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Los Angeles

Corresponding Lives: Women Educators of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*
School for Girls in the City of Tunis, 1882-1914

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Islamic Studies

by

Joy Land

2006

i

The dissertation of Joy Land is approved.

Arnold J. Band

Ghislaine Lydon

Yona Sabar

Michael G. Morony, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2006

DEDICATION

To the memory of my father and

To my mother

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	v
Vita.....	vii
Abstract.....	ix
Preface.....	1
Introduction: The Historical Context.....	18
PART I FEMALE EDUCATORS: The <i>Directrices</i> of the AIU School for Girls in Tunis	
Chapter 1 From Paris to Tunis and Back: Local Responses to European Directives.....	60
Chapter 2 From the Margins to the Center: The <i>Directrice</i> as Cultural Intermediary of Language and Literacy.....	95
Chapter 3 “This Little World”: Academic Politics in the Primary School.....	132
PART II THE EDUCATION OF FEMALES: Teachers, Students, Parents, and the Community	
Chapter 4 Implementing the Curriculum: Workshops, World’s Fairs, and Employment.....	176
Chapter 5 On the Verge of Modernity: The Voluntary Association.....	231
Conclusion.....	264
Bibliography.....	272

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of the many people involved at all stages of research and writing, my thanks first go to my dissertation committee: to Michael Morony, Chair, for his patience and support; to Arnold Band for his insight, guidance, and humor; to Ghislaine Lydon for her assistance; and to Yona Sabar for his advice. A debt of gratitude goes to Dean John Richardson of UCLA for granting me permission to resume graduate work after a hiatus of many years. I thank Frances Malino of Wellesley College and Joel Blatt of the University of Connecticut, Stamford, for discussions of my topic.

The librarians of Widener Library at Harvard provided access to primary and secondary source material, for which I am grateful. The Chief Archivist at the *Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU)* in Paris, Jean-Claude Kuperminc, granted me authorization to use the archives, which I appreciate. The untiring efforts of Laurent Zimmern, librarian at the AIU Archives, were a boon to continued research, for which he deserves thanks.

Several surgeons, oncologists, and other physicians participated in my medical care over the past fourteen months and enabled me to complete the dissertation. I am especially indebted to Doctors Steven Bramwit, Peter Costantino, Cliff Connery, David Harmon, John Levinson, John Munzenrider and Beverly Drucker. Their skill and expertise saved my life.

Among the friends and family who provided invaluable editorial advice and technical support I would like to thank Anne Aubrey, Anne-Marie Foltz, Margaret Freiberg, and Hillel and Barbi Disraelly. Finally, I acknowledge the encouragement and

devotion of my family, Michelle and her husband, Matt David; Joshua; Abigail, and her husband Doron Bracha; Eva; and my husband, Charles.

VITA

Place of Birth	New York, N.Y.
1967-68	New York University, New York, N.Y.: Arabic Tuition Fellowship for Arabic, New York University in collaboration with the Center for International Programs and Services of the New York State Department of Education
1968	B.A., History Queens College (CUNY), Flushing, N.Y.
1968-69	History of Islamic Countries, Hebrew University, Jerusalem Fellowship, American Friends of the Hebrew University
1969-1972	NDEA Title IV Fellowship for teaching on the university level
1971	M.A., Islamic Studies University of California, Los Angeles
1972-73	NDEA Title VI Fellowship in Critical Languages: Arabic
1973	C. Phil., Islamic Studies University of California, Los Angeles
1999-2004	Lecturer, University of Connecticut, Stamford
2004-05	The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, Cambridge, MA: Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women's and Gender Studies

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Editor, *Proceedings of a Seminar on Muslim-Jewish Relations in North Africa* (New York, 1975).

Land, Joy (June 2004), Corresponding Lives: Women Educators of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU)* in Tunisia, 1882-1914. Paper presented at the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) 2004 Conference, *Rethinking Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, Tangier American Legation Museum, Tangier, Morocco.

—, (April 2005). From the Margins to the Center: The *Directrice* as Cultural Intermediary of Language and Literacy. Paper presented at the AIMS 2005 Dissertation Workshop, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Corresponding Lives: Women Educators of the
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City of Tunis, 1882-1914

by

Joy Land

Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies
University of California, Los Angeles, 2006
Professor Michael G. Morony, Chair

The multiple roles of women educators as cross-cultural intermediaries in the realm of language, literacy, dress, employment, and social action are examined in the hybrid Muslim-Jewish culture of Tunisia. Educated in Paris, the women served as catalysts of change at the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) School for Girls

in Tunis for the students, parents, and the community. Sources are based on the correspondence of the women educators, supplemented by that of their male colleagues at the School for Boys. The pioneering initiatives of the women in education, apprenticeships, health, and post-graduate voluntary associations, were closely followed by the Director of Public Education for the schools of the French Protectorate and by the French patroness of the first Muslim School for Girls in Tunis. The model of female secular education advocated by the Alliance, with its emphasis on academic skills and productivity, set important precedents for similar ventures by other religious and ethnic communities.

Discussion of female educators and the education of females in the AIU School for Girls is intertwined with the themes of the “civilizing mission”, the educator-mother, and colonialism in an emerging modernity. Parallels are drawn to the education of girls in Muslim Tunisia, France, or other regions, as appropriate. Evidence has revealed that the work of the women educators extended beyond the classroom to the local community. The goal of the teachers was to form a new role for women in the private realm of the household and the public place of employment. The Middle East and North Africa continue to be confronted by these issues today, as first recognized by the women educators of the Alliance more than a century ago.

Preface

Women educators fulfilled many complex roles at the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) School for Girls in the city of Tunis, 1882 to 1914. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, the AIU established a network of schools in the Ottoman Empire, its Arab provinces, Egypt, Iran, and North Africa. By the turn of the twentieth century there were more than 100 schools with over 26,000 students. The first AIU School was founded in Tetuan, Morocco, in 1862 and served as a model for other schools throughout the Middle East and North Africa.¹ By 1878 a school for boys opened in Tunisia and another one for girls followed soon after in 1882.² The establishment of the School for Girls in Tunis (near ancient Carthage) occurred in tumultuous times: the French occupied Tunisia in 1881 and established a Protectorate there in 1883.

The coincidence of these dates underscores the many, shared purposes of the Alliance with the colonial power. Among them was *la mission civilisatrice* to be spread through the use of the French language and the transmission of Enlightenment culture in the AIU schools. The aims of the schools as stated in the protocols were, above all, to work on the emancipation and “moral progress” of the local Jewish population, and the “regeneration” of their co-religionists.³ These goals, easy to disparage with post-colonial

¹ Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society:1991, paperback ed., 2003), 23-25; Aron Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle: University of Washington Press: 1993, paperback ed., 2003), 12-21.

² A. Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 19-20.

³ André Chouraqui, *Cent ans d'histoire: l'Alliance Israélite Universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine, 1860-1960*. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France: 1965), 196-200, 38-39, 188-190, and

hindsight, were a product of their time. However, as suggested by the literature⁴ it would be inaccurate to level charges that the Alliance sided with the French Foreign Ministry to promote French penetration of North Africa. Increasingly after World War I, the Alliance accepted subsidies from the French government,⁵ and became a close supporter of French interests abroad. In Tunisia, however, subsidies from the government of the local French Protectorate, *la Régence*, were paid to the Alliance schools beginning in 1891.⁶

The teachers of the Alliance, both men and women, spearheaded the creation of a largely urban elite that was educated and "Westernized". (Here used in quotation marks as a nod to Huntington⁷ who reminded us that Europe was Western many centuries before it was modern.) But it was the women who were truly revolutionary: they formed the cadre of the first Jewish professional females in the Middle East.⁸ That is not to say that theirs was an isolated case. In Tunisia, for instance, the first secular primary school for Muslim girls opened in 1899.⁹ But what was especially unique about the Alliance schools

408; A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle in Turkey, 1860-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xi–xiii, 22, 72.

⁴ Michael Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco: 1862-1962* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1983), 74; A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 75.

⁵ Joan Gardner Roland, "The Alliance Israélite Universelle and French Policy in North Africa, 1860-1918", Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, (1969), 334-335.

⁶ L. Machuel, *L'enseignement Public en Tunisie* (Tunis: Imprimerie Rapide, 1900), 128.

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of the world order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 68-72.

⁸ Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 74.

⁹ L. Machuel, *L'enseignement ...*, 83.

was that they accepted rich and poor, males and females, Jews and non-Jews. By 1895, the non-Jewish student population of about 280 students included 95 Catholics, 43 Protestants, 39 Greek Orthodox, 21 Armenians, and 37 Muslims.¹⁰ At that time there were 59 AIU schools with a total enrollment of 12, 050. Of the 12,050 students, 4,900 were girls.¹¹ The women teachers of Tunis were also multi-ethnic and multi-religious: European and North African, Jewish and non-Jewish. During its first decade of operation, the non-Jewish teaching staff of the AIU School for Girls included two Protestants and one Catholic. No men taught on its staff at that time

A central theme is to explore the nature of the newly emancipated, modernizing, Jewish elite of Alliance women educators. On the one hand, the women teachers and *directrices* held positions of power and certain degrees of autonomy within the confines of the school system. On the other hand, their status as educated women limited their marital choices: they remained single or married later in life, wed AIU men teachers, or left the school system altogether. According to one researcher,¹² in their correspondence women teachers were more likely to comment on pedagogical issues rather than the broader political and social conditions more likely to be addressed by the men. The correspondence of the women and their husbands or male counterparts in the boys' school or other neighboring AIU schools, were read to understand the role of women as agents of social change, in the hybrid Muslim-Jewish culture of Tunisia.

¹⁰ AIU, *L'Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860-1895* (Paris: Maréchal et Montorier, [1895]) 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

¹² A. Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 82.

The Jews (that is the Jewish men) of the Middle East and North Africa had long held positions as intermediaries between the European powers and the Muslim populations serving as translators, commercial agents, or consular staff. This was as true for the Jews and Christians of the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire¹³ as it was for the semi-autonomous regions of North Africa.¹⁴ More recently, the Jews functioned as “modernity brokers” in the 1940’s.¹⁵ With the introduction of Jewish women educators in the region they too assumed the role of intermediaries between cultures. Their venture, however, lay between bridging the modernized culture of French Jewry and the traditional life of the *hāra* (Cl. Ar. *harāt al-Yahūd*, the Jewish Quarter), in Tunisia or elsewhere.

In a recent essay, the two authors ask: "How does the clustering of women, apart from men, empower and/or limit women?"¹⁶ Continuing their discussion of women in cross-cultural contact, they assert,

Women are important intermediaries of cultural exchange.... Women may become empowered by their intermediary position: it may give them pivotal control of

¹³ Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Michel Abitbol, *Les commerçants du roi: Tujjar al-Sultan – Une élite économique judeo-marocaine au XIXe siècle, Lettres du Makhzen, traduites et annotées, Ouvrages publiés avec le concours du Centre International de Recherches sur les Juifs du Maroc*, (Paris: Maisonneuve & LaRose, 1998).

¹⁵ Richard L. Press, “The Jewish Community of Marrakesh in the 20th Century: A Paradigm for Majority-Minority Relations”, *Proceedings of the Seminar on Muslim-Jewish Relations in North Africa* (New York, 1975).

¹⁶ Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Stroebel, “Conceptualizing the History of Women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa” in Guity Nashat and Judith E. Tucker, eds., *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), lv.

information or material resources. On the other hand, as intermediaries they are sometimes marginal within their society of origin.¹⁷

These statements were made in the context of indigenous women linking with European men as sexual partners, a far cry from the women teachers who were exhorted to be exemplars of moral rectitude for an impressionable group of youngsters. However, the theme of woman as intermediary who then becomes empowered and /or limited in her new role, serves as a central argument for research on women educators of the AIU in Tunis, based on their correspondence found in AIU archives.

A subsidiary theme is the metaphorical use of “silence”. As one feminist theorist explains, “in addition to ‘not talking,’ being *silent* is taken to mean: not being present[;] not participating[;] not writing[;] talking (or writing) but not being heard[;] talking, (or writing) but being ignored or ridiculed[;] ... [and] talking (or writing), but only in limited ways: only on particular topics, or only in particular places, genres, times, situations...”. She continues by saying that “‘silencing’ ... is taken to refer not just to quieting, but also to censorship, suppression, marginalization, trivialization, exclusion,...and other forms of discounting”. However, silence is not always imposed or accepted. It can be an act of rebellion. And it can include chosen silences, often cooperative and enabling”.¹⁸ The various forms of silence cannot be applied uniformly to all the *directrices* in this study or even consistently to one. But they emerge as possible explanations for some of the directresses’ behavior.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, lvi.

¹⁸ Marjorie L. DeVault, *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 177.

An additional theme targets the *directrices*, their pupils, and the community through the prism of Francophonie. Francophonie was intended to underscore the importance of French language as a vehicle to attain universal values. Its purpose was to promote co-operation between the metropole and the colonies¹⁹ as well as to foster understanding among the regions of France d’Outre Mer (French Overseas Territories).²⁰

In a recent article about teaching a course on women and gender in the French colonies, the historian, Patricia Lorcin, asks:

Should the focus be French women or the women France colonized? These two are of course, interrelated, but more often than not they are considered separately: the former are seen as integral to French history and the latter as part of the national history of the ex-colony in question...[However,] at all stages of the imperial enterprise the experiences of these two groups of women were intertwined.²¹

An investigation of French women, the women France colonized, and the combination of these two categories is not only a subject for teaching, but also an area for research. The present study is divided into two sections: The first part discusses the French-trained, although not exclusively French-born, female educators in Tunis. The second part examines not only the changes that the women teachers engendered, but the community’s response to those initiatives. Ultimately, though, the role of the females in the AIU

¹⁹ Colonies in the literary, rather than the political sense, refer to those areas under “any form of elite or cultural domination”. See Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (eds.), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, 273, n. 5 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998). Thus, Tunisia, technically a protectorate and not a colony (such as Algeria), could also be considered as part of French colonial rule.

²⁰ Patricia Lorcin, “Teaching Women and Gender in France d’Outre Mer: Problems and Strategies,” *French Historical Studies* 27, no.2 (Spring 2004): 294-296.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 294-295.

expands our notions of perceived cultural boundaries by rethinking Jewish culture and society in North Africa.

Review of the Literature

The literature on the women teachers of the Alliance school system is very limited. Two recent articles on the women teachers of the Alliance²² note that the *institutrices* were often related, as mothers and daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters, or as sisters or cousins. In addition to these two articles by Frances Malino, the field only boasts of three others: Esther Benbassa on “*L’éducation féminine en Orient: L’école de filles de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle à Galata, Istanbul (1879-1912)*”; Annie Benveniste on “*Le rôle des institutrices de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle à Salonique*”²³; and Susan G. Miller on “*Gender and the Poetics of Emancipation: The Alliance Israelite Universelle in Northern Morocco, 1890-1912*”²⁴.

Each of these latter three articles focuses on a different, though often related, point of view. The first, by Esther Benbassa, centers on one school for girls, with detailed statistics on enrollment, types of courses, apprenticeships and later employment. It indirectly provides a socio-economic profile of Galata, the pre-dominantly non-Muslim quarter of Istanbul where more than half of the Jews of that city lived. The second, by

²² Frances Malino, “Prophets in Their Own Land? Mothers and Daughters of the AIU,” *Nashim* 3 (2000): 56-73; *eodem*, “The Women Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1872-1940,” in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith R. Baskin, 2nd ed., (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 248-269.

²³ *Combat pour la Diaspora*, 8 (1982):13-26.

²⁴ L. Carl Brown and Matthew S. Gordon, eds., *Franco-Arab Encounters* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 229-252.

Annie Benveniste, places women teachers of the Alliance squarely within the framework of French Emancipation and is based on the correspondence of eight *institutrices* from Salonika (1876-1929). The third, by Susan Miller, chooses to view the AIU women in terms of continuity of tradition on the one hand, and change to modernity on the other, framed by the emblematic novel of a Jewish Algerian woman author.

An additional published source on Alliance women can be found in part of a book chapter. Rachel Simon discusses educational opportunities for girls during the late Ottoman period in her book on Libyan Jewish women.²⁵ Simon bases her research on correspondence of the school directors from the AIU Archives. The first AIU School for Girls opened in Tripoli in 1896. During the early period, it shared many of the same problems as the School for Girls in Tunis, such as eagerness of the mothers to enroll their daughters in school, but unwillingness to send them on a regular basis.

An allied work is Rachel Simon's book chapter on "Jewish Female Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914."²⁶ While its focus is on the Ottoman Empire, many of Simon's observations on attitudes toward Jewish female education can be applied to North Africa as well. Thus, the Ashkenazim, stemming from Northern Europe, were opposed to modern female education, although the Sephardim, tracing their roots to Spain and Portugal, promoted the education of girls as a means to acquire languages,

²⁵ Rachel Simon, *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1992), chap. 4, "Educational Opportunities", 108-126.

²⁶ In *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 127-152; 281-325.

knowledge of math and science, and vocational training.²⁷ The emphasis on acquiring a secular education and learning a trade conformed to the goals of the Alliance schools.

Simon's chapters and the articles by Malino, Benbassa and Benveniste, provide models for research on the AIU schools for girls. Current research on the history of women teachers in the AIU includes a book length study in preparation by Frances Malino. It focuses on the career lines of the Lévy-Benchimol family of women teachers, who originated in Morocco and were sent to AIU schools around the Mediterranean Basin. Malino's narrative will cover the period from the 1870's to post-1956 and is intended to reach a wide audience.²⁸ There are two forthcoming articles which discuss Jewish female education in Tunisia, but only one utilizes the Alliance archives.²⁹

Contribution to the Field

In his book, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, Aron Rodrigue indicates "the need for further study of the changes in the position of Jewish women in the Middle East in the past century".³⁰ In a later footnote he adds that the "Alliance's 'regeneration' of the Eastern Jewish woman is a complex topic that merits a separate study of its own."³¹

²⁷ Simon is referring to Ottoman Palestine. *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁸ Based on discussions with author (August and December 2003).

²⁹ Joy Land, "Corresponding Lives: Women Educators of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU)* in Tunisia, 1882-1914" and Keith Walters, "Education for Jewish Girls in 19th- and early 20th-Century Tunis and the Spread of French in Tunisia", presented at the American Institute of Maghrib Studies (AIMS) 2004 Annual Conference, *Rethinking Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, Tangier, Morocco.

³⁰ Rodrigue...1990, 74.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.189 n.50.

Furthermore, Nikki Keddie notes in an article discussing some recent books on Middle Eastern women's history, that, "Relatively little coverage in recent historical works has been given...to ethnic and religious minorities".³² This holds true from the time these statements were written until today.

Published works on "minority women" of Tunisia, based on archival sources, are similarly lacking. The archivist and librarian of the Alliance in Paris, Jean-Claude Kuperminc, recently wrote an article on sources for the contemporary history of the Jews of Tunisia at the Archives of the AIU, from 1860 to 1940. In it he unequivocally states, "*C'est dans le domaine de la place des femmes dans la société juive que les archives de l'Alliance devraient être encore plus exploitées*".³³ Kuperminc's injunction that the AIU archives on Tunisia should be more fully utilized will be heeded in the research at hand.

To date, no studies have been published on the women educators of Tunisia based on the AIU archives. The articles and material previously cited are on the women teachers of the AIU centered in Istanbul, Salonika, and various towns in Morocco and Libya. Other works have used AIU archives to examine various regions where the AIU conducted its activities: for instance, Claude Hagège and Yaron Tsur on Tunisia,

³² Nikki R. Keddie, "Women in the Limelight: Some Recent Books on Middle Eastern Women's History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, August 2002, 34, 3, 569-570.

³³ Jean-Claude Kuperminc, "Les Sources de l'histoire contemporaine des Juifs de Tunisie aux archives de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle: 1860-1940," *Histoire Communautaire, Histoire Plurielle: la communauté juive de Tunisie; Actes du colloque de Tunis organisé les 25-26-27 Février 1998 à la Faculté de la Manouba (Université de Tunis)*, (Tunis: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 1999), 88.

Michael Laskier on Morocco, or Paul Dumont and Aron Rodrigue on the Ottoman Empire.³⁴

Archives have been consulted for dissertations on the function and structure of the AIU: Joan G. Roland on the AIU and French policy in North Africa or Paul Silberman on the AIU school system.³⁵ But none of the published studies based on AIU sources specifically focus on women educators in Tunisia.

Method and Primary Sources

This study will be a prosopography: a biography of a group, the first generations of women educators of the Alliance in Tunisia, and by extension, their female students. The first recruits came from France, Alsace-Lorraine or Germany. Later on, young girls, usually at age 14, were selected from the top students of the local Jewish community in the Balkans, the Middle East or North Africa for an intensive teacher -training program in Paris lasting four years. Upon completion of their studies they were sent to teach in one

³⁴ Claude Hagège, “La communauté juive à la veille du protectorat français”, *Le Mouvement social*, 110 (Jan., March 1980); Yaron Tsur, “Haskalah in a Sectional Colonial Society: Mahdia (Tunisia) 1884”, in Harvey E. Goldberg, ed., *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 146-167; Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance...*; Paul Dumont, “Jewish Communities in Turkey during the Last Decades of the Nineteenth Century in the Light of the Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle”, in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Holmes & Meier, Inc., 1982) Vol. 1, 209-242; A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews...*, and *Jews and Muslims...*

³⁵ Joan Gardner Roland, “The Alliance Israelite and French Policy in North Africa, 1860-1918”....Paul Silberman, “An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the Alliance Israelite Universelle from 1862-1940”, Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1973. Silberman asserts that the doctoral dissertation on the Alliance by Elisha Cohen, *L'influence intellectuelle et sociale des ecoles de l' Alliance Israelite sur les Israelites du Proche-Orient, Universite de Paris*, 1962, “does not meet our standards regarding scientific work” and “does not supply sufficient information on the Alliance schools to permit its use as a reference work”. See Silberman, p. 21. For these reasons E. Cohen’s study has not been consulted.

of the schools of the Alliance.³⁶ Once established in their new posts, the teachers were enjoined to write at least once per month to the Central Committee in Paris and their assistants were required to submit written reports back to headquarters at least once every two months.³⁷ The most comprehensive collection of letters is from the school principals; in contrast, their teaching staff tended to write infrequently or hardly at all. Perhaps, though, the care taken to preserve the letters of the directors was not equally applied to the reports of their subordinates. The correspondence of the women directors in Tunisia constitutes the bulk of the archival sources for this study.

The original letters are in the AIU Archives in Paris. Microfilm copies of the letters are available in Jerusalem and Cambridge, MA. Harvard has a microfilm collection of 86 reels on file under the rubric of *AIU Archives: Collection 01: Tunisia*. The collection can be located through the Hollis Catalog, Widener Harvard Depository Film A 1075. The documents on microfilm, handwritten in French, comprise the major unpublished source materials for the dissertation. Since there are restrictions on the use of the collection, it can only be viewed at Widener Library on one machine - in the Phillips Reading Room. Electronic copying of the microfilm is not allowed, nor can the reels be sent to requesting institutions. However, in Paris, it is permissible to use copiers or to scan documents on to compact discs at the Library of the Archives of the AIU. Printed primary source materials include brochures, books, and periodicals published by the AIU. Many of these, such as the article by Mme. Sémach, *La Directrice et*

³⁶ A. Chouraqui, *Cent ans d'histoire...*, 177-178.

³⁷ AIU, *Instructions aux professeurs*, (Paris, 1903), 10.

*l'Adjointe*³⁸, are available online and can be retrieved by interlibrary loan. These collections can also be found at major university libraries in this country, although possibly not in their entirety. Other published primary sources are photographs of Tunisian Alliance schoolgirls³⁹ Newspapers for Tunisia include *La Dépêche Tunisienne* and *La Tunisie Française*.

Secondary Sources

Secondary source material for the dissertation, of which only a sample will be provided here, can be divided into several categories: first, there are studies specifically devoted to the AIU, its founders, guiding principles, and network of schools (Chouraqui,⁴⁰ Kuperminc,⁴¹ Leven,⁴² Navon,⁴³ and Weill⁴⁴). The authors are most often leaders or educators within the AIU system. Second, there are book length studies of the AIU divided by region, such as

³⁸ *Revue des Ecoles de L'Alliance Israelite*, (Paris, 1902), 399-401.

³⁹ *From Carthage to Jerusalem: The Jewish Community of Tunis* [No. 85]. Tel Aviv: The Nahum Goldman Museum of the Diaspora, Beth Hatefusoith-Photo Archive, 1986; AIU, *Les Cahiers de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle* (Nov. 2003), 14.

⁴⁰ André N.Chouraqui, *Between East and West...*1965.

⁴¹ Jean-Claude Kuperminc. "Les sources de l'histoire contemporaine des juifs de Tunisie aux archives de l'alliance israélite universelle: 1860-1940."...1999.

⁴² Narcisse Leven. *Cinquante ans d'histoire. L'Alliance Israélite Universelle(1860-1920)*. 2 vols.(Paris: F. Alcan, 1911-1920).

⁴³ A.H. Navon, *Les 70 Ans de L'École Normale Israélite Orientale (1865-1935)* Paris: Librairie Durlacher, 1935.

⁴⁴ Georges Weill, *Emancipation et progress: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et les droits de l'homme* (Paris: Université Presses, 2000.)

Rodrigue⁴⁵ on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Laskier⁴⁶ on Morocco. Third, the history of women educators of the Alliance, as mentioned above, is a newly emerging field. Fourth, the history of the Jews of North Africa provides a rich field for investigation. It includes the works of Abitbol⁴⁷ and Hirschberg,⁴⁸ Attal⁴⁹, Ganiage,⁵⁰ and Sebag⁵¹ on Tunisia. However, caution should be exercised when reading Ganiage's publications; he is unsympathetic, if not antagonistic, to his subject matter. A fifth category is the role of the Jews in the Islamic World and Muslim-Jewish Relations. It ranges from discussion of Jews as *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book) to modern Jewish communities in the lands of Islam: Ettinger,⁵² Goitein,⁵³ Littman,⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews...* 1990.

⁴⁶ Laskier, Michael M. *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco...*

⁴⁷ Michel Abitbol, ed. *Judaïsme d'Afrique du Nord aux XIXe-XXe siècles* (Jerusalem: Institut Ben Zvi, 1980). _____, "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: Analysis of a Discourse (1830-1914)," in *The Jews in Modern France*, eds. F. Malino and B. Wasserstein, translation by Jonathan Mandelbaum (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985).

⁴⁸ H.Z. Hirschberg, H.Z., *History of the Jews in North Africa*. Vol. 2 Eliezer Bashan and Robert Attal, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981). *Idem*. "The Jewish Quarter in Muslim Cities and Berber Areas", *Judaism*, 17, 4 (1968):405 – 421.

⁴⁹ Robert Attal and Claude Sitbon, (eds.) *Regards sur les Juifs de Tunisie* (Paris: A. Michel, 1979).

⁵⁰ Jean Ganiage, *L'Expansion Coloniale de la France sous la troisième République (1871-1914)*. Paris: Payot, 1968. *Idem*. "La crise des finances tunisiennes et l'ascension des Juifs de Tunis, 1860 - 1880." *Revue Africaine* (1955):153 – 173.

⁵¹ Paul Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie, des origines à nos jours*. (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1991.) *Idem* with R. Attal, *L'évolution d'un ghetto nord africain, la Hara de Tunis* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959). *Idem*, *Tunis: Histoire d'une ville* (Paris: Harmattan, 1998).

⁵² Shmuel Ettinger, *Toldot ha-yehudim b-arzot ha-islam: ha-'et ha-hadashah* [History of the Jews in Islamic Countries: Modern Times], vols. 2,3 (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 1986).

⁵³ Shlomo Dov Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts through the Ages.*, 3rd revised ed., (New York: Schocken Books, 1974). *Idem*, *A Mediterranean Society* 6 vols. (1967; 1st paperback printing, Berkeley: University of California, 1999).

⁵⁴ Donald Gerald Littman, "Quelques Aspects de la condition de dhimmi. Juifs d'Afrique du Nord avant la colonization (d'après des documents de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle," *YOD- Revue des Etudes*

and Stillman.⁵⁵ The history of North Africa and Tunisia is a sixth category: Abun-Nasr, Brown, Ganiage, and Anderson.⁵⁶

The history of women's education in France and Tunisia is a useful seventh category, particularly since the AIU school curriculum so closely followed that of the metropole. For female education in nineteenth century France, see Mayeur and Margadant on the secondary schools, and Quartararo on the primary schools.⁵⁷ As for the education of girls in Tunisia, see Bakalti and the articles by Brown and Clancy-Smith.⁵⁸ Clancy-Smith, basing much of her article on Bakalti, provides an account of the first primary school for Muslim girls in Tunis (for the period from 1900-1912). Here, the French curriculum serves as a model for the school's secular components, much as it did for the AIU schools.

Hébraïques et juives modernes et contemporaines 2, no. 1 (Paris P.O.F.1976): 22-52. [Enlarged, revised reprint with ill., (Geneva: Editions de l'Avenir, 1977.)]

⁵⁵ Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979); *idem*, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (1991; 1st paperback ed., Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003.)

⁵⁶ Jamil M. Abu-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*, 2nd ed. (1975; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); L. Carl Brown, *The Tunisia of Ahmad Bey, 1837-1855* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Jean Ganiage, *L'Expansion Coloniale...*1968; and Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.)

⁵⁷ Françoise Mayeur, *L'éducation des jeunes filles en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris : Hachette, 1979) ; Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur : Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1990) ; and Anne T. Quartararo, *Women Teachers and Popular Education in Nineteenth Century France: Social Values and Corporate Identity at the Normal School Institution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995.)

⁵⁸ Souad Bakalti, *La femme tunisienne au temps de la colonisation, 1881-1956* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1996) ; L. Carl Brown, "Tunisia," in *Educational and Political Development*, ed. James S. Coleman (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1965) 144-168 ; *idem*, "Tunisia : Education, 'Cultural Identity', and the Future," in *Man, State and Society in the Contemporary Maghrib*, ed., I. William Zartman (New York : Praeger Publishers, 1973) 365-379 ; and Julia Clancy-Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge: Educating the Muslim Woman in Colonial North Africa c.1850-1915," in *Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000) 99-118.

An eighth category is feminist theory and women in the Middle East. American feminist theory includes DeVault and Reinharz.⁵⁹ Theory on women of the Middle East is presented in Abu Lughod, Ahmed, Johnson-Odim and Stroebel, and Marsot. Specific studies on Middle Eastern women for the period under consideration are Bakalti as mentioned above, Clancy-Smith, Najmabadi Rostam-Kolayi, Shakry and Tucker.⁶⁰

Another area relating to the dissertation topic includes cross-cultural contact between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.⁶¹ It includes the transmission of ideas, whether from the realm of Islam to Europe in the Middle Ages, or from Enlightenment France to other parts of the world in the eighteenth century and after. A complementary issue concerns commercial and diplomatic contacts of countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Many of these categories will be discussed at greater length in the introduction, on the historical context. From there, the study is divided into two sections: (1) the women educators from France, the *directrices*, and

⁵⁹ De Vault, *Liberating Method...*; and Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.)

⁶⁰ Lila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Bakalti, *La femme tunisienne...*; Julia Clancy-Smith, "Gender in the City: Women, Migration and Contested Spaces in Tunis, c. 1830-1881, in *Africa's Urban Past* ed., David Anderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 189-204; Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Strobel, "Conceptualizing the History of Women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa" in *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Restoring Women to History* ed., Judith E. Tucker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) xxvi-lxi; Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "Women and Modernization: A Re-evaluation" in *Women, the Family and Divorce Laws in Islamic History* ed., Amira El Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996) 39-51; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Re-making Women: Feminism and Modernity...*, ed., Lila Abu-Lughod, 91-125; Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, "The Women's Press, Modern Education, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Iran" (Ph.D. Dissertation UCLA 2000); Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn of the Century Egypt" in *Re-making Women: Feminism and Modernity...* ed. Lila Abu-Lughod, 126-170; and Judith E. Tucker, "Women in the Middle East and North Africa: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in *Women in the Middle East and North Africa...* ed., Judith E. Tucker, 73-131.

⁶¹ Bernard Lewis, *Cultures in Conflict: Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and J.L. Miège, ed., *Les relations intercommunautaires juives en méditerranée occidentale, XIIIe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984.)

(2) the women and girls they sought to educate in Tunisia. As their motivations, goals, and actions intersect, they will be noted in the text.

Introduction: The Historical Context

There are several issues to be addressed in undertaking an investigation of cross-cultural contact, such as in the case of French trained women teachers serving in the local communities of the Middle East and North Africa. First there are theoretical concerns: A) the transmission of ideas in the medieval period, as background to its occurrence in the modern era; B) the ideals of the French Enlightenment, their influence on women, education, and family, and their export to the Middle East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and C) the ideals which influenced the formation of Alliance teachers and principals. Linked to the ideals of the Alliance are: D) the reasons for its founding and the background of its founders; and E) the question of the AIU as a “missionary” organization. The second set of issues discusses the commercial contacts between Europe and her Mediterranean neighbors, as an influence on the formation of the Tunisian Jewish communities. The third area of investigation highlights aspects of the legal status of the Jews under Islam. This will lead to a fourth area of concern: political developments affecting the Jews of the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman tributary states. These developments include diplomatic relations between Europe and the Middle East, particularly as they relate to the “protection” of non-Muslim minorities. It also covers reform movements of the Tanzimat stemming from Istanbul and Tunis, which spawned more liberal legislation. In addition it discusses the financial crisis of Tunisia before the advent of the Protectorate. The fifth topic is on female education. It highlights the organization of teacher training schools (*écoles normales*) of the AIU and of the public

school system that developed in France during the late nineteenth century. A parallel discussion is held on elementary school education. It focuses on the AIU and other educational school systems in Tunisia, and, by way of comparison, the primary school curriculum of the 1880's in France. The section concludes with material on sources of funding for the Alliance school system. It also notes the salaries for teachers in the public schools of Tunisia and the AIU schools in Tunis.

A cognitive map of the Mediterranean basin can serve as a point of departure for investigating cultural interaction in the region. In the medieval Islamic world, the transmission of ideas traveled from East to West, from *Mashriq* to *Maghrib*, and then on to Western Europe.⁶² Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Kayrawan (Tunisia), served as the great centers of medieval learning in the “classical age” of Islam (900-1200). Scholars in these cities fostered developments in theology, philosophy, law, medicine, astronomy, geography and other disciplines.⁶³ Translations of Greek works into Arabic and then Latin, or sometimes direct translations from Greek into Latin, eventually found their way

⁶² For a discussion on the inadequacy of dividing the world into West-East cultural domination and North-South economic supremacy, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of the world order*. (New York: Simon Schuster, 1996), 32-33. But these and other bipartite divisions, such as majority and minority, center and periphery, or the Ottoman nomenclature of the rulers and the ruled, are common classifications in social science literature and will be employed here. Huntington admits, moreover, that the concept of a two-part world may, in some sense, reflect reality.

⁶³ See G.E. von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam, A History, 600-1258*; Trans. by Katherine Watson (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1970), Philip K. Hitti, *A History of the Arabs: from the earliest times to the present* rev. 10th ed./ new preface by Walid Khalidi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), and Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), among others. Of related interest is Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* rev.ed. (Chatham, N.Y.: Oneworld, 1993).

into the vernacular literatures of Renaissance Europe, via Spain or Italy.⁶⁴ Thus, cultural transmission from the realm of Islam influenced literary developments in Europe.

More recently, since the Enlightenment, there has been a North-South movement in the dissemination of ideas. This would include the works of the *philosophes* and the principles of the French Revolution spreading from the metropolitan center in France to North Africa, Egypt, and elsewhere. By the mid-nineteenth century, ideas of reform within the Islamic Mediterranean world were diffused on an East –West continuum within the confines of the Ottoman Empire⁶⁵, from the administrative center in Istanbul to the autonomous Arab tributary regions on the periphery, such as Tunisia. But ideas of reform within the Ottoman Empire, which supported the growth of the schools, were not the only influences on the community.

The revolutionary ideals of 1789 heralded a new era for Europe, as well as for the Middle East and North Africa. They influenced the development of the *haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) and a renaissance of Hebrew literature. French Enlightenment ideals promoted the advance of secular education in France, England and America and in sections of the Middle East and North Africa as well.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the vibrant translation movement in Toledo in the twelfth century see Hitti, *Ibid.*, 578-80 and 588-590; and von Grunebaum, *Ibid.*, 177-78. Christians and Jews, such as Gerard of Cremona (d.1187) and Abraham Ibn Ezra (d.1167) contributed to this movement. For an example of the transfer of Qur'anic themes into Italian literature, see Miguel Asim Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, trans. and abr. by Harold Sunderland (Lahore, Pakistan: Qausain, 1977).

⁶⁵ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

Ideas of formal education for women in France were derived from, among other sources, the vision of such *philosophes* as Rousseau. In *Émile*, Rousseau's ideal male student and Emile's counterpart, Sophie, receive instruction from private tutors.⁶⁶ But Sophie was raised to be less educated than Emile, more pleasant, passive and docile, and always his subordinate. Rousseau's theories of education also informed the popular image of woman as "*mère educatrice*".⁶⁷ It was the mother, who, in her domestic role would educate her sons for a strong civic role in the public domain. Her daughters by contrast were preened for marriage and the structured life of domestic order. With formal education she would become a companion to her husband and an educated mother of her children.⁶⁸ By the early years of the Third Republic (1870-1940) there was recognition of the needs for girls' education to be supported by the state.⁶⁹ As has been recently pointed out,⁷⁰ the goal of educating girls was not to grant them rights as individuals, but to ensure

⁶⁶ J.J. Rousseau, *Émile* (Paris, Sorbonne: Presses Universitaires, 1979).

⁶⁷ See Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne: Textbooks and the Socialization of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984; Erna O. Hellerstein, Leslie P. Hume, and Karen M. Offen, eds., *Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France, and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981); and Jo Margadant, *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic*, (Princeton University Press, 1990), which discusses the establishment of a teacher-training school for women secondary school teachers in Sèvres.

⁶⁸ Of note, the second *directrice* of the AIU School for Girls in Tunis, Mme. Voley Chimenez, commented that many of her pupils were "embarrassed" to come to school because it was contrary to social custom. *Archives of the AIU, Tunisie*, XXX E, Reel 66 (Chimenes, 1887-1891), letter of 27 February 1888. Girls were expected to learn housework and needlework and never have any formal schooling.

⁶⁹ J. Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 24.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-32.

the future of the Republic. Education was not meant to change the role of women in society, but rather, to maintain and reinforce existing gender roles.⁷¹

The moral values of the European family emphasized the role of the mother in raising honest and dutiful youngsters. The mother of the family had the responsibility to be the moral authority in the household. In Tunisia and other areas of the Middle East, uneducated mothers were ignored and relegated to inferior positions within the family. But morality came to be a key issue in the French schools. It was easily exportable within France's rapidly expanding colonial enterprise and to other regions.⁷²

The ideological underpinnings of the AIU school system, in addition to embracing the Rights of Man were based on the writings of the French Positivists, principally Auguste Comte. From the beginning of their enterprise, as proclaimed in the AIU manifesto of 1860, the AIU founders stated that they sought to pursue moral progress.⁷³ They viewed education as an intellectual and moral undertaking. Their statement of 1903,

⁷¹ Anne T. Quatararo, *Women Teachers and Popular Education in Nineteenth Century France: Social Values and Corporate Identity at the Normal School Institution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 112.

⁷² For the purpose of educating women to be "the educators of the nation" in Iran, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran" in Lila Abu Lughod, ed., *Remaking Women, Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91-125; . For Egypt see Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn of the Century Egypt", in *Ibid.*, pp. 126-170.

⁷³ Manifesto of 1860, as quoted in Narcisse Leven, *Cinquante Ans de d'Histoire: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle, (1860-1910)*, (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1920), vol. II, 27-28. See also Georges Weill, *Emancipation et Progres: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et les droits de l'homme*. (Paris: Editions du Nadir, 2000) 67-68.

in addition to touting their goals, reveals their patronizing attitude toward “oriental populations”:

Le véritable objet des écoles primaires, surtout en Orient, est moins l’instruction que l’éducation. L’éducation comprend à la fois l’éducation intellectuelle et morale.

L’éducation morale est donnée en partie par l’enseignement religieux et par la famille, mais elle doit être fortifiée et développée par les professeurs de l’Alliance. L’enseignement tout entier doit être moral, il doit tender, par des voies secrètes et une action continuelle mais invisible, à élever l’âme et l’esprit de l’enfant et à créer en lui une atmosphère morale qui le soutient et l’élève. Une des principales tâches des maîtres sera surtout de combattre les mauvaises habitudes plus ou moins répandues parmi les populations orientales, l’égoïsme, l’orgueil, l’exagération du sentiment personnel, la platitude, le respect aveugle de la force ou de la fortune, la violence de passions mesquines. Les vertus qu’il faut chercher à inspirer aux enfants sont l’amour du pays, l’amour de la vérité, la probité, la loyauté, la dignité du caractère, la noblesse des sentiments, l’amour du bien public, l’esprit de solidarité, le dévouement et l’esprit de sacrifice pour l’utilité commune, l’esprit de suite aussi et d’application, l’amour du travail.⁷⁴

The function of the girls’ schools was to form the mothers of families and “*diriger la première éducation*” and “*inculquer des principes de morale durables*”. In the Instructions for the *Directrice*, of the Schools for Girls, it states that “*l’éducation morale et les travaux manuels doivent occuper une place preponderant.*”⁷⁵ In addition, the Alliance called on its *institutrices* to develop the following qualities for its young girls:

La douceur, la simplicité dans la mise, le désir de briller autrement que par un étalage ridicule de bijoux et de falbalas, le sentiment de l’égalité des riches et des pauvres, etc..⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Narcisse Leven, *Ibid.* Georges Weill, *Emancipation et Progrès: L’Alliance Israélite Universelle et les droits de l’homme*. (Paris: Editions du Nadir, 2000), 68. For an English translation see Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 72.

⁷⁵ Leven, *Ibid.*, v, II, 29 and Weill, *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁷⁶ Leven, *Ibid.*

The AIU attitude toward female education is best demonstrated by a statement published in 1885, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the AIU's founding.

En Orient, plus que partout ailleurs, le relèvement de la femme par l'instruction et le développement de son autorité dans la famille sont appelés à exercer la plus heureuse influence sur l'éducation des enfants. La future mère de famille, élevée dans les écoles de l'Alliance, apprend tenir le ménage plus régulièrement, à exécuter les travaux d'aiguille si nécessaires pour la bonne tenue de la maison; elle contracte des habitudes d'ordre et de propreté qui rendront son intérieur plus agréable et lui permettront, par le rôle nouveau qu'elle remplira dans la famille, de prendre sa part légitime dans la direction intellectuelle et morale des enfants. Par l'éducation qu'elle aura recue, elle sera préparée à apprécier les effets de l'instruction, à juger des progrès des enfants, à les pousser dans la voie de la civilisation. Elle sera, pour l'Alliance, le plus actif et le plus précieux des auxiliaires.⁷⁷

By 1930, the discourse on the educator-mother was echoed in the work of the male Tunisian social reformer, Tahar Haddad (1899-1935).

La femme est la mère de l'homme; elle le porte dans son sein et l'élève sur ses genoux. Il reste marqué par sa personne toute sa vie, car c'est elle qui le nourrit de son sang et de son âme.⁷⁸

Haddad recognized the importance of Muslim female education and emancipation, particularly in the role of women as spouses and as educators of their children⁷⁹.

Educated Muslim Tunisian women would eventually safeguard the “national patrimony”.

⁷⁷ A.I.U., *Vingt-Cinquième Anniversaire de la Fondation de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle célèbre le 1er Mars 1885* (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1885), 80-81. For an earlier version, see *BAIU*, 2nd Series, No. 7, 2nd Semester, 1883 (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1883), 29-30.

⁷⁸ Tahar Haddad, *Imra'atuna fi al-shari'ah wa-al-mujtama'*, [Notre femme: La Législation islamique et la société] (Tunis: Maison Tunisienne de l'Édition, 1978), 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, “Partie Sociale, L'Éducation des Jeunes Filles: Futures Épouses et Mères”, 149 – 157.

*Ce relèvement social, cette promotion ne peuvent se réaliser qu'en dispensant à la femme une instruction qui la prépare à assumer ses responsabilités d'éducatrice des générations futures.....elle doit acquérir des connaissances générales sur les fondements de sa religion, l'histoire de son pays et apprendre sa langue nationale; le but est de lui redonner le goût de vivre, de la rendre plus consciente de son rôle, utile dans la sauvegarde de notre patrimoine national.*⁸⁰

The similarities of this discourse and that of the AIU seventy years earlier are readily apparent; the differences would be fully realized after the cataclysmic events of the 1940's.

The ideals of the French Revolution and the ideas of the Positivists⁸¹ were not the only sources for the founding of the Alliance. There were concrete, readily definable instances of anti-Semitism that propelled the founders into action. The first was the Damascus Blood Libel of 1840, in which the Jews were falsely accused of ritual murder of a Capuchin monk. This sparked an international incident where the French foreign minister sided with his Syrian (Christian Arab) protégés. Only the intervention of the British philanthropist of Sephardic origin, Moses Montefiore, and that of Adolphe Crémieux, the French legislator and statesman who later became President of the AIU, helped resolve the issue.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁸¹ Georges Weill, "Emancipation et humanisme, Le Discours Ideologique de l'Alliance Israelite Universelle au XIX Siecle", in *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, no. 52, 1978, 1-20, adds the influence of the French Masons and the followers of Saint Simon and the German "Science of Judaism", *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, as formative ideological components of the AIU. See also Weill's *Emancipation et progrès*, 62-78.

⁸² For a discussion of this case see A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 1-4, although there is a large literature on the subject.

The second was the Mortara Affair of 1858-1861, in the period preceding and during the early years of the unification of Italy. In Bologna, then part of the Papal States, the Catholic nurse of a Jewish boy, Edgardo Mortara, had secretly baptized him during an early childhood illness. When word of this came to the re-installed Inquisition, it led to Edgardo's kidnapping by pontifical police.⁸³ French Jewry, the first Western European community to receive emancipation through the Napoleonic Code, rallied to the defense of the boy. Appeals to the Pope to free the child were fruitless. Edgardo was raised as a Catholic and became a priest.⁸⁴ The Mortara Affair alerted French and Western European Jewry to the plight of their co-religionists in other parts of the world. Moreover, it highlighted the inadequacy of the older system of individual petitions for justice and it emphasized the need for a new, formal organization of advocacy.

The founders of the Alliance represent the first generation of Jews born after the 1791 decree of emancipation. A significant influence was the journalist Samuel Cahen, founder of the newspaper *Les Archives Israélite*, one of the two publications of French Jewry. In 1840 Samuel Cahen counseled that moral direction would deliver the Jews from their anguish and uncertainties. In 1844 he added, "*Il est...urgent que les israélites*

⁸³ David I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1998).

⁸⁴ Georges Weill, *Emancipation et progress*, 13-51 on the Mortara incident. See also A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*, 21. The works of A. Chouraqui, *Cent ans d'histoire. L'Alliance Israélite Universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine (1860-1960)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965), 19-29, N. Leven, *Cinquante Ans d'histoire*, v. I, 63-92 and Paul Silberman, "An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* from 1862 to 1940", Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1974, 31-49, should be consulted on the founding and founders of the AIU. For a recent recapitulation of these events, see Paula E. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 77-85.

*de l'Occident relèvent leurs frères d'Orient... ”.*⁸⁵ His son, Isidore, later became one of the founders of the Alliance. In 1851, Jules Carvallo, an engineer and founding member of the AIU, expressed his views in the more religiously orthodox newspaper, *L'Univers israélite*. Here he called for the emancipation of oppressed Jews through the formation of a worldwide association to work on their behalf.

In 1858, on the heels of the Mortara kidnapping incident, the pages of *Les Archives israélites* promoted the name of the new organization, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. The editor of the paper, Isidore Cahen, was influenced by the British Protestant Evangelical Alliance, known in French as the *Alliance Evangélique Universelle*. Cahen wrote:

*Il nous semble que les israélites devraient suivre l'exemple qui leur est donné, et former, eux aussi, une Alliance dans un intérêt de défense et de propagation, combiner leurs efforts internationaux pour une création du même genre.... Elle s'appuierait sur l'identité de la langue des prières et ramènerait, moins attiédi qu'on ne le croit ordinairement, celui de l'assistance mutuelle entre coreligionnaires, qui a fait notre force dans le passé et que l'émancipation ne doit point tuer, mais confirmer.*⁸⁶

The difference, of course, between the two organizations is that an organization such as the Evangelical Alliance sought conversions from outside its religious community⁸⁷ while the AIU sought mutual assistance from within, between its co-religionists.

⁸⁵ A. Chouraqui, *Cent ans d'histoire...*, 22.

⁸⁶ *Les Archives Israélites*, as quoted in *Ibid.*, 26. For the date of the article as December 1858, see Silberman, 37-38.

⁸⁷ American Protestant missionary groups operating in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are of related interest. They sought Muslim and Jewish converts but since the missionaries were largely unsuccessful in their conversion attempts, they turned to the “Oriental churches” (Copts or Nestorians, but not Greeks or Armenians) for new (Episcopalian or Presbyterian) “converts”. Discussion, Workshop on *American Missionaries in the Middle East*, sponsored by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, CUNY Graduate Center, October 1, 2004.

The AIU was formally established in 1860. Joining Isidore Cahen and Jules Carvallo, its founders included Narcisse Levin, a lawyer; Charles Netter, a businessman; Elie-Aristide Astruc, assistant to the Chief Rabbi of France; and Eugène Manuel, a future Inspector-General of the Ministry of Education. Adolphe Crémieux became a driving force of the organization, although his name was not present on the list of founding members. It was he who guided the institution for seventeen years as its President, until his death in 1880.⁸⁸

Was the Alliance a “missionary” organization? The term “missionary” is used in quotation marks here since Jews do not seek converts, and it is something of a misnomer to apply it to the AIU. The author of a book on “the Jewish missionaries of France” recognizes this, but proceeds to defend the title.⁸⁹ She says that first of all, the envoys of the AIU spoke of their own civilizing mission (*mission civilisatrice*); they emanated from a central nucleus, Paris; and they were missionaries of France (*missionnaires de la France*), of the values of the French Revolution and of humanism. In her work on the AIU and French policy in North Africa, another author discusses a more pointed question: “the Alliance Israélite Universelle: French agents or Jewish missionaries?”⁹⁰ Joan Roland Gardner concludes that when “close co-operation with French agents to serve mutual interests, coupled with the insistence on the fulfillment of Jewish demands

⁸⁸ A.Chouraqui, *Cent ans...*, 19-29; A. Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews...*19-22; J. Gardner Roland, 15, and P. Silberman, 31-49, among others.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Antébi, *Les Missionnaires Juifs de la France, 1860-1939*. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1999),11-12. This work should be used with caution, as its documentation is inadequate.

⁹⁰ J.Gardner Roland, 336-348.

when interests clashed on major issues, ... the operation of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in North Africa parallels that of a Christian missionary organization in an imperial setting”.⁹¹ It should be noted, however, that the AIU had to be invited into the host country by the local community. So although the educators of the Alliance may have had the goals of cultural “missionaries”, it was only under certain circumstances that the AIU resembled a missionary organization.

Commercial contacts flourished in the port cities of the Mediterranean and inland urban centers, beginning in the eleventh century. Examples of such interaction can be found in the works of S.D. Goitein, notably his six-volume study of *A Mediterranean Society*.⁹² Portolan charts of the sixteenth century, based on Ptolemy’s *Geography*, illustrate the multiple crossings of European sailors to the ports of the Mediterranean.⁹³ Tunisian sailors, on their part, maintained a lucrative trade in merchandise between, for instance, Leghorn (*Livorno*, Italy), Tunis, and Marseille.⁹⁴ In the seventeenth century, this triangular trade primarily consisted in capturing Christian slaves from unsuspecting

⁹¹ J. Roland Gardner, 346.

⁹² In particular, see chapter III, “The World of *Commerce* and Finance” in vol. 1, “Economic Foundations”, *supra*, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1967, first paperback printing , 1999) 148-272, covering the years 1069 – 1250.

⁹³ Eugene F. Rice and Anthony Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1599* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994) second ed., 28.

⁹⁴ See F. Braudel, *Navires et marchandises a l’entrée du Port de Livorne (1547 - 1611)* (Paris: Librarie Armand Colin, 1951) 62, for types of merchandise shipped from Tunis to Europe. A discussion of this Mediterranean trade can be found in Minna Rozen, “The Leghorn Merchants in Tunis and Their Trade with Marseilles at the End of the 17th Century”, in J.L. Miegge, *Les relations intercommunautaires juives en mediterranee occidentale, XIIIe-XXe siecles*, (Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984) 51-59.

vessels for ransom money. The release of the captives, held in the prisons of the Christian quarter of Tunis, was effectuated through Jewish financial intermediaries in these three Mediterranean ports. In Tunis, Jewish merchants also aided the development of maritime commerce by granting credit to ship owners and participating in a vital export-import trade with Europe.⁹⁵ Their role as commercial intermediaries of the Mediterranean was well established by the end of the seventeenth century.

The city of Leghorn lies almost directly north of Tunis, across the Mediterranean. It figures as a place of sanctuary for the descendants of the Jewish exiles of the Inquisition, and for the *Marranos*, the newly converted Christians, from the Iberian Peninsula.⁹⁶ In 1593, Ferdinand de Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, granted freedom and security to all who wished to settle in Leghorn, regardless of religion, and included a special invitation to the Portuguese Marranos. The charter he promulgated attracted Jewish merchant families, mainly of Spanish and Portuguese descent.⁹⁷ This community grew rapidly so that by the middle of the seventeenth century it is estimated that there

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ The Jewish Expulsion from Catholic Spain occurred in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. The Jews from Spain (Hebr. *Sepharad*) and by extension, the Jews from the entire Iberian Peninsula, are termed *Sephardim* (Hebr. pl.). The final Muslim Expulsion from Spain was in 1609 and these exiles are termed *Moriscos*. Both Jews and Muslims found asylum in Tunisia, among other sites, as a result of the Expulsions.

⁹⁷ A. Milano, "La Costituzione 'Livornina' del 1593" as quoted by Rozen, "Leghorn Merchants...", p.51. See also J.P. Filippini who states that the charter was still in effect in the eighteenth century, "Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord et la communauté de Livourne au XVIII siècle", as found in J.L. Miegge, *Les relations intercommunautaires*, 60. J. Brunshwig, in his article on "Tunis", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, first edition, 633, also mentions that the Grand Duke gave permission to the Jews to live and work in Leghorn. See also Braudel, *Navires*, 26-28.

were 3500-5000 such residents in Leghorn.⁹⁸ The merchants traded with their counterparts in other Mediterranean ports, often settling in those cities. But they still maintained their ties to Leghorn, their town of origin.

When the Jews of Leghorn settled in Tunis they were referred to as the “Portuguese” or the “Grana”⁹⁹, presumably the Judeo-Arabic of *Gorni*, claimed to be derived from *al-Gorna* (possibly a corruption of *al-Kurn* or *al-Qurn*,) or the people of *Livorno*. In Hebrew they were called the *Gornim*, plural of *Gorna*. The most likely source for the ubiquitous derivation of the term *grana*, probably stems from the handwritten French manuscript of J. Vehel,¹⁰⁰ which has been consulted by historians of Tunisian Jewry. However, the Classical Arabic geographical dictionary, *al-Munjid*, cites *Livorno* as nothing more complicated than *līfōrnō*.¹⁰¹ The term Grana, referring to the Jews from Leghorn or other Christian lands, is most likely derived not from Arabic or Judeo-Arabic, but from Italian. The indigenous Jewish population, which had been there since antiquity,

⁹⁸ S.A. Toaf, “The History of the Community and Synagogue in Leghorn”, (Hebrew), *Eretz Israel* 3 (1954), 249-250, as quoted in Rozen, , n.2, p. 57.

⁹⁹ Itzhaq Avrahami,(ed.), *Le Memorial de la communaute Israélite Portugaise de Tunis: Les Granas, 1710-1944*, (Ha-Pinças ha-qehilla ha-yehudit ha-portugezit bi-tunis, 1710-1944, in Hebr.) (Lod: Institut de recherches , 1997) 5. On the derivation of “Grana” as Judeo-Arabic see H.Z. Hirschberg, *History of the Jews in North Africa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981) second ed., 83, although he does not cite the Classical Arabic form for “Leghorn”. See also Ibid., p. 115 for equating “Grana” with “Qrana”. Yona Sabar states in his *Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dictionary* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002) that the “k/q” can also be pronounced as “g” in Judeo-Arabic. But Braudel, *Navires*, 27, notes that in the sources, a Jew of Leghorn would be referred to as *l’hebreo de’berrettini tinti in grana*, which he translates as *Juif des berets teints en pourpre*. One of the definitions of the Italian word *grana*, is the English “garnet”. The term *grana* may therefore be derived from the purple, possibly garnet, color of the Grana’s headgear when they lived in Leghorn.

¹⁰⁰ “...la Communauté du rite portugais ou livournais (en judéo-arabe ‘grana’, pluriel de ‘gueurni’, de Leghorn (Livourne)....” J.Vehel, *Grana et Touannsa-ou: les deux communautés juives de Tunis*, AIU, MS. 544, 1921.

¹⁰¹ *Al-Munjid*, (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Sharqīyah, new ed., 1966), 468.

was termed the *Tuansa*, (Cl Ar. *tawānisa*), the Tunisians. This division between the Grana and the Tuansa continued until the mid-twentieth century. In 1870 the Alliance attempted to reconcile the two groups, but their unity was short-lived.¹⁰² The distinctive nature of the two sub-communities will be discussed in the following section on the Jews under Islam.

The literature on the Jews under Islam and on Muslim-Jewish relations from the advent of Islam until the modern era is extensive.¹⁰³ The Jews, as People of the Book, *ahl al-kitāb*, were accorded protection on condition that they recognize the domination of Islam. The *dhimma*, the indefinitely renewed contract between the Muslim rulers and the non-Muslim subjects of other revealed religions, was expressed through various regulations.¹⁰⁴ At the time of the Arab conquests at the end of the seventh century, certain measures were taken, considered temporary, to protect an occupying army from sabotage or infiltration. The People of the Book were prohibited from wearing Arab dress, for instance, to distinguish them from the Arab Muslim conquerors.¹⁰⁵ The earliest stipulations concerning the people of the *dhimma* (*ahl al-dhimma*, also known as *dhimmis*) are attributed the Rightly Guided Caliph Umar b. al-Khattab (634-644).

Discriminatory measures of a more lasting nature are ascribed to the Umayyad Caliph

¹⁰² Jean-Claude Kuperminc, "Les sources de l'histoire...",87.

¹⁰³ See, for instance, the works of T.W. Arnold, Mark Cohen, Bernard Lewis, E. Fagan, Antoine Fattal, S.D. Goiten, Norman Stillman, and A.S. Tritton.

¹⁰⁴ Claude Cahen, "Dhimma", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second ed., vol. 2, 227-231.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 227.

Umar b. Abd al-Aziz (717-720). These measures would include payment of the *jizya*, or poll tax, which came to be associated with the fiscal role of the *dhimmi*s in the state.

Other regulations, first applied to the Christians in Syria, stated that:

We shall not build in our cities or in their vicinity any new monasteries, churches.... We shall not restore any of those that have fallen into ruin.... We shall not hold public religious ceremonies. We shall not build our homes higher than theirs.¹⁰⁶

Other measures were used similarly to subjugate the non-Muslim populace. In the ninth century the caliph, al-Mutawwakil, also included distinctive clothing for women in his regulations. In 850 he stated that when *dhimma* women went out they should wear honey colored headscarves. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jews of Tunisia wore dress in the Turkish style but were required to wear articles of clothing distinguishing them as *dhimmi*s. By the nineteenth century, differences in style of dress between the Tuansa and the Grana were evident. The “indigenous Jews” dressed in “Turkish style” and wore a skullcap and black turban. The Grana wore European clothes topped by a wig and a round hat, as was the fashion in Europe.¹⁰⁷ In 1823, the Bey of Tunisia, Mahmud (1814-1824), ordered Jewish men to wear a black “fez” to distinguish them from the Muslims who wore red.¹⁰⁸ But these sumptuary laws were not applied

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the “Pact of Umar” see Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1979) 20, and for a translation of the text see pp. 157-158. See also Bernard Lewis, ed. and translator, *Islam: From the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) vol. 2, 217-219.

¹⁰⁷ See M. Poiron, “*Memoires Concernant l’État du Royaume de Tunis*. Ed. J. Serres, Paris, 1925, as quoted in P. Sebag, *Tunis, Histoire d’une Ville*, 217.

¹⁰⁸ Abitbol and Sitbon, *Regards sur les Juifs de Tunisie*, p.15 and p. 285. See also P. Sebag, .90.

uniformly throughout the Islamic world, nor were they strictly enforced. Otherwise there would not be evidence of new legislation reiterating the old strictures.

In Tunis, the Grana and the Tuansa were singularly noted for their discord. By a convention (Hebr., *taqana*) drawn up in 1710, the two communities officially separated. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Grana maintained a separate marketplace (*suq al-Grana*, or *suq al-Qrana*), synagogue, chief Rabbi, Rabbinical tribunal, butcher shop¹⁰⁹, schools and cemetery from the Tuansa.¹¹⁰ However, this doubling of communal institutions did not obtain in other Jewish communities of Tunisia.

In addition to the Grana's acceptance of European fashion, they were accorded political and economic privileges, usually reserved for Europeans or foreigners. These privileges were based on the Treaty of Capitulations of 1535, first drawn up between the Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), and the French King, Francis I (1515-1547).¹¹¹ When Tunisia came under Ottoman suzerainty in 1574, protection by the French consul was extended to foreign nationals, including the Grana.¹¹² The *protégé* status of foreign merchants afforded many privileges, including the reduction of customs duties in Tunisia, from ten percent to three percent.¹¹³ As *protégés* of European powers these "protected" non-Muslims were granted the legal status of Europeans, no longer

¹⁰⁹ The butcher shops imposed a salt tax that subsequently contributed to the funding of the Alliance schools. Thereafter the Grana shops supported the majority of the Tuansa's education.

¹¹⁰ P. Sabag, *Op. Cit*, p.219. Also Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie*, 80-84.

¹¹¹ J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record 1535-1956* (Gerard's Cross, England: Archive Editions, 1987), 1-5.

¹¹² J. Braunschvig, "Tunis", *Encyclopedia of Islam* 1st. ed.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

subject to the discriminatory measures of *ahl al-dhimma* or the laws of the Ottoman realm.¹¹⁴ By the mid-nineteenth century the Jews who originated in Tuscany or other parts of Italy, and settled in Tunisia during the course of the century, were allowed to retain Italian nationality and thus receive European protection.¹¹⁵ They were termed the “new” *Livournais*.¹¹⁶ In their relations with the government of Tunisia they were considered European. When the first official censuses were taken early in the next century, the Jews with *protégé* status were enumerated as foreign nationals, not as Tunisian Jews. This categorization was also maintained for the statistics compiled on school enrollment by the inspector general of the French Protectorate.

Benefits of foreign protection were not the only ones afforded to the Jews of Islam. Reform within the Ottoman Empire also provided a measure of improvement in their legal status. The first decree to alter the status of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire was the Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhane, Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber, of 1839. However, not until 1856 was the decree reiterated and re-enforced by the Hatt-i Humayan. The Hatt-i Humayan offered complete religious freedom to the traditional non-

¹¹⁴ H.Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, vol. II from the Ottoman Conquest to the present time. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 80-87, see also P. Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie: des origines à nos jours*. (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1991). Jacques Taieb. “*Israélites de Tunisie Sous le règne de l’Islam.*” *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, vol. 42, Aug. 1975, 9, 10.

¹¹⁵ *EI*

¹¹⁶ The “new” *Livournais* were distinguished from the “old” *Livournais* by their surnames. The latter, tracing their origins to the Iberian Peninsula, assumed the names of Spanish or Portuguese cities, such as the Portuguese name Cardoso (Beira). The “new” *Livournais* took the names of Italian cities, such as Cesana (Bologna), Finzi (Faenza), or Montefiore (Ascoli). Sebag, *Histoire de Tunisie...*, 111. The women of these Grana families later became leaders in the voluntary associations affiliated with the AIU School for Girls in Tunis.

Muslim communities of the Empire.¹¹⁷ It directly influenced the promulgation of a similar reform act in Tunisia of the following year, known as the Fundamental Pact.¹¹⁸ However the Fundamental Pact was not effectuated without pressure from Great Britain and France.¹¹⁹

According to the terms of the Fundamental Pact, non-Muslims would be equal to Muslims in the eyes of the law. The testimony of non-Muslims would be accepted in Islamic law courts and discriminatory dress codes would be abolished. Limitations on the construction of new buildings or on the repair of old ones were removed. Although the Fundamental Pact of 1857 had to be rescinded shortly thereafter, some of its liberal provisions continued to remain in force. Theoretically, Jews were no longer subject to the discriminatory dress code. In 1858 Muhammad Bey decreed that men were not required to wear a black cap although they continued to wear navy blue turbans.¹²⁰

In the period from 1860 to 1881 Tunisia underwent a financial crisis. Following excessive spending to modernize the army and navy and through corruption and financial mismanagement, the government went into total bankruptcy in 1867.¹²¹ Unable to re-pay European loans, the Bardo first sought French and Genoese brokers in Tunis for assistance. They refused to get involved, so the government turned to Grana brokers to

¹¹⁷ Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 96-98, and J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, v.1, 149-153.

¹¹⁸ Attal and Sitbon, *Regards sur les Juifs de Tunisie*. Also, Jacques Taieb, «*Israélites de Tunisie...* »

¹¹⁹ A. Raymond, «*La France, La Grande Bretagne et le Probleme de la Reforme à Tunis (1855-1857)*», *Études Magrebines* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964) 137-164.

¹²⁰ Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie*, 119.

¹²¹ Ganiage, «*La crise des finances tunisiennes...* », 163.

provide credit. About a dozen Grana families were involved in schemes to purchase securities of the public debt. (Other members of the financial community may have engaged in speculation as well.¹²²) Conversions of the bonds and bank charges contributed to the economic advance of the commercial houses, but not to the financial health of the Tunisian government. In addition, Tuansa Jews were involved in the finances of the bey, such as the *qa'id* Nissim Samama who served as Treasurer. Thus, before the advent of the Protectorate, there was an economic ascent of certain elements of the Grana and, and to a lesser extent, the Tuansa.¹²³

The establishment of an international finance commission, composed of Tunisians, French, Italians, and Maltese, in 1869 was hoped would restore financial order. Its chairperson was the reformer Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnīsi, recently recalled from France and author of a treatise on the management of government and the reasons for the success of the European powers.¹²⁴ There was some improvement under his stewardship. But the resources of Tunisia were so limited and the debt so great that the commission failed.¹²⁵

¹²² Sebag, 115.

¹²³ Jacques Taieb, « *Les juifs livournais de 1600 à 1881* », *Histoire Communautaire, Histoire Plurielle : la communauté juive de Tunisie-Actes de colloque de Tunis organisé les 25-26-27 Février 1998 à la Faculté de la Manouba* (Tunis : Centre de Publication Universitaire, 1999), 158-159 ; Ganiage, « *La crise des finances tunisiennes...* » 163-165 ; Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2004) 27-32.

¹²⁴ Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnīsi, *Aqwam al-masalik, li-ma'rifat ahwal al-mamalik*. See *Introduction to The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of the Countries by Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnīsi*, tr. Leon Carl Brown (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

¹²⁵ Perkins, 32-36; R. Brunschvig, "Tunisia", *EI I*, ed. by H.A.R. Gibb, *et al*, 1st ed., (Leiden: E. J. Brill) 854-855.

However, bringing in an international commission led to the growing involvement of the European powers in the finances and politics of Tunisia. It was only after France received Tunisia as a protectorate in 1881, as a consequence of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, that the debt was guaranteed. At that time the debt was 143 million francs, a sum eleven times greater than the state's revenue. In 1884 Great Britain and Italy agreed to suppress the financial commission. France instituted a regularized financial system and a budget which led to greater economic stability.¹²⁶

By the 1860's, Jews were allowed to leave the *hāra*, buy property, restore old houses or buy new ones. The German traveler, H. von Maltzan notes a difference in population distribution, between his first visit to Tunis in 1852 and his second in 1868: by his second trip, Jews had begun to move into the Christian Quarter and blend in with the European population.¹²⁷ When the first Alliance School for Boys was established in 1878, it was located outside the *hāra* on Malta Srira (Cl. Ar. *malta saghira*, Little Malta) Street. It opened on 7 July 1878 with 748 students, including some Christians and Muslims.¹²⁸ In 1879 the French government placed the work of the Alliance in Tunisia under its protection.¹²⁹ That way, in times of distress, Jews could find refuge in the

¹²⁶ Brunshwig, *Ibid.* See also, Jean François Martin, *Histoire de La Tunisie Contemporaine de Ferry à Bourguiba, 1881-1956* (Paris : Editions L'Harmattan, 1993), 58.

¹²⁷ As quoted in Hirschberg, 118.

¹²⁸ Machuel, 127.

¹²⁹ Machuel, 128.

school, just as Muslims could seek sanctuary in the mosque.¹³⁰ In effect, this protection provided an extension of the Capitulations agreements so that the schools, at times, could function as independent “governments”.

When the Girls’ School of Tunis opened in 1882, it shared a building with the Boys’ School, benefiting from the Bey’s decree of 1858. In 1891, the Girls’ School moved into the former palace of a *qa’id* in the *hara* on al-Meshnaka Street. A kindergarten (*école maternelle*, school for children ages 4 – 6) was also established on al-Meshnaka in 1891. The director of the Girls’ School often doubled as the kindergarten director, although there was a separate director for the kindergarten at its outset. The kindergarten was predominantly attended by girls; parents of boys preferred to send them to traditional religious schools in early childhood. In 1910 a second school for boys opened, this time on rue de la Hafsia in the *hara*, which later became a “mixed” (or co-educational) school.¹³¹ The only other AIU School for Girls in Tunisia was in Sfax; it operated from 1905 to 1963. The documents on microfilm for Sfax cover the period from 1905 to 1938.¹³² Except for the kindergarten, the AIU schools in Tunis were still functioning by the end of the Protectorate in 1956.

What was the educational training of the *insitutrice* for the A.I.U. schools? The earliest teacher training school for men, *École Normale Israelite Orientale (ENIO)*, was

¹³⁰ Narcisse Leven, *Cinquante Ans...*, v.2, 21.

¹³¹ Paul Sebag with Robert Attal, *L’évolution d’un ghetto nord africain, la Hara de Tunis*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959).

¹³² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XII E* 46-60, Reels 28-30.

opened in Paris in 1867. A similar teacher-training program for women was organized at the Institut Bischoffsheim in 1872 and classes were also held at the boarding schools of Madame Weil-Kahn and Madame Isaac. But a formal A.I.U. teacher training school for women, with its own building, opened in Versailles only in 1922.¹³³

The curriculum for women was similar to the program that all French primary school teachers studied.¹³⁴ But in addition they studied Jewish History and Biblical exegesis. For women, the study of Hebrew was optional. At the end of their three-year program they received a *brevet elementaire* after passing the French national exam, which allowed them to teach in primary schools. In 1876 a fourth year of study was added to their curriculum, and students were then required to take the *brevet superieur*.¹³⁵ According to the Statutes of the ENIO, first decreed on 12 February 1880, and modified by decree on 13 February 1906, the program of study principally included the following subjects:

- 1.) *L'enseignement religieux;*
- 2.) *L'hebreu et d'autres langues orientales;*
- 3.) *La langue et la litterature francaises;*
- 4.) *L'histoire et la geographie universelles;*
- 5.) *Les elements des sciences mathematiques, physiques et naturelles;*
- 6.) *Les principes d'hygiene;*
- 7.) *La pedagogie;*
- 8.) *Le dessin, le chant et la gymnastique.*

¹³³ A. H. Navon, *Les 70 Ans de l'Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale (1865-1935)* (Paris, 1935) 73-75.

¹³⁴ See below pp. 17-18.

¹³⁵ P. Silberman. "An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* from 1862 to 1940." Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1973, 123-124.

Additionally, the students were required to study for their *brevet* exam to become an *instituteur* or *institutrice* in France.¹³⁶

A note from the Alliance files in Paris from 1884 indicates the course of study for women at the Biscoffsheim School for the *brevet supérieur*:

Le cours supérieur de l'Ecole Bischoffsheim comprend actuellement l'enseignement des matières suivantes:

Physique et Chimie

Histoire naturelle et botanique

Historie ancienne et géographie universelle

Littérature française. Littératures anciennes.

Dessin linéaire et dessin d'ornementation.

Langue anglaise

Solfège et musique.

Le programme est conforme à celui de l'Hôtel de Ville pour le brevet supérieur des jeunes filles. (Aspirantes du premier degré.)¹³⁷

Here the main goal is to conform to the educational standards of the metropole. The language or culture of their possible host communities is not part of the curriculum. Additionally, pedagogy does not appear as part of the instructional program.

A more detailed, seven-page published brochure exists in the AIU Archives in Paris on the “Pensionnat de Mme. L. Isaac” in Auteil, Paris, dated 1887.¹³⁸ It includes sections on *Instruction*, *Religion*, *Régime* (meals and cleanliness), *Emploi du Temps* (daily schedule),

¹³⁶ A. H. Navon, *Les 70 Ans de l'Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale (1865-1935)* (Paris, 1935) p. 107.

¹³⁷ *Archives, AIU, France VI E 6 b*, received 6 April 1884.

¹³⁸ “*Pensionnat de Mme. L. Isaac, Officier d'Académie, Successeur de Mme. J. Kahn, Maison fondée en 1824; 22, Rue Boileau (Auteil-Paris) (Près ue Bois de Boulogne)*” (Paris: Imprimerie Jules Weill, 1887). *Archives, AIU, France V E 5 a*.

Conditions d'Admission et Mode de Payement, Extrait du Règlement (Statement of Regulations, about such issues as entering and leaving the building, or receiving visitors), and *Trousseau* (list of clothing and supplies for students at the boarding school).

As for *Instruction*, the guidelines cover the following:

Dans les classes élémentaires les matières enseignées sont:

Le français, le calcul, la géométrie, l'histoire, la géographie, l'allemand ou l'anglais, l'histoire sainte, et le solfège.

Occupations selon la méthode Froebel, adoptées à l'âge des enfants.

Les classes supérieures comprennent:

La grammaire raisonnée, la littérature, l'histoire générale, la cosmographie, la mythologie, l'histoire naturelle, la physique, la chimie, la géométrie, l'arithmétique appliquée à toutes les opérations du commerce, la comptabilité, l'allemand et l'anglais, la pédagogie, la lecture expressive, les différentes sortes d'écriture, le solfège, les travaux à l'aiguille, coupe et assemblage.

...L'instruction religieuse embrasse: *la lecture hébraïque, la traduction des prières avec prononciation allemande ou portugaise, selon le rite auquel les enfants appartiennent; l'enseignement de l'histoire sainte et de la religion en général.*¹³⁹

There is no reference here to required or recommended courses.

As for payment, the brochure states the following:

Le prix de la pension est de 1,200 fr. par an.
Ce prix donne droit à la fréquentation de tous les cours.

Les arts d'agrément se paient à part aux conditions suivantes:

Piano: 300 fr. par an;
Dessin: 100 fr. par an;

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Danse: 100 fr. par an;
Gymnastique: 100 fr. par an....¹⁴⁰

Men taught almost all the academic subjects, as well as gymnastics, dance, and piano.

The courses taught by women included German, “cutting and assembling” of garments, solfège, piano and singing.¹⁴¹

Two recent articles on the women teachers of the Alliance¹⁴² note that the *institutrices* were often related, as mothers and daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters, or as sisters or cousins. But women educators also often married their male counterparts. The first administrators of the ENIO are one such example of an “AIU family”, and three of their careers began in Tunis as assistant teachers, although that was not their city of birth. For instance, from his post in Tunis to five other schools in the Ottoman Empire, A.H. Navon was eventually appointed the first director of the ENIO boys’ school in Paris, where he served from 1911 to 1932. Navon was a leading figure in the Alliance administration, authored a book on *Les 70 Ans de L’École Normale Israelite Orientale* (1865-1935)¹⁴³, and became a Knight of the Legion of Honor. His future wife, Lucie Salomon, was promoted from Tunis to the school in Balata-Constaninople as

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6,7.

¹⁴² Frances Malino, “Prophets in their own Land? Mothers and Daughters of the Alliance Israelite Universelle”, in *Nashim*, 3, 2000, 56-73 and F. Malino, “The Women Teachers of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, 1872-1940”, as found in Judith R. Baskin, ed. *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, second edition, (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1998), 248-269.

¹⁴³ Paris, 1935. Many useful thumbnail sketches of the first AIU teachers can be found here.

directrice. After her marriage in 1898, “her career followed that of her husband” in the words of M. Navon. Mme. Navon’s younger sister, nee Henriette Salomon, wife of Albert Antebi, another AIU teacher and director, began her teaching career in Tunis, became the first *directrice* of the ENIO women’s school and remained in that post until the start of World War II.¹⁴⁴ These two sisters and their husbands are representative of many professional couples throughout the AIU system. In Tunis, for the period under consideration, there was one teacher/ administrator couple: one spouse, a teacher, and the other, the *directrice*. A second professional couple consisted of a husband and wife as principals.¹⁴⁵ In France of the 1890’s, government administrative policy encouraged such marriages between teachers and promoted raising a family while remaining in the teaching profession. Moreover, teachers were “key figures of social change at the turn of the century.”¹⁴⁶

In comparison to the ENIO of the Alliance for women that had opened in 1872, secular “*écoles normales*” in France, controlled by the national government, were established in 1879 to encourage the training of professional female teachers. Prior to

¹⁴⁴ Navon, op.cit. See also <http://www.aiu.org>. Navon’s 1500 file cards on each teacher are now computerized and can be found by clicking on the AIU website, going to Archives, clicking on ARCH-AIU and clicking on *fiches du personnel enseignant*. It is necessary to know the first name or first initial of each teacher in order to access the biographical information.

¹⁴⁶ M.:Lazare Guéron was an *adjointe* (assistant teacher) at the Malta Srira Street School for Boys and Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron the *directrice* at the School for Girls. M. Albert Saguès was the *directeur* and main teacher at the School de la Hafsia, originally for boys, but then co-educational; Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès was the *directrice* at the School for Girls. The tenures of the women were: Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron (1900-1911), Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès (1911-1926).

¹⁴⁶ Leslie Page Moch, “Government Policy and Women’s Experience: The Case of Teachers in France” *Feminist Studies*, 14, no.2 (Summer, 1988), 303, <http://www.jstor.org/> (accessed October 8, 2005).

that, normal schools had been established by each department, with only eighteen training schools for *institutrices* in France in 1877, compared with a total of seventy-nine for men. Of these eighteen schools, eleven were secular and the rest were religious.¹⁴⁷ A system of free education in France for both sexes was instituted in 1881, and education became compulsory in 1882 for children up to age 13. The law of 1882, which made education compulsory, also required primary school teachers to hold the *certificat d'études primaires*.¹⁴⁸ The *certificat*, a diploma awarded after seven years of primary school study ensured standardization throughout the national school system. Prior to that, there was a two-tiered system for certification of women teachers: nuns only needed approval from their superiors with a letter of obedience and secular teachers were required to hold a diploma, the *brevet de capacite*. Many of the first AIU teachers, trained in France, held the *brevet*.

The curriculum of the French normal school underwent secularization in the 1880's, so that religion was omitted by 1883. In 1881 a class on (secular) moral instruction was merged with civics; by 1887 "morale" was combined with psychology and pedagogy, and civics joined history as a separate course. Other humanities courses included French language and literature, geography, writing, and foreign languages. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, "natural sciences and hygiene", "domestic economy" and "drawing" were categorized under the rubric of "sciences". Lessons given during

¹⁴⁷ Anne T. Quartataro, *Women Teachers and Popular Education in Nineteenth Century France: Social Values and Corporate Identity at the Normal School Institution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 106.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 111, 112

recreation consisted of sewing, housekeeping and gardening, gymnastics, singing and music.¹⁴⁹

The secular subjects offered by the ENIO closely mirrored those of the women's normal schools in France. This would stand to reason since both systems were avenues for certification in the French elementary school system. It also meant that in Tunisia, for instance, the boundaries between the AIU and the French school system were permeable: teachers, and students, could, and did, transfer from one system to the other.

Furthermore, the subjects taught in the normal schools of both systems, excluding pedagogy, understandably provided core content for the primary school curricula.

In discussing primary school education in nineteenth and early twentieth century France, a recent article notes that children were inculcated in the art of letter writing from an early age.¹⁵⁰ Model letters were used for instruction in style and content. An honest, open style was addressed to peers and siblings; a more formal approach was encouraged for letters to parents and adult family members. By adulthood, daily correspondence with loved ones, especially during wartime, was commonplace. Moreover, it was acceptable to chide the recipient for any lapses, such as insufficient length of letters or infrequent correspondence. But the letters ended on a positive note, hoping for an improved citizen of the republic. This epistolary tradition may explain the willingness of AIU *directrices* to exceed the guidelines for writing reports. In the early years of the Third Republic

¹⁴⁹ Ministère de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts, *Plan d'études et d'enseignement des écoles normales primaires* (Paris: Delalain freres, n.d.), 35, as quoted in Quartararo, *Women Teachers*, 122.

¹⁵⁰ Martha Hanna, "A Republic of Letters: The Epistolary Tradition in France during World War I", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, No. 5, Dec. 2003, 1338-1361.

official, numbered letters often exceeded twenty-five per year, interspersed with many unnumbered notes requesting supplies or reimbursements.

What educational opportunities were available to girls in Tunisia during the early years of the Protectorate? In Tunis, the authorities of the French Protectorate created “*un cours normale d’institutrices*” in 1892, molded after the teacher-training program in France.¹⁵¹ At the end of the academic year 1898-1899, a secular elementary school for girls was established as an annex to the already existing girls’ secondary school in Tunis.¹⁵² The total enrollment in 1899 for both elementary and secondary courses was 593 girls. Of that total, Louis Machuel, Director General of Instruction in Tunisia reported in 1900 that among the “foreigners” there were 58 Italians, 4 Maltese, 7 Muslims, 102 “Israelites tunisiennes” and 49 others. The remaining 373 girls were French.¹⁵³

Prior to the establishment of the Protectorate and a public school system, education for girls was available at various private institutions. The first “modern” school opened in Tunis in 1831 under the direction of a Jew from the Leghorn community, Pompeo Sulema, assisted by his sister, Esther Sulema.¹⁵⁴ In 1845 it merged with the

¹⁵¹ Louis Machuel, *L’enseignement Public en Tunisie*, (Tunis: Imprimerie Rapide, 1900), 31.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁵⁴ Another school intended for the Grana also opened in 1840, under the direction of Joseph Morpugo. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews*... 118.

school of Abbé François Bourgade.¹⁵⁵ Girls could also attend church schools.

The Nuns (*Soeurs*) of Saint Joseph of the Apparition established a school for girls in Tunis in 1843. This order also founded schools for girls, open to all “nationalities”, in the towns of La Goulette, Bizerte, Sousse, Monastir, Mahdia, Sfax, and the island of Jerba. The nuns of Notre Dame de Sion opened a school for girls in Tunis in 1882.¹⁵⁶ An English Protestant missionary school, specifically targeted at the Jewish population, and deceptively entitled “The College of the London Jews’ Society”, opened in Tunis in 1863. Prior to the establishment of the Protectorate, the language of instruction was Italian; afterwards, French replaced it.¹⁵⁷ There was also a small network of Italian schools: a *collège* for girls in Tunis, a school for girls in La Goulette and one in Sousse.¹⁵⁸ The Jews of Italy emigrating at a more recent date sent their children to these schools. Their example was followed by the *Livournais* who were more long established in Tunisia and by the more well-to-do native Tunisian Jews.¹⁵⁹

L. Carl Brown provides a discussion of education in Tunisia during the Protectorate. The educational system consisted of: (1) French education comparable to schooling in France, (2) “Franco-Arab” education in the primary grades; in the secondary schools it was termed “modern” or Sadiqi type of education, named after the ruling Bey of Tunisia, Muhammad Sadiq. He established a “modern” secondary school, the Sadiqi

¹⁵⁵ Sebag, *Historie des Juifs de Tunisie...*,127.

¹⁵⁶ Machuel, 7.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,126.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,7

¹⁵⁹ Sebag, 127.

collège,¹⁶⁰ in 1875, which was inherited by the French and remained past the Protectorate, (3) Muslim schools, termed the Zitouna type of education, derived from the religious educational establishment, the Zitouna mosque, and (4) in the primary grades, “the modern Qur’anic school”, a modernized version of the traditional *kuttab* school.¹⁶¹ The AIU schools functioned as “lay” schools within the larger education system of Tunisia.

The curriculum of the girls’ schools of the AIU school system presented an educational model to be replicated throughout the AIU network. In the *Instructions generales pour les professeurs* of 1903 the Central Committee of the AIU published a curriculum that remained in effect until the outbreak of World War II and provided the following:

The most advanced class, the 1st class, the next 2d and so on in descending order.... In addition to the four classes defined above, the school may include one or more classes for younger children. These would be called the 5th and 6th classes (even in case where there is no 4th class)....

The compulsory subjects are:

- a. Religious instruction.
- b. Biblical and post-Biblical Jewish history.
- c. Hebrew (reading, writing, translation, grammar).
- d. Oral reading in French and analysis of texts.
- e. Spoken or written exercises in French (grammar, dictation, composition, memorization exercises).
- f. Arithmetic, the metric system.

¹⁶⁰ For a monograph on this school, see Nourredine Sraïeb, *Le Collège Sadiqi de Tunis, 1875-1956. Enseignement et nationalisme* (Tunis: Alif, Les Editions de la Mediterranée, 1990).

¹⁶¹ L. Carl Brown, “Tunisia: Education, ‘Cultural Identity’ and the Future”, in William Zartman, ed., *Man, State, and Society in the Contemporary Maghrib* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 365-368. His note on the AIU is now outdated, p. 379, n.1. See also L. Carl Brown, “Tunisia”, in James S. Coleman, ed., *Education and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 144-150. No mention is made of instruction for girls.

- g. Local geography (province, country, neighboring countries), world geography, physical geography.
 - h. Local history (province, country, neighboring countries), world history.
 - i. Elementary physical and natural sciences.
 - j. Elementary applied natural sciences.
 - k. Calligraphy.
 - l. A language for practical application in the country (Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, Arabic, Spanish, English, German).
 - m. For the girls, sewing and handwork.
 - n. Linear drawing.
- Optional subjects are:
- o. Singing.
 - p. Free-form drawing.
 - q. Physical education....
 - r. In the classes for young children, the curriculum includes:
 - Religious instruction, Hebrew, Jewish history.
 - Reading exercises and text analysis, the number system, counting reading exercises and text analysis, the number system, counting exercises.
 - Calligraphy on slate tablets (which may be accompanied by drawing exercises).
 - Lessons on things (*Lecons des choses*) with the particular goal of familiarizing pupils with everyday French vocabulary.
 - A language of practical application in the country....¹⁶²

Although a model curriculum, it was often modified to conform to the local situation and, incidentally, to the paternalistic attitude of the AIU's governing Central Committee. Thus in Tunisia, the boys were taught Italian as their third foreign language, after French and Hebrew. The girls, it was felt, had enough difficulty in just mastering French. As the times changed, so did the curriculum. After 1910 in Salonika, for instance, the teaching of handiwork was supplanted by courses in typing (*dactylographie*) and stenography.¹⁶³ This underscores the transition of women from paid work in the home to employment in the public domain.

¹⁶²AIU, *Instructions*.... English trans. found in Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 29-30.

¹⁶³ Annie Benveniste, "Le role des institutrices de l'Alliance Israelite a Salonique", *Combat pour la Diaspora*, 8(1982), 19, n. 10.

As stated in the *Instructions* for the Directrice, and also in the *Instructions generales pour les professeurs*, the girls' curriculum emphasized handiwork, which could occupy from seven to eleven hours of a child's week. It included dress making (*couture*) the related skills of pattern cutting (*coupage*), sewing on a sewing machine (*coudre*), ironing (*repassage*), as well as embroidery (*broderie*) and other handicrafts. The purpose of teaching these trades was to find employment for the girls once they finished school. By keeping the girls in school, education had the added social benefit of reducing the incidence of child marriage.¹⁶⁴ However the young women often did not pursue these trades after marriage. But the Alliance championed employment of women and set up workshops (*ateliers*) to encourage growth in this field. Workshops for girls opened in Tunis in 1885, 1895 and 1901.¹⁶⁵ Apprenticeships (*apprentisages*) in town were reserved for boys.

While education of girls and training them to earn money from their handiwork may seem to be a ground breaking venture, there is documentary evidence that such activities were common practice as early as the eleventh century in countries bordering the Mediterranean.¹⁶⁶ One such document recounts that two orphan girls should receive education from one teacher in the "female arts" of embroidery and another private

¹⁶⁴ Jacques M. Bigart, Secretary of the AIU, made this point at a conference on 6 February 1900. See his printed booklet, *L'Alliance Israelite: son action educatrice* (Paris, 1900), 25-26.

¹⁶⁵ For the dates, see Georges Weill, *Emancipation et Progres: L'Alliance Israelite Universelle et les droits de l'homme*. (Paris: Editions du Nadir, 2000), 194, 207.

¹⁶⁶ S.D. Goitein. *Mediterranean Society*. Vol 2. The Community, Chapter 6, Education and the Professional Class: Education of Girls, Women Teachers, 183-185.

teacher who would come to the house to train them in prayer¹⁶⁷ so they would understand the synagogue service and not grow up ignorant. The difference of course, between schooling at home in medieval Egypt, and the training that girls received in the Alliance schools, was the nature of instruction, the secular goals of the Alliance's *appel*, and the far-flung network of an organized school system.

In addition to private teachers who came to the house, education for girls in North Africa was also held in the homes of women teachers specializing in handicrafts. At such a school, termed a *dār al-mu'allima*, a student received training in artisanal work and the domestic arts. Moreover, by the nineteenth century these schools existed in every quarter of Tunis and were attended by Muslim or Jewish girls.¹⁶⁸ According to Tahar Haddad, upon the establishment of the Protectorate, the traditional schools for handicrafts began to offer instruction in French language, the rudiments of the history of France and of math, and later on, an elementary knowledge of geography. As for the teaching of Arabic, it was limited to memorizing verses from the Qur'an and to the basic elements of reading and writing. However, the teachers were uncertified.¹⁶⁹ In the 1940's legislation was passed, by beylical decree, to restrict instruction in these schools exclusively to artisanal work. According to one author, this was an effort to curtail the extension of these

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 183-184.

¹⁶⁸ Souad Bakalti, "L'enseignement féminin dans le primaire au temps de la Tunisie coloniale", *Revue de L'Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes* 53,166 (1990): 249-73; *eodem*, *La femme tunisienne au temps de la colonisation, 1881-1956*; Julia Clancy-Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge...", 102-106.

¹⁶⁹ Tahar Haddad, *Notre femme...*, 219.

schools, and even though they were private, to bring them under the control of the *Direction de l'Instruction Publique*.¹⁷⁰

Secular AIU education closely follows elementary education in France at the end of the nineteenth century. The law of March 28, 1882 provides this course of study for French school children:

Article 1. Primary instruction comprises:
Moral and civic instruction;
Reading and writing;
The language and the elements of French literature;
Geography, particularly that of France;
History, particularly that of France, down to our time;
Some common notions of law and political economy;
The elements of natural science, physics and mathematics; their application to agriculture, to hygiene, to industrial arts, manual work and the use of tools of the principal crafts;
The elements of drawing, of modeling, and of music;
Gymnastics;
For boys, military exercises;
For girls, needlework.

By the decree of January 18, 1887 elementary education was modified to include the following:

Article 27. Primary elementary instruction comprises:
Moral and civic instruction;
Reading and writing;
The French language;
Arithmetic and the metric system;
History and geography, especially of France;
Object lessons and elementary scientific notions,

¹⁷⁰ Habib Kazdaghli, "L'Éducation de la Femme dans la Tunisie Colonisée: Représentations et Moyens Mis en Oeuvre", in Dalenda Larguèche, *Histoire de Femmes au Maghreb, Culture matérielle et vie quotidienne* (Paris: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 2000), 325-326.

The elements of drawing, singing, and manual work, principally with reference to applications to agriculture (and to needlework in the girls' schools);
Gymnastics and military exercises.¹⁷¹

While this basic curriculum was incorporated in the guidelines of the AIU, it was clearly expanded to include foreign languages, Jewish Studies and a variety of trades. Moreover, before the promulgation of these French laws or the AIU directives, the AIU principals on the local scene exercised a certain amount of choice in course content, to more closely suit the background and interests of their students, or, of themselves. But any deviation from the *programme* first had to be approved by the Central Committee. This of course entailed more correspondence and a greater lapse of time from the initiation of local policy to its implementation.

What were the sources of funding for this educational enterprise? The headquarters of the AIU in Paris and the local community provided funding for the schools. After 1891, the government of the Protectorate provided increasing subsidies.¹⁷² Sources for the budget drawn up in Paris are the semester Bulletins of the AIU. This budget was intended for disbursement to the far-flung school system. On the local scene, the best source on budgeting is the correspondence of the *directeurs*. In Tunisia, the male director of the School for Boys functioned as inspector-general, or superintendent, of the

¹⁷¹ P.-H. Gay and O. Mortreux, eds., *French Elementary Schools: Official Courses of Study*, trans. with an introduction by I.L. Kandel (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, 1926), 31.

¹⁷² “*Subventions de l’Etat- M. Machuel m’a remis le 1er de ce mois un mandate de 1200fr. à titre de ‘subvention du gouvernement aux écoles de l’Alliance israélite, pour l’année 1891’. Ce mandate m’a été payé à la recette générale du gouvernement tunisien. Il a été convenu entre M. Machuel et moi que la subvention de 1892 nous sera versée par mensualités de 500fr. qui nous seront payés à la fin de chaque mois.*” *AAIU, Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 64, David Cazès, 4 December 1891. The subsidies from the State thus started at 6000F per year.

AIU schools for the region, including Tripolitania (Libya). It was also his role to establish and oversee the functioning of new schools. In this multi-faceted capacity, his correspondence provides the most detailed information on the budgets for the AIU schools of Tunis. The *directrices* presented budget requests to the Central Committee in Paris, but these were usually annual submissions for salary increases or trimester requests for re-imbursements of small outlays of money. At the beginning of the calendar year, the principals also sent in an accounting of income and expenses (*recettes et dépenses*) for the previous school year.

The year 1884, for instance, can be used as a yardstick of the financial process for funds in Paris. The financial statements, reported in francs, are published in two separate volumes of the Bulletin.¹⁷³ As an example the *Comptes-Rendus Financiers* for the spring semester 1884 are divided into three sections: *I. Comité Central: A. Recettes et Dépenses*, 1 January –30 June 1884, with an income of 231,923.40 F derived from: annual contributions from European communities, donations to the general work of the Alliance, various revenues, various subsidies, the subvention of Baron de Hirsch for apprenticeships for boys and girls totaling 21,892 F, and contributions in perpetuity; expenses for the six month period amounted to 204,925 F, including primary schools and apprenticeships for the sum of 99,266.05F; additional expenses for schools during the second semester of 1884 and other costs brought the total up to 231,923F; *B. Bilan* (Balance-sheet) *au 30 juin 1884* includes *actif* (credit): cash and other assets of

¹⁷³ BAIU, *Deuxième Série, No. 8, 1er Semestre 1884*, 64-67. BAIU, *Deuxième Série, No.9, 2e Semestre 1884-1er Semestre 1885*, 81-85.

841,195.55, and *passif* (debt): for instance, *Fondation Crémieux*, 68,660.50, balancing out to 841,195.55; *II. Fondation de M. de Hirsch*, grants “1 million francs for the education of Jewish youth in Turkey”; and *III. Etat des Titres (Securities) en Portefeuille* includes “2 obligations de la dette générale tunisienne...930F, 2 obligations de la dette unifiée d’Egypte...11, 550F. The BAIU for the first semester of 1884 reports that the annual expenses for the School for Boys was 68,420.00F and it received a subsidy of 9,940F from the Central Committee. The School for Girls had annual expenses of 7,264F and it received a subsidy of 4,750F from the AIU.¹⁷⁴

David Cazès, first principal of the School for Boys, provides a financial statement for 1885 in his correspondence of 1 March 1886.¹⁷⁵ However, it is in piastres and caroubes, not francs and centimes.¹⁷⁶ Here he states the following sources of income:

<i>Recettes ordinaires</i>	
<i>Caroube sur la viande</i>	12,800.00 [Piastres]
<i>Revenues des immeubles</i>	19,422.31
<i>Subventions</i>	30,678.75
<i>Ecolage</i>	8,781.90
<i>Offres dans les temples</i>	5,046.48
<i>Fête du “Siyoum”</i>	1,333.24
<i>Revenues des temples</i>	1,209.56
<i>Quête hebdomadaire</i>	1,233.99
<i>Repas payés</i>	894.50
<i>Dons divers en argent</i>	2,871.12
<i>Profits et pertes</i>	30.00

¹⁷⁴ BAIU, *Deuxième Série*, No. 8, 42,43.

¹⁷⁵ AAIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 63, David Cazès, 1 March 1886

¹⁷⁶ The *Journal Officiel Tunisien* of 29 November 1883, states that the price of a one-line announcement is 12 caroubes (50 centimes) and an advertisement is 1.10 piastres (1 franc) per line. The price per issue of the newspaper in Tunis is 3 caroubes (10 centimes). According to the correspondence of David Cazès, the monetary system was not changed from piastres to francs until the end of 1892. *AAIU, Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, 21 November 1892.

<i>Revenues divers</i>		<u>374.06</u>
	P.	85,249.01
<i>Pain de samedi, ...</i>		17,310.38
<i>Dons en nature</i>		<u>3,866.12</u>
	P.	106,425.51
<i>Ecole des filles, subvention</i>		8,686.82
“ , <i>écolage</i>		<u>3,693.01</u>
	P.	118,768.34
<i>Recettes extraordinaires:</i>		
<i>De Paris p.[pour] bâtisse</i>		28,663.13
<i>Soirée théâtrale 1883</i>		3,520.00
<i>Empreunts contractés</i>		-----
	P.	150,951.47

This statement provides categories of income, whether in cash or in kind. The largest sources of revenue are subsidies. Thus, to gauge the financial health of the school system accurately, it is necessary to marshal a number of published and unpublished sources.

Just as the correspondence of the *directeur* serves as the best source of information on the local AIU school budgets, his letters include reports on the salaries of male and female teachers. Thus, S.T. Pariente provides the budgets for the schools of Tunis for 1892-1895.¹⁷⁷ Other *directeurs* or *directrices* may provide information on salaries of individual educators.

On 11 February 1896 the *Journal Officiel Tunisien* published a list of teacher salary scales for public elementary schools. It is divided into four categories: male and female, and sub-divided to those holding the *brevet supérieure* (first category) and those

¹⁷⁷ “*Tableau budgétaire des Ecoles de Tunis: 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895*”, Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S.T. Pariente, received in Paris 14 January 1896. (Here the salaries of both men and women are treated as one expense.).

holding the *brevet élémentaire* (second category).¹⁷⁸ For instance: *instituteurs* at the lowest rank receive an annual salary of 1500F in the first category and 1200F in the second category. The lowest level *institutrice* in both categories receives 1200F per year. At the highest rank, *instituteurs* receive 3000F in the first category and 2500F in the second. By contrast, women teachers at that level receive 2500F (first category) and 2100F (second category).¹⁷⁹ Men receive higher pay than the women, for the same job and the same qualifications. As the pay scale rises, the discrepancies between the salaries of the men and the women also increase, with the men at the highest level earning more than 500F per year than the women. The AIU schoolteacher, on the other hand, receives lower wages than those paid by the government.¹⁸⁰

Differing pay scales was a cause for concern among the teachers of the AIU schools system-wide. In 1905, the nascent teachers' union (*L'Association Amicale des Instituteurs de L'Alliance*) published a request for equality of salaries between men and women teachers and also called for the suppression of categories at each rank.¹⁸¹ But the lack of standardization in salaries continued, as is evident in the correspondence.

Other discrepancies in salaries plagued the AIU system up to World War I. Thus, AIU teachers from the metropole (*le cadre métropolitain*) received higher wages than the

¹⁷⁸ « Décrit du 4 février 1896..le rapport de notre Directeur de l'Enseignement », *Journal Officiel Tunisien*, 11 February 1896. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S.T. Pariente.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ « Etat comparatif des traitements des instituteurs de Tunisie et de ceux de l'Alliance », Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XX E*, C. Ouziel, received in Paris, 3 March 1907.

¹⁸¹ *L'Association Amicale des Instituteurs de L'Alliance*, « Bulletin Trimestriel » October 1905, 39.

local Tunisians (*le cadre local*). In 1913, C. Ouziel, director of the School for Boys, details the wages of the local teachers, many of them graduates of the AIU system. After fourteen years of service, an *insituteur* receives an annual salary of 1440F and an *institutrice* is paid 1220F. Among the local *institutrices*, Zita Chemla for instance, earns 600F after two years of teaching. However, Louise Hayat's salary is 940F after six years, while her colleague, Marie Jami, receives 1050F for the same number of years of service.¹⁸² Here, the documents from the file of the *directeur* augment the material from the *directrice*.

The correspondence of the AIU female educators opens a small window on the lives of women brought from France to teach young girls in a foreign land. The limited view of these women's professional identities gained in the correspondence needs to be expanded through the use of other sources, both primary and secondary. A social, cultural, political, economic, and educational overview aids a study of the women educators and the lives they sought to influence. For the women, the larger context often lies in the history of France and its ideals. For the girls, their context is life in the *hāra* of Tunis. Between the two, an interchange evolves which affects the teachers, the girls, and the community as well.

¹⁸² «*Application de nouveau règlement relative au traitement et à l'avancement des instituteur et des institutrices du cadre local* », Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXI E*, Reel 47, C. Ouziel, 17 February 1913.

Chapter 1

From Paris to Tunis and Back: Local Responses to European Directives

The correspondence of the *directrices* of the Alliance School for Girls of Tunis often provides responses to guidelines, directives, cultural paradigms, or ideologies emanating specifically from Paris, or more generally, from Western, and even Eastern, Europe. In this chapter the perspective will be on the North-South continuum, granting a vertical look at certain themes that emerge from the correspondence. While there are hazards to the “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches of narrative analysis,¹⁸³ effort will be made to sidestep some of their presumed pitfalls.¹⁸⁴ Although the preceding research method refers to the work of anthropologists, historians similarly engage in top-down/bottom-up inquiry. For example, one of the first historians of the post World War II era to discuss the French Revolution from the viewpoint of the peasants, or the Third Estate, was George Rudé, a specialist on “history from below”.¹⁸⁵ This chapter will investigate the views of the “authorities”, whether literary, administrative, or religious,

¹⁸³ Peter K. Manning and Betsy Cullum-Swan, “Narrative, Content, and Semiotic Analysis” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds., Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, (London: Sage Publications, 1994) 463-474.

¹⁸⁴ In reference to the bottom-up version of ethnographies, the two authors note, “Often such reports rely on personal interviews or documents, and the translations of these materials into part of a coherent argument remains fuzzy.” *Ibid.*, 465. Or, “To a striking extent narrative analysis is rather loosely formulated, almost intuitive, using terms defined by the analyst. . . . Narrative analysis typically takes the perspective of the teller, rather than that of the society. . . .” *Ibid.* Finally, the authors conclude, “Content and narrative analysis struggle continuously with the problem of context or the embeddedness of a text or a story within personal or group experience.” *Ibid.* 474. In response to these statements, context will not be overlooked.

¹⁸⁵ See Eric J. Hobsbawm, “History from Below—Some Reflections”, in *History from Below, Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé*, ed. Frederick Krantz (Montréal, Québec: Concordia University, 1985) 63-73.

and the responses on the ground, or “from below”, of the principals, or of the local Tunisian population.

The strands to be discussed include convergent or divergent views of the *directrices* to paradigms of the “authorities” on: the utility of correspondence; the educator-mother; the education of women; the “civilizing” mission; the related functions of cleanliness, order and work as well as disease and epidemics; the value of manual labor/handiwork; and the “colonialist” experience. The views of the *directeurs*, or of men in the community, will be introduced as appropriate noting similarities or differences with Paris or with the *directrices*.

The importance of letter writing was a theme inculcated in the minds of French schoolchildren from an early age. Correspondence was not only a subject in elementary school,¹⁸⁶ but also a topic for adult reference.¹⁸⁷ It was an activity to cultivate throughout life, perhaps indicative of the significance of letter writing as a society gains literacy.

The role of letter writing in the daily lives of nineteenth century French men and women and the existence of letter-writing manuals, reveal the attitudes and social

¹⁸⁶ For the curriculum, see *Manuel général de l'instruction primaire*, for the years 1880-1900, as referenced in M. Hanna, “A Republic of Letters...”, 1339, 1343-1344.

¹⁸⁷ Adults were advised to consult guidelines for correspondence, such as J. McLaughlin, *The New Universal Letter Writer in English and French – Theory, Practice, Models* (Paris: Garnier Frères; London, Hachette and Co., 1890).

conventions of the era. The genre of *correspondance* seems to assume a place within the literary canon:

The *Bibliographie de la France* [1830-1839] dispenses with ‘epistolary style’ in its ‘Belles Lettres’ section. It lumps together editions of the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné or Voltaire, love letters, *secrétaires* great, small, modern, new universal ...and a variety of commercial and administrative formularies. Everything, that is, that has anything to do with letter-writing.¹⁸⁸

Even mundane letters, such as prescribed correspondence within a school system, would thus warrant classification among works of literature.

Moreover, the “letter-writing manuals reflected back at society the precise image that society wished to project while reinforcing the kinds of rules and social order that were worthy of conservation.”¹⁸⁹ The guidebooks on correspondence mirror a hierarchical society, where “age, gender, rank and power [are] the four unavoidable parameters”.¹⁹⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century the elitist position of letter-writing, derived from the courtly traditions of the *ancien régime*, was tempered by the recognition that “to learn how to write, one first had to read”¹⁹¹ and not merely copy inscribed

¹⁸⁸ Cécile Dauphin, “Letter-Writing Manuals in the Nineteenth Century”, *Correspondence, Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. R. Chartier *et al*, trans. by C. Woodall (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997), 113. The French edition, R. Chartier, *La Correspondance, les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), is more comprehensive.

¹⁸⁹ C. Dauphin, “Letter-Writing Manuals...”, 139.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 146. (In the French version, see Chartier, p. 242.) See also Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne: Textbooks and the Socialization of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 6.

formulas. This was particularly directed to the general populace.¹⁹² Learning the alphabet was no longer sufficient to enter the realm of written culture. Correspondence encrypted the dual function of maintaining an artificial aristocratic model of writing while simultaneously encouraging reading among the peasants.

The *Grande Encyclopédie du XIXe siècle* offers the following definition of correspondence: “A letter is a conversation between people who are absent from one another.”¹⁹³ Derived from prayer, this definition has its shortcomings. It denotes correspondence as an “illusion of oral communication”, and denies social distancing¹⁹⁴ implicit in a relationship between, for example, an employer and an employee, an administrator in Paris and an educator in Tunis.

The *Nouveau Manuel Epistolaire*, or *The New Universal Letter Writer*, a dual language French-English manual of 1890, expands the definition of correspondence from that of the *Grande Encyclopédie*. A letter is not only “a written conversation”.¹⁹⁵ As the author notes, “the art of correspondence supposes a good education, talent, and extensive general knowledge, a facility of expression and above all tact.”¹⁹⁶ Tact, or the need to

¹⁹² The population of rural France in the 1870’s spoke in patois; the children learned written and spoken French in school, by rote memorization. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchman: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 336-337.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ J. McLaughlin, *The New Universal Letter Writer...*, 3.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

maintain job security or ensure future promotion, could account for issues discussed or overlooked, in the correspondence of the AIU men and women educators.

Not only were epistolary manuals widely available during “the long nineteenth century” (1789-1914) in France, but the Alliance published its own internal guidelines for teachers. The *Instructions générales pour les professeurs* of 1903 echo these handbooks:

In his correspondence with the Central Committee, an Alliance teacher must, in general, avoid the use of any terms which are not in keeping with a tone appropriate to administrative matters or which might signal a lack of respect for his superiors....

The teacher should concentrate on the style of his letters and make every effort to convey in them the polite, urbane, educated tone which must be maintained in all administrative correspondence. He must seek a handling of the French language and will arrive at a mastery of that language especially through the careful reading and rereading of a few authors who number among the great writers....¹⁹⁷

The *Instructions* of the Central Committee in Paris governed the style and content and, to a large extent, the choice of subjects¹⁹⁸ of the teachers’ correspondence. They also dictated the minimum number of required letters: a monthly letter from the principal and a bi-monthly letter from each teacher.¹⁹⁹ In reality, the *directrices* would sometimes write long letters two or three times per week, particularly if they were single or childless, with more time and less company available at home. Although the *Instructions* speak directly to the male teacher, the female teachers shared the same letter writing responsibilities as the men.

¹⁹⁷ AIU, *Instructions*, 13-14, as translated by Rodrigue, 2003, 55-56.

¹⁹⁸ “*Correspondance avec le Comité Central*”, AIU, *Instructions*, 12-15. The subjects of a director’s model annual report are discussed on pp. 58-60.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

Maintaining a correspondence was time consuming, but the women rarely complained directly of its burden. Even a year and a half after becoming a *directrice*, it may have been bothersome to follow the prescribed format:

*Quant au Rapport Annuel, je vous demande pardon, de ne pas l'avoir rédigé sous la forme prescrite. Je suis peu habituée encore à la correspondance administrative; je crains, que mes (?) lettres ne le montrent que trop.-Quoique le rapport soit en forme de lettre, j'ai tâché de classer les renseignements; mais je le réfèrais volontiers, si en l'examinant vous trouvez que le fond convient aussi peu que la forme.*²⁰⁰

In reply to her letter, Jacques Bigart, Secretary of the AIU, said that Sara Ungar, the first *directrice* of the School for Girls, did not have to rewrite her annual report because of her error. Moreover, "*Cette petite négligence n'a aucune importance...*".²⁰¹ Here Bigart is very forgiving. Sometimes the women principals would write shorter or fewer letters. At other times they might be rebuked for not sending in reports on time.

Louise Bornstein Guéron has a few pointed remarks on the unreliability and unsuitability of the epistolary genre to reveal the true character of her teachers.

*Adjointes-...Il serait utile de faire un parallèle entre les qualités éducatrices de chacune d'elles et leurs qualités épistolaires. Telle qui peut avoir l'aisance, de l'élégance même dans sa façon d'exposer son travail peut apporter beaucoup de mauvaise volonté, d'impatience et parfois un manqué absolu de tact dans la façon de s'en acquitter.*²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E.*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, 28 December 1883.
N.B.: No corrections have been made to any errors of French spelling, grammar or usage.

²⁰¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E.*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, Bigart to Ungar, n.d. (He begins his letter with his tell-tale abbreviations: *N a r v l* [*Nous avons reçu votre lettre*] du 28 déc....)

²⁰² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E.*, Reel 38, Mme. Louis Bornstein Guéron, 4 January 1906.

After discussing the letter-writing style of two *adjointes* as compared to their actual teaching performance, she concludes that the reports should not be the sole basis for judging a teacher's work.

The *directeur* of the School on Hafsia, Albert Saguès, rails against the system of obligatory correspondence. He says that the instructors sometimes write trimester reports of "hopeless banality": "*ils s'y conforment, il faut dire, sans enthousiasme et leurs lettres ... sont parfois d'une désespérante banalité...*".²⁰³ M. Saguès recognizes the "performative" value of the correspondence, but decries their routine nature. However, this is one of the few instances of forthright disclosure. Usually the men and women of the Alliance accepted the norms, and terms, of the epistolary genre.

The theme of the educator-mother, who will raise her children to be responsible citizens, is so pervasive in this period²⁰⁴ that it probably warrants its own global investigation. But here the view will be focused on the Paris-Tunis axis. The AIU often invoked the cultural paradigm of the educator-mother when discussing the necessity of women's education. One of the founders of the Alliance, Charles Netter, reported to the Central Committee that: "*C'est par la femme cependant qu'il faudrait commencer l'éducation d'un peuple; c'est elle qui donne les premières leçons à l'enfant.*"²⁰⁵ The

²⁰³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 53, Albert Saguès, 19 January 1914.

²⁰⁴ See references in Introduction and also Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) on "a generation of mothers", pp.111-113.

²⁰⁵ "*Rapport de Charles Netter sur la situation des Israélites d'Orient Présenté au Comité Central dans la Séance du 11 Janvier 1869*" as quoted by A. Chouraqui, *Cent Ans...,Annexe*, Third Part, p.455.

centrality of the educator-mother figures in the brochures of the Alliance. What follows is a representative statement from Jacques Bigart, Secretary of the Central Committee and correspondent with the teachers of the AIU school system:

*Nulle part, les écoles de filles n'étaient plus utiles dans les pays musulmans, où la femme occupe une situation absolument inférieure; pour lui donner la place et le rang qui lui conviennent dans la famille, pour faire d'elle une véritable mère, c'est-à-dire, l'éducatrice de ses enfants, il était nécessaire de la rendre l'égale du mari. Nous avons réussi au delà même de nos espérances. Nos écoles de filles valent nos écoles de garçons, je crois même qu'elles leur sont supérieures en bien des points.*²⁰⁶

The leaders of the Alliance in Paris believed in, or at least paid lip service to, prevailing attitudes about the educator-mother.

In Tunis, a speaker at the inauguration of the newly refurbished building for the School for Girls on al-Meschnaka Street, voiced similar high approval ratings for the educator-mother. The words are those of David Cazès, the first principal of the School for Boys on Malta Srira Street, as reported by the second *directrice*, Mme. Voley Chimènes, writing back to Paris:

Monsieur Cazès a ouvert la cérémonie par un discours dans lequel il a d'abord rappelé le but que se propose l'Alliance Israélite qui est d'apporter la civilisation et le progrès chez des populations qui par leur éloignement en avait été privés. Il a dit que l'Alliance avait compris que c'était surtout par la femme qu'on pouvait

²⁰⁶ Jacques Bigart, "L'Alliance Israélite: Son Action Educatrice", (AIU, Conférence faite le 6 Février 1900),24-25.

*atteindre ce but, puisque c'est la mère qui a la plus grande influence sur les enfants, et qui s'occupe plus particulièrement de leur éducation.*²⁰⁷

The event is recorded in other sources²⁰⁸, but they do not mention the educator-mother. Here Cazès upholds the value of the educator-mother and by implication, the necessity for female education. His attitudes toward the first two *directrices*, however, belie his sincerity.

By 1906, the principal of the School for Girls delivers a public address at the School. She underscores the role of mothers in organizing a household and in raising children.

*Elles savent que, de la façon qu'elles organiseront leur ménage, oneront leur maison, de la manière dont elles élèveront leurs enfants, dépendra la prospérité, le bonheur, ou la ruine de leur famille.
...Nous leur enseignerons surtout le rôle éducateur des mères et les nouvelles générations qui nous arrivent à l'école mieux élevées plus soignées dans leur ---, dans leur tenue, témoignent du progrès déjà réalisé.*²⁰⁹

The School upholds the standard that girls will, above all, be educator- mothers. Based on these official pronouncements, the educators in Tunis enunciate the prevailing discourse in Paris.

²⁰⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 24 December 1890. Although she was seated with the dignitaries, she did not make a public speech.

²⁰⁸ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 64, David Cazès, 24 December 1890; *La Dépêche Tunisienne*, 24 December 1890; Bulletin of the AIU, Second Series, No. 15, 1st and 2nd Semesters 1890, p.44.

²⁰⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 20 May 1906. See also her Annual Report of 1907-1908, AAIU, France VII F 14, Annual Reports, Tunis 1883-1926, 1 November 1908.

An advocate for Muslim female education in Tunisia also notes that girls with schooling will be the educator-mothers of the future. In 1908 a paper presented at the *Congrès de L'Afrique du Nord* in Paris on “*L'Instruction de la Femme Musulman*” raises this theme. The author, Sadok Zmerli, also calls for Muslim girls to study Arabic language and literature to be able to transmit it to their future children.²¹⁰

Discussion of the importance of educating women, particularly in the Middle East, coupled with a contemporary paraphrase of the “educator-mother”, recently appeared in the periodical *Foreign Affairs*:

Educating women, especially young girls, yields higher returns than educating men. In low-income countries, investing in primary education tends to pay off more than investing at secondary and higher educational levels.... Similarly, children benefit more from an increase in their mother's schooling than from the equivalent increase in their father's. Educating mothers does more to lower child mortality rates, promote better birth outcomes (for example, higher birth weights) and better child nutrition, and guarantee earlier and longer schooling for children.²¹¹

Today's readers of nineteenth century correspondence would not be strangers to such messages in the twenty-first century. The initial premise and the intended results of the passage quoted above, however, are couched in the economic and social research patterns

²¹⁰ « C'est donc l'étude de la langue nationale[la langue arabe] et de cette langue seule qui la lui assurera et lui permettra de la transmettre...à sa descendance. Or quelle personne mieux que la mère peut s'acquitter de cette délicate mission et inculquer à la jeunesse musulmane, avec les principes religieux, l'amour de cette littérature... ? Si donc la mère est le seul individu capable de remplir dignement cette mission, , n'est-il pas indispensable qu'elle sache avant tout cette langue arabe pour s'en acquitter avantageusement ? » Sadok Zmerli, « *L'Instruction de la Femme Muulmane : ce qu'elle doit être* », *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord, Tenu à Paris du 6 au 10 Octobre 1908, Compte Rendu des Travaux, t. 2*, (Paris : Au Siège du Comité d'Organisation du Congrès, 1909), 289.

²¹¹ Isobel Coleman, “Why Women Matter”, *Foreign Affairs*, 83, No.3,(May/June 2004):83.

of the present. Only the subject matter, educating women and educating mothers, remains the same as that at the turn of the last century.

Linked to the theme of the educator-mother, are the statements of AIU functionaries in Paris and the responses from Tunis on the education of women. The attitude of the Alliance toward women's education can be found in a brochure from 1895 published thirty-five years after the founding of the organization. Here is a passage from the English version:

In Mahometan countries, more than anywhere else, the education of women had to be attended to as carefully as that of men. In order to enable women to acquire authority, the legitimate rank which belongs to them in the family, and which is refused to them by local customs, to let them have in the intellectual and moral guidance of their children a share which they could possess on account of their social inferiority, it was necessary to make them equals of their husbands and brothers in knowledge and education. It was on this account that the *Alliance*, at the very outset, contemplated creating girls' as well as boys' schools... the Society has also added to the girls' schools work-shops, where the pupils, after leaving school, may learn some profession.²¹²

In practice, the girls neither had the equivalent education nor the opportunities of their husbands and brothers. But at least the goal was set to encourage them to become the educational and social equals of the males.²¹³ Without the Alliance and its many subsidized programs, most of the girls of the *hāra* would probably never even have been exposed to rudimentary schooling.

²¹² AIU *L'Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860-1895* (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1895) 16-17. In the French version, of the same title, this passage appears on page 17.

²¹³ On the equality of a woman with her husband after the arrival of the Alliance, see the speech of Alfred Lévy, Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory in France, *BAIU*, Third Series, No. 36 (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1911), 37.

How does the correspondence of the *directrices* reveal their attitudes toward the education of women in the lands of Islam? A few examples culled from the correspondence of the *directrices*, generally reflect the aims of the Alliance:

*Plusieurs de nos anciennes élèves sont mariées et leurs maris les traitent avec tous les soins et les égards qu'ils leur doivent, leur rendant ainsi la place qu'elles doivent occuper et qu'elles n'avaient jamais eu à Tunis. Espérons que ses exemples seront bientôt suivis par toute notre jeunesse Tunisienne.*²¹⁴

According to this glowing report, the young married women of Tunis, former Alliance students, are now treated with care and consideration by their husbands. However Mme. Chimènes does not mention that they are the “equals of their husbands and brothers”.

The fourth *directrice*, Louise Bornstein Guéron, discusses the goals of the Alliance:

...Le but de l'Alliance étant d'améliorer la situation matérielle et morale des Israélites, elle devaïet naturellement s'occuper tout d'abord de l'oeuvre l'éducatrice et professionnelle des hommes....Mais les hommes qui ont fondé et dirigé notre oeuvre étaient trop avisés pour ne pas comprendre que cette oeuvre de régénération ne serait pas couronnée de succès...si elle n'était pas complétée par des institutions parallèles destinées à préparer les nouvelles générations féminines.

C'est pourquoi dans tous les centres où l'action de l'Alliance s'exerce, l'ouverture d'une école de filles a toujours suivi de près celle d'une école de garçons.

L'Alliance peut, à bon droit, s'enorgueillir aujourd'hui des résultants obtenus, car elle a eu, dès le début, la vision bien nette de ce qu'il y avait à faire.

²¹⁴ Archives of the AIU, France VII F.14 Annual Reports, Tunis, 1883-1926, Voley Chimènes, 1 September 1889.

Il s'agissait en effet, non seulement de donner à l'homme le moyens de gagner honorablement sa vie en développant les facultés latentes qu'il possédait, mais il s'agissait surtout de transformer les moeurs des populations israélites....

L'éducation des jeunes filles était et reste l'instrument essentiel de cette partie fondamentale de notre oeuvre.²¹⁵

Here she affirms the aims of the AIU and observes that the education of girls is essential to achieve them.

In the next passage on the teaching of Hebrew to girls, Mme. Chimènes notes the positive influence of competition with their brothers to motivate the girls:

C'est la première année que l'enseignement de l'hébreu a été mis en vigueur à l'Ecole des Filles . A Tunis, il n'est pas besoin, d'après les usages tunisiens²¹⁶, que la femme prie, aussi, nos élèves sont elles heureuses de pouvoir montrer à leurs frères qu'elles aussi, elle aiment et savent prier.²¹⁷

In this report, she relates that the girls are learning the basic elements of Hebrew.

Although here they are using it for religious, not secular, purposes.

The following statement by Iris Parush, regarding the education of Jewish

²¹⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise B. Guéron, 20 May 1906.

²¹⁶ Although Mme. Chimènes states that “there is no need, according to local Tunisian custom, for women to pray”, there is no legal requirement for Jewish women to perform religious duties, such as prayer, in the public place of the synagogue. The focus of most of their religious obligations is in the home. The remark of Mme. Chimènes is more indicative of her own background than of prevailing Tunisian customs.

²¹⁷ Archives of the AIU, France VII F 14, Annual Reports 1883-1926, V. Chimènes, 18 September 1890. Hebrew language instruction at this stage consisted of, letter, and some word recognition: *Hébreu. - Les voyelles, la syllable, règles élémentaires du schéma*[the *Shma*, the most basic prayer], *et du daguesch* [the *dagesh*-grammatical sign for doubling/emphasizing a letter of the alphabet, equivalent to the *shaddah* in Arabic]; *l'accent. Le pronom, les propositions [sic], la conjonction*. Based on this level of literacy, it is most likely that prayer was memorized, rather than read.

women in nineteenth century Eastern Europe, could easily apply to the local Jewish women of North Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

The rabbinic leadership sought to assure that the canonical cultural properties would remain under the exclusive control of men. Women were therefore denied by the traditional educational system any access to the literacy skills that would allow them access to the sacred texts. In this way the traditional society also absolved itself of the need to supervise what women were reading, as it assumed they could not so much as read the prohibited texts. Yet this policy of repression or discrimination, which marginalized women socially and marginalized their religious and spiritual life, was also the policy which gave them the space to be free and set free. In this marginal space, unsupervised, women could study foreign languages...and could take maximum advantage of their marginal status. ...It was in fact the women...who eluded the supervisory system entirely and who were able to act, wittingly or unwittingly, to subvert it.²¹⁸

This powerful analysis could serve as another theme for investigating the role of women educators of the Alliance. Tellingly, Rodrigue also notes a similarity between Eastern European and Sephardi Jewish women:

... as in many instances in Eastern Europe, Sephardi and Eastern Jewish women sometimes also became vectors of the most radical forms of westernization, bringing the latter into the home and influencing the next generation.²¹⁹

The forces of the Haskalah, aided by the Alliance, brought education in European languages and Hebrew, to the homes of nineteenth century Jewish women in Europe, North Africa, or Southwest Asia. Thus, North African Jewish girls and women, marginalized by the rabbinical authorities, could gain a secular education as well as a radically different outlook for the future.

²¹⁸ Iris, Parush, *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society*, trans. by Saadya Sternberg, (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 6-7.

²¹⁹ Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims...*, 80-81.

Does the correspondence disclose anything about the attitudes of Tunisian rabbis toward AIU education for boys or girls? In the correspondence there are references to education for boys, but not specifically for girls. Since the education of girls did not come under rabbinical purview, perhaps the rabbis felt no need to discuss it. Alternatively, sources other than the AIU correspondence may identify rabbinical opinion on the subject.

It is clear, however, that the rabbis expressed concern on issues directly relating to their domain. In a letter to Adolphe Crémieux, President of the Central Committee of the AIU, the Vice-President of the Regional Committee of Tunis, Alexandre Daninos, discusses the opposition of the local rabbis to the AIU School for Boys. With the assistance of the French Resident General, they come to an agreement a year before the opening of the school. In return for allowing a clean, spacious Alliance school to open, where Hebrew, Bible and Talmud are taught, the Alliance grants the rabbis the right to supervise the religious studies curriculum.²²⁰

By 1901 the rabbis assume an attitude of neutrality toward teaching boys secular subjects. Clément Ouziel, third *directeur* of the School for Boys discusses these rabbis who neither oppose nor condemn modern education: :

*...ils ne s'opposeront pas à l'institution du cours de français et d'Hébreu moderne, mais ils ne l'encourageront pas non plus parce qu'ils ne veulent assumer aucune responsabilité ni devant Dieu ni devant les hommes; ils garderont une neutralité absolue et laisseront libres ceux de leurs élèves qui voudront faire des études profanes....*²²¹

²²⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie I C (Situation Générale intérieure des Juifs)* 1-4, Reel 5, A. Daninos, 5 December 1877.

²²¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIX E*, Reel 43, C. Ouziel, 6 November 1901.

By the turn of the century it is possible that the rabbis recognized the usefulness of a secular education, without compromising their beliefs in the value of religious instruction.

The correspondence provides indirect evidence on the attitudes of the rabbis toward the Alliance primary schools. Not only did the rabbis teach in the School for Boys, but they also sent their sons and daughters to the AIU educational institutions. In 1908 Lazare Guéron, a teacher at the School for Boys and husband of the fourth *directrice* at the School for Girls, compiled a list of occupations of the schoolchildren's parents. Out of a total of 1376 boys, the parents of fifteen boys are rabbis. Of the 967 girls enrolled, rabbis are the parents of fourteen girls.²²² These figures, however, may only indicate three or four rabbis since most families consisted of ten or eleven children.

The rabbis, however, were more hostile to the formation of a rabbinical seminary under the aegis of the Alliance than to the primary school. A seminary sponsored by the AIU could sharply curtail the authority of the rabbis in areas traditionally under their control. The principal of the School for Boys records the negative attitudes of “the old Tunisian rabbis” toward the rabbinical school.²²³ It is possible that as the Alliance encroached on the perceived boundaries of the rabbinical authorities, there was an increase in hostility of the rabbis to those institutions of the Alliance which could most

²²² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 37, Lazare Guéron, *Tableau: Professions des parents de nos élèves*, 6 February 1908. The table does not indicate if any of these children are siblings. So the actual number of rabbis sending their children to the AIU schools could be much lower than the 29 reported in these statistics.

²²³ Archives of the AIU, France VII F 14, Annual Reports, Tunis, 1883-1926, C. Ouziel, 30 September 1908; and AAIU, *Tunisie XXI E* 187g, Reel 47, C. Ouziel, 24 Nov. 1911.

threaten their livelihood and standing in the community. Since the education of girls was not under their supervision in any case, it probably did not warrant discussion.

As for the AIU men principals in Tunis, their official attitudes toward the education of women was positive. A year before the School for Girls of Tunis opened, David Cazès remarked:

We must open schools for both boys and girls...
Allow me to present a summary of what should be, in my opinion, the agenda for the work of the Alliance in this country....
4. Foundation of a good school for girls in Tunis.²²⁴

Cazès openly supported women's education, as noted previously in his public statements.

Another *directeur*, Albert Saguès, indirectly voiced his admiration for the girls' school and its *directrice*.²²⁵

²²⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXVIII.E.*, David Cazès, 10 July 1881, as quoted in Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims...*, 180-181.

²²⁵ For example, see the letter by Albert Saguès, director of the School on Hafsia in the *hāra* :

“Tunis. 12 October 1912. El-Meschnaka Street, ordinarily so quiet and isolated, with the only sign of life being the chatter of little girls in their way to school, has taken on a strange appearance today. Since five o'clock this morning, groups of women and children have been pouring in from every direction....

Good heavens! What can be happening? The crowd swells and thickens. There can be no doubt. We are besieged! The assailants' intentions cannot be mistaken: they would take our building by storm. The police must be summoned without delay. Three officers arrive, out of breath.... They station themselves in front of the school entrance. The concierge is trembling in fear....

The women of the Hara, in spite of their size, worm a sinuous path through the crowd toward the sacred gate. It is a *marabout* which all seek to touch; once they have reached it some cling to it fiercely....

Eight o'clock: The entrance gate is haltingly opened a crack. The frightened headmistress casts an imploring glance at the police officers. Surrounded by this rabble, she would be too easy a prey in the hands of these *tricoteuses*. But what can three policemen do to hold at bay a crowd with no sense of order or discipline? It is obvious they will be unable to enforce any semblance of order.

The rush toward the gaping hole is uncontrollable. The floodgates burst open and the wave of humanity, all the stronger for having been contained, pours into every corner of the school.... The ill-fated headmistress and her heroic assistant are at the mercy of the crowd. They lose their footing and are tossed about in the storm until they suddenly feel the grip of strong hands and find themselves, as if by miracle, shut into the head office...

What local economic and social circumstances prompted the community to support the foundation of such a ground-breaking venture as a school for girls in Tunis? The correspondence of the European *directrice*²²⁶ is more circumspect than that of the members of the AIU Regional Committee or of the North African *directeur*. In 1882, the President of the AIU Committee speaks of the need for the education of girls, not only to spread instruction among the poor, but above all, to ameliorate “the depraved state” of “this interesting class of society”.²²⁷ The following year the President and the Secretary of the Regional Committee sign a similar letter stating that “our school for girls” will be a remedy for the “moral plague” in the community and will “elevate the moral sentiment of our community through the education of women.”²²⁸ Thus the men on the local scene justify the creation of a girls’ school to ameliorate the wretched conditions of the poor, coating it in a loftier, altruistic goal.

A passerby, intrigued by this mad scramble, asks what is the reason for it. Someone says in reply, “Today is the day registration forms are distributed at the Alliance school for girls.” Archives of the AIU, Tunisia XXIV.E.198a, A. Saguès, as translated by Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 32-33.[The headmistress of the school is none other than Julie Cohen-Scali, who marries Albert the next year on 10 September 1913. AAIU, *Tunisie XXIV E* 198a, Reel 53, Albert Saguès, 11 September 1913 and AAIU *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, uses her married name for the first time on 19 September 1913.]

²²⁶ For instance, note the veiled language of V. Chimènes in Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, 9 July 1890, quoted on p. 18 below.

²²⁷ ...*Dans un pays comme notre, ou toute est à faire, le besoin d'une école de filles se fait événement sentir. Elle serait appelée non seulement à répandre l'instruction parmi la classe pauvre, très nombreuse à Tunis, mais encore, et surtout, à améliorer l'état deprave dans lequel se trouve actuellement cette classe intéressante de la société, que la misère plague chaque jour d'avantage dans un abîme de vices, de dégradation.* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie* 1 B 11, Reel 1, Raymond Valensi, 28 March 1882. See also *Ibid.* 22 December 1882.

²²⁸ ...*nous sommes tous persuadés que de notre école de filles sortira le remède à la plaie morale répandue parmi les femmes juives de crasse classe; nous sommes tous animées de meilleurs dispositions en faveur de cette nouvelle institution, appelée à relever le sentiment moral de notre communauté par l'éducation de la femme....* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie* 1 B 11, Reel 1. R, Valensi and G. Medina, 16 May 1883.

The director of the school for boys provides even clearer social commentary on the poorest section of the population and the need for a school for girls. In his confidential letter of 22 February 1884, David Cazès discusses the necessity to combat prostitution, due to extreme poverty.²²⁹ He then notes the reasons why it developed among the Jewish poor. Whether employed by Christians or Arabs, the sons of the family abused every servant girl; poverty, the difficulty of marrying without a dowry contributed to prostitution; but it was lucrative because there were no European prostitutes.²³⁰ He has also seen, with horror, fathers and mothers force their daughters into prostitution so the girls can earn enough money for a dowry. For a price, Cazès continues, the rabbis find some passages to rehabilitate these women. The monstrous result, declares Cazès, is to see these women with a shameful past welcomed with open arms by honorable families. The only really efficacious remedy, he concludes, is to enlarge the school for girls. While the men cherish, or at least enunciate, the ideals of the Alliance, there are solid grass-

²²⁹ *Voici, selon moi, ce qui, en grande partie, a contribué à développer la prostitution chez les juives pauvres. D'abord toute jeune servante employée chez des chrétiens ou des arabes, était subornée par des fils de famille, qui, n'ayant pas la facilité de satisfaire ailleurs un besoin naturel, profitaient de la subordination de la servante pour en abuser, en faisant briller à ses yeux des promesses oubliées aussitôt le but atteint. La pauvreté, la difficulté de se marier sans avoir un dot, ont contribué à cet état lamentable, mais qui devenait lucratif, par l'absence de l'élément des lupanars européens. Nous avons vu avec horreur des pères et des mères qui prostituaient leurs filles pour leur faire gagner une dot, avec laquelle on parvenait toujours à acheter un mari. Les rabbins, à prix d'argent, trouvaient des passages qui réhabilitaient ces femmes, au point qu'on est arrivé à ce résultat monstrueux de voir accueillir à bras ouverte, dans des familles honorable, des femmes dont le passé honteux n'est ignoré de personne....et nous attacher à améliorer à agrandir l'école des filles, seule remède vraiment efficace bien qu'éloigné.* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXVIII E*, Reel 62, David Cazès, 22 February 1884.

²³⁰ Although Cazès does not mention Muslim prostitutes, they of course existed as well. . See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation, Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) 193-198 and Abdelhamid and Dalenda Larguèche, *Marginales en terres d'Islam* (Tunis: Cérès, 1992). On prostitutes of Tunis in the nineteenth century, see Julia Clancy-Smith, "Gender in the City: Women, Migration and Contested Spaces in Tunis, 1850-1881", in *Africa's Urban Past*, David Anderson, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 195; and Mohammed Kerrou and Moncef, M'halla, "La Prostitution dans la Medina de Tunis aux XIXe et XXe Siècles" in *Etre Marginal au Maghreb*, ed. Fanny Colonna with Zakya Daoud, 201-221 (Paris: CNRES Editions, 1993).

roots reasons for opening and maintaining a school for girls. Thus the native North African men of the community emerge as staunch advocates of female education.

By 1912, the deplorable situation of the women of the *hāra* has apparently not improved, at least for those who did not attend the Alliance school. Albert Saguès, director of the boys' school on Hafsia, discusses the element of the population that attends the al-Mishnaqa school: *Poussé par la misère et la faim, cette classe vit du vice et contribue à le répandre*. He says that by admitting these girls to our schools, we are giving access to vice itself, (since the girls are so precocious). He favors the creation of a special boarding school for girls who have been rejected by the Alliance due to their “doubtful” backgrounds. Such a school would also be a haven for girls who have been “materially or morally abandoned”.²³¹ One month later he opens three classes for girls in his school on Hafsia Street, but excludes some 10 children, among others, whose parents are “known to have doubtful morality”.²³² Had there been funding for a separate institution, it would have benefited the most needy girls.

Not only did the AIU invoke the “civilizing mission” to justify the establishment of schools in the Middle East and in North Africa, as noted in its Appeal of 1 March 1865 or elsewhere.²³³ The *Alliance Française*, the cultural organization that still distributes school prizes abroad to top students in French, also contributed to this discourse. At a

²³¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E* 198a, Reel 53, Albert Saguès, 20 December 1912.

²³² *Ibid.*, 16 January 1913.

²³³ For the full text of the 1865 Appeal see A. Chouraqui, *Cent ans...*, *Annexe No. 1*, 444-447. For a discussion of this topic, see *Ibid.*, “L’Action civilisatrice de l’Alliance”, 196-197. According to Chouraqui. “L’oeuvre de civilisatrice de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle commence par un acte très humble: l’ouverture d’une école”, *Ibid.*, 197. The passages cited above by Valensi, Medina, and Cazès, on the need for educating women, can also be considered part of the civilizing mission.

ceremony marking the end of the school year, a representative of the *Alliance Française* spoke to the girls about the benefits of instruction:

*Il leur a parlé des bienfaits de l'instruction, de la reconnaissance qu'elle doivent à l'Alliance Israélite, des devoirs qui incombent à la femme de propager les idées civilisatrices, etc. ...il a fini par les exhorter à aimer la France et à la considérer comme leur seconde patrie.*²³⁴

Here he speaks of the obligations of women to propagate civilizing ideas.

The *directrices* often invoked the “civilizing mission” as a response to the cultural paradigm presented in Paris. The women educators of the AIU viewed themselves as bringing civilization to their students and referred to themselves as “civilizing missionaries”. This rhetoric is evident in the correspondence of Mme. Chimènes:

*...car ici comme partout, ce sont les femmes qui sont chargées de l'éducation des jeunes enfants et qui par cela même ont la plus grande influence et peuvent contribuer le plus au développement et à la civilisation. Et le but que nous poursuivons dans l'école est précisément de donner à nos jeunes filles une éducation qui les mette à même de remplir cette mission civilisatrice.*²³⁵

Here Chimènes voices the opinion that women educators should spread French civilization through schooling the young girls of Tunis. As a result of their education, the girls would then be able to fulfill this civilizing mission. Additionally, in her book on *Les Missionnaires Juifs de la France*, Elizabeth Antébi selects Mme. Chimènes as one such “missionary”.²³⁶ The men too, such as David Cazès in his speech of 24 December 1890

²³⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, S. Ungar, 6 June 1884.

²³⁵ Archives of the AIU, France VII F14, Annual Reports, Tunis 1883-1926, V. Chimènes, 1 September 1889.

²³⁶ See E. Antébi., *Les Missionnaires Juifs...*, in the chapter on “David Cazès (1850-1913) et les Jeunes Filles de Mme. Chimènes (1863-1894)...”, 86-91.

noted above, also discussed the need to bring civilization to the populace through education.²³⁷

However, the views of the *directrices* toward their charges, in presumed need of “civilizing”, particularly of its French variant, are neither uniform nor consistent. Each *directrice* could have a unique perspective on the school and its student body. Moreover, a *directrice* might change her views toward the “little savages” during the course of her tenure, sometimes despising them and sometimes admiring them. Yet, her views of her pupils are parallel to those of French city dwellers when confronted with people from the countryside. The peasants were lazy, filthy, ignorant, superstitious, savage- in short, “a country of savages” in need of civilizing. Civilizing would be brought to them through schools.²³⁸

As for the *directrices* in Tunis, here are the comments of Mme. Chimènes about the youngest girls. Although the girls are dressed in European clothes by 1890, they still have the “primitive habits and customs of the Tunisians”.

Dans ces classes inférieures, nos petites indigènes ne comprennent pas le français, et quoique presque toutes vêtues du costume européen, elles ont encore les habitudes et les moeurs primitives des tunisiennes, et elles s'en détachent difficilement.

The children are imbued with the erroneous ideas of their parents and their beliefs in superstition. *Il faut donc lutter, et lutter beaucoup.*²³⁹

²³⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 64, David Cazès, 24 December 1890.

²³⁸ Weber, 4-5.

²³⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 9 July 1890.

When Louise Bornstein takes over as principal in 1900, she also sees her job as a struggle against the attitudes of the school population:

*En somme, voici la situation: ...comme moyens, pour lutter contre indifférence, l'apathie des enfants, la sauvagerie, l'hostilité, parfois des parents, l'influence que la bonté, l'affection indulgente et ferme cependant dans les exigences, peuvent exercer sur les enfants.*²⁴⁰

Here the implicit need to civilize the youngsters is even more apparent than in the statement of Chimènes. Mlle. Louise Bornstein's struggle in 1900 is against "indifference, apathy of the children, savagery [and] hostility". But in her annual report of 1904-05, she can report:

*... Malgré l'élément ingrat que constituent ces enfants détournées du travail par leurs parents, vivant dans un milieu particulièrement arriéré, les résultats obtenus à l'école sont excellents. C'est une transformation totale des habitudes extérieures et de la tournure d'esprit de nos fillettes.*²⁴¹

After five years of directing the school, she can claim that there has been a total transformation in the exterior habits and the frame of mind of the little girls. Thus, the views of the *directrice* could become positive, while she is attempting to change the attitudes of her students.

The goal "to civilize" was closely linked to the idea of fulfilling "a mission". This may seem to resemble evangelicalism, but a contemporary education textbook on *The Principalship* states that successful administrators are "enthusiastic as principals and

²⁴⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 14 November 1900.

²⁴¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron, Annual Report 1904-1905, 1 January 1906.

[accept] their responsibilities as a mission rather than as a job”.²⁴² Perhaps the “zeal” or enthusiasm that the *directrices* use to describe the work habits of their students and teachers also applies to a successful principal - with a mission.

An article published in an organ of the AIU, penned by an AIU *adjoint*, discusses the teacher as a secular missionary (*un missionnaire laïque*) in the following terms:

*Pour être à la hauteur de sa tâche le professeur de l'Alliance doit être un missionnaire laïque, animé de foi ardente, passionné de bien, voulant, luttant, triomphant à force d'affection, de pureté et de dévouement.*²⁴³

This bombastic description portrays the desired qualities of an educator, at least in some circles, then and now. Moreover, the teacher training school at Auteil in Paris, “*doit être le foyer où se formeront les missionnaires de l'Alliance et non de simples professeurs.*”²⁴⁴

The personnel of the AIU were not just teachers, but “missionaries of the Alliance”, in keeping with the outlook and goals of the organization.

The themes of cleanliness, order, and work (or industriousness) are concerns that emerge from the correspondence. They may also be expressed in their antonymous forms as “filth”, “disorder”, and “laziness”. According to Timothy Mitchell on Egypt, such issues are related to the “new political practices of the colonial period...with the aim of

²⁴² Keith Goldhammer, *et al*, *Elementary School Principals and Their Schools* (Eugene, OR: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1971) 2-3, as found in *The Principalship*, Thomas J. Sergiovanni (Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon, 2001) 23.

²⁴³ L. Guéron “La Formation du Personnel de L'Alliance”, *La Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance*, (Paris: A La Librairie A. Durlacher, April-June 1902), 62. The article's author is stated as “L. Guéron (Salonique), p. 65. The author was most likely Lazare Guéron, future husband of the fourth *directrice* in Tunis, Louise Bornstein. In 1902 she was in Tunis and he was in Salonika. They did not get married until September 1905 (aiu.org accessed September 24, 2003) when he was transferred to the School for Boys in Tunis.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

making the individual body disciplined and industrious, and ... the same distinction became the subject of a large literature, concerned in particular with the Egyptian mind or 'character', whose problematic trait was the lack of the same habit of industry."²⁴⁵ It is instructive to note that the issues faced by the nineteenth century British in Egypt of the Protectorate were similar to those of the French in Tunisia under the Protectorate there.

The *Revue des Ecoles d'AIU (REAI)* presents an article on cleanliness and health, of particular concern to school principals and educators.²⁴⁶ The article states that the most elementary rules of hygiene are unknown to most of the parents. When the child is returned early from school, after showing up poorly groomed the first day, the child then teaches the mother about the schools' expectations of cleanliness, causing a "quiet revolution" in the household. The anonymous author concludes: "*Soignons donc l'extérieur de nos élèves en même temps que nous cultivons leur coeur et leur esprit: que les deux educations marchent de pair et se complètent l'une l'autre...*"²⁴⁷ The importance of cultivating the exterior and the interior of the student conforms to Mitchell's preceding observations.

The *REAI* article appeared at the turn of the twentieth century, an era when social reformers in France, Great Britain and the US first came to recognize problems of public

²⁴⁵ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 14. See also pp. 98-100.

²⁴⁶ "La Propreté à l' Ecole", *La Revue des Ecoles...*, 1902, 169-173.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

health²⁴⁸ and social welfare in their own societies. In France, for instance, public health or *hygiène sociale*, “became an organized, bourgeois movement” during the early years of the Third Republic.²⁴⁹ In the middle of the nineteenth century, US cities suffered from outbreaks of smallpox, cholera and typhus as well as tuberculosis, diphtheria, and scarlet fever. Although some effort to organize the American public health movement began at mid-century, no serious inroads were made until after the 1870’s and the discoveries of Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, linking germs to disease.²⁵⁰ Disease and epidemics, such as those reported by the *directrices*, were no doubt the international problems of the time. But the introduction of health care measures by these women, even of using soap and water, were revolutionary steps into the modern world.

The Alliance itself published directives on cleanliness, order, and work and the related public health issues of the day. For instance, cleanliness (*propreté*) and hygiene became inscribed in the General Instructions for Teachers of 1903. Almost every letter, before or after this date, mentions these issues. The Instructions state the following about cleanliness:

²⁴⁸ The term “public health” denotes “ ‘the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of individual principles of personal hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and prevention of diseases...’”, as quoted in *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, Walter I. Trattner, sixth edition, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1999), 140-141.

²⁴⁹ Elinor A. Accampo, “Gender, Social Policy, and the Third Republic: An Introduction” in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870-1914* eds. Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs and Mary Lynn Stewart, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995),16.

²⁵⁰ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State...*, 140-141. Seasonal epidemics of these diseases, and others, occurred in Tunisia as well: cholera in the summer and influenza in the winter. For the public health movement in England, see *Ibid.*, 141-142.

*Ils est expressément recommandé aux directeurs de veiller à la propreté des élèves. Les élèves qui arriveraient à l'école dans un état malpropre seront admonestés on renvoyés dans leur famille. Ils pourraient revenir, dans ce dernier cas, dès qu'ils se présenteront dans un état de propreté satisfaisant.*²⁵¹

Thus the example of the pupil, sent home by the teacher to be washed before being allowed to return to class, as described in the REA of 1902, becomes formalized as AIU policy the following year. Also, the Instructions give advice on disciplinary measures:

*L'unique moyen de se faire obéir est la patience, la douceur, l'affection pour l'élève. Un bon système de recompenses contribue également au maintien de l'ordre et discipline.*²⁵²

Thus cleanliness and hygiene, order and discipline, were daily (or constant) issues on the agenda.

The following passages from the correspondence of the *directrices* illustrate this point. Discussing the admission of new students, Ungar writes: *Il y a de nouveau beaucoup à faire pour habituer ces enfants à l'ordre – à la propreté – mais elles ne tarderont pas à suivre l'exemple de leurs camarades* -²⁵³ Seven years later, Mme. Chimènes states: *Nos enfants sont toujours très propres, bien peignées (ce qui est un grand progres)....La sortie des classes se faire toujours avec ordre....*²⁵⁴ In 1905 Mlle. Bornstein summarizes many of the preceding concerns:

²⁵¹ AIU, *Instructions* ..., p. 64. See also p. 65 and p.58.

²⁵² *Ibid* ., pp.65-55.

²⁵³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, 14 November 1883.

²⁵⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Voley Chimènes, 1 May 1890.

Je suis bien persuadée que, par les habitudes d'ordre et de propreté qu'elles acquièrent chez nous, par le gout que nous formons en elles, surtout par le sentiment que nous leur donnons de leur dignité, nous contribuons à former la ménagère active ... que par les notions d'hygiène qu'elles acquièrent et pratiquent, dans une certaine mesure, à l'école, nous les préparons à être plus tard des mères plus prévoyantes, plus conscientes aussi de leurs devoirs parce que nous leur apprenons à désirer leur propre estime et à se l'accorder difficilement.²⁵⁵

Bornstein points out that the habits of order and cleanliness, which the girls acquire in school, re-enforced by feelings of self-esteem and dignity, prepare them later to be better housewives and mothers. Such statements help to define and broaden the context of women educators working in Tunisia at the turn of the twentieth century.

One of the leitmotifs that emerges from the correspondence is an emphasis on physical work: manual labor for boys and handicrafts for girls. Looking only within the borders of France, Georges Weill states that the study of agriculture is based on the theories of the eighteenth century French Physiocrats, still popular in nineteenth century France.²⁵⁶ This would have been a motivating force for the AIU to open an agricultural school for boys in Jedaïda, Tunisia, some 20 km from Tunis, starting in 1895. In the other schools of the Alliance, boys and girls engaged in artisanal class work and apprenticeships affiliated with the school, with the hope of earning a livelihood in the commercial sector upon graduation.

²⁵⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 4 January 1905.

²⁵⁶ Georges Weill, *Emancipation et progress...*, p. 159.

Representative attitudes of the Alliance toward teaching girls dressmaking (*couture*) can be found in two published AIU documents. The first statement appears in the Bulletin of the AIU of 1867 regarding Morocco: *...le travail de la couture inconnu des femmes, à tel(?) point que les indigènes ne servent de ligne non ouvré et que les Européennes sont obligées de coudre elles-mêmes, va devenir pour ces jeunes filles un métier lucratif qui les mettra à l'abri de la misère.*²⁵⁷ The AIU underscores that (North African) women do not know how to sew European clothes or unembroidered linen and that this would be a lucrative profession for young girls.

The following extract from the General Instructions for Teachers (1903) states that:

*...rien n'est plus utile ni plus nécessaire dans un ménage que la couture et la lingerie. Certains préjugés et une indolence habituelle aux pays d'Orient et d'Afrique éloignent encore souvent les femmes des travaux de couture; c'est aux directrices à combattre ces fâcheuses habitudes; elles y parviendront en agissant en même temps sur l'esprit des parents et sur celui des enfants. Aucune élève ne pourra être dispensée de suivre les cours de couture, ni remplacer la couture par un travail de fantaisie. Les travaux d'aiguille devront être enseignés une heure par jour dans les classes de 6 heures, deux heures par jour dans les classes de 7 heures.*²⁵⁸

Not only is sewing (European) dresses and lingerie useful or necessary in a household, but the author(s) of this document add that “certain prejudices and a habitual indolence” in “Oriental and African countries” distance the women from *couture*; it is up to the *directrices* “to combat these irritating habits”. Here the prejudices of the authors are readily apparent. Moreover, recent research on the work of British evangelical missions

²⁵⁷ AIU, *Bulletin de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, 2e Semestre 1867, p. 46.

²⁵⁸ AIU, *Instructions...*, p. 47.

in South Africa, suggests that “fashioning the colonial subject” marked an external transformation equivalent to the internal transformation of conversion.²⁵⁹ Dress therefore was a symbol of change in ways of thinking and in methods of consumption. This principle could be applied to the French in North Africa as well.

How do the *directrices* follow the AIU injunctions to combat the “irritating habits” of “indolent” Tunisian women, reluctant to undertake *couture*? Primarily, it is by educating their young daughters. Mme. Chimènes, for instance, notices that new girls often arrive in school with clean, but torn clothes. She assumes that the mothers do not know how to mend (*raccomoder*) clothes. Under the influence of the school, however, the girls who have been there longer now wear clothes in better condition.²⁶⁰ It is unlikely that the women of Tunis did not know how to mend since a female artisan was available in every quarter of the city to teach sewing to young girls, Jewish and Muslim.²⁶¹ Possibly, with ten children in the family, mending was one chore that was overlooked. Here Mme. Chimènes perceives a local need, not known by headquarters in Paris. Rather than pursue it though, she continues with a report on embroidery, one of the handicrafts

²⁵⁹ John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* v. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 218-247.

²⁶⁰ « *Les femmes tunisiennes tiennent leurs enfants très propres, les vêtements en calicot blanc, en general sont toujours d'une blancheur irréprochable. Il y a cependant une lacune qui s'améliore de jour en jour, chez les anciennes élèves de l'école, mais qui existe pour les nouvelles arrivées, c'est un désordre dans les vêtements, qui, quoique propres, sont souvent déchirés. J'ai déjà eu l'honneur de le dire à Messieurs les Membres du Comité, la femme tunisienne ne sait pas raccomoder. Ce qu'il y a de singulier, c'est que les mères désirent beaucoup que leurs filles sachent broder....* » Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Voley Chimènes, 2 March 1891.

²⁶¹ Souad Bakalti, “*L'enseignement féminine...*”; *eodem*, *La femme tunisienne...*; Julia Clancy-Smith, “*Envisioning Knowledge...*”.

to appear later on the approved list of the General Instructions, and which could presumably provide economic support to the school's young graduates.

By 1900 the third *directrice*, Mme. Hortensse Gelbmann, can state: *Notre clientele se compose exclusivement de l'élément tunisien, de jeunes filles dont le mères habillée à l'Arabe, désirent quitter cette costume pour arborer le vêtement à l'Européene, et de jeunes femmes, qui, par la plupart, avaient déjà renoncé à la mode indigène.*²⁶² The girls influence the mothers to wear European clothes although it is the girls, not the mothers, who sew them. The mothers have acquired new needs and consumption patterns, but it is through their daughters that they fulfill them. While the girls have acquired new aspirations, they will have “independence of character and freedom of action” by earning a wage. Lazare Guéron made this point in an article published in the Bulletin of the AIU in 1909.²⁶³ It is only the younger generation then, that can hope to achieve the goals of the Alliance fully.

The final topic under discussion is the “colonialist” experience. Albert Memmi, for instance, the Tunisian Jewish author born in 1920 who attended the Alliance School for Boys in Tunis, defines the terms “colony”, “colonial”, “colonizer”, and “colonialist” in his book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*.²⁶⁴ Memmi adopts the pose of a European

²⁶² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 29 January 1900.

²⁶³ *Vous ne pouviez instruire nos jeunes filles sans leur donner des besoins nouveaux, et il eût été pour le moins imprudent de leur créer de nouvelles aspirations sans les mettre à même de gagner leur vie pour les satisfaire.* AIU, *Bulletin de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, Third Series, No. 34, 1909, p. 100.

²⁶⁴ *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfield (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991; 1st Am. Ed. New York: Orion Press, 1965). See pp. 4, 10-11, 45-47 of the 1991 ed.

traveler to define the term “colony”:

...our traveler will come up with the best possible definition of a colony: a place where one earns more and spends less. You go to a colony because jobs are guaranteed, wages high, careers more rapid and business more profitable. The young graduate is offered a higher position, the public servant a higher rank, the businessman substantially lower taxes, the industrialist raw materials, and labor at attractive prices.²⁶⁵

However, there are other, stricter uses of the term “colony”. Thus, France directly annexed Algeria as a colony, while Tunisia, for instance, became a French protectorate. Joan Gardner Roland states that Algeria handled its relations with France through the Ministry of Interior while Tunisia maintained its ties with the mother country through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁶⁶ A protectorate denotes a more distant political relationship to the metropole than a colony, but the term “colony” has increasingly broadened to include any political relationship of domination or subjugation.

Memmi states that: “A colonial is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonized person of equivalent economic and social status.” But then he dismisses this situation as impossible: “a colonial so defined does not exist, for all Europeans in the colonies are privileged”.²⁶⁷ He then turns to the privileges of the “colonizer”, and in so doing, defines the term. Economic privileges, such as access to jobs, or psychological benefits, such as preference and respect from the “colonized”, contribute to the portrait of the

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁶⁶ Joan G. Roland, “The Alliance...”, p. 74.

²⁶⁷ A. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*...10.

“colonizer”²⁶⁸ Finally, “a colonialist is... a colonizer who agrees to be a colonizer[;]...he seeks to legitimate colonization.”²⁶⁹

The text of the AIU General Instructions regarding couture can be employed to illustrate the relationship of the “colonizer” and the “colonized”. The Instructions speak of the “indolence” of Tunisian women. In his “mythical portrait of the colonized”, Memmi states: “Nothing could better justify the colonizer’s privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized’s destitution than his [or her] indolence.”²⁷⁰ Since the colonizer is active, and the colonized is lazy, management positions remain in the hands of the colonizer and the colonized stay in low paid jobs, justifying the social order of colonization.

What do the letters, and published materials, of women educators reveal about colonialist attitudes? Here is an example from the correspondence of Mme. Chimènes where she discusses the impressions of the French school inspectors, after visiting her school:

*Après avoir interrogé nos élèves qu’ils ont trouvées très intelligentes et très avancées pour des indigènes, ils ont visité notre école et l’ont beaucoup admirée.*²⁷¹

The *directrice* discloses the attitudes of the inspectors, who, viewing the students as a group of natives, found them “very intelligent and very advanced for the indigenous....”

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-13.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁷¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Mme. Chimènes, 6 July 1891.

Here the duality of European/ indigenous is apparent, and re-appears not only in conversations about the students, but also in discussions about the teaching staff. By the time a nascent teachers' union is established in 1905, meetings are conducted on the salaries for the "indigenous" teachers and their European counterparts. It is assumed that the native North African teachers will receive a lower salary and that women of both categories will receive salaries lower than the men. In addition, the "indigenous" teachers of both genders are excluded from participating in the union as active members.²⁷² A distinction between the Europeans and the North Africans, and the latter's implicit subordinate status, is always maintained.

Many of the themes discussed in this chapter were published in the Bulletin of the AIU, as part of a speech delivered by David Cazès in 1883. They include the importance of teaching women so they will have greater respect in the family, future mothers will improve their management of the household; the mother will know needlework; the habits of order, regularity and cleanliness which make the interior of the home more pleasant will allow her to take a legitimate part in the intellectual and moral direction of her children; she will be prepared to appreciate the benefits of instruction, to judge the progress of her children, and to place them on the track of culture and civilization.²⁷³ Often the discussion on the ground mirrored the language of the AIU in Paris, or they became the same. Sometimes, there was disagreement over the type of work required by

²⁷² *L'Association Amicale des Instituteurs de L'Alliance Israélite, Bulletin Trimestriel*, July 1905. Meeting of 21 May 1905.

²⁷³ Bulletin of the AIU, 2nd Series, No. 7, 2nd Semester 1883.29-30.

the Central Committee. Usually the attitudes of the educators in Tunis coincided with the directives from Paris.

In this chapter a North-South view, from Paris to Tunis, was employed to examine the context of Alliance women educators working in Tunisia under the French Protectorate. In the next chapter, a horizontal approach will be adopted, to investigate the role of the *directrices* as cultural intermediaries, moving from the margins to the center.

Chapter 2

From the Margins to the Center: The *Directrice* as Cultural Intermediary of Language and Literacy

The *directrice* in Tunis served as an intermediary between cultures: European and North African; *Grana* (descendants of Jews from Leghorn, [*Livorno*,] Italy) and *Tuansa* (the indigenous Tunisian Jews); the often Ashkenazic teachers and their Sephardic students; the teachers of Northern European Germanic background and those of Southern European Latin heritage; Jews and non-Jews; or the secularizing tendencies of the Enlightenment and the traditional values of North African Jewry. She also served as a link between the sexes: bridging the female environment of the girls' school and the male dominated world of education and employment. In this chapter, the *directrice* will be viewed from the horizontal axis, as a cultural intermediary, crossing from the margins to the center. Issues of marginality, gender, silencing, and social change all contribute to a portrait of the *directrice* as a cultural intermediary.

In a recent work, *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East*, the editor, Eugene Rogan states, "Marginality represents a distinct sub-unit of the enormous field of grassroots or non-elite social history."²⁷⁴ He defines "marginality" as "an individual's non-conformity to legal or social norms.... Customary practices often play just as important a role as formal law in setting the boundaries between what is

²⁷⁴ Eugene Rogan, ed., *Outside In: On the margins of the Modern Middle East* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 2.

acceptable and what is marginal.”²⁷⁵ Rogan continues: “apart from ... [the] historic notion of change across time, individuals can and do pass from states of centrality to marginality and back again.”²⁷⁶ Rogan then cites, as an example of this behavior, the protagonist in the *Cairo Trilogy* of Naguib Mahfouz. The main character, Sayyid Ahmad, secures his role as a respected merchant of the community by day and a frequenter of the underworld of singers, dancers and prostitutes of Cairo by night.²⁷⁷ The protagonist “crosses back and forth across the boundaries of marginality without any sense of double standards”.²⁷⁸ This illustrates the mutability of boundaries and the possibility for the same person to cross from elite to non-elite sectors of society within the course of a day. While the life of an Egyptian merchant does not present an immediate parallel to that of a *directrice*, in both cases their lives could be marked by passages from the fringes of society to its more accepted, and respected, economic or educational centers.

The *directrices* outside the school could be marginalized, for instance, as women and, if they were not married, as singles. In this circumstance they would be excluded from society, not accepted by their male colleagues as equals, and in at least one case, expunged from history. However within the school system they tried to maintain their autonomy and independence either from the Secretary of the AIU in Paris or from the *directeur* of the School for Boys in Tunis. Under this condition, the *directrices* would be

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ See, for instance, Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace Walk* trans .by W. M. Hutchins and O.E. Kenny, (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

²⁷⁸ Rogan, *Outside In...*, 3.

at the center, a staunch elite of professional women. As two authors have noted, “women are important intermediaries of cultural change.... Women may become empowered by their intermediary position... On the other hand as intermediaries they are sometimes marginal within their society of origin.”²⁷⁹ Within their domain women are at the center of power, yet beyond the school gates, they could be silenced, or even erased.

In feminist writing, De Vault claims, the term “silence” or “silencing” denotes “women’s exclusion from the production of culture”. Silencing refers to “censorship, suppression, marginalization, trivialization, exclusion,...and other forms of discounting.”²⁸⁰ Silencing, as a form of marginalization, can serve as an apt framework for viewing the *directrices*. However, in the context of the correspondence, the men may also have been “silenced”, out of tact, or out of fear for job security. Sometimes the men only grudgingly disclose information, in presumably submitting to the power of their employers. Silencing, in effect, may not necessarily only apply to women.

Turning to a definition of social transformation from the late nineteenth century, Paul Lapie states:

*Les Israélites de toutes classes abandonnent d’abord leur langue; puis, peu à peu, leurs coutumes: mobilier, vêtement; maison, nourriture; enfin leurs moeurs: la monogamie devient pour eux la loi, l’idéal et la réalité; leurs sentiments sociaux se développent; même leurs idées religieuses commencent à se transformer.*²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Stroebel, “ Conceptualizing the History of Women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa” in Guity Nashat and Judith E. Tucker, eds., *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), lv.

²⁸⁰ Marjorie L. DeVault, *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 176-177.

²⁸¹ Paul Lapie, *Les Civilisations Tunisiennes: (Musulmans, Israélites, Européens,) Etude de Psychologie Sociale*, (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1898), 287. As for the Arabs, Lapie says, “*Les Arabes commencent à nous*

Paul Lapie's definition of social change, indicative of his time, reflects what he sees as Jewish social mores in nineteenth century Tunisia. A twentieth century researcher says that Paul Lapie: "a teacher of philosophy at Lycée Carnot in Tunis, makes an interesting attempt to formulate sociological rules for the different mentalities of the three communities in Tunisia - Moslem, Jewish, and Christian. Traces of his influence are found in later articles and books by Tunisians."²⁸² The typology constructed by Paul Lapie reveals issues that would be of importance to an author in 1898 writing "a study of social psychology", as well as to a fin-de-siècle *directrice*. However, only some of the topics mentioned by Lapie are documented in the correspondence. Also, there are other topics that are important to the *directrices*, such as health and immunizations, which do not appear on Lapie's list. So it is by no means comprehensive, but it can serve as a springboard for further research.

Issues of social transformation in the correspondence include changes in: language skills- particularly from speaking Judeo –Arabic, to reading, writing and speaking French; clothing and food; and attitudes toward social welfare. In all of these cases, the *directrices* served as intermediaries between several cultures and sub-cultures.

imiter, mais leur assimilation et moins rapide et moins universelle que celle des Israélites" Ibid., 288. He continues by stating that, "*Les Musulmans ne veulent pas accepter purement et simplement nos usages: ils voudraient non pas s'europeaniser mais islamiser nos coutumes*" Ibid., 289.

²⁸² Leon Carl Brown, "Stages in the Process of Change, The First Stage: Early Western Impact", p.7, n. 1., See Notes on page 193, n.1, as found in *Tunisia, The Politics of Modernization*, by Charles Micaud with L. Carl Brown and Clement Henry Moore (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964)7-21. For more recent use of Lapie's work, see Claude Hagège, "*Les Juifs de Tunisie et la colonisation française*", Ph.D. thesis, *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, 1973, 246 ;see Paul Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie: Des origines à nos jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991), Chapter VII, 135-178.

The focus here will be on changes in language and literacy. Paul Lapie states that gaining new language skills was the first indicator of change. Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Paul Sebag notes that the establishment of a French protectorate in Tunisia led to a series of chain reactions, and the most important (catalyst) was knowledge of French.²⁸³ According to Lapie and Sebag, foreign language acquisition is the primary factor for initiating social transformation. The innovations of the *directrices* regarding French literacy in the curriculum, and to a lesser extent, the teaching of Hebrew, will be set within the larger context of women and their role, or perceived role, in society. From their innovations, several sub-themes become apparent, such as: methods for judging literacy in French, for adults or children; attitudes of the *directrices* toward teaching French; obstacles encountered by the *directrices*, either from male administrators in Tunis or Paris; opposition to education that female students faced from their male counterparts; and the role of the *directrice* as intermediary in training her own teaching personnel from among her top students.

Some questions emerge in terms of French literacy in the pre-World War I era. What standards were used to judge adult literacy of French native speakers in France? What benchmarks were used to measure children's French literacy in France or in its overseas territories? A work on *Reading and Writing* discusses three methods for determining adult literacy in nineteenth century France: from 1827, oral questions to army conscripts, by 1905-06 replaced by a dictation of 10 lines and four arithmetic

²⁸³ Lapie, *Les Civilisations Tunisiennes...*, p. 287. Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie...*, p. 144.

questions; from 1854, signatures on marriage contracts; and from 1866 and 1872, census returns on educational levels.²⁸⁴ While such statistical returns could indicate the difference between literates and illiterates, they do not measure up to the standardized tests administered to schoolchildren later in the century.

Free, public education was available to children in France due to the promulgation of the Ferry Laws of 1881-82, named for the Minister of Instruction and Premier, Jules Ferry. At the end of primary school studies, undertaken from ages 5-13, a pupil could be recommended to take the exam for the certificate of primary studies (*certificat d'études primaires, c.e.p.*). According to the historian, Linda L. Clark, the *c.e.p.* during the Third Republic was equivalent in value to the American high school diploma before World War II.²⁸⁵ It can be used as a yardstick for measuring children's French literacy. In 1877 girls receiving the *c.e.p.* represented 29% of the total group taking the exam; in 1882 the figure rose to 42%; and in 1902 and 1907 it reached 46%.²⁸⁶ The introduction of free education aided the schooling and literacy of girls.

A chapter on "The School's Dissemination of Feminine Images" in Linda Clark's study of French textbooks discusses the categories of the written and oral parts of the exam.²⁸⁷ The written section was three hours, including one hour of arithmetic, one hour of dictation for spelling, and one hour for an essay. The essay question could be on

²⁸⁴ François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 9, 10-14. On the education of girls in nineteenth century France, see Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne: Textbooks and the Socialization of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 1984), 5-25.

²⁸⁵ Clark, 108.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 66-68..

moral or civic instruction; history or geography; or elementary science and its practical applications. Girls received different essay questions from the boys and science could be domestic science.

The *directrice* and her teachers served as intermediaries, bringing the educational goals and standards of France to the girls of the Alliance School in Tunis. The correspondence of Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, fifth *directrice*, includes sample questions from the *c.e.p.*, particularly directed to females. The questions on the exam serve as a standard for achievement in certain fields. After approximately seven years of education, girls were not only required to have mastered the domestic arts (how to prepare alcoholic beverages, how to set a platter or a table, how to cook, how to take a bath, why take a bath- especially in houses with no running water), but also be able to write about these issues in a foreign language. The questions, however, are not strictly geared to creating a French housewife; they take into account the culinary preferences of local North Africans (for instance, how do you prepare couscous?). The following exam questions reveal the social conventions entailed in becoming an educated *ménagère*:

Questions d'enseignement ménager
L'eau .- Les boissons alcooliques.
Comment prépare-t-on ces boissons?
Quelle sont des qualités d'une bonne ménagère?
Comment prépare-t-on le couscous?
Que fait-on au lever du lit?
Comment lave-t-on une robe de toile?
Préparez un plat de poissons? ...
Préparez une table un jour de fête?
Faites votre lit, cirez vos souliers?

Préparez des confitures d'abricots?
Faites une omelette?
Comment peut-on prendre des bains? Pourquoi les prend-on? ...
Comment lave-t-on une robe en flanelle, un ligne de toile?
*Comment fait-on la "chacchouca"? ...*²⁸⁸

If a student could provide suitable answers, the results would indicate a fairly high level of literacy, and, of home economics.

The oral part of the exam consisted of various components: read and discuss a passage, recite a prepared selection, and answer short questions on history, geography, and science. Science questions could also be tailored to suit gender.²⁸⁹ For the oral section of the exam administered in Tunis, the girls were not only required to know etiquette ("How would you spend Saturday if you were received [at someone's home]?"), or be familiar with current events ("What do you know about the wounded at the Dardanelles?"), but also discuss social customs (spending the summer out in the villages). With the *directrice* as the catalyst, the young girls could provide social change. Here is a sample of oral questions, ranging from the ordinary to the unexpected:

Questions de conversation française

Où habitez-vous? Que comptez-vous faire après l'examen?
Comment allez-vous employer les vacances? Sortez-vous vous promener souvent?
Décrivez votre robe?
Que savez-vous des blessés des Dardanelles?

²⁸⁸ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E* 188-199, Reel 54, Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, *Certificat d'études primaires - session de Juin 1915, Ecoles de Tunis* (received in Paris, 22 July 1915). Although the date of this document extends one year beyond the intended timeframe, it is the only one of its kind in the correspondence to date; it is indicative of the material required by the girls to master; and it is evocative of the era.

²⁸⁹ Clark, 66-67.

Parlez de la Croix Rouge? ...
Comment allez-vous employer le samedi si vous serez reçue?
Décrivez votre salle de classe? ...
Quelle est la leçon que vous préférez?
Aimez-vous l'histoire? Pourquoi?
Dans quelle école êtes-vous?
Pourquoi préférez-vous l'étude à la couture, où allez-vous passer vos vacances?
Décrivez une montre? ...
Allez-vous en villégiature? Aimez-vous voyager?
Quels voyages avez-vous fait jusqu'ici?
*Décrivez votre école?*²⁹⁰

Thus, questions could be uninventive (“How are you going to spend your vacation?”), thought provoking (“Do you like history? Why?”), or gender biased (“Why do you prefer the study of *couture*?”). The content of the questions might not have specifically influenced the girls to promote social change, but the ability to analyze and converse in a foreign language could have far reaching consequences. High scores on such questions would provide a girl with a *c.e.p.*,²⁹¹ the possibility of more schooling, if allowed by her parents, or the opportunity to marry a similarly French educated young man.²⁹² In any case, literacy in French could provide freedom from destitution.

²⁹⁰ Archives of the AIU, Ibid., Julie Saguès, 22 July 1915. N.B.: No effort has been made to correct any grammatical errors.

²⁹¹ The *c.e.p.* is still administered to schoolchildren in North Africa today. For instance, in Morocco in June 2004, a total of 529,179 pupils passed the exam, and the number of girls was 239,574, or 45.27%. The subjects now include the following: “*la langue arabe, l'éducation islamique, la langue française, les mathématiques, l'histoire et la géographie et les activités scientifiques.*” See “*Plus de 1,5 millions d'élèves passent le certificat d'études primaires*”, *Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghrib*, 21 June 2004, 5. Presumably there is only one exam for boys and girls.

²⁹² On the last point, see Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, ...*Si vous savez comme nous avons besoin d'apprendre le français.*
« Nous ne pouvons même pas trouver à nous marier. Nous confiaient les autres. Quand nous disons au courtier (matrimonial) que nous ignorons le français, il ne veut pas d'occuper de nous.. Les jeunes gens ne veulent que des jeunes filles sachent le français » C'est la note comique dans un sujet particulièrement poignant. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX IV E*, Reel 54, 12 May 1914. This is similar to the role French

The *directrices* served as cultural intermediaries and innovators in teaching foreign languages, specifically French, to the schoolgirls of Tunis. What were the attitudes of the *directrices* toward teaching French? What obstacles did the *directrices* have to overcome to introduce and maintain the *c.e.p.* as a goal of their curriculum? What were the attitudes of the men in the AIU administration, either in Paris or Tunis, for the girls to prepare for the *c.e.p.*? Could the *directrices* maintain their autonomy within the confines of the school system and successfully pursue their educational objectives? Such questions as these will be investigated in this section.

The attitudes of the teachers and their principals toward teaching French language and literature were usually positive. First of all, their own teacher-training program in Paris emphasized the acquisition of French fluency for themselves and their future students.²⁹³ Second, the General Instructions for Teachers (1903) stated the topics to be covered and the number of hours to be devoted to these subjects.²⁹⁴ Third, teaching the

language acquisition played in the lives of young Russian Jewish girls of the mid-nineteenth century, in imitation of the European (and Russian) aristocracy, see Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women...* 40, 71-72. Mothers of Jewish girls in Libya during the late Ottoman period often agreed on the importance of French in matchmaking: "Some mothers believed that the chances of their daughters for a good match improved if they knew French.... This attitude reflected the view that knowledge of foreign languages was needed for upward mobility," see Rachel Simon, *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 122. See also Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims...*, 80-81.

²⁹³ For the course of study for the Bischoffsheim School see Archives of the AIU, France VI E 6 B, received 6 April 1884 and for Mme. Isaac's Boarding School (1887) see Archives of the AIU, France V E 5a.

²⁹⁴ AIU, *Instructions générales pour les professeurs...* 37-40. For French reading the topics were *lecture courante* (oral reading) and *lecture expliquée*. For French language the subject matter included grammar, vocabulary and exercises for style. For the number of hours for each subject to be taught on a weekly basis, see *Ibid.*, *Filles, Tableau B*, 50.

French language conformed to the Alliance's goals.²⁹⁵ The French language was a vehicle to put the child in contact with Western civilization.

The first *directrice*, Sara Ungar (1882-1887) discusses her work, notably the importance of teaching French language, in her first six months on the job:

...Les sujets d'enseignement se bornaient à l'écriture, la lecture (expliquée autant que possible), les premiers notions de calcul; mais surtout nous faisons des exercices de langage, des leçons de choses qui peu à peu devaient devenir des leçons préparatoires pour d'autres matières. C'était de la première importance pour les enfants dont l'intelligence n'était nullement éveillée et qui (sauf une seule) étaient arrivés sans aucune notion de la langue française.²⁹⁶

Not only is it necessary to do language exercises, she says, but it is of utmost importance “for children whose intelligence has not been awakened” and who do not have any knowledge of the French language. Here Ungar indirectly invokes colonialist language (“the slumbering East”) to further the cause of teaching French. But as *directrice* she has the authority to emphasize French language over other required subjects.

How effective was Ungar's teaching of French, from a student's point of view? In a published oral history, one of Mlle. Ungar's first students, Elise/Ziza Slama, recalls her French studies at the Alliance school. When she was about ten years old, the director of the School for Boys (David Cazès) came to visit her father and said: “*l'Alliance doit faire une école pour les petites filles, au moins elles apprendront à écrire en français, à*

²⁹⁵ *Langue française ... C'est ici surtout que le professeur devra se rappeler que le but de l'école primaire n'est pas d'enseigner une langue pour elle-même, que la langue est non pas le but, mais l'instrument nécessaire pour atteindre un but qui est l'éducation générale de l'enfant. Une langue occidentale est indispensable pour cet objet, puisqu'elle est l'unique moyen de mettre l'enfant en communication et en contact avec la civilisation occidentale. See AIU, Instructions, p. 38*

²⁹⁶ Archives of the AIU, France VII F 14, Annual Reports, Tunis, 1883-1926, Sara Ungar, 3 December 1883.

coudre.”²⁹⁷ Cazès hoped to interest Elise’s father in the school either through teaching Elise to write in French, or to sew, subjects deemed crucial for creating the paradigmatic educator-mother. Elise then recounts the following:

*On a loué deux chambres, une chambre pour la maîtresse qui est venue de France, et une chambre pour les enfants; on était six ou sept filles seulement. C’est là que j’ai appris à lire, écrire, et parler en français, moi la petite-fille du grand rabbin. A la maison, tout le monde parlait arabe, bien sûr.*²⁹⁸

The young girl describes her teacher as having come from France, certainly Ungar’s last place of residence before Tunis, although Germany was her birthplace. In the one room reserved for teaching, Elise learned to read, write and speak French. Even though Elise only attended for two years, from ages ten through twelve, she mastered enough French to receive the highest grade for a short essay entitled, *L’Aiguille*, (*The Needle*). Her composition was later sent to Brussels and displayed at the Universal Exhibition held there.²⁹⁹ Ungar’s teaching methods of elementary French seem to have been a success; she could effect change at a very basic level, the youngest generation of schoolgirls.

The fourth *directrice*, Louise Bornstein (1900-1911), reports positive results about teaching French: *Les études sont bonnes.... Nos toutes petites filles savent*

²⁹⁷ Annie Goldmann, *Les Filles de Mardochee: Histoire familiale d’une emancipation* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1979), 23. Her skills may have helped her in “the marriage market”. At fifteen she was betrothed to Mardochee Smaja. In a photograph of the event, she is wearing traditional “Turkish” white billowy pants and blouse, he is dressed in European clothes, even though she prepared European clothes for her trousseau. He later became editor of *La Justice*, the organ promoting Tunisian Jewish assimilation with France. Using her schooling, Elise helped her husband with articles for the periodical. He insisted that she continue her education by reading Emile Zola and Anatole France. She had her first child, Juliette, at age 16, in 1890. Juliette became the first female lawyer in Tunisia, in 1919. (pp. 23-47).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁹⁹ For a copy of the essay, see *Ibid.*, 24. On Ungar’s teaching methods for elementary French, see Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, 13 April 1883.

*lire des mots, de courtes phrases, même de petites histoires; elles causent le français à l'école....*³⁰⁰ Here the students have moved French from the classroom to the schoolyard, incorporating it into their daily lives. Bornstein thus achieves the goals of the Alliance and demonstrates her power within her realm of the school.

What obstacles, if any, did the *directrices* face in introducing, or maintaining, the exam for the *c.e.p.* for the School for Girls? First, not all the *directrices* favored the girls taking the exam. Sara Ungar, for instance, thought her students lacked adequate preparation. She says she would like to present some of her students for the exam, but declines to do it:

*Je vous avoue, que je ne le ferais que pour le simple raison: parce que des autres écoles le font – car je trouve que cet examen ne répond nullement à notre programme et pourtant demande une préparation des plus minutieuses. D'un autre côté les absences, que je déplore si souvent dans mes rapports, sont un obstacle bien sérieux à cette préparation.*³⁰¹

To the extent that the thrust of the curriculum was to train students to enter the Alliance's own preparatory schools in Paris,³⁰² Ungar's assertion that the exam does not correspond to "our" academic program would be correct. Furthermore, her complaint of high

³⁰⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 25 October 1902. For details on Bornstein's teaching methods of French, see Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, Report of 21 October 1906 and her Annual Report of 1906-1907, 12 December 1907.

³⁰¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Sara Ungar, 24 March 1886.

³⁰² AIU, *Instructions*, 75. The entrance exam included the following: *une dictée, une composition française, des problèmes, une version et un thème hébreux*. Literacy in two foreign languages, French and Hebrew, was thus required to enter the AIU preparatory schools, while the *c.e.p.* only demanded French for native and non-native speakers.

absenteeism was also true for France at this time.³⁰³ Both factors combined could lead to less than satisfactory results on the exam.

What was the view in Paris of Ungar's job function? Ungar's correspondence was most likely available to researchers by the time Narcisse Leven, one of the AIU founders, wrote a history of the Alliance in 1920. However, in his two volume history of the AIU, the existence of a separate administration, and separate administrators, for each school is completely overlooked during the tenure of Sara Ungar:

*...la vie des deux écoles se confond. Les deux établissements ont la même administration, la même caisse, la même représentation auprès des autorités.*³⁰⁴

Here Leven more than marginalizes Ungar: he erases her from history. Leven expunges a woman and a life from a history book; but it is more indicative of Leven's qualities as an author than of Ungar's qualities as a *directrice*. Furthermore, the quotation serves as an example of De Vault's thesis, the "silencing" of women may be a form of suppression or marginalization.

In contrast to Ungar's attitude to girls taking the *c.e.p.*, her successor, Mme. Chimènes adopts a different stance, openly supporting the exam. Evidence from the correspondence of the second *directrice* of the School for Girls in Tunis, Mme. Myriam Voley Da Costa Chimènes (1887-1894) to the Secretary of the AIU, Jacques Bigart, reveals her determination to present her students for the exam. At the end of the spring semester of 1888, she writes that,

³⁰³ Furet and Ozouf, *Reading and Writing...*, 237-247.

³⁰⁴ Narcisse Leven, *Cinquante Ans d'Histoire...*, vol. II, 116. It should be noted, however, that a later history authored by another AIU luminary, A.H.Navon, includes an entry on Sara Ungar. See his *Les 70 Ans de L'Ecole Normale Israélite Orientale...*p. 113.

*Je suis satisfaite de la marche générale des études, de l'application des élèves. Nos enfants qui se préparent à passer l'examen du certificat d'études travaillent avec courage et ardeur Les élèves qui se présentent peuvent passer brillamment l'examen, et si je pouvais obtenir des parents de laisser revenir leurs enfants encore deux années, j'aurais certainement des jeunes filles capable d'obtenir le brevet simple.*³⁰⁵

Three weeks later she wrote that her pupils took the exam for the *Certificat d'Etudes* and that "they performed brilliantly"....

*Voilà des jeunes filles qui rendront de véritable services à l'Alliance Israélite, elles seront non seulement poursuivies de titres académiques de qui est une excellente chose, mais encore, elles sont tunisiennes et par cela même pourront apprendre le français à nos enfants avec beaucoup plus de facilité et aussi beaucoup plus de rapidité.*³⁰⁶

But before receiving her glowing report of 2 July 1888 above, Bigart wrote on 8 July that it is useless for girls to prepare for the exam:

*Y a-t-il un avantage à présenter l'élèves à l'examen de Certificat d'Etudes? La préparation à cet examen ne dérange-t-il pas les études et la programme? On comprend l'utilité du certificat pour le garçon à qui il peut servir pour entrer dans une administration ou dans le commerce, mais à quoi peut-il servir aux jeunes filles?*³⁰⁷

He notes the utility of the certificate for the boys, who could use it for office work or commerce, but what use can it serve the girls? Bigart's letter of 8 July 1888, above, underscores the beginning of a strained relationship between the male authority at central AIU headquarters in Paris and the local AIU female administrator in Tunisia. No sooner does the central office direct Mme. Chimènes not to prepare her students for the *certificat d'études* than she continues to prepare them for the exam for the following year. Their

³⁰⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Voley Chimènes, 11 June 1888.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, 2 July 1888.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Jacques Bigart, 8 July 1888.

method of communication conveys what is not written in the text; it is an unspoken power struggle between two correspondents. However, for the moment she stands firm.

The continued effort of Mme. Chimènes to prepare her students for the exam may be interpreted as an act of defiance or, subversion, since in 1889 a new group of students take the exam, and also perform brilliantly. As an advocate of female education Mme. Chimènes challenges the accepted European male perception of women's role in society: girls only need a limited education. Moreover, the code of behavior indicates that men formulate policy, while women implement it. Here the woman, an employee, is initiating policy, stepping beyond the accepted social norms. This may contribute to an increasingly tense relationship with her employer in Paris, J. Bigart.

In his scrawled notes for a letter of 10 May 1889 M. Bigart writes in reference to the *Certificat*: *Il n'en voit pas l'utilité surtout pour les jeunes filles....* This line is crossed out in the draft. The next sentence more politely states that the *directrice* should follow the established "*programme*" instead of preparing the students for the exam.³⁰⁸ Although Bigart's tone is mild in the letter that he eventually sends, there is a clear difference of opinion between Bigart in Paris and Chimènes in Tunis. Perhaps Mme. Chimènes wants to institute new policies in a traditional world where girls did not normally receive any formal education.

Thus Mme. Chimenes writes in July 1889, in apparent disregard of the instructions from May,

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Jacques Bigart, 10 May 1889.

*J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que les élèves présentés au Certificat d'études primaire par notre École, ont toutes été reçues avec d'excellentes notes....*³⁰⁹

In 1888, 1889, and 1890³¹⁰ the *directrice* guided her students for the exam so that at least some could be certified for careers in education. As Mme. Chimenes herself pointed out, (in her letter of 2 July 1888 quoted above), preparing students for the exam would eventually benefit the perennially understaffed AIU system. Within her domain, as principal of the School for Girls, she attempts to wield her authority against the assertions of Paris.

By 1891 eleven girls were presented to take the exam for the *c.e.p.*, but two were declined.³¹¹ At this point her luck starts running out. During the following year the school was plagued by long bouts of illness, first the teachers had influenza and then the students. As it turned out, in 1892 the students were insufficiently prepared to take the exam.³¹² In 1893 only four girls were accepted to take the exam for the *c.e.p.*³¹³

Although she enjoyed early successes, it is necessary to read the correspondence of the *directeur* of the School for Boys, to seek explanations for the later failures of Mme. Chimènes. At the close of the 1891-1892 academic year, David Cazès, *directeur*, states that:

L'absence de postulantes de notre école de filles à l'examen du certificat d'études tient à plusieurs causes, parmi lesquelles il faut placer les maladies des adjointes.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, 8 July 1889.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, 9 July 1890.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, 6 July 1891.

³¹² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 7 May 1893.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, 12 July 1893.

*Mais cette cause n'est pas la seule. ...il est indispensable que le travail y devienne plus sérieux, que les maîtresses s'y appliquent davantage, que la direction soit plus ferme, plus éclairée et plus vigilante. Dans tous les cas il faut prendre, des mesures pour que l'échec de cette année ne se renouvelle plus, il y va de la réputation des institutions de l'Alliance en Tunisie.*³¹⁴

Here David Cazès, the native North African *directeur* of the School for Boys in Tunis and of all the other Alliance schools in Tunisia, says there are many reasons, not only illness, for the lack of candidates from the Girls' School for the Certificate. Notably, work must become more serious and the administration must be more firm, more clear and more vigilant, a reference to Mme. Chimènes. This is not only a criticism of Mme. Chimènes³¹⁵; it is also a possible rebuff to any attack he may incur, as director of the schools. Above all, he wants to appear in a favorable light to his superiors and succeed at his work. In the confrontation between the two principals, the dualities of North African/European, (*indigène/ européenne*), male /female, *directeur/directrice* are readily apparent. They reflect the ethnicity and gender roles of the protagonists.

Moreover, David Cazès, as a correspondent, is “performing” for an audience, his employers in Paris. His observation of events in the School for Girls or of its *directrices* should be viewed in that context. Both Ungar and Chimènes accuse Cazès of making it difficult for them to work in Tunis.³¹⁶ When Cazès reports on a confrontation with Mme. Chimènes, he quotes her:

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* D. Cazès, 25 July 1892.

³¹⁵ He continues with his criticism the following year, *Ibid.*, D. Cazès, 9 July 1893.

³¹⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Ungar, 16 July 1885. For instance, “*M. Cazès se vante d'avoir faire partir Mlle. Ungar! Est-ce que cela voudrait pouvoir en dire de moi?*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 29 July 1889.

-Vous m'en voulez, vous voulez me faire partir de Tunis, vous m'avez dit que vous avez fait partir Mlle. Ungar, vous voulez que je m'en aille!
*- Cela ne me regarde pas.*³¹⁷

Although there were lapses of judgment on the part of Chimènes that provoked this exchange, Cazès presents this scene as if it were a comedy. He thus undercuts her presentation, and her authority. In struggling to maintain certain academic standards and their presence in the school, the first two *directrices* encounter issues of power with the local *directeur* and indirectly or directly, with the authorities in Paris.

During the era of the third *directrice*, Hortense Gelbmann (1896-1900), many of the issues she faces are similar to those of her predecessors. On an academic level, French language instruction continues to be of primary importance. Thus,

*La langue française, enseignée par la lecture expliquée, les compositions écrites et orales, les exercices de langage, le calcul, quelques notions d'histoire générale, l'histoire de France et de géographie, l'étude de l'hébreu et de l'histoire sainte nous absorbent en grande partie notre temps.*³¹⁸

In addition to French, the girls also study Hebrew. But instruction in Hebrew was not usually held on a regular basis, nor necessarily given by qualified teachers.

However Gelbmann encountered difficulties in maintaining academic standards. By October 1899, preparing girls for the *c.e.p.* was cancelled, to the detriment of enrollment in the highest (first) class. Without the motivation to prepare for the exam, the oldest and best students left school.

Je constate avec stupeur que, depuis la suppression du certificat d'études, nos grandes élèves, par conséquent les meilleurs, ont presque toutes déserté. Déjà,

³¹⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 63, D. Cazès, 29 July 1889.

³¹⁸ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, H. Gelbmann, 27 Nov. 1898 (“27 9bre 1898”).

*l'an dernier, à l'annonce de cette nouvelle mesure, j' en ai à constater des abstentions: la rentrée m'a totalement édifiée à ce sujet.*³¹⁹

Gelbmann continues to implore Bigart to re-instate the *c.e.p.*, but to no avail.³²⁰

On 17 (?) October 1899 he responds as follows: *...nous ne désirons que nos élèves soient préparées aux certific. d'études.*³²¹ In other words, he would like the students to be prepared for the *c.e.p.*, but not actually take it. There may be multiple reasons for his decision. Bigart may have thought that since the girls were ill prepared there was no need to publicly embarrass (himself,) the school, and the girls; he may still have believed that there was no utility for girls to take the exam, as he had declared in 1889; or he may have genuinely believed that it was more important to follow the Alliance curriculum scrupulously and not spend more time on extra exam preparation.

But there were other measures for testing literacy, perhaps not as objective as the *c.e.p.*: they included the personal observations of S.T. Pariente (1893-1900), second director of the School for Boys. Pariente's report on the School for Girls in 23 June 1899 presents some harsh evidence against the school, for instance, on the question of language acquisition: *Hébreu – Les élèves de la 1ère classe connaissent à peine l'alphabet. Elles lisent passablement en 2ème, en 3ème et en 4ème....* As for French, in the first (and highest) class where there were thirteen students present, Pariente writes in his notes: *Lecture expliquée-Passable; faible en analyse grammaticale...; Composition française: "Quelle est la personne que vous aimez le mieux et pourquoi?" Style*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 October 1899.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*, Bigart to Gelbmann, (17?) Oct. 1899.

absolument faible et plein d'incorrections.... As for the second class, where there were twenty-one students present, Pariente notes for French, *Lecture expliquée*.

...Passable; ...Composition française...Même faiblesse qu'en Ire classe. Hebrew, taught by the classroom teacher, receives high grades here: *Hébreu-Lecture courante, assez bien.*³²² Pariente's observations could be used against the *directrice*, and could bear the same weight as *c.e.p.* scores to determine a *directrice*'s job future. The overwhelming suggestion here is that had the girls stayed in school for the last year, and had there been an exam, they would not have succeeded at it in any case. Gelbmann does not appear to be in control of the helm; the "center" begins to elude her.

What was the relationship of the *directrice*, Hortense Gelbmann, to her male counterpart, S.T. Pariente? Her two predecessors had difficulty with David Cazès, and Gelbmann suffers from a trying relationship with Pariente. Hortense Gelbmann says he attempts to undermine her and prove that there is only one *Directeur*:

*...je vous prie de bien vouloir me fixer quels sont les droits de M. Pariente et quels sont mes devoirs, d'autant que M. Pariente, dans tout le courant de l'année, n'a cessé, à chaque occasion, d'interroger nos institutrices de la façon plus indelicate, voyant prouver qu'il n'y a jamais qu'un seul Directeur.*³²³

Even though criticism of the school may be justified, the *directrice* needs to be on guard against it, particularly when she suspects that the *directeur* would like to marginalize her or erase her out of existence.

³²² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIII E*, Reel 72, S.T. Pariente, 23 June 1899.

³²³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, H. Gelbmann, 11 June 1899.

Pariente's negative school report for 1898-99 motivated Gelbmann to write in detail about the school and about M. Pariente. Her letter of 12 July 1899 counters many assertions made by Pariente against her in his report.³²⁴ In her next letter she reveals her resentment toward him; she discusses Pariente's "malevolence and bad faith".³²⁵ But it is only through reading the correspondence of the men that a more complete picture emerges of the School for Girls. It is thus apparent that Gelbmann was one of the weaker *directrices*, and that the academic preparation of her students proved inadequate. Her career in Tunis does not entirely conform to the model proposed earlier, that women intermediaries can become empowered in their position but may be marginalized in their society of origin. In her first three years of leadership in Tunis, she sought to improve the school's workshops and find employment for her students,³²⁶ probably to the detriment of language acquisition and academic subjects. But whether or not she chose to emphasize certain areas of the curriculum over others, the *directeur*, S.T. Pariente, her presumed colleague, still sought to deny her existence.

While recent research reveals that successful women in the Alliance school system had support from sisters, mothers, or grandmothers, who were also teachers in the network,³²⁷ it may be possible to posit that an AIU spouse similarly provided advantages and support to aspiring women educators. Thus, the first three

³²⁴ Ibid., H. Gelbmann, 12 July 1899.

³²⁵ "*la malveillance évidente du M. Pariente et ses mauvais fois ...*". Ibid., H. Gelbmann, 14 July 1899.

³²⁶ See, for instance, Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 28 November 1897.

³²⁷ F. Malino, "Prophets in their Own Land? Mothers and Daughters of the AIU"...

directrices in Tunis (Ungar, Chimènes, Gelbmann)³²⁸ were involved in relations of power with the *directeur*, and their tenures were relatively short-lived. On the other hand, when Louise Bornstein assumed her post in 1900, perhaps female educators were not as novel or as threatening to the *directeurs* in their male domain, as they may have been fifteen years earlier. Mlle. Louise Bornstein, born in 1876 in Paris, first came to Tunis as a young *adjointe* for the academic year 1894-95. From 1896-1900 she served in Salonika as *directrice*.³²⁹ Her role in promoting the use of French there, and its proper pronunciation, is documented in an article by Annie Benvensite.³³⁰ Louise later married an AIU teacher, Lazare Guéron, and was employed as *directrice* in Tunis for eleven years. Mlle. Louise Bornstein can serve as a model of a thoughtful and innovative *educatrice*. Not only does she do her work well, but she provides forthright observations on the acquisition of female literacy, the role of the *c.e.p.*, and other educational issues. In contrast to her predecessors, she does not denigrate the director of the School for Boys, Clément Ouziel, nor does he attempt to silence or marginalize her. Ouziel, in fact, honors her by recommending that she receive *la rosette d'Officier du Nicham Iftikhar*. In September 1907 M. Machuel, Director General of Teaching in Tunisia, accords her this award.³³¹

³²⁸ The dates of their tenure as principals, are as follows: Sara Ungar (1882-1887), Voley Chimènes (1887-1894), and Hortense Gelbmann (1896-1900).

³²⁹ www.aiu.org, accessed September 24, 2003.

³³⁰ “Elles récitent sans mettre l’accent local qui n’est pas précisément fait pour flatter l’oreille”. Archives of the AIU, *Grèce IX E 132*, Louise Bornstein, 7 February 1897) as quoted in *Le rôle des Institutrices de l’Alliance israélite à Salonique...*, p. 17.

³³¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XX E*, Reel 45, C. Ouziel, 17 August 1907 and Annual Report, September 1907.

When Louise Bornstein (Guéron) first taught at the School for Girls in Tunis during 1894-95, her reports portrays dismay at the lack of reading ability of the girls at the beginning of the year, in the fourth class.³³² By mid-year there's already improvement.³³³ At the end of the academic year she has persuaded the girls to speak French to each other in school and some even use it at home.³³⁴ Such conversation could be good practice for the students of the school, creating an early generation of French speakers.

Once Louise Bornstein (Guéron) assumes leadership of the school, her comments are of greater depth, questioning the reasons for the persistence of certain social customs and noting that the generation of girls who attend school will be open to modern ideas. She also hopes that the young men will aid in this process of transformation.

*Pourquoi, en effet, les idées étroites subsistent-elles si fermement dans les familles tunisiennes? La génération des filles qui fréquente l'école, quoique faiblement pourvue d'initiative, sera plus ouverte aux idées modernes. Il semble aussi que les jeunes gens en contact avec un milieu plus civilisé, devraient contribuer à la transformation rapide et définitive.*³³⁵

Although her remarks are couched in the stereotypes of a secular, "civilizing missionary", she knowingly places the duties of social transformation on the shoulders of the students.

³³² *Il ya dans toutes ma classe six peut-être qui lisent à peu près, couramment, et il m'est assurément très difficile de suivre le programme....* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 31 December 1894.

³³³ *La lecture est devenue plus courante, plus intelligente; on voit qu'elles saisissent à peu près le sens de leur lectures.* Archives of the AIU, *Ibid.*, Louise Bornstein, 11 February 1895.

³³⁴ *Enfin, j'ai fini par persuader à mes petites élèves de parler français entre elles.....* Archives of the AIU, *Ibid.*, Louise Bornstein. 9 July 1895.

³³⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Ibid.*, Louise Bornstein, 4 March 1903.

What could be the consequences, and difficulties, of such change? The *directrice* discusses young men who are in turn, fearful, and opposed to educating women.

Louise Bornstein (Guéron) is aware of the “instinctive fear” of some young men toward women who know more than how to read and have become emancipated. Such men say, “*Que nos femmes sachent lire, cela nous suffit.*”³³⁶ They feel threatened by women who want an education and seek work outside the home. To some young men, even the limited goals of female education of the Alliance would make them fearful and would account for slow measures of social change. As Bornstein says:

*Tous les grands frères ont-ils si ‘grand’ peur de voir leurs soeurs acquérir de la raison, quelque indépendance de caractère? Il y en a beaucoup, je crois, et ce fait expliquerait la lenteur des changements dans les mœurs.*³³⁷

Opposition to girls increasing their literacy and education, according to Bornstein, stems from the same age group as the female students: either the boys who are in apprenticeships already or the older brothers of the girls.

Difficulties for a girl to obtain an education may have come from her own cohorts, her male counterparts, rather than from the older generation. Similarly, the *directrices* encountered opposition to their work from their male counterparts. The horizontal linkages, between the young men and the young women, or between the *directeurs* and *directrices*, reveal the following: it is socially acceptable to be dismissive of girls and women and to de-legitimize educated women; social change, in the form of literacy, may occur at the level of the young girls, before it is incorporated into the

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

family; and, as educated girls or women, they may have to endure forms of resistance by the males.

Bornstein's correspondence reveals an irony in teaching girls French and the presumed value of French on the marriage market. On the one hand, a French education could discourage possible suitors, on the other hand, it could increase the number of prospects. Presumably, a highly educated woman could face a similar social dilemma today. While there is no automatic consensus that knowledge of French facilitates marriage, fluency in French could work in favor of many young girls seeking a mate.

Once Bornstein re-institutes the *c.e.p.*, a more reliable index returns for judging the quality of the AIU School for Girls in Tunis in comparison to other girls' schools in Tunisia.

*M. Machuel qui n'est pas suspect de tendresse pour nos écoles, m'en a témoigné sa satisfaction à plusieurs reprises et vous comprendrez que nos élèves aient été fières de se trouver une supériorité sur les autres. Leur supériorité est tout aussi réelle sous le rapport des connaissances: Chaque année les examens du certificat d'études primaires me fournissent les éléments d'un parallèle entre les meilleures élèves des autres écoles et les nôtres;...*³³⁸

But she's also realistic enough to recognize the quality of the competition. She concludes:

*Etre des boignes au milieu d'aveugles ne nous contente pas, nous voudrions être des voyants.*³³⁹

Her goal, therefore, is to ensure her students not to be one-eyed among the blind, but to be fully sighted, or fully educated within the norms of the day.

³³⁸ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 5 June 1903.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

Louise Bornstein has many educational goals, including creating a “French school”; teaching the girls French, not only to facilitate marriage or pass the *c.e.p.*, but also to attend secondary school and then gain employment. As for her school, Bornstein writes in 1903:

*Notre école prend[?] de plus en plus l'aspect d'une école française; nos fillettes deviennent toutes très familières avec notre langue. Dans les petites classes, les leçons de langage... sont de véritables conversations.*³⁴⁰

Here she is beginning to realize her goal of creating “a French school”, which will allow her to train monitors and teachers for the school from the local population, rather than bringing in European personnel. Such a school could become a paradigm of female education in an Islamic country. As a principal, Bornstein acts upon AIU educational goals and seeks to augment the system from within its own ranks.

Thus, Louise Bornstein supports secondary education for girls. As an example, Louise Bornstein writes to Bigart, requesting a subsidy for one of her students, Marie Jami, to attend high school:

*Je vous ai entretenu à diverses reprises de l'utilité qu'il y avaient pour nous à avoir des institutrices formées pour nos soins et dévouées à l'école. J'ai en ce moment, en première classe une jeune fille, Marie Jami, âgée de 15 ans environs, et qui serait très heureuse d'être plus tard employée à l'école.... Il lui suffirait de passer une année, l'arrière (1904-1905) à l'école secondaire pour réussir à l'examen du brevet élémentaire. Mais sa famille très nécessiteuse ne peut subvenir à son entretien. Il serait dommage de ne pas nous attacher cette jeune fille qui sera capable de rendre plus tard à l'école d'excellents services.... De même que vous accorder une subvention aux jeunes apprenties qui s'essayent à un métier, ne voudriez-vous pas accorder aussi à cette enfant un secours qui lui permettrait d'attendre qu'elle arrive à gagner sa vie à l'école.*³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 3 December 1903.

³⁴¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 20 December 1903. She then asks for a subsidy of 27 francs per semester to cover the cost of school fees (*écolage*) at the secondary school.

Bigart's reply, in response to Bornstein's letters of 20 December 1903, Nos. 193, 194, 195, includes the following: *Mlle. Jami - Nous soumettrons au CCI [Comité Central] la demande que vous nous adressez concernant cette jeune fille....*³⁴² Shortly thereafter Bigart authorizes a subsidy of 27 francs per semester for the intended *monitrice*.³⁴³

Continuing in her quest to train local students, in October 1904 Bornstein requests funding for three students to attend secondary school so they can acquire their *brevet élémentaire* after two years of study. They would then be qualified to join her staff as monitors.

*A l'une d'elles, Marie Jami, vous accordez déjà cette petite subvention; les deux autres Louise Hayat et Louise Nataf la sollicitent à titre de prêt, s'offrant à la rembourser par des retenues que vous feriez plus tard, sur leurs appointements si vous le juger bon....Je suis persuadée que vous voudriez bien m'autoriser à les placer à l'école secondaire, et à leur avancez le montant de leur écolage et de quelques frais de livres.*³⁴⁴

Typical of all her solicitations for money, she invariably suggests local means of financial support to offset new expenses. Thus Bornstein acquires funding from Paris for two more girls, Louise Hayat and Louise Nataf, to attend secondary school.³⁴⁵

Although the Alliance provides support for the education of the *monitrices*, the girls may not regard their jobs as careers. For Louise Bornstein Guéron, she is providing the girls with a livelihood, as noted above, at least until they get married. But Albert

³⁴² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, Response of Jacques Bigart, 24 December 1903.

³⁴³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, Letter No. 1454, Response of Jacques Bigart to Bornstein's letter of 20 January, 1904, n.d.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Louise Bornstein to Bigart, 25 October 1904.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Response of Jacques Bigart to Bornstein's letter of 25 October 1904, n.d.

Saguès, director of the Hafsia school in the Jewish Quarter of Tunis, views the situation in a darker light: *En général les jeunes filles tunisiennes ne considèrent pas l'enseignement comme une carrière d'avenir et n'y entrent pas dans le but d'assurer leur indépendance matérielle...ce travail qui n'est à leurs yeux qu'une corvée.* He feels that girls do not view teaching as a career for the future and that they see it as an onerous burden, so he prefers to hire males instead of females, particularly at the higher levels.³⁴⁶ His resistance to hiring females is a further obstacle for Tunisian women seeking employment.

However, statistics support Louise Bornstein Guéron's view; literacy and an education provide employment at the school. There is documentation that in several instances *monitrices* worked at the school for a number of years.³⁴⁷ In any event, once they get married they usually leave and the *directrice* is faced with finding replacements. So at the beginning of the 1905 school year, Louise Bornstein Guéron asks for funding for her best student, Ida Finzi, to enroll in high school.³⁴⁸

Louise Bornstein Guéron soon provides the impetus to develop staffing for another Alliance project. A new School for Girls will be opening in the coastal town of

³⁴⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E* 198.a., Reel 53, Albert Saguès, 12 June 1914.

³⁴⁷ For instance: Cohen, Louise, Nov. 1898-Oct. 1907; Cohen, Rachel, Nov. 1894 - Jan. 1905; Samama, Taïta, Oct. 1892 - May 1901; Cohen, Haya, May 1904-Oct. 1907; Jami, Marie, Nov. 1906 - Apr. 1917; Maimoun, Rachel, Nov. 1907 - July 1915; Bismuth (Saada), Henriette, Nov. 1907 - March 1919; Lévy, Rachel, Nov. 1909 - June 1924; Bessis, Rachel, Nov. 1909 - Feb. 1917; or Chemla, Zita, Dec. 1910 - Nov. 1917. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie Boîte 18 - Boîte 48*, Reel 85, *Ecole de filles de la rue El Mechnaka, Registre du personnel enseignant (1900-1948)*.

³⁴⁸ *Ida Finzi-Ainsi que ces dernières années je voudrais placer la meilleure élève de l'école qui a achevé nos classes à l'école secondaire où elle pourrait se préparer à l'examen brevet élémentaire de nous servir comme monitrice à l'école.... Nos anciennes monitrices se marient et nous quittent....* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 31 October 1905.

Sfax in 1905. Louise Guéron not only recommends the new *directrice* from her teaching staff, Mme. Abib, but also promotes the education of one of the young girls, Rachel Maïmon, to become a *monitrice* in Sfax. Rachel's family is from Sfax and she will be returning there after she obtains her *brevet élémentaire*.³⁴⁹ The *directrice* is concerned with educating girls and promoting the goals of the Alliance not only in Tunis but in another area of the country as well.

By the first trimester of 1906, the AIU is financing the education of five girls at the secondary school in Tunis.³⁵⁰ In June 1906, Louise Guéron writes that three students, L. Hayat, L. Nataf and M. Jami, have passed the *brevet élémentaire*.³⁵¹ She then employs them in the school that Fall.³⁵² Although two girls at the high school have managed to pay their own fees for the first year, Henriette Bismuth and Maïna Samama, they will need subsidies for the second year, which will cost about 175 F. These students will eventually replace Mlle. Louise Cohen, Rachel Cohen and Taïta Samama who have become engaged (“*toutes trois actuellement fiancées*”).³⁵³ Summarizing her six years in Tunis, the *directrice* notes that five pupils from the School for Girls have returned as

³⁴⁹ ...la jeune fille dont je vous parle, Rachel Maïmon, n'exercerait pas à Tunis. La famille s'établie à Sfax où elle retournerait quand elle aurait obtenu son brevet élémentaire.

Or vous avez une école à Sfax, et je sais que Mme. Abib ne trouve pas, facilement, sur place, à recruter son personnel. Une monitrice formée par nous rendrait à Sfax d'aussi appréciables services qu'à Tunis. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905.

³⁵⁰ The fees per semester for Louise Nataf, Louise Hayat, Marie Jami and Ida Finzi were 27.20 francs each, and for Rachel Maïmon/Meïmoun they were 28.70 F. *Ibid.*, *Ecolage*, 30 March 1906. The girls attend the Jules Ferry secondary school.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7 June 1906.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 14 October 1906 and 21 October 1906.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1906.

monitrices and that four are students at the secondary school.³⁵⁴ Louise B. Guéron must plan ahead to maintain, or increase her staff, but she has the authority to do so. Moreover, secondary education is becoming acceptable for girls in Tunis.

In her correspondence, Louise Guéron continues to note the success or failure of her former students on the *brevet élémentaire*. In June 1907 Ida Finzi, Henriette Bismuth, and Rachel Meimoun all pass. Mme. Guéron will hire them for the next school year. But the fourth, Maïna Samama, failed the second written exams in art, calligraphy and dressmaking. One of the current *monitrices*, Mlle. Haya Cohen, also passed the exam.³⁵⁵

The *monitrices* continue revolving through the school in the 1907 fall trimester. Louise Cohen and Haya Cohen get married, no statement as to their French literacy influencing their marriages, and Guéron hires four of her former students from the secondary school as *monitrices*. In addition, she has placed three new students at the secondary school: Rachel Boccara, Zita Chemla, and Rachel Bessis.³⁵⁶ A fourth student, Rachel Lévy soon joins them.³⁵⁷ There is a steady increase in the number of girls attending secondary school, but it is too soon to expect any Tunisian parents to be willing to send their daughters to the AIU preparatory schools Paris. That will not happen until 1913.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Annual Report of 1905-1906, 21 October 1906.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25 June 1907.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 Nov. 1907.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12 December 1907.

³⁵⁸ The first Tunisian girl to attend the Alliance Preparatory School for teachers in Paris, at Bischoffsheim, was Emma Lévy. Her brother attended the ENIO School for Boys. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Mlle. Julie Cohen –Scali, 28 July 1913, 19 September 1913. Emma returned to teach at the School

Louise Guéron requests a year-end salary increase for her staff, and notes her role in creating “an indigenous personnel” which will help the Alliance economize:

*Je vous forme un personnel indigène qui remplace avantageusement les adjointes ayant reçu leur éducation à Paris et vous réalisez du coup une économie qui compte.*³⁵⁹

In keeping with her style, she then asks for salary increases for her *monitrices indigènes*, who currently earn 50 francs per month, or 600 francs per annum. For Marie Jami she would like an increase of 200 francs (for the year) and for Louise Hayat she would like an increase of 150 francs.³⁶⁰ This indicates that there was no standardization of salaries.

What was the buying power of the franc in Tunisia in the beginning of the twentieth century? Clément Ouziel, director of the School for Boys reports that: *La viande se vend couramment à 2 frs. et à 2.50 le kg et le prix du pain augmenté de moitié (45 cent, le kg. au lieu de 30) depuis Juilliet dernier, à la suite de la nouvelle loi sur les céréales.*³⁶¹ Before any salary increases, a *monitrice* would have to work approximately two days to afford a kilo of meat and a kilo of bread. Salaries were not only lower for women than men, but the “native” personnel were paid less than the Europeans.³⁶² Once

for Girls in November 1920. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie Boîte 18 – Boîte 48*, Reel 85, *Ecole de filles de la rue El Mechnaka, Registre du personnel enseignant (1900-1948)*.

³⁵⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 10 December 1907.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Second letter, 10 December 1907.

³⁶¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XX E*, Reel 45, C. Ouziel, 2 December 1904.

³⁶² For instance, Louise Guéron notes the salary differences in this comment: *Personnel indigène – Le départ de Mme. Nataf [née Rachel Menahem, an Ottoman subject from Salonika, as accessed at www.aiu.org, September 24, 2003] qui gagnent 2000 frs. et son remplacement en 1ère classe par Mlle. Jami qui gagne 750 frs. par an vous crée une économie de 1250 frs....* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Mme. Louise B. Guéron, Reel 38, 10 December 1908.

a retirement fund was established, the school contributed less for the local women than for the “indigenous” men.³⁶³ Salary discrepancies between men and women were not a primary concern. The focus was rather on the differences between the Europeans and the *indigènes*.

Mme. Guéron is not only an advocate for *monitrices*, but also for teachers and principals in the AIU school system. Although she does not mention her political activities in her correspondence, in October 1905 she is elected the Vice-President of a nascent teacher’s union (*L’Association Amicale des Instituteurs de l’Alliance Israélite*) in Tunis. It published its first Bulletin in July 1905 and continued functioning during the academic year 1905-1906. The President is Clément Ouziel, director of the School for Boys on Malta Srira Street. Louise’s husband, Lazare, is also an active member of the Association.³⁶⁴ On the subject of salary increases, the Association demands the following in 1906:

*Des augmentations minima de 200 fr. seront accordées régulièrement tous les deux ans à tous les membres du corps enseignant.*³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXI E*, Reel 47, C. Ouziel, *Ecoles de Tunis, Caisse de Retraites pour le Personnel enseignant du cadre local*, 24 December 1912.

³⁶⁴ AIU, Document P1116, *Bulletin Trimestriel de L’Association Amicale des Instituteurs de l’Alliance*, Tunis, July 1905 and October 1905, 26, 28. Such *Associations* were not uncommon in France at that time either, René Mouriaux, *Le syndicalisme enseignant en France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996) 10-15. C. Ouziel’s files contain a copy of the Association’s publication, Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXI E*, Reel 45, C. Ouziel, *Association amicale des Professeurs de l’Alliance Israélite*, received in Paris 23 April 1905.

³⁶⁵ AIU, Document P1116, *Bulletin Trimestriel de l’Association Amicale...* January-March 1906, 68.

But since Guéron still asks for unequal salary hikes for her *monitrices* the following year as indicated above, it is assumed that the Central Committee has not acted on the Association's requests.

Similarly, by 1913, the *directrice*, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, is still requesting differing pay increases for the *monitrices*. But for some of the *monitrices* who remain, there are opportunities for advancement:

*Mlle. Hayat qui me seconde très efficacement pour la surveillance de la cantine scolaire et l'encaissement de l'écolage, a droit d'une augmentation de frs. 120.... Mlle. Jami, chargée d'une petite classe d'arrières dite petite classe de travail la plus pénible à tenir, s'occupe en outre de la surveillance de l'atelier de couture. Elle mérite une augmentation de 100 frs. Ainsi que Mlle. Ida Finzi et Maïna Sammama. Pour Mlles. Meimoun et Bismuth, je ne vous demanderai qu'une augmentation de frs. 60, soit frs. 5 par mois.*³⁶⁶

Thus, Marie Jami now is teaching a small class in remedial work and has more supervisory responsibilities. For this she merits an annual salary increase of 100 F.³⁶⁷ She remains on the job for eleven years.

Louise Bornstein Guéron is a strong proponent of training her own personnel in Tunis, rather than bringing in young instructors from Paris. When her former students return as *monitrices*, they almost instinctively apply the methods to their work that they were taught as young children.³⁶⁸ The value of training local students to fill the ranks of

³⁶⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, 12 December 1913.

³⁶⁷ The Central Committee accords it to her in January 1914. The other *monitrices* receive the requested sums too. Ibid., Bigart to Julie Saguès, 16 January 1914.

³⁶⁸ *Personnel-* Je vous ai suffisamment répété les années précédentes combien peu je dois compter sur le concours des jeunes institutrices formées à Paris. Elles ne semblent nullement faites pour leur métier. Aussi- ai-je pris la résolution de préparer moi-même mon personnel.

Les meilleures de nos élèves de première qui ont passé par nos méthodes, sont placées à l'école secondaire où elles obtiennent leur brevet élémentaire. Elles appliquent ensuite presque d'instinct, la

the school does not go unrecognized by M. Charlety, *inspecteur général de l'enseignement professionnel des indigènes*. As Bornstein Guéron reports of his visit to her school:

Il a été surpris du niveau relativement élevé et du caractère essentiellement pratique de notre enseignement. L'ordre, la propreté, la discipline, le zèle de nos élèves l'ont très vivement impressionné. Il m'a demandé comment nous parvenions à avoir un personnel aussi homogène, imbu des mêmes principes éducateurs....

Je lui expliquai comment après de longues années d'efforts, j'étais parvenue à recruter la grande majorité de nos monitrices parmi nos anciennes élèves qui, ayant reçu leur première instruction d'après nos méthodes, étant ensuite initiées à leur profession et dirigées par nous-même, appliquent aisément et comme d'instinct les principes d'éducateurs que nous considérons comme appropriés au milieu.³⁶⁹

Mme. Guéron, as her own publicist, re-iterates the concerns of a *directrice*: maintaining order, cleanliness, and discipline; and training a “homogeneous” staff according to educational principles appropriate for the milieu. Thus, “recycling” her former students through the school system helps Bornstein Guéron achieve her goals as a manager; it provides her girls with a livelihood, however meager; and it placates the Treasurer of the Central Committee in Paris.

To what extent were the *directrices* disregarded or respected? How were they perceived, and received, by their presumed colleagues, the *directeurs*; their male

méthode d'après laquelle elles ont été elles-mêmes formées. Moins prétentieuses, plus malléables, plus travailleuses surtout, il est aisé de compléter leur éducation professionnelle.

J'ai en ce moment, huit anciennes élèves comme monitrices, quatre autres préparent leur brevet élémentaire.... Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, Annual Report of 1906-1907, 12 December 1907.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1908.

superiors in Paris; the girls in their school; or the inspectors of instruction of the French Protectorate? One composite portrait of the *directrices* cannot be drawn based on the sources. Not surprisingly, the first *directrice*, Sara Ungar, probably suffered the most social exclusion and encountered the most silencing, from the *directeur*, David Cazès to Narcisse Leven, Secretary of the AIU and its eventual President. Yet her students responded positively to her, as the founder of the School for Girls. The second and third *directrices*, Chimènes and Gelbmann, by contrast, were initially accepted by the *directeurs* and the community, but later came under attack from the *directeurs*, Cazès and Pariente, and eventually from Bigart in Paris as well. By 1900 and the fourth *directrice*, exclusion or marginality does not seem to be an issue. There is a new director of the School for Boys, Clément Ouziel, and Louise Bornstein marries a teacher at his school. She has local support within the system, which enables her to branch out beyond it into leadership capacities, and receives recognition from her peers and superiors for her work. As the chronology unfolds, it appears that there is less marginalization and more acceptance of women in their roles as professionals as the twentieth century progresses. This may be due to chance, or to the personalities and backgrounds of the educators, or to changes in the perceived role of women in society.

But the women share many qualities: devotion to the school, positive attitudes toward French, conscientiousness in teaching French language and literacy, and a desire to effect change. In their efforts to transform the world of the school, they become cultural intermediaries, moving from the margins to the center, with varying abilities to stay there. This chapter viewed the *directrices* on the horizontal axis; the next

chapter will depict one period from within the school itself, focusing on an anomaly of the school system, Mme. V. Chimènes.

Chapter 3

“This Little World”: Academic Politics in the Primary School

In a recent volume on qualitative research, the authors of an article on multi-method interdisciplinary clinical research state: “linkages can occur vertically.... Or linkages can be horizontal.... Linkages also occur over time or at different times.”³⁷⁰ So far, linkages in the School for Girls in Tunis have been viewed vertically and horizontally. The primary focus now will be on linkages as they occur over time. Secondary to that will be vertical and horizontal linkages.

The chronological period will be 1887-1896, which represents the tenure of Mme. V. Chimènes (1887-1894), second *directrice* of the Alliance School for Girls in Tunis, and the subsequent two years when there was no *directrice*. From 1894 to 1896, two *adjointes* at the school, Mme. Mathilde Alchallel/Alhallel/Alhalel (née Twersky) and Mlle. Henriette Salomon (future wife of Albert Antébi), served as acting principals. The nine-year period under consideration raises the following questions: What was the role of the *directrice*? How did Mme. Chimènes fulfill that role? What happened to the school after Mme. Chimènes left and was replaced by two of her *adjointes*? The sources include: AIU publications; the correspondence of the three women and other *adjointes*; the responses of Jacques Bigart, Secretary of the AIU; and the letters of the two *directeurs*, David Cazès and Shemtob Pariente.

³⁷⁰ William L. Miller and Benjamin F. Crabtree, “Clinical Research”, in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 615.

Sources on the Role of the *Directrice*

Among the sources, the AIU published internal guidelines on the role of the *directrice* or *directeur*. It also encouraged discussion of administrative issues in its journal, *La Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance (1901-1904)*. Information on the functions of the teachers and principals can additionally be found in such secondary sources as Narcisse Leven's *Cinquante Ans d'Histoire...*, Paul Silberman's dissertation "An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the Alliance Israélite Universelle...", or Aron Rodrigue's *French Jews, Turkish Jews*.³⁷¹ The AIU *Instructions* afford a glimpse of the organization's expectations of its personnel; however, in the period before the publication of the *Instructions* in 1903, the *directrices* could exercise greater freedom. But wayward *directrices* could still be reprimanded, shifted to other locations, or punished, even in the period before there were any official published instructions.

What kinds of regulations do the *Instructions* stipulate for AIU teachers and principals? A few examples will be cited here:

Défense d'écrire dans les journaux et de faire partie d'Associations.

... Il est également recommandé au professeurs de n'adresser aucune lettre ou aucune demande à des personnes ou à des sociétés étrangères à la Communauté sans l'assentiment préalable du Comité Central...

Rapports des Directeurs avec les Adjointes et les Professeurs indigènes.

Le directeur n'oubliera en aucun circonstance qu'il n'est pas appelé seulement à enseigner, mais aussi à diriger...

³⁷¹ AIU, *Instructions Générales pour les Professeurs*, Paris (1903); on women educators see AIU, "Sur la préparation des institutrices de L'Alliance", "Les adjointes de nos écoles", "La préparation des institutrices", and Mme. Sémach, "La directrice et l'adjointe", *La Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance (REA)*, Paris (1901), 179-184; (1902), 258-262; (1902), 324-39; (1902), 399-401; Narcissen Leven, *Cinquante Ans d'Histoire...* II, 19-21; Paul Silberman, "An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the Alliance Israélite Universelle...", 185-212; Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews...*, 57-70.

*Le directeur ne devra jamais faire d'observations à un professeur en présence des élèves; ses observations doivent toujours être faites dans la forme la plus courtoise. La courtoisie n'est pas un signe de faiblesse, mais d'autorité.*³⁷²

The code of behavior inscribed here, whether overbearing or merely sensible, was no doubt based on the Central Committee's prior experience. It was the kind of experience that could be gained from a *directrice* such as Mme. Chimènes. Moreover, the Central Committee hoped to protect its personnel from attacks in the press or from the community at large.

What penalties did the *Instructions* impose for infractions of the regulations? For the most serious offenses, "*Le professeur pourra..., selon le cas, être puni d'une diminution de traitement, change de post ou destitué.*"³⁷³ The need to decrease salary, change location of post, or fire a member of the staff would also not have been demonstrated as in effect until they were published in the *Instructions* in the early twentieth century. In fact, such measures were applied to disciplinary cases before that time.

The articles that appeared in the AIU's *Revue des Ecoles d'Alliance* in 1901 and 1902 on the role of *institutrices* constitute opinion pieces, penned by three women educators in the AIU system. Although the authors differ on the type of education necessary to produce a capable *adjointe*, they agree on the desired qualities of a *directrice* when training a new teacher. If a *directrice* were "sweet" and "indulgent", it would help

³⁷² AIU, *Instructions*, 17-18.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, *Infractions aux instructions*, 22.

a novice adjust to her new post in a foreign country.³⁷⁴ Thus, when a new teacher comes to Tunis from Paris during the tenure of Voley Chimènes, the “*débutante*” writes:

*... en Tunisie l’institutrice se trouverait tout à fait désolée et découragée sans la bienveillante affabilité de sa Directrice qui a la bonté de la recevoir chez elle et de la mettre courant des moeurs et coutumes du pays.*³⁷⁵

Mlle. Rachel Pisa notes that in Tunisia an *institutrice* would be totally “miserable” and “discouraged” were it not for the kindness of her *directrice*, who introduced her to the customs of the country. The *directrice* therefore functioned in the role of educator to her staff: she organized an informal “immersion course” in Tunisian culture for her newly arrived *adjointes*.

Another article from the *REA* in 1902 advises that a *directrice* should be a model of “tactfulness” and “decency.”³⁷⁶ Finally,

*... la directrice, par son indulgence et son langage affectueux, apparaîtra à l’adjointe non comme une étrangère qu’il faut craindre et à laquelle on obéit, mais comme une amie qu’on doit aimer, et dont il faut non seulement suivre, mais encore solliciter les conseils. Ce jour-là les directrices cesseront de trouver leur adjointes insuffisantes et incapables, et les adjointes cesseront de trouver les directrices sévères et exigeantes.*³⁷⁷

While Mme. Sémach’s statements may represent an idealized version of the *directrice* and her relations with her teaching staff, the recommendations offered above may have

³⁷⁴ “Si la directrice est douce et indulgente...elle se fera un devoir d’aplanir autant que possible les premières difficultés que rencontre son adjointe, elle l’aidera de son expérience.” AIU, “Les adjointes de Nos Ecoles”, *REA* (1902), 259.

³⁷⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIII E-247*, Reel 72, Mlle. Rachel Pisa, 3 November 1889. (Pisa later changes her mind about the affability of her *directrice*.)

³⁷⁶ “Il faudra ... que la directrice soit un modèle de délicatesse et de d’honorabilité, que son école ... soit un foyer réchauffant où tous les bons sentiments germent et se développent.” Mme. Sémach, “La Directrice et L’Adjointe,” *REA*, (1902), 401.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

helped Mme. Chimènes or Mlle. Cohen-Scali when they encountered “insubordination” among their *adjointes*.³⁷⁸

Responsibilities of the *Directrice*

The *directrice* and the *directeur* had many responsibilities³⁷⁹, as teacher, administrator, supervisor, social worker, protector of the abused (from political threats to health menaces), fund-raiser, public relations agent, representative to the community, correspondent to Paris, and role model of French Enlightenment civilization. Certainly many of the functions of the *directeur* and *directrice* were similar, since they faced many of the same problems: at first, over-enrollment; later, retention of pupils; overcrowding, understaffing; and providing nourishment, clothes, and shoes for the neediest in the school.

However, the principals of the Alliance had many other obligations. The *directrice*, for instance, lived and worked in the school building with her teaching staff and family, if she had one. The AIU requested reports on the religious practices and moral behavior of its teachers. The AIU Instructions of 1903 specify the details of religious observance required of the *directrice* and her teaching staff. Moreover, the headmistress was to report on the “religious, moral, and intellectual discipline” of her

³⁷⁸ See, for instance, Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 27 October 1893. See also Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Reel 35, Julie Cohen-Scali, 20 September 1912 and Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 54, Mme. J. Cohen-Scali Saguès, 11 May 1914 and 14 July 1914.

³⁷⁹ Narcisse Leven, *Cinquante ans d'histoire, L'Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860-1910)* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1911-1920), mentions the “*multiples devoirs du directeur*”, 1:21. Paul Silberman, “An Investigation of the Schools Operated by the Alliance Israélite Universelle from 1862 to 1940” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1973), devotes a chapter to “The Roles of the Teacher”, i.e. the *directeur*: Protector of the Jews, School Administrator, Community Leader and Social Worker, 185-198.

adjointes in her annual report.³⁸⁰ Knowledge of the teachers' activities could be gained firsthand from the *directrice*, if she chose to divulge the information; often she did not.³⁸¹ Mlle. Sara Ungar, the first *directrice* in Tunis, said, for example, that even the girls' mothers couldn't control their behavior.³⁸² As far as the level of religious observance was concerned, Mme. Chimènes said that since Jewish women did not attend services in Tunis, she could not comment on her teachers' synagogue attendance.³⁸³ But the Catholic teacher, Mme. Duchesne, went to church every day at 6:00 A.M., or so she told her *directrice*.³⁸⁴

Raising a family in Tunis was a challenge for a *directrice* with children. When her children were sick, Mme. Chimènes would stay home to take care of them.³⁸⁵ Since substitutes did not exist (the AIU women educators were in the vanguard, and there were no other trained Alliance teachers), an older child or a *monitrice* would be required to tend to the lower classes.³⁸⁶ In cases where two or three teachers were absent, the *directrice* spent much of her day supervising and teaching many classes.

³⁸⁰ AIU, *Instructions...*, "Règles de discipline religieuse, morale, et intellectuelle". 16.

³⁸¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Jacques Bigart, 16 October 1885 and reply of Sara Ungar, 23 October 1885.

³⁸² Ungar, *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Myriam Voley DaCosta Chimènes, Report of 2 April 1889 and Letter of 1 May 1890.

³⁸⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Chimènes, Report of 2 April 1889.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Chimènes, 16 May 1890.

³⁸⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, Chimènes, 22 March 1892 and 25 April 1892.

When the girls' school was located in the same building as the boys' school, on Malta Srira Street, discipline problems arose at the beginning or at the end of the day. The boys and girls would jostle each other, leading to "disorder".³⁸⁷ But even the new location on al-Meshnaqa demanded the utmost supervision.³⁸⁸ Again Mme. Chimènes found that the students exited "without order."³⁸⁹ It was the role of the teacher to maintain order at a time before older children could serve as hall monitors. The *Instructions Générales* address this issue under **Mesures de discipline**:

*La sortie des classes doit être surveillée par les directeurs et les professeurs. Il faut qu'elle se fasse avec ordre et décence et que les élèves, en rentrant chez eux, ne produisent aucun trouble dans les rues.*³⁹⁰

So, by the time that the Instructions were published, the principals and the teachers were required to supervise an orderly dismissal. This measure would have increased the responsibilities of the *directrice*, but it probably decreased the unruliness of the students and any inherent friction between the duties of the principal and the teachers.

In addition, the *directrice* was a female role model for the girls in her school. She influenced the girls to change their style of dress: outside the house they wore European clothes, but at home they wore traditional clothes – to please the grandparents.³⁹¹ The

³⁸⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Ungar, 30 June 1882 and 14 November 1883; Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Chimènes, Report of 1 May 1890.

³⁸⁸ "Les entrées et les sorties demandent surtout la plus grande surveillance, car la rue est très étroite et souvent embarrassée par les chameaux, les ânes et les voiture de louage." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, Chimènes, 16 October 1893.

³⁸⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, Chimènes, 12 January 1894.

³⁹⁰ AIU, *Instructions...*, 66.

³⁹¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Ungar, 22 February 1884.

more financially secure girls requested that their mothers bring fabric to school for dressmaking, and the mothers proudly complied.³⁹² Their daughters sewed European clothes for themselves, their sisters³⁹³, and for the boys in the AIU School³⁹⁴. A circular sent to the principals from Paris on 2 June 1896, and annexed to the Instructions, notes that: “*En quittant l’école, la jeune fille devrait savoir très bien coudre, savoir raccommoder, tailler un vêtement simple et de coupe facile, de telle sorte que deux ans de présence à l’atelier suffiraient à en faire une bonne ouvrière.*”³⁹⁵ When a girl left school she would know how to sew and mend, having been supervised by the dressmaking teacher and, ultimately, the *directrice*. It was the role of the *directrice* not only to survey, but to lead.

How did Mme. Chimènes fulfill her role as *directrice*, in her own eyes and in the eyes of others? What occurred at the school so that after seven years of service she received the ultimate punishment, loss of her job in the AIU school system? Mme. Chimènes is an anomaly: in a system where disapproval was usually expressed by replacement within the network, she gets fired. She thinks she is performing well; others feel dissatisfied, even angered. Her perception of reality differs from that of her associates.

On a purely educational level, the *directrice* faced pedagogical and curricular issues. On a social level, she confronted relations of power: with other women teachers

³⁹² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, Chimènes, 2 March 1892.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, Chimènes, 8 March 1893.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Chimènes, 7 March 1894 and 2 April 1894.

³⁹⁵ AIU, *Instructions...*, *Annexe*, 100.

in the school, with the director of the School for Boys, with the AIU local committee in Tunis, with the Central Committee in Paris, with male and female officials from the French Protectorate, with the parents of the girls, and with her students. The relationships of Mme. Chimènes with her teaching personnel, her colleagues, and her superiors will be examined to determine the nature of her tenure.

Mme. Chimènes and her Teaching World

Myriam Voley Da Costa Chimènes hailed from Bordeaux, in southwestern France close to the Spanish border, and was of Marrano descent. She was born in 1862, which would later make her the same age as many of her staff members. The Jews of Bordeaux and Bayonne were proud of their Sephardic heritage and had a different outlook from that of the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, the Ashkenazim, who predominated in the AIU ranks.³⁹⁶ The cleavage between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim in France, where they were known as the Portuguese (*portugais*) and the Germans (*allemands*), persisted through the eighteenth century and beyond. The Sephardim in pre-Revolutionary France, particularly those from Bordeaux and Bayonne, viewed themselves as an advanced, acculturated, even noble elite and distanced themselves from the Yiddish speaking Ashkenazim of northeastern France in the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.³⁹⁷ A list of Sephardic names, according to the censuses of Jews and registries of Jewish names, 1806-1810,

³⁹⁶ E. Antébi, *Les Missionnaires Juifs de la France, 1860-1939* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1999), 90.

³⁹⁷ On the origins of the Sephardic/Ashkenazic cleavage of French Jews, see Paula E. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2-5.

include “Dacosta” and “Chiménés” (accent on the third syllable, not the second).³⁹⁸ The name “Chiménés” may have been derived from the Spanish “Ximinés”.³⁹⁹ Moreover, since the maiden name of the second *directrice* and her married name appear on the list, the list attests to her Sephardic lineage.

Mme. Chimènes accepts the offer of the AIU to be the *directrice* of the School for Girls in Tunis on 25 August 1886, with a salary of 4,000 francs per year.⁴⁰⁰ She disembarks at the port of La Goulette (Tunisia) with her husband, *le chef de bureau* of the *Compagnie Général Transatlantique*,⁴⁰¹ and her parents,⁴⁰² the Da Costas, on 10 October 1887. Upon her arrival in Tunis she says that she hopes she can soon give details about her class, but that “*pour l’instant je suis comme l’oiseau sur la branche, je ne sais où me retourner...*”⁴⁰³ In essence, the uncertain destiny of a bird perched on a branch, mentioned here by Mme. Chimènes, epitomizes her seven years at the School for Girls in Tunis. Other personal details that emerge from her correspondence include the birth of two children: on 19 March 1888 and, fourteen months later, on 17 May 1889. She

³⁹⁸ Zosa Szajkowski, “The Marranos and Sephardim of France,” *The Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1964), 107-127. See Appendix II, p. 120.

³⁹⁹ The name “Ximinés” appears on a list of “Lost” Names of Marranos and Sephardim of Bordeaux and Saint-Esprit-lès-Bayonne, and it stems from the Bordeaux register. *Ibid.*, Appendix I, p. 119.

⁴⁰⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 25 August 1886. On 26 April 1888 (*ibid.*) she also announces that Mme. Chimènes, *Directrice*, age 25 ½, will receive 4,000 francs in salary.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* V. Chimènes, Letter of her husband, G. Chimènes, 1 February 1888.

⁴⁰² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 63, David Cazès, 10 October 1887.

⁴⁰³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 14 October 1887.

mentions that she is expecting a third child, due towards April 1892.⁴⁰⁴ Her parents were probably not very well off, since Mme. Chimènes pleaded with the Central Committee on several occasions to employ her mother at the school as a dressmaking teacher.⁴⁰⁵

Ultimately, Bigart declined.

Typically, Mme. Chimènes as well as others refer to the school as “*ce petit monde*” (“this little world”).⁴⁰⁶ The *directrice* views “this little world”, her world, as a self-contained unit, subject to the changing dynamics of political and social relations in the school. To Mme. Chimènes, the world of the school is disciplined yet forgiving. It is a place where she has amiable relations with her staff and where her students enjoy their studies.⁴⁰⁷ In her overall correspondence, Mme. Chimènes tends to overlook incidents that offend her *adjointes*. She focuses instead on the curriculum: on preparing the girls for the *Certificat d’Etudes*, on developing classes on pattern cutting and sewing, classes which will help her students find employment after graduation. Her description of “this little world” partly depicts the microcosm of academic politics in the primary school. The other part can be found in additional correspondence. The letters or reports of the other actors (her *adjointes*, the *directeurs* of the Boys’ School, the Secretary of the

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 29 March 1888, 17 May 1889. *Ibid.*, Reel 65, Chimènes, 8 February 1892. There is no confirmation of the birth of the third child.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 27 February 1888, 21 March 1888, 20 May 1888. This was before her mother became a widow in 1890. *Ibid.*, V. Chimènes, Letter of G. Chimènes, 1 December 1890.

⁴⁰⁶ “*Nous allons commencer les travaux de l’exposition, nous avons fort à faire pour stimuler tout ce petit monde...*”. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1889. See also, “*Il nous est impossible de recevoir plus d’admission si nous n’avons des adjointes pour diriger tout ce petit monde. Chaque maîtresse a eu en moyenne dans sa classe 100, 130, 200 enfants....*” *Ibid.*, 6 January 1891.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1890.

Central Committee in Paris, and the French inspectors of the public schools in Tunis [*Direction de l'Enseignement public, Tunis*]) transform her little world from a smoothly running school into a backbiting hornet's nest.

Viewing This Little World Vertically: The *Directrice* and her *Adjointes*

Early in her tenure at the School for Girls, Mme. Chimènes comes into conflict with one of her *adjointes*, Mlle. Céline Créhange. Créhange was born in Vantoux, in the province of Lorraine, in 1862⁴⁰⁸, the same year as Mme. Chimènes. In the letters of the two women, their comments tend to focus on personal behavior in and out of class, rather than on curricular issues.

There is friction in the classroom and in their place of residence. According to Mme. Chimènes, “*Mlle. Créhange est trop absorbée par ses leçons particulières et je trouve que sa classe souffre.*”⁴⁰⁹ Créhange apparently gives private lessons in town, detracting from the quality of her teaching in school. In her letter of 30 November 1887, Chimènes complains of the work ethic of Créhange, as first noted above, and of the personal life of her *adjointe*. The principal writes that Mlle. Créhange was absent almost the whole day on 29 November 1887. At 12:45 PM Céline Créhange had a doctor's appointment, and by 4:30 she still had not returned. In the evening Mme. Chimènes went out with her parents, and when they came home, around 9:30 PM, they were astonished to see Mlle. Créhange on the stairs with a man of a certain age, the entry door closed

⁴⁰⁸ www.aiu.org, accessed February 10, 2005.

⁴⁰⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 27 November 1887. Chimènes does not give an account of direct speech. (On the microfilm, this letter is photographed with the correspondence of 1889, rather than 1887.)

(...Mlle. Créhange dans l'escalier avec un monsieur d'un certain âge, la porte de l'entrée fermé.) Mme. Chimènes says it is distressing for her to have such encounters, since the teachers all share the same premises. The *directrice* states that she does not believe that Mlle. Créhange can remain as an *adjointe* in the school after what has come to pass. Could Bigart send another *adjointe*⁴¹⁰ to replace Mlle. Créhange? Bigart complies, sending Mlle. Delphine Bloch to replace Créhange.⁴¹¹ In the case of Mlle. Créhange, both her “work” and her “character” are at stake -- two important characteristics, as defined by Bigart.⁴¹²

What is the point of view of Mlle. Créhange? On 1 December 1887 she sends a letter of outrage to Paris:

*... Je tiens à vous mettre au courant de ma situation en qualité d'adjointe de Mme. Chimènes. Ma nouvelle directrice me rend la vie insupportable par son peu d'expérience, son manque absolu de tact, et surtout par son orgueil insensé. Pour la moindre ..., je dois essayer un affront en recevant des observations déplacées faites avec arrogance, de ces observations qu'une personne mal éduquée adresse à ses domestiques, et cela devant les élèves Je me chagrine en songeant que jamais je ne pourrai m'accorder avec une personne à l'esprit si étroite et qui sans cesse cherche à m'humilier devant les enfants. ... Aujourd'hui vivement à ce que vous m'honoriez de votre confiance en m'accordant le premier emploi de directrice vacant.*⁴¹³

Here Mlle. Créhange's complaints against her *directrice* concern the classroom behavior of her supervisor in front of the children. The Instructions of 1903 later address public

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1887. Bigart's response: “Lorsque vous aurez le temps de vs. [vous] familiariser avec le travail et la caractère de vos adjointes et maîtresses de couture, vous pourrez adresser ... un rapport spécial sur chacune d'elles...”. *Ibid.*, 11 December 1887.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.* Bigart to Chimènes, 18 December 1887.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 11 December 1887.

⁴¹³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Céline Créhange, 1 December 1887, received in Paris 7 December 1887.

affronts of the principal towards the teachers, as noted above. In addition, Créhange asks for a transfer. Both she and Chimènes agree on that. Tension between the Sephardic *directrice* and her Ashkenazic *institutrice* may have stemmed from their differing backgrounds or from their relative youth. Since they were the same age, it was probably difficult for Mme. Chimènes to exert her authority over Mlle. Créhange.

Examining the relationship of Mme. Chimènes with another one of her teachers, Mlle. Rachel Pisa⁴¹⁴, will elucidate some of the conflicts within the school administration. Mlle. Pisa arrives at the end of October 1889 with Mlle. Souroujon.⁴¹⁵ Mme. Chimènes reports the following about her young novices:

*Nos deux nouvelles adjointes bien jeunes et bien novices, on voit que ce sont des jeunes filles qui n'ont jamais enseigné, je suis donc obligée d'être souvent près d'elles pour donner des conseils. J'ai confié la 1ère classe à Mlle. Pisa qui a paru désireuse d'avoir cette classe, je l'ai lui donné provisoirement...*⁴¹⁶

Although she says that her new personnel have no teaching experience, Mme. Chimènes similarly lacks administrative experience. By 25 November 1889, her new *adjointes* are questioning her authority:

Permettez-moi de vous demander si je dois exiger de mes adjointes qu'elles corrigent les devoirs faits à la maison par les élèves. [Bigart writes in the margin: “Certainement...”.] *J'ai toujours, lorsque j'étais adjointe, fait ce travail,*

⁴¹⁴ Rachel Pisa is a native of Andrinople/Adrianople (Edirne), in the European part of Ottoman Turkey, born in 1875. See E. Antébi, *Les Missionnaires Juifs ...*, 151. Rachel later becomes a *directrice* in Damascus, Ortaquey-Constantinople, Smyrna (Izmir) and Cairo. Ibid., 349, n.7. See also A.H. Navon, *Les 70 Ans de l'Ecole Normale Israélite-Orientale...*, 162; and www.aiu.org, accessed February 10, 2005.

⁴¹⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, Chimènes to Bigart, 28 October 1889 and Bigart to Chimènes, 3 November 1889. Both Souroujon and Pisa were born in the Ottoman Empire; see Navon, *Les 70 Ans...*, 161-162. See also Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 64, D. Cazès, *Tableau du personnel des écoles de l'Alliance israélite en Tunisie, Ecole de filles de Tunis*, 20 April 1891.

⁴¹⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 5 November 1889.

*et je n'ai jamais trouvé qu'il fut excessif; les devoirs doivent être corrigés, selon moi, et expliqués en classe; mais j'ai souvent eu l'occasion de voir des élèves peu attentives, ne corriger que très imparfaitement leur devoirs. Aussi est-il nécessaire que la maîtresse revoie les devoirs et les annote ... Je vois à ce travail de maîtresse un double profit pour l'instruction de l'élève. Mlles. Pisa et Souroujon trouvent cela extraordinaire et disent souvent qu'à l'école de garçons cela ne se fait pas.*⁴¹⁷

Whether or not to correct papers at home may appear to be an issue of pedagogy; it can also be construed as a teacher's test of the principal's discipline and authority.

What is Rachel Pisa's impression of her *directrice*? Pisa states in her letter of 2

April 1890:

*Dès le lendemain de mon arrivée ma directrice s'est plu à me faire, à tout propos, des scènes et des observations injustes devant les élèves. Ainsi elle m'a dit qu'une démonstration était fautive quand elle était identique à celle du livre. Ensuite elle m'a appelée "mal honnête, impolie, mal élevée" parce que je n'ai pas voulu baisser les yeux quand elle me parlait ... Madame Chimènes cherche toutes les occasions pour froisser mon amour-propre ... Ma directrice me déteste et elle voudrait que je ne sois aimée de personne. ... mais malgré tous mes efforts je ne parviens pas à satisfaire Madame Chimènes. Après une dernière scène qu'elle m'a faite j'ai sollicité mon changement.*⁴¹⁸

The behavior that Pisa complained of -- that from the day after she arrived, her *directrice* rained down unjust observations about her in front of the students -- would later qualify as inappropriate behavior for a *directrice*, as printed in the Instructions of 1903. But even without the Instructions, a more seasoned teacher and principal may have had the presence of mind to act otherwise. Pisa has other grievances, too: a demonstration she gave, identical to the one in the book, was declared wrong by her principal; Mme. Chimènes calls her "impolite" because Pisa does not lower her eyes when speaking to

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 November 1889.

⁴¹⁸ Archive of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIII E-247*, Reel 72, Rachel Pisa, April 1890.

her. Mme. Chimènes, however, does not mention this incident in her correspondence. Meanwhile, Pisa is convinced that her principal “detests” her, and Pisa applies for a change of post six months after arriving in Tunis. Thus, from the very beginning, Rachel Pisa is manifestly unhappy with her *directrice*.

Mme. Chimènes, on the other hand, is either oblivious to the true state of her *adjointes* or is just trying to maintain her job. Throughout the academic year of 1890-91 she praises Mlle. Pisa, the rest of her teaching staff, and the progress of the school. On 18 September 1890, Mme. Chimènes states: “*Mlle. Pisa a beaucoup de goût pour l’enseignement, elle fait sa classe avec ardeur. Son caractère a bien changé à son avantage ...*”⁴¹⁹ Then, on 6 January 1891, she writes: “*Mes adjointes ont d’excellents rapports avec moi ... Elles ont agi comme des véritables soeurs...*”⁴²⁰ Again, on 5 May 1891: “*Je ne crois pas cependant m’illusionner en disant que malgré tous, notre école marche bien...*”⁴²¹ Mme. Chimènes seems honestly to believe that the school is running smoothly.

However, in August 1891, Mme. Chimènes indirectly learns of forthcoming staff changes. She says she heard that Mlle. Pisa received her nomination for the school at Adrianople. Should she believe it? Bigart soon confirms Pisa’s nomination for

⁴¹⁹ Archives of the AIU, *France VII F.14*, Annual Reports, Tunis 1883-1926, V. Chimènes, 18 September 1890.

⁴²⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 6 January 1891.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 5 May 1891.

Adrianople⁴²², where Sara Ungar is *directrice*. In fact, on 26 April 1891, Sara Ungar suggested that Rachel Pisa return to her hometown in Ottoman Turkey and teach at the AIU School for Girls:

*Je serais très contente pour ma part d'avoir ici une adjointe appartenant à une des bonnes familles du pays et qui aurait son chez-soi et les consolations de la famille dans la tâche ardue que incombe à nos jeunes maîtresses.*⁴²³

This measure would afford sanctuary for Rachel Pisa and entrée for Sara Ungar to “one of the good families” of Andrinople.

Andrinople was one of the cities of the Ottoman Empire that gave refuge to Jews who were exiled from Spain (1492 and 1495), Portugal (1506), Italy (1534) and elsewhere. Some family names, reports Moïse Franco, a teacher at the Boys’ School in Andrinople in 1896 and author of a history in French on the Jews of Turkey, reflect the names of Italian cities, such as Pisa.⁴²⁴ Both Mlle. Pisa and Mme. Chimènes were raised in Judeo-Spanish communities, so it could be assumed that they shared a common heritage. But Pisa was a native of the Ottoman Empire (or “Eastern”) and Chimènes was French. This East/West duality may have colored their relationship. However, it appears that their conflicts arose more from personality differences than from differences of geography.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 12 August 1891 and 20 August 1891. Rachel Pisa confirms her transfer to Adrianople in October 1891. See Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIII E-247*, Reel 72, Rachel Pisa, 7 October 1891.

⁴²³ As quoted in *Les Missionnaires Juifs...*, 151.

⁴²⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Turquie VII E*, M. Franco, letter received in Paris on 30 January 1897, as quoted in Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims...*, 142-143. On Franco’s background, see Navon, *Les 70 Ans...*, 126. For more general information in English on the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, see Avigdor Levy, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1992).

Viewing This Little World Horizontally: The *Directeur* and the *Directrice*

What does David Cazès say about Mme. Chimènes and the School for Girls? As early as December 1887, he remarks: “... *Mme. Chimènes est une très bonne institutrice, mais elle n’a pas l’habitude de la direction, elle a un peu, comme on dit, la main lourde, et manque du tact nécessaire pour conduire et former son monde...*”⁴²⁵

Thus, two months after the school year begins, Cazès notes that Chimènes lacks the necessary tact as an administrator “to conduct and form her world”. Bigart in Paris unofficially attacks “her world”: “...*Mme. Chimènes n’a pas la légèreté de main qu’il faut pour diriger un personnel relative si nombreuse...*”⁴²⁶ His attack is unofficial only because it is crossed out in his notes. But it reveals Bigart’s negative opinion of Mme. Chimènes, and it also underscores the influence of Cazès over Bigart.

The influence of Cazès over Bigart reveals the power of the director to formulate policy at the School for Girls, and also, to subvert the authority of the *directrice*. Before the new school building on al-Meshnaqa is inaugurated at the end of December 1890, Cazès proposes an idea that is contrary to the usual practice of the AIU. Rather than the same person supervising the nursery and primary schools, he requests that the nursery school be completely independent from grade school, with its *directrice*. He notes that a woman teacher should have “sweetness of character”, “patience”, and “indulgence.” Cazès then tartly reminds Bigart that these are “not the dominant character traits” of the

⁴²⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 63, David Cazès, 22 December 1887.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, Bigart to Cazès, 1 January 1888.

directrice, and concludes that the nursery school should be autonomous.⁴²⁷ It is Cazès who proposes the budgets of the schools, including the nursery school.⁴²⁸ He nominates and hires the nursery school teachers.⁴²⁹ If one *directrice* had had overall authority over both the primary and nursery schools, she would have hired the staff for both schools.

For two years, Mme. Léonie Féraud serves as *directrice* of the nursery school.⁴³⁰ Cazès successfully guides his policy so that even after he leaves Tunisia for Argentina in December 1893, there is a separate *directrice* for the youngest children. But by 1896 and the tenure of Mme. H. Gelbmann, the nursery school comes under the direct supervision of the primary school principal,⁴³¹ in accordance with accepted AIU practice.

Although Cazès discusses the innovation of a nursery school, Mme. Chimènes rarely mentions it. In March 1890 she looks forward to the creation of a nursery school,

⁴²⁷ ...je suis obligé, par suite des circonstances, de vous proposer quelque chose de contraire à mon idée et à ce qui se fait partout habituellement. En principe, partout où l'on établit un asile à côté d'une école de filles, la directrice de ce dernier établissement a la haute surveillance sur la directrice et les maîtresses de l'asile. Actuellement, et en tenant compte de la composition actuelle de notre personnel, je suis obligé de vous demander de ne pas vous arrêter à ce parti, et de faire de l'asile une institution complètement indépendante avec une directrice spéciale. Voici ce que me fait faire cette proposition: Les enfants de l'asile, bien plus que les élèves de l'école, ont moins besoin d'instruction que de l'éducation; il leur faut des soins affectueux, des attentions, des témoignages de bontés, la maîtresse doit être d'une douceur de caractère, d'une patience et d'une indulgence à toute épreuve. Ce ne son pas là les traits dominants du caractère de la directrice actuelle de votre école de filles, et comme en somme l'asile est une nouvelle creation...on peut... les séparer l'un de l'autre, et laisser à l'asile son autonomie.... Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 64, David Cazès, 21 November 1890.

⁴²⁸ He estimates that the annual cost will be 4,000 F per student per year. Ibid., 16 February 1891.

⁴²⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, David Cazès, 5 February 1892, 26 February 1892.

⁴³⁰ The nursery school was slated to open on 28 February 1892; Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, David Cazès, 26 February 1892; the letter of 2 March 1892 confirms the date. Mme. Veuve Léonie Féraud's correspondence covers the period of 24 February 1892 – 10 June 1894. She died in Tunis on 7 July 1894, at age 45. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, L. Féraud. Her daughter, Mlle. B. Féraud, was a teacher in the School for Girls. Ibid., B. Féraud.

⁴³¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, H. Gelbmann, 3 November 1896.

among other projects (*Nous allons pouvoir maintenant réaliser tous nos projets, ateliers de couture, de repassage et asile*⁴³²), yet she rarely dwells on it later. Her omissions may be a form of “silence”. In the contemporary feminist metaphors of silence and voice, an author notes that “in addition to ‘not talking’, being *silent* is taken to mean...not writing.” Moreover, “silence refers to a particular kind of silence, that of a powerless group.”⁴³³ Since Cazès decides that there should be a separate (and autonomous) *directrice* for the nursery school, hires the staff of the new institution, and wields control in an area that should have been in the *directrice*’s domain, her omissions may be the silence of the powerless.

Continuing Strife: New *Adjointes* and Emerging New Leaders

Mme. Chimènes continues to provoke controversy and to antagonize her newly arrived *adjointes*. In the fall of 1891 there are several staff changes: Mlles. Pisa and Souroujon return home to Ottoman Turkey; one of the new replacements is Mlle. Mathilde Twersky.⁴³⁴ Born in Russia in 1867, Mathilde Twersky marries M. Alhallel/Alchalel, an *adjoint* at the School for Boys, in 1893. But first she receives permission to get married from the Central Committee. (By 1903, the Instructions clearly state that this is a requirement for the Alliance teaching personnel. Such regulations reveal the underlying paternalism of the AIU.) In 1894, as a “senior” member of the

⁴³² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66 V. Chimènes, 24 March 1890.

⁴³³ Marjorie L. DeVault, *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 177.

⁴³⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 9 September 1891.

teaching staff, Twersky become a provisional *directrice* of the School for Girls in Tunis.⁴³⁵ Her marriage to another Alliance teacher, who could serve as her advocate in administrative disputes, may have contributed to Twersky's long-term success (of thirty-one years) in the school system.

Conflicts between Mlle. Mathilde Twersky and Mme. Voley Chimènes become apparent by November 1892 and continue until Mme. Chimènes returns to Paris in 1894. Both Twersky and Chimènes make remarks in front of the children that should have been avoided. Twersky says to her *directrice*: "*Le Comité Central defend aux directrices de faire des observations devant les élèves à leur maîtresses.*" Bigart responds that neither one should make observations in front of the children.⁴³⁶ This echoes the incidents between Céline Créhange and Chimènes in 1887 and between Rachel Pisa and Chimènes in 1890.

What does Mme. Chimènes report about Mlle. Twersky? In a letter from 2 January 1892, Mme. Chimènes writes:

*Mlle. Twersky avait l'habitude de l'enseignement particulier et pas de tout de l'enseignement public, elle doit faire elle aussi un apprentissage. Elle manifeste du zèle, mais n'est pas encore habituée à nos élèves et à la façon de les diriger...*⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ www.aiu.org, Alchalel (née Twersky), Mathilde, accessed October 31, 2003; Twersky, Mathilde, accessed August 14, 2004. *Bulletin de l'AIU*, 2nd Series, No. 18, 1st and 2nd Semesters, (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1893), 85. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 8 February 1893 and 7 May 1893. *Instructions....., Mariage des professeurs*, "*Le Comité Central souhaite d'être consulté par les professeurs et institutrices sur leurs projets de mariage.*", 16-17 Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 69, S.T. Pariente, 18 July 1894 and 10 October 1894.

⁴³⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mlle. Mathilde Twersky, Twersky to Bigart, 18 November 1892; *Ibid.*, Bigart to Twersky, November 1892.

⁴³⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 2 January 1892.

Here Chimènes is reserved in her assessment of Twersky.

But about one and a half years later, Chimènes is “absolutely stupefied” to discover complaints from Mme. Alhalel (née Twersky). In response to a letter of Bigart, Chimènes exclaims on 8 June 1893:

Je puis dire qu'en la lisant j'ai été absolument stupéfaite, je me demandais s'il n'y avait pas erreur et se c'était bien à moi qu'elle était adressée. Comme j'ai des excellents rapports avec toutes mes adjointes sans exception, je ne pouvais pas comprendre laquelle avait à se plaindre à moi. Pourtant, en réfléchissant, je compris que ce ne pouvait être que Mme. Alhalel ... J'ai prié M. Cazès de bien vouloir demander à Mme. Alhalel les motifs de plainte qu'elle a contre moi, et elle n'a pu en alléguer un seul, disant que c'était mille petits riens du tout (c'est son expression) dont elle ne se rappelait pas en ce moment, que du reste son mari pourrait les dire beaucoup mieux qu'elle...⁴³⁸

Chimènes thinks she has excellent rapport with her teachers. On further reflection she realizes that complaints could stem only from Mme. Alhalel. Chimènes asks Cazès to intercede and find a motive. Mme. Alhalel tells Cazès that it is “a thousand little nothings”, and that her husband, M. Alhalel, could provide more information. Chimènes then demands an explanation from Bigart.

The Secretary of the Central Committee, Jaques Bigart, replies that criticism of Chimènes is widespread among the ranks of the *adjointes*. It is not limited to Alahalel. As Bigart makes clear in his typed (!) response of 14 June 1893, all personnel who are later transferred from Tunis welcome it as “a deliverance” from her. He says that her staff suffers thousands of small humiliations and annoyances every day,⁴³⁹ no doubt a

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 June 1893.

⁴³⁹ *Nous avons reçu votre lettre du 8 juin et lu les explications que vous nous donnez sur votre attitude envers Mme. Alhalel. Notre lettre avait une portée plus générale que celle que vous lui attribuez. Ce n'est pas Mme. Alhalel seule qui se plaint de vos bruqueries, vos manières peu bienveillantes. Toutes vos*

reference to the “thousand little nothings” raised in her prior letter. Bigart’s letter also confirms the feeling of humiliation expressed by Créhange and Pisa in the past. Since Mme. Chimènes ruffles everyone who works under her direction, Bigart asks her to examine her conscience, giving her warning of his displeasure with her. Wedged chronologically in between the letters of Chimènes and Bigart, Cazès adds his opinion of the situation: “*Je comprends que vous en ayez assez et qu’il est temps que toutes ces mequineries prennent une fin ...*”.⁴⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, Cazès already thinks it is time for Mme. Chimènes to leave. His comment occurs one year in advance of her dismissal. In the meantime, Mme. Alhalel keeps criticizing Mme. Chimènes in letters to the Central Committee.⁴⁴¹

During this era of rancor, staff changes continue. Mme. and Mlle. Féraud arrive in the winter of 1892, a French mother and daughter pair of teachers.⁴⁴² The mother, a widow (Mme. Veuve Léonie Féraud), maintains a strained but working relationship with Mme. Chimènes. The younger Féraud, however, takes offense at the behavior of Mme.

adjointes, pour ainsi dire, se trouvent malheureuses de travailler sous votre direction, et celles de vos adjointes qui, après avoir servi à l’école de Tunis, ont été appelées à un autre poste, ont accueilli leur déplacement comme une délivrance... ce qui est constant, c’est que vos adjointes souffrent de mille petites humiliations que vous leur infligez, de mille tracasseries de tous les jours qui découragent et énervent les plus courageuses et les plus dévouées, c’est que vous les traitez sans bienveillance, sans indulgence, sans bonté, que nous ne pouvons tolérer une situation aussi douloureuse pour des institutrices animées de bonne volonté et de zèle, que notre devoir est d’y mettre un terme. Avant tout, il faut que vous vous rendiez compte que l’accusation portée contre vous n’est ni imaginaire ni tendencieuse Si vous ne voulez ou ne pouvez faire cet examen de conscience, ce sera pour nous la preuve que cette situation n’a pas d’issue. Ibid., Bigart to Chimènes, 14 June 1893.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, David Cazès, 9 June 1893.

⁴⁴¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXVII E*, Reel 50, Mme. M. Alhalel, 1893-94.

⁴⁴² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 8 February 1892.

Chimènes and finds allies with the Salomon sisters, Lucie and Henriette, who begin teaching at the school in the fall of 1893.

The younger and more talented sister, Henriette Salomon, later becomes one of the provisional *directrices*, with Mme. Alhalel, in 1894. Henriette was born in Château-Salins in the province of Lorraine in 1873. But she and her family, along with thousands of others, move from this region shortly after it is annexed by Germany as a result of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Her father, Victor Salomon, was the Burgmeister (mayor) in their hometown, but when they transfer to Châlons-sur-Marne in the neighboring province of Champagne, he opens a grocery store. Victor Salomon dies when Henriette is thirteen, and her mother takes over the store. Henriette and her older sister are put in boarding school and then sent to the Collège Sévigné, a private and secular secondary school in Paris, with Eve and Marie Curie noted among its graduates. But rather than undertaking the expenses entailed in preparation for entering the state normal school for women secondary school teachers at Sèvres (a two year period of study which afforded neither grant nor “remuneration”⁴⁴³), she and her sister enroll in L’Hay-les-Roses. Salomon Reinach, one of the teachers at Sévigné (and also an archaeologist, friend of Bigart, and eventual member of the Central Committee of the Alliance), and the AIU itself come to the aid of the sisters. Lucie and Henriette graduate as *institutrices*. After teaching and serving as a provisional *directrice* in Tunisia, Henriette marries an AIU teacher and *directeur*, Albert Antébi. But she truly proves her merit only after she is widowed – with eight children. In 1922, at the age of 48, she assumes the post of

⁴⁴³ Françoise Mayeur, *L’Education des Filles en France au XIXième Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1979) 150-151.

directrice of the *Ecole Normal Israélite Orientale (ENIO)* for women in Versailles. She remains there during the twenties and thirties. But her career starts in Tunis.⁴⁴⁴

The life of Henriette Salomon conforms to several models of women educators in the early years of the French Third Republic: displaced person from Lorraine, daughter of a widow, and later, a widow herself. The death of a father, as chief breadwinner, would have signaled the beginning of unprecedented strains, financial and social, for a middle class nineteenth century family. It is estimated that a French family could spend twenty-five to thirty per cent of its income on education.⁴⁴⁵ Tuition in Paris for secondary school during the mid-1880's could cost 800 francs per year for a *demi-pensionnaire* (a student who would be served only lunch). In addition, the family was expected to pay for uniforms, book, school supplies, and housing.⁴⁴⁶ There were strong motivations, however, to send a daughter to Paris for an education, particularly after the sudden death of a father. The lack of a dowry and the possibility of having to support herself and care for a widowed mother were common reasons for a girl to attend normal school.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ For information on the life of Henriette Salomon Antébi, see an entry in the book by her brother-in-law, A.H. Navon, *Le 70 Ans...*, 114; and the chapter in her granddaughter's book, E. Antébi, "*Henriette Antébi (1873-1954), Lorraine de Palestine*", *Les Juifs Missionnaires...*, 300-309. This chapter should be read judiciously, preferably in conjunction with Henriette's correspondence that is relevant to this period, found in the Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mille. Henriette Salomon, September 1893 – May 1896. Henriette Salomon discusses her education in her letter of 19 November 1894.

⁴⁴⁵ Marguerite Perrot, *Le mode de vie des familles bourgeoises, 1873-1953* (Paris: A. Colin, 1961), 92, as quoted in Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur, Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 57.

⁴⁴⁶ Françoise Mayeur, *L'Enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des science politiques, 1977), 184-185, as quoted in Margadant, *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁷ According to Margadant, in *Madame le Professeur*, p. 56, in the first ten classes at Sèvres, eighteen per cent of the girls training to be secondary school teachers had lost their fathers. This was similar to the proportion of families lacking fathers in the total population of 1900.

Similarly, the death of the father of a Tunisian family in the *hāra* could cause immediate hardship. In the case where only the daughter could be employed, learning a trade at the Alliance school was of primary importance. Some of the most desperate cases reported by the *directrices* concern girls who suddenly became the sole support of their families after the death of the male breadwinner.⁴⁴⁸ Thus, the same economic and social considerations could guide the employment patterns of the teachers and their students.

What else motivated young women such as Henriette Salomon, having originated in the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, to leave northeastern France for the shores of North Africa? In a recent study on the women educators in the Third Republic, the historian Jo Burr Margadant notes that almost half the young women who attended the national normal school at Sèvres were born in small towns, but by the time they entered the school, less than a quarter still lived in such communities. The elite of France's female teaching corps, more than half of them lived in cities of more than 20,000 when they began their studies. A move from a small town to a larger city would often indicate upward mobility. If the future teachers originated in Alsace-Lorraine, German annexation would have impelled their families to move. Mobility patterns of the parents may then have influenced the choices of their daughters.

... the necessity of moving must have affected the way that parents thought about their children's futures. Not themselves deeply rooted in one area, such parents

⁴⁴⁸ Discussing two of her students who work on the knitting machines, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali states: "*L'une de ces jeunes filles, Mathilde Attal vient de perdre son père à la suite de l'épidémie de cholera; elle se trouve maintenant l'unique soutien de sa famille; l'autre, Marie Haddad, souffre de ne pas pouvoir gagner assez pour aider son vieux père et une sœur veuve et sans reources, avec 3 enfants.*" Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Reel 35, Julie Cohen-Scali, 5 January 1912.

might more easily envisage for their children careers requiring a mobile life-style and even a residence far from home.⁴⁴⁹

The trend posited for the Sévrienne could also probably be valid for the young women attending teacher-training programs of the Alliance in Paris. Already uprooted, they would accept another move. Thus, a teacher such a Mlle. Céline Créhange of Lorraine would conform to this model. Moreover, in the case of Henriette Salomon (also of Lorraine), after she receives her *brevet supérieur* in Paris, she goes with her family to North Africa.

When the Salomon sisters arrive in Tunis, ahead of their mother who soon joins them, the *directrice* places them in virtually uninhabitable living quarters. Their apartment is full of scorpions, mice, rats, and other vermin,⁴⁵⁰ and certainly does not endear Mme. Chimènes to them. The sisters move in with Mme. and Mlle. Féraud, gaining the friendship of the daughter. When their mother arrives, they move into an apartment. As for the attitudes of her teaching staff, Mme. Chimènes reports on 27 October 1893 that the *adjointes* have become more ‘impertinent’, that the younger Miss Salomon (i.e. Henriette) does not recognize Chimènes’ authority, and that the teachers are in ‘open rebellion’ against Chimènes and incite the students to disobey her.⁴⁵¹ On 6

⁴⁴⁹ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 52-53.

⁴⁵⁰ Mme. Chimènes says that the apartment was vacant all summer and had not been cleaned. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 16 October 1893. See also Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Henriette Salomon, 6 November 1893.

⁴⁵¹ “...la conduite de nos adjointes au lieu de se modifier devient de plus en plus impertinente ... Mlle. Salomon jeune ne me reconnaît aucune autorité ... ces maîtresses sont en révolte ouverte contre moi, et cela sans aucune motif, ensuite qu’elle suscitent les élèves à me désobeir et à ne plus avoir confiance en mon enseignement aussi qu’a celui des autres maîtresses.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65 V. Chimènes, 27 October 1893.

November 1893, both Chimènes and Henriette Salomon write to Bigart. Mme. Chimènes complains of the insolence and absences of the Salomon sisters. Henriette, in her turn, describes how she ignores the advice and instructions of her principal.⁴⁵² Meanwhile, Mlle. Féraud has many absences, although her “illness” doesn’t prevent her from going out and making visits.⁴⁵³

The conflict escalates the following month: both Chimènes and Féraud seek redress outside the confines of the Alliance school system. In her letter of 24 December 1893, Mlle. Féraud explains to Bigart that on the request of Mme. Chimènes an inquest took place at the school where the *directrice* and four teachers submitted to interrogation by the Inspector General, M. Baille, and the other teachers gave testimony.⁴⁵⁴ This is a summary from Féraud’s point of view. In reconstructing the events, first, Chimènes went outside the AIU system to complain to M. Machuel, Director General of Instruction. M. Machuel delegated the Inspector General of Instruction, M. Baille, to lead the inquest.

On 21 December 1893 Mlle. Féraud airs her grievances to the Chief Rabbi (*le Grand Rabbin*) of France.⁴⁵⁵ Here she goes above her immediate supervisors at the

⁴⁵² Ibid., 6 November 1893; Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, 6 November 1893.

⁴⁵³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 13 November 1893.

⁴⁵⁴ « *Ma lettre de 22 Xbre [Décembre] 1893 vous apprenait que sur demande de Mme, Chimènes enquête avait eu lieu à l’école où la directrice, Mmes. Alchalel, Sandoz, Duchêne et moi nous avons été appelées les unes à subir l’interrogation, les autres à porter témoignage* » Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Mlle. B. Féraud, 24 December 1893.

⁴⁵⁵ She writes to Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn and says she has been subject to « *toutes les vexations et à tous les outrages qui puissent être infligés à quelqu’un, et cela de la part de Mme. Chimènes, ma directrice... Mais nous n’avons pas eu la chance d’obtenir même audience de Monsieur Machul. Celui-ci a délégué hier soir encore Monsieur l’Inspecteur Primaire qui est venue à l’école procéder à une enquête.* » Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Mlle. B. Féraud, 21 December 1893.

Central Committee to lodge her complaints. In the period after Cazès leaves and the same day that Pariente arrives to be director of the School for Boys, Mme. Chimènes sends a letter to Paris (on 25 December 1893) discussing problems with her personnel. She says that Mlle. Féraud's insolence has increased. More importantly, since M. Pariente had not yet arrived she had "had to inform M. Machuel," Director General of Education in Tunisia, (*Directeur Général de L'Enseignement en Tunisie*) for the French Protectorate, of Mlle. Féraud's behavior. An inquiry had been held at the school, chaired by the Inspector General of Public Education, M. Baille.⁴⁵⁶

Regarding the inquiry, Mlle. Féraud reports that Mmes. Alchalel, Sandoz, Duchêne and she herself were called in for an interrogation. Both the *directrice* and the *adjointes* gave depositions. Baille, with good political sense, said it was difficult to know which of the two sides was right. The Inspector concluded that an inquiry of this kind would take at least two weeks and that he could not and would not undertake it.⁴⁵⁷

By calling in the French educational establishment, Mme. Chimènes demonstrates that she does not understand the vertical (top-down/bottom-up) linkages of power politics. Her complaints should have been kept within the confines of the school system, even though the French administration had supervision over the school. She neither

⁴⁵⁶ "Monsieur Pariente n'était pas encore arrivé, j'ai dû avertir Monsieur Machuel, qui a trouvé le fait si grave qu'il fit faire une enquête immédiatement par M. Baille, inspecteur." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 25 December 1893. For Mlle. Féraud's recapitulation of the inquest, see Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Mlle. B. Féraud, Féraud to Bigart, 21 December 1893, 24 December 1893, and Bigart to Féraud, 4 January 1894.

⁴⁵⁷ Baille says "qu'il lui était bien difficile de savoir laquelle des deux était dans le vrai, n'ayant pas assisté aux faits mentionnés.... Monsieur l'Inspecteur objecté qu'une enquête de ce genre durait au moins quinze jours, qu'il ne pouvait ni ne voudrait l'entreprendre." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Mlle. B. Féraud, 24 December 1893.

maintains discipline over her subordinates nor respects the authority of her supervisors in Paris. By complaining to the French educational administration, she jeopardizes her position within the Alliance, the position of the Alliance in Tunisia and the continuation of subsidies by the Tunisian government to the Alliance schools.

Mlle. Féraud has the same lack of perspicuity, and she arouses almost comparable displeasure from the Central Committee of the Alliance as Mme. Chimènes.⁴⁵⁸ For her lack of “discipline” and for refusing to obey the orders of her *directrice*, Féraud is put on three months’ leave of absence without pay. Upon receiving the letter notifying her of this, Mlle. Féraud resigns.⁴⁵⁹ The Central Committee still has not quite taken a decision to replace Mme. Chimènes. Perhaps they were willing to wait a bit longer to see whether the punishment of Mlle. Féraud would suffice to restore calm.⁴⁶⁰

What does the new director of the School for Boys, S.T. Pariente, say about the inquest of 21 December 1893? In his first letter upon arriving in Tunis, in late December 1893, he notes that Mlle. Féraud did not want to take orders from Mme. Chimènes, and that Chimène immediately went to M. Machuel to complain and M. Machuel delegated his Inspector to investigate. Already Pariente notices a “deplorable” esprit de corps at the School for Girls: students are deserting. And M. Machuel had asked M. Pariente:

⁴⁵⁸ “Le Comité Central a pris connaissance des diverse communications que nous avons reçu sur les derniers incidents entre Mme. Chimènes et vous. Le comité estime qu’il n’est pas admissible qu’une adjointe oublie au point que vous l’avez fait les égards qu’elle doit à la directrice de l’école. Malgré un précédent avertissement, vous avez continué à manquer à la discipline et refusé de vous soumettre aux ordres de la directrice. En conséquence, le Comité Central vous inflige un mise de disponibilité pendant 3 mois sans traitement.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Mlle. B. Féraud, Bigart to Féraud, 4 January 1894.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.* and 9 January 1894.

⁴⁶⁰ As suggested in *Ibid.*

“Hasn’t the Alliance decided to replace Mme. Chimènes?” Diplomatically, Pariente had asked for Machuel’s personal opinion. Machuel responded that it was absolutely necessary to find a replacement.⁴⁶¹ Here, then is the first time that firing Mme. Chimènes is discussed by Machuel. It is introduced by none other than the French director of public education for Tunisia, who ironically had become involved only at the behest of Chimènes herself.

What arguments does the *directrice* muster in self-defense? She says that the *désordre moral* which reigns in the school began only when the Central Committee started sending letters directly to Mlle. Féraud. Also, the principal had to struggle when she took over the leadership of the school. First, at dismissal, the students left the school “without order”; when she requested that the students line up in rows, she received the response that it was not done that way at the School for Boys; and Mlle. Pisa publicly refused to accompany the students. Then there were complaints about correcting homework (by Milles. Pisa and Souroujon in 1889). Bigart had replied that the teachers should not concern themselves with whatever transpired at the School for Boys. Mme. Chimènes declares that the School for Girls leaves nothing to be desired under the report on cleanliness and discipline. Under the report on work, she states that the results are satisfactory, even though the teachers from Paris (as oppose to the native-born Tunisians)

⁴⁶¹ In Pariente’s first letter from Tunis to Paris, he writes: “*Seulement je m’aperçois déjà qu’un esprit déplorable règne à l’Ecole de filles. Les élèves de bonnes familles désertent... M. Machuel me demandra: ‘Est-ce que l’Alliance n’est pas décidée changer Mme. Chimènes?’ Je répondis: ‘Quel serait votre avis personnel?’ M. Machuel répondis: ‘Entre nous, il le faudrait absolument.... C’est la faute de l’Alliance, qui diminue l’autorité de la direction en correspondant directement avec les adjointes.’*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S. Pariente, 25 December 1893.

were often absent.⁴⁶² Here the themes of order and discipline, as well as respect for authority, reflect particular concerns of the era. As Timothy Mitchell notes in his discussion of Egypt, “Streets and schools were built as the expression and achievement of an intellectual orderliness, a social tidiness, a physical cleanliness that was coming to be considered the country’s fundamental political requirement.”⁴⁶³ The same goals of orderliness and cleanliness appear in the Instructions of the Alliance of 1903, as mentioned earlier. They recur in the correspondence and probably applied equally to Tunisia and Egypt.

How does Bigart reply to Mme. Chimènes? He counters her argument that lack of discipline took place only after Mlle. Féraud received letters directly from the Central Committee. Moreover, he says, *adjointes* are at liberty to write directly to the Central Committee when they do not want to first submit their letters to the *directrice*. In none of our schools has this liberty engendered “disorders” such as those that have troubled your school. You cannot forget that the “discord” between you and your *adjointes* antedates

⁴⁶² “Vous m’informez du mécontentement du Comité Central, et vous me dites que le Comité est décidé à ne pas laisser durer plus longtemps le désordre moral qui règne dans l’école Vous me reprochez d’avoir eu des ennuis avec plusieurs de mes adjointes. J’ai pris en main la direction de l’école, mon but était de faire bien, et comme il fallait changer des habitudes existants déjà, j’ai eu beaucoup à lutter. D’abord, pour la discipline qui laissait beaucoup à désirer, ensuite pour le défaut d’organisation. Les élèves sortaient sans ordre .. Lorsque j’ai demandé qu’on mette les élèves en rangs on me répondait: ‘à l’école des garçons cela ne se fait pas.’ Mlle. Pisa ... elle s’est refusée publiquement à accompagner les élèves ... Pour la correction des devoirs, vous avez aussi reçu des plaintes, je dois dire que vous avez répondu que les maîtresses ne doivent pas s’occuper de ce qui se passait à l’école des garçons ... je puis dire que l’école des filles ne laisse rien à désirer sous le rapport de la propreté et de la discipline. Sous le rapport de travaux les résultats tous très satisfaisants, j’aime à le constater, vu les nombreuses absences des maîtresses venant de Paris ... Aussi profitent-elles de toutes les indispositions même les plus légères pour s’absenter durant plusieurs jours.” Archives of the AIU, Tunisia XXX E, Reel 65, Mme. V. Chimènes, 12 January 1894 (letter no. 21, dated 12 January “1893” should read “1894”).

⁴⁶³ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* ..., 63.

the arrival in Tunis of Mlle. Féraud and Milles. Salomon.⁴⁶⁴ Here he is referring to her problems with Créhange, Pisa, and Souroujon. On 14 May 1894 Bigart informs Chimènes that her contract will not be renewed for the following year.⁴⁶⁵

Inspecting This Little World from Outside and Above

The report of the Inspector from the Department of Public Education in Tunis for 1891-1892,⁴⁶⁶ affords insights into the administration of the School for Girls. Its advice ranges from time management (“lessons of one hour are too long: half an hour or three quarters of an hour suffice”), to books and teaching methods (“too many books are used.... One book for reading is enough in the lower grades, *Méthode de lecture et de langage*’ by L. Machuel; in the second [or next to the highest class], it can be used not only as a simple reader [*livre de lecture courant*] but also as a method for language teaching”). There should be a special notebook for daily assignments (*cahier unique de dev. quotidiens*) and also one for weekly assignments (*c. des devoirs hebdomedaires*). As for reading in the sixth (or lowest) class, translations should be made in Arabic and in French (*traductions en arabe – traductions en français*). The inspector suggests oral

⁴⁶⁴ “ Vous dites que l’indiscipline ne se pris [?] à l’école que depuis et parce que Mlle. Féraud a reçu des lettres directement du Comité Central. ...il faut cependant laisser aux adjointes la liberté d’écrire directement au Comité Central lorsqu’elles ne peuvent pas au préalable soumettre à la directrice.... Dans aucune de nos écoles, cette liberté...a engendré de désordres comme ceux qui ont troublé votre école. Vous ne pouvez pas oublier non plus que cd n’est pas aujourd’hui, il est antérieur à l’arrivée à Tunis de Mlle. Féraud et Melles. Salomon. » Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, Bigart to Chimènes, 28 January 1894.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1894.

⁴⁶⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, *Régence de Tunis, Direction de l’Enseignement Public, Tunis*, “Notes d’inspection, Ecoles de filles de l’All. Israélite visitée le 22 juin 1892”, received in Paris 13 July 1892.

exercises for foreign language instruction – students should always respond with complete and correct sentences. Recitations and grammar encourage application of the rules. The Inspector even encourages group work in French. (*“Pourquoi un livre? Sujets simples – préparation en commun”*).⁴⁶⁷ Such suggestions all seem reasonable, certainly by today’s standards. However, since there was no official Arabic teacher, the school always employed at least one indigenous teacher who could serve as an interpreter. Sometimes a teacher would rely on students in higher grades to translate for pupils in the lower classes.⁴⁶⁸ Of course, this method of transmitting knowledge is not exactly risk-free.

Bigart and Chimènes discuss the implementation of Baille’s report throughout 1892-1893.⁴⁶⁹ For instance, Chimènes notes on 10 October 1892 that she is trying to follow the instructions of M. Machuel and M. Baille. Chimènes also sends the school’s schedule (*emploi du temps*) to M. Machuel, who returns it with some changes, as reported in her letter of 14 November 1892. Among other items, the report states that parents are supposed to sign the notebooks of their children. However, the lack of literacy among the parents prevents them from signing any notebooks. To solve the problem, an older

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ For instance, “...nous avons un bien grand obstacle dans notre école, nous nous adressons à des enfants ne comprenant pas ... le français. Il faut donc pour expliquer le plus simple mot, recourir à une enfant pour traduire nos paroles, il va sans dire, que nous ignorons, nous maîtresses, si l’explication a été non seulement comprise, mais encore bien exprimée par l’enfant.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 31 October 1887.

⁴⁶⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, Chimènes to Bigart, 9 September 1892; Bigart to Chimènes, 16 September 1892; Chimènes to Bigart, 10 October 1892; Bigart to Chimènes, 20 October 1892; Chimènes to Bigart, 14 November 1892; Chimènes to Bigart, 3 January 1893 and 8 March 1893.

brother usually provides the requested signature.⁴⁷⁰ Of course, that negates the purpose of having the notebook signed in the first place. In the end, Mme. Chimènes and M. Bigart decide to ignore the recommendation of the inspectors. But the Report of the French educational authorities in Tunis (M. Machuel and M. Baille) weighs against Mme. Chimènes.

Revisiting Horizontal Linkages: The *Directeur* and the *Directrice*

Both Cazès and Pariente, the successive directors of the School for Boys, influence the course of events at the School for Girls. What is the *directeur*'s opinion of the *directrice*'s use of time as discussed in the Report? Cazès writes that he would be lacking in his "moral duty" if he did not discuss school schedules. As for the *emploi du temps* of Mme. Chimènes, he says it is ridiculous: lessons of fifteen minutes or half an hour; material repeated twice in the same day; courses of religious instruction and singing for children in the sixth, seventh, and eighth (or lowest) classes, who do not know a word of French. When he discussed his observations with Mme. Chimènes, she said that the class schedule had shuttled back and forth three times between the school and the Inspector's office. Cazès notes that this is so extraordinary and inexplicable that he

⁴⁷⁰ "Nos enfants sont obligées, depuis la rentrée, d'avoir un cahier hebdomadaire, ainsi qu'un carnet de correspondance, que nous leur remettons tous les 15 jours. C'est à mon avis une bonne chose et j'ai toujours vu cela en France; mais à Tunis les parents ne savent ni lire, ni écrire; je doute dans ce cas que ce carnet remplisse le but qu'on se propose en mettant les parents dans l'obligation de signer ce livret. Il est facile aux enfants de tromper la famille, nous sommes forcées d'accepter une signature quelconque, et c'est souvent le frère, s'il sait écrire, qui se charge de ce soin." Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXX E, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 14 November 1892.

would not be surprised if M. Machuel does not approve of her scheduling.⁴⁷¹ The written reaction of the *directeur* appears harsher than that of the *inspecteur*, possibly because one was a private letter and the other an official government document. Also, their responses are somewhat at odds with each other. Cazès thinks the lessons are too short, and Baille thinks the lessons are too long. In any case, the length of class is a problem. On the other hand, it should be noted that today, teaching children songs in a foreign language is an accepted method of foreign language acquisition, even at the most elementary levels. But it is clear that Mme. Chimènes does not have the approval of M. Cazès, only his ridicule.

Once M. Pariente becomes director of the School for Boys in Tunis, Chimènes does not fare much better. In January 1894, Pariente comments on the Inspector's Report and concludes that the Central Committee would see if the punishment applied to Mlle. Féraud would suffice to restore "calm and discipline" to the school.⁴⁷² Here the implication is that the opposite prevails. By the end of February 1894, Bigart drafts a note to Pariente about the "imminent departure of Mme. Chimènes". He then crosses this

⁴⁷¹ "Je vais vous parler d'une autre affaire dont il m'est très désagréable de parler, mais je manquerais à mon devoir moral si je la laissais passer sans _____ viens de soumettre à l'approbation de M. Machuel l'emploi du temps de nos écoles et les élèves dont nous servons et cela en conformité de vos accords avec le gouvernement tunisien. Pour cela j'ai demandé à Mme. Chimènes et à Danon les emplois du temps de leurs écoles; ... celui de Mme. Chimènes ... est tellement ridicule que j'avais vraiment honte de l'envoyer. Des leçons d'un quart d'heure et d'une demi-heure, des matières répétées deux fois dans la même journée, des cours d'instructions religieuses et de chant faits aux enfants de 6e, 7e, 8e classes, qui ne savent pas un mot de français! Je crois qu'il est difficile de combiner un travail plus irrationnel. Comme je faisais des observations à Mme. Chimènes, elle m'a répondu qu'elle avait envoyé son emploi du temps à l'inspecteur primaire, que celui-ci lui l'avait renvoyé avec des observations. Que trois fois ce document a fait la navette entre l'école et le bureau de l'inspecteur primaire .. et que le travail que je vous envoie est le résultat des efforts de l'une et de l'autre. Dans ces conditions ... il est tellement extraordinaire et inexplicable que je ne serais pas étonné si M. Machuel ne l'approuvait pas ..." Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXX E, Reel 65, David Cazès, 31 October 1892.

⁴⁷² Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXXII E, Reel 70, S. T. Pariente, 7 January 1894.

out and states that Mme. Chimènes must be replaced (by a person who takes the apprenticeships to heart).⁴⁷³ Thus, between mid-January and the end of February 1894, the Central Committee decides to find a new principal for the School for Girls in Tunis. The input of the *directeurs*, who are horizontal links in the “little world” of Mme. Chimènes, contributes to her eventual downfall. In addition, the members of the Central Committee are heavily influenced by the attitude of Mme. Chimènes toward her staff, by the report of the Inspector, and by Chimènes’ lack of judgment in complaining to the French administration.

Injudicious Choices

By the beginning of May 1894, it appears that Mme. Chimènes has overstepped all accepted, or acceptable, boundaries. In December 1893, she had gone outside the realm of the Alliance school system to air complaints with the French public school inspectors in Tunis. According to Pariente, after this incident she complains on two more occasions about the AIU to the local French administration, including its highest representative, the Resident General, M. Rouvier.⁴⁷⁴ The Central Committee implies that by voicing criticism to the French authorities, Mme. Chimènes may be jeopardizing the state’s subventions of the Alliance schools.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, Bigart to Pariente, 7 February 1894.

⁴⁷⁴ “... Mme. Chimènes est allée récemment se plaindre de l’Alliance (!) chez M. Rouvier, à deux reprises différentes.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S. T. Pariente, 2 May 1894.

⁴⁷⁵ Pariente’s letter to Bigart opens with assurance that “M. Machuel va nous verser l’arriéré de son subvention.” *Ibid.*

Two years earlier, Cazès wrote that the state subsidy would amount to 6,000 francs per year, of which 1,100 F was earmarked for the School for Girls. For 1893, the subvention for all the AIU schools in Tunisia was raised to 10,000 francs, where it remained throughout 1894 and 1895. Although this sum represents a fraction of the total operating budget (in 1892 it was 106,015.76 franc, and in 1893 it was 125,238.30 francs), the increased state subsidy saved the AIU school system in Tunisia from operating at a deficit in 1893.⁴⁷⁶ Thus, the behavior of the *directrice* was not to be taken lightly, particularly when it could lead to negative financial repercussions.

By May 1894, Bigart wrote to Pariente that Mme. Chimènes had been advised that she would be replaced over the next vacation. Ten days later the Central Committee confirmed its intention, stating that it would not renew her “engagement” with the Alliance for the next academic year.⁴⁷⁷ A typed formal explanation from Bigart followed in mid-June 1894.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ “*Subvention de l’Etat – M. Machuel m’a confirmé que cette subvention me sera régulièrement versée par acomptes de 500 frs. à la fin de chaque mois ... Il est entendu que ces 6000 frs. par an, vous en laissez 4000 au Comité de Tunis, dont 1900 pour l’école de garçons, 1000 pour l’école de filles et 1000 fr. pour l’asile ...*”. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, David Cazès, 3 February 1892; “... *dans le budget en préparation pour l’année 1893 une somme de 10,000 frs. a été inscrite pour subvention aux écoles de l’Alliance en Tunisie.*” Ibid., 12 September 1892; for detailed budgetary allocations of the Alliance schools in Tunis 1892-95, see Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S. T. Pariente, “*Tableau budgetaire des Ecoles de Tunis, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895*”, 14 January 1896.

⁴⁷⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S. T. Pariente, Bigart to Pariente, 4 May 1894; Bigart’s first draft to Chimènes reads as follows: “*Votre situation. Nous devons vous confirmer ce que vous a dit notre Vice-Président au sujet de votre situation vis à vis l’Alliance: Le Cté. Cl. a décidé que pour la prochaine année scolaire il ne renouvelerait pas l’engagement que vous avez avec l’Alliance.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, Bigart to Chimènes, 14 May 1894.

⁴⁷⁸ “*Le Comité Central vous a fait savoir à plusieurs reprises verbalement et par lettre qu’il était très mécontent de la conduite que vous teniez envers vos adjointes et il vous a averti nettement que si vous ne modifiez pas votre manière d’agir envers vos collaboratrices, il se verrait dans la nécessité de renoncer à vos services. Vous n’avez pas pu ou pas cru devoir suivre nos conseils et tenir compte de nos observations.*”

Certainly her inexperience, personality, and poor judgment all contributed to her downfall. Moreover, her complaints to the Resident General may have influenced the formulation of the *Instructions Générales* on not addressing requests to anyone outside the Community without the assent of the Central Committee. Pariente's allusion to her injudicious choices⁴⁷⁹ may also have contributed to the content of the *Instructions*. But Mme. Chimènes alienated almost everyone who came in contact with her in her "little world", with all its vertical and horizontal linkages. Not only did Mme. Chimènes lose her job in Tunis, she also lost any chance for future employment within the Alliance school system

Interregnum Years: 1894-1896

The correspondence of S. T. Pariente is one of the sources for the period after Mme. Chimènes' departure when there is no *directrice*. He writes that if a *directrice* is not found by the beginning of the school year of 1894-95, Mme. Alhalel, the oldest of the *adjointes*, will take over in the interim. Bigart later concurs with this arrangement, stating that Mme. Alhalel will serve as the *directrice intérimaire*, in her capacity as *adjointe*.⁴⁸⁰

En conséquence, le Comité Central estime qu'il ne vous doit aucune indemnité d'aucune espèce." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, Bigart to Chimènes, 14 June 1894.

⁴⁷⁹ "*Afin s'éviter à l'avenir certains incidents, je pense qu'il serait utile de recommander à tout notre personnel de l'École de filles et de l'asile de ne correspondre avec la Direction de l'enseignement que par l'entremise de votre représentant à Tunis.*" Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 69, S. T. Pariente, 12 October 1894.

⁴⁸⁰ "... *dans le cas où nous n'auriez pas trouvé de directrice au moment de la rentrée, l'intérim ne pourrait être fait que par la plus ancienne des adjointes de l'Alliance, qui est Mme. Alhalel.*" *Ibid.*, Pariente to

For the academic year 1893-94, the *directrice* was paid 4,000 francs, and Mme. Alhalel, as an *adjoïnte*, received a salary of 1,500 F.⁴⁸¹ Hiring Alhalel at a lower rate would represent a considerable saving for the financially strapped AIU, although it would benefit Mme. Alhalel only in leadership experience gained. However, by the end of October, Pariente announces that there will be more than one teacher on the supervisory staff – Mme. Alhalel and Mlles. Salomon. M. Alhalel will be in charge of general supervision (discipline, hygiene, etc.), and Mlles. Salomon will take care of the educational program and directing new teachers.⁴⁸² But according to the correspondence of Mme. Mathilde Alhalel, M. Pariente really directs the school from afar; she and Henriette Salomon divide up the supervisory duties and still teach a class.⁴⁸³

Although perhaps the Central Committee would have liked Mme. Alhalel and the Salomon sisters to administer the school, it emerges that only Henriette Salomon assists Mathilde Alhalel. Moreover, by the summer of 1895, Pariente says he does not want to confer the directorship on Lucie Salomon, even if it is only provisional. After observing the teaching personnel over the year, he concludes that Mlle. Bornstein obtained the best

Bigar, 8 July 1894; “*Il vrai dire, nous croyons que nous cherchons et que nous ferons un provisoire, avec Mme. Alhalel comme directrice intérimaire (en sa qualité d’adjoïnte)...*” Ibid., Bigart to Pariente, 10 October 1894.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., *Liste de personel des Ecoles de l’Alliance à Tunis, Année scolaire 1893-1894*, Pariente to Bigart, 1 October 1894.

⁴⁸² “*Mme. Alhalel aura la surveillance générale (discipline, hygiène, etc.); Mlles. Salomon veilleront à l’application du programme et dirigeront surtout les institutrices débutantes.*” Ibid., 24 October 1894.

⁴⁸³ “*Mme. Chimènes n’ayant pas été remplacée, c’est M. Pariente qui dirige notre école, mais comme il lui est impossible d’être constamment chez nous, il nous a chargé, Mlle. H. Salomon et moi, d’assurer le service. Mlle. Salomon s’occupe du matériel, et moi j’ai la surveillance générale. Toutes les deux, d’ailleurs, nous continuons à tenir une classe...*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXVII E*, Reel 60, Mme. Mathilde Alhalel (née Twersky), 30 December 1894.

teaching results.⁴⁸⁴ Indeed, five years later, Mlle. Louise Bornstein does become the *directrice* of the School for Girls in Tunis.

What were the desired qualities of a new *directrice*? Pariente quotes Machuel as saying:

*Qu'on se garde bien d'engager une savante.... Ce qui il faudrait surtout c'est une personne de coeur et d'expérience, une véritable éducatrice...*⁴⁸⁵

As for Pariente, he thinks:

*Il faut à notre Ecole de filles une main de fer gantée de velours. Ce sera le rôle de la future éducatrice.*⁴⁸⁶

Machuel and Pariente do not want a scholar, but an experienced educator at the helm of the School for Girls. Recalling the description of Bismarck, Pariente adds that the school needs “an iron hand in a velvet glove”. This requirement would be necessary to enforce discipline and presumably facilitate learning.

But a new *directrice* does not appear until 1896. In the meantime, the school seems to run smoothly. Calm, discipline and hygiene prevail, according to the director of the School for Boys, S. Pariente.⁴⁸⁷ The women administering the school on a daily basis seek to introduce reforms, on the vocational and academic levels.

⁴⁸⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 69, S. T. Pariente, 22 August 1895.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 28 September 1894.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 3 July 1895.

⁴⁸⁷ “L’Ecole de filles, je suis heureux de vous le dire, marche tout à fait bien. On ne s’y aperçoit pas de l’absence d’une directrice ...la discipline, l’hygiène et l’esprit générale n’y laissent pas à désirer. Les divisions qui existaient jadis parmi le personnel ont disparu, et toutes nos institutrices sont plaines de dévouement.” *Ibid.*, 2 November 1894.

Vocational adjustments concern the two acting principals. Mme. Alhalel would like to improve the level of *couture*; for this she requests a good teacher of dressmaking.⁴⁸⁸ She also states that the most useful innovation for the academic year 1894-95 was the creation of a workshop for ironing (*atelier de repassage*).⁴⁸⁹ Mlle. Henriette Salomon reinforces Mme. Alhalel's convictions about the utility of such a workshop.⁴⁹⁰ Henriette's arguments mirror the nineteenth century discourse on the value of manual labor, or handiwork in the case of girls, and the negative stereotypes held by civilizing missionaries of the "natives" as lacking in initiative. Also, a workshop for lingerie (*atelier de lingerie*) was opened in 1895. Henriette Salomon decries the Tunisian attitude of not letting girls become good workers, capable of earning honorable wages. She says that after a two-year apprenticeship they will earn from 2 to 2.50 francs per day.⁴⁹¹ Bigart presents another opinion scrawled in the margin of Henriette's letter. He says he has seen young girls in Tunis working with silk who earn only eight to ten *sous*

⁴⁸⁸ "Parmi les reformes qu'il y a lieu d'introduire à l'école de filles, une des plus urgentes est celle de l'enseignement de la couture ... Il faut chercher une bonne maîtresse de couture." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 60, Mme. M. Alhalel, 4 March 1895.

⁴⁸⁹ *Travaux manuels – Atelier de repassage* – "La création la plus utile qui doit caractériser l'année scolaire 1894-95 c'a été la création de l'atelier de repassage ... Au début, aucune jeune fille ne voulait apprendre. Elles trouvaient cet apprentissage inutile et peut-être indigne d'elles. Nous persuadâmes huit élèves à apprendre le repassage." Ibid., 2 July 1895

⁴⁹⁰ "L'atelier de repassage a été une heureuse innovation, l'absence constituait une véritable lacune dans une population aussi pauvre, privée d'initiative, imbuée de faux principes d'amour-propre et de point d'honneur, écartant les filles de tout travail manuel...." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mlle. Henriette Salomon, 16 July 1895.

⁴⁹¹ "L'atelier de lingerie ouvert récemment nous prouve que les Tunisiens ne comprennent pas encore l'utilité de pouvoir leurs enfants pour la lutte de l'existence. Ils entretiennent un faux point d'honneur, un amour-propre incompréhensible chez leur filles en refusant de nous les livrer pour en faire de bonnes ouvrières capables de gagner honorablement quotidien... A la fin de son apprentissage d'une durée de deux ans, elle recevra de 2F à 2F.50 par jour." Ibid. 27 December 1895. On the establishment of the lingerie workshop, see also Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 69, S. Pariente, 6 December 1895.

per day.⁴⁹² The two provisional *directrices* struggle to introduce handiwork to an unwilling population where the financial reward is meager at best.

Shemtob Pariente, Mathilde Alhalel and Henriette Salomon also attempt educational reforms. Pariente proposes a course on Hebrew reading for the School for Girls and the nursery school. Until Pariente can find a teacher (*un professeur*), however, one of the rabbis undertakes that function.⁴⁹³ Thus, by 1894, the rabbis accept schooling for girls, and the school allows a man to teach them. However, by the following year the rabbi teaches no more than six hours per week at the School for Girls. Two teachers at the school, Mlles. Benbassat and Benchmol, partially take over for him.⁴⁹⁴ As in other cases during the tenures of Ungar or Gelbmann, some women teachers had enough training to teach Hebrew to the girls.

Under her report on ateliers, Mlle. Salomon discusses another innovation: evening courses for female apprentices, held four times per week.⁴⁹⁵ By 1903 the *Instructions Générales* incorporate this measure to continue the academic preparation of the apprentices. Thus, the Instructions advise:

⁴⁹² “*J’ai vu à Tunis plusieurs jeunes filles travaillent la soie, dévider ... pour gagner 8 à 10 sous par jour.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mlle. Henriette Salomon, Bigart to H. Salomon, 27 December 1895.

⁴⁹³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXII E*, Reel 70, S. T. Pariente, 5 November 1894.

⁴⁹⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mlle. Henriette Salomon, 27 December 1895.

⁴⁹⁵ “*Toutes les apprentices sont reliées à leurs habitudes d’écoliers par les cours du soir. Quatre fois par semaine Mlle. L. Cohen vient s’exercer avec elles, sa journée d’élève finie, à l’enseignement qu’elle doit reprendre bientôt.*” *Ibid.*, 10 March 1896.

*La directrice de l'école ou une adjointe fera à l'atelier un cours d'une heure par jour ou au moins d'une heure tous les deux jours. Ce cours comprendra l'arithmétique pratique, l'écriture de la langue du pays, et des lectures variées.*⁴⁹⁶

Subjects such as arithmetic and writing in the language of the country would be particularly useful for an artisan entering the commercial world. This, of course, is predicated on the assumptions that there are enough students for a class and that there is a market for their products. Additionally, the women educators of the AIU in Tunis may have been indirectly responsible for the organization's formulation of policy. Their experience, negative or positive, could help further the goals of the Alliance educational system.

Academic politics in the primary school is more than a twice-told tale (with all due respect to Nathaniel Hawthorne⁴⁹⁷). It is a tale told by a dozen voices over many years. When one peers into "this little world" of the School for Girls in Tunis, the words of the teachers and the *directrice*, of the AIU Secretary and his subordinates, of the French inspectors and the Alliance educators, of the *directeurs* and *directrices*, reveal a school beset by problems, but a school system with resilience and purpose.

⁴⁹⁶ AIU, *Instructions Générales ...* (1903), 88.

⁴⁹⁷ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Twice Told Tales* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1876)

Chapter 4

Implementing the Curriculum: Workshops, World's Fairs, and Employment

A circular addressed to school principals from the Central Committee in Paris, dated 2 June 1896, states that instruction for girls should be equally divided between academic and vocational subjects.⁴⁹⁸ Although girls, in theory, studied the same subjects as boys, except for the addition of couture to their curriculum, girls generally spent fewer hours per week on each academic area.⁴⁹⁹ Thus education for girls was more skewed toward non-academic subjects and the girls had a shorter school day.. However, as the leaders of the Alliance stated, the goal of the curriculum was not to create technicians or linguists.⁵⁰⁰ Rather, it was to create “tolerant men” (or tolerant human beings), capable of reconciling the exigencies of the modern world with traditional values.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ AIU, *Instructions Générales pour Les Professeurs* (1903), *Annexe*, 99: “Notre désir serait que... les jeunes filles partagent également leur temps entre l’enseignement proprement dit et les travaux manuels.”

⁴⁹⁹ For instance, boys in the first (highest) and second classes spent 5-8 hours per week on French Reading (*Lecture française*), and in the third and fourth classes, 6-10 hours. In contrast, girls spent 4-5 hours per week on this subject in all four of the top grades. See *Tableau A* (boys), and *Tableau B* (girls), *Ibid.*, pp.49-50.(On the role of French reading in teaching, see Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXXIV.E.198a, Reel 53, Albert Saguès, 9 February 1914. Aron Rodrigue provides a translation of this letter in *Jews and Muslims*, 31-32.)

⁵⁰⁰ “Le but de l’école primaire n’est pas de donner aux élèves une instruction technique.... Il n’est surtout pas...d’enseigner les langues. Les langues sont un instrument, non un but, une forme de la pensée et de la connaissance....”, *Instructions*, 27-28. For an English translation see Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 30.

⁵⁰¹“Mais l’action de l’Alliance visait aussi et principalement à donner à la jeunesse israélite et, par suite, à la population juive tout entière une éducation morale plus encore qu’une instruction technique, à former, plutôt encore que des demi-savants, des hommes tolérants, bons, attachés à leurs devoirs de citoyens et d’israélites...sachant concilier enfin les exigences de la vie moderne avec le respect des traditions anciennes.”*Instructions*,95. An English translation is available in Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 73.

But the curriculum was not static. It evolved in response to local conditions and local voices. The *directrice* recorded the attitudes of the indigenous mothers and daughters, sometimes in disbelief and tones of mockery, and sometimes in amazement and terms of approval. Today, recording the indigenous voice has become institutionalized in the social sciences. Current research demonstrates that with the rise of “indigenous social science(s)”,

Indigenous voices are not all heard in the same ways...; rather, the geography of place... lends a distinctive tang to the expression of indigenous desire, as do indigenous peoples’ particular experiences of colonialism and postcolonialism.⁵⁰²

This statement raises several questions: How does “the geography of place” influence “indigenous desire”? In the context of the School for Girls, how does the local scene in Tunis affect change in the attitudes of the *indigènes* (in their desire or need for studying French, or for undertaking artisanal, industrial, or commercial work)? This includes shifts in attitudes of the parents to education or employment for their daughters. On the other side of the coin, how do the realities of Tunis influence change in the attitudes of the *directrices* toward the curriculum, as well as toward the community? Do the voices of the *éducatrices* and their students (whether parents or children) become intertwined? Is the secular civilizing mission accomplished? These questions and related issues will be examined shortly. But the first area of investigation will be the ideological sources of the Alliance’s concern for academic and vocational education. It will focus particularly on the influence of Auguste Comte, and his teacher, Saint-Simon. The latter is associated

⁵⁰² Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, (eds.), epilogue to *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 1118, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 3rd ed., 2005).

with two seemingly unrelated features of the Alliance educational system: workshops and world's fairs.

What were the roots of the AIU's determination to teach a wide-ranging curriculum? According to Georges Weill, in his *Emancipation et progrès*, the positivism of Comte strongly influenced the Alliance's educational program.⁵⁰³ Emile Durkheim expounds on the foundation of positivism, as first enunciated by Comte's teacher, Saint-Simon:

It is necessary to extend the positive spirit, which inspires astronomy and the physico-chemical sciences, to man and societies....That is why, in order to attain the goal philosophy pursues, it is not enough to build the system from such sciences as exist. You must begin to complete it by founding a new science—the science of man and societies.⁵⁰⁴

In addition, positivism incorporates the social sciences with the natural sciences. Quoting Durkheim again,

One of the great innovations positive philosophy brought along with it is positive sociology. As has been said, it is the integration of social science into the circle of the natural sciences. In this regard, one might say of positivism that it has enriched human intelligence, that it has created new horizons.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Georges Weill, *Emancipation et progrès: L'Alliance israélite universelle et les droits de l'homme* (Paris: Editions du Nadir, 2000), 66-71. For an earlier version, see Weill's "Emancipation et humanisme: Le discours idéologique de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle au XIXe siècle," *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 52, 1978, 1-20. In addition to positivism, Weill states that other influences on the ideological sources of the AIU were republican ideas (that is, of the French Third Republic), the Masons and Saint Simon, and the Science of Judaism (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*).

⁵⁰⁴ Emile Durkheim, *Socialism*, Alvin W. Gouldner, ed., Charlotte Sattler, trans. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 133-134. (Emile Durkheim originally presented this material as lectures at Bordeaux, 1895-1896. Introduction to the first edition, Marcel Mauss.)

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

It was these new horizons that the Alliance sought to develop, as exemplified by the AIU's academic curriculum.⁵⁰⁶ The primary focus of this chapter will be on the vocational training of the AIU School for Girls in Tunis.

The capacity to reason was not the only component of the Alliance's educational enterprise. Another requirement was the formation of a productive work force.⁵⁰⁷ Training in practical courses, industrial arts for boys or domestic science for girls became a cornerstone of an Alliance education. It was rooted in the principles of Saint-Simon and his followers. Saint-Simon said, in judgement against the Old Regime, that societies should be productive. The Saint-Simonians called for production as the basis for society: "The production of useful things is the only reasonable and positive end that political societies can set themselves."⁵⁰⁸ For the AIU it justified the promotion of agricultural, commercial, and industrial ventures.⁵⁰⁹ The Alliance's Brochure of 1885 formally stated that *la production* would benefit not only Jews, but the surrounding population as well.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁶ For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Chapter 1.

⁵⁰⁷ "Il faut en faire une force productive, c'est à eux de donner l'élan à ces nations parmi lesquelles ils sommeillent et d'en relever le niveau" Here the reference is not only to productivity, but to the paternalistic duty of awakening the slumbering "Orient". See AIU, *Appel en faveur de l'Oeuvre des Ecoles* (Paris, 1865) as quoted in Weill, *Emancipation et progrès*, 70. For evangelism as a source for the rhetoric on the sleeping /awakening of the East (whether Near or Far), see Kenneth Pomeranz, "Empire and 'civilizing' missions," *Daedalus*, 134:2 (Spring 2005), 37.

⁵⁰⁸ Saint-Simon, *Industrie*, II, 186, as quoted in Emile Durkheim, *Socialism*, 173. The original reads as follows: « *la production des choses utiles est le seul but raisonnable et positif que les sociétés politiques puissent se proposer.* » Henri Saint-Simon, *Œuvres de Saint-Simon, Industrie*, II, (Paris : Librairie de la Société de Gens de Lettres, 1868), 186.

⁵⁰⁹ Weill, *Emancipation et progrès*, 72.

⁵¹⁰ "Que fallait pour régénérer et relever les plus abaissés d'entre eux? Quelques années de repos, la liberté, un appui fraternal, des écoles, des métiers! Les leur procurer, était-ce un bienfait pour les juifs seulement? Guérir les peuples, au milieu desquels ils vivent, de l'intolérance et du fanatisme, faire pénétrer

Although this statement may appear arrogant and self-serving, it may also have been prophetic.

The production of useful items, advocated by the Saint-Simonians, was formally expressed in the Instructions of 1903. Girls had special handiwork classes as part of their daily curriculum. Sewing skills needed for running a household, or for future employment, were encouraged. They included pattern-cutting and sewing lingerie and dresses. More fanciful work, such as embroidery or crocheting, was to be limited to no more than one hour per week.⁵¹¹ After graduation, girls (and boys) could continue their vocational training as apprentices in workshops.

One of the earliest plans of the first *directrice*, Sara Ungar, was to open a workshop for dressmaking (*atelier de couture*). It was hoped that her students could then earn a livelihood or at least contribute financially to the household. But another problem arose. The boys could walk to an apprenticeship in town, but it would have been inappropriate for the girls to do so. In her letter of 22 February 1884, Ungar asks for the workshops for girls to be attached to the school.⁵¹² With the establishment of workshops for girls, albeit not until the era of the second *directrice* and a larger building, they

chez eux les idées, les mœurs des pays civilisés, répandre l'instruction, rendre des forces perdues au travail, à la production, c'était un bienfait pour eux aussi." AIU Brochure of 1885, 7-8, as quoted in Ibid.

⁵¹¹ "Dans les écoles de filles, le cours de travaux manuels sera consacré à enseigner la lingerie, la couture, et un peu de coupe, s'il est possible; la tapisserie, la broderie, le crochet et autres travaux de fantaisie ne devront y occuper qu'une place très restreinte et au plus une heure par semaine." *Instructions*, 47.

⁵¹² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Ungar 22 February 1884.

conformed to Ungar's proposal. The Instructions later took these considerations into account.⁵¹³

Workshops for boys and girls were an educational priority. The Instructions note that apprenticeships were a rational continuation of schooling. The goal of training apprentices was to form workers who could earn a livelihood through manual labor. In addition, the local community and the Alliance would subsidize the apprenticeships.⁵¹⁴ Recommended trades for boys included training as a locksmith, coppersmith, blacksmith, cabinetmaker, upholsterer, or saddler.⁵¹⁵ By contrast, trades for girls were ones that could be conducted either at home⁵¹⁶ or in a suitable environment in town. They consisted of pattern cutting (*la coupe*), construction of garments (*la construction*), laundering (*la blanchissage*), ironing (*le repassage*), and weaving (*le tissage*). Embroidery was only to be taught in cities where it would furnish a livelihood.⁵¹⁷ However, even by the end of the Protectorate in 1956, the number of Jewish or Muslim women from the *hāra* who were

⁵¹³ *Instructions*, 87.

⁵¹⁴ “L’oeuvre d’apprentissage est appelée à rendre les plus grands services en Orient, en préparant la jeunesse israélite à l’exercice des métiers. L’apprentissage est la continuation rationnelle indispensable de l’école. Le but de l’oeuvre est de former des ouvriers qui puissent gagner leur vie par le travail manuel....” *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵¹⁵ “Les métiers les plus à recommander diffèrent selon les régions, mais ce sont généralement ceux de serrurier, chaudronnier, maréchal-ferrant, forgeron, ébéniste, tapissier, charron, maçon, sellier.” *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵¹⁶ Thus, the fourth principal, Louise Bornstein (Guéron), states: “Dans le choix des métiers que nous conseillons à nos élèves d’adopter, nous sommes toujours guidées par la préoccupation de leur procurer un gagne-pain sans les obliger à quitter leur maison.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 17 December 1903.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

employed outside the home, not surprisingly, was minimal.⁵¹⁸ The trades that they plied, moreover, were generally the least lucrative and the least likely to lead to much change either in the established social order or in the perceived role of women in the family or society.

French policy in North Africa promoted artisanal work. Lucien Golvin, in his book on *Aspects de l'Artisanat en Afrique du Nord*, cites various decrees of the French administration in Tunisia designed to reorganize and protect artisans. In addition, there was specific legislation enacted to encourage artisanal education. The decree of 27 June 1885 instituted academic commissions (*des commissions scolaires*) in localities with one or more schools. A stated purpose was to ensure that young people learned trades that would “reawaken” local industries.⁵¹⁹ The first professional school in Tunis for manual trades (*des métiers manuels*) was established by decree on 4 April 1898. Its goal was to further “indigenous industry”.⁵²⁰ The historian Kenneth Perkins notes however, that, as for the vocational school established in 1898, “Most of its students were European...and those Tunisians who did attend were pushed into training as traditional craftsmen rather

⁵¹⁸ For the census figures of 1956, see Paul Sebag with Robert Attal, *L'évolution d'un ghetto nord africain, la Hara de Tunis*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), 40-45. According to the census returns, of those reporting, 283 Jewish women and 101 Muslim women were employed as salaried or independent wage earners.

⁵¹⁹ Lucien Golvin, *Aspects de l'artisanat en Afrique du nord* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 113.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

than receiving an opportunity to learn more modern, and better remunerated, skills.”⁵²¹

Perkins thus places the vocational school in a different and broader context than Golvin.

As of 1909, M. Charléty, director of Public Education and the Beaux-Arts, established a program to maintain local craft traditions scrupulously.⁵²² Moreover, Lazare Guéron, a teacher at the Alliance School for Boys and husband of the *directrice*, suggested in 1909 that the professional training of Muslims was largely inspired by the AIU’s apprenticeship program.⁵²³ His wife, Louise Bornstein Guéron, seconded his opinion in her Annual Rapport of 1910-1911.⁵²⁴

The vocational programs of the Alliance schools coincided with the mother country’s designs. In addition, the Alliance’s program may have indirectly influenced the Muslim population. Ironically though, by protecting the past, educators were, in part, denying their students a brighter economic future. But the Alliance did keep pace with the times and by 1913 the School for Girls offered courses in stenography, typing and

⁵²¹ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 67.

⁵²² Golvin, 114.

⁵²³ “*La direction de l’Enseignement Public de la Regence procède à une sérieuse organisation de l’éducation professionnelle des Musulmans. Elle semble, dans la choix des moyens, s’être largement inspiré de notre oeuvre d’apprentissage.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 37, Lazare Guéron, 7 June 1909.

⁵²⁴ “*...depuis l’arrivée à la direction de l’enseignement public de M. Charléty – qui visita notre école et nous manifesta son approbation flatteuse – nos methods sont, pour ainsi dire, calquées par cette administration. C’est à notre exemple que, dans les écoles laïques, on commence à imposer aux élèves l’obligation de la propreté; c’est à notre imitation que, dans certaines d’entre elles, sont organisées des oeuvres d’apprentissages....*” Archives of the AIU, France VII F 14, Louise B. Guéron, Annual Report, 1910-1911, received in Paris 30 November 1911.

other commercial subjects.⁵²⁵ Yet it still maintained workshops in the trades advocated by the Instructions of 1903.

Although the Instructions are quite explicit in developing apprentices for various trades, they are silent about related activities, such as preparing exhibits for local and foreign audiences, which also engaged the attention of the *directrices*, however fleeting, before 1900. That the schools of the Alliance displayed their work at international exhibitions was not just an internal policy of a specific educational system. French schools in Tunisia similarly sent items to exhibitions.⁵²⁶ This conformed to the Protectorate's policy of encouraging "indigenous artistic industries", increasingly threatened by modernization.⁵²⁷

Indirectly, the Alliance encouraged productivity through that presumed showcase for technological progress, the *exposition universelle*, known as the Great Exhibition in England and the World's Fair in the United States. It is only "presumed" since current scholarship recognizes several schools of thought on the role of international exhibitions in a modernizing world.⁵²⁸ Educating the public on innovations in industry, technology,

⁵²⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie, XXIV E*, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali (Saguès), 10 February 1913, 17 July 1913.

⁵²⁶ See for instance, *BAIU*, Second Series, No. 14, first and second semesters 1889, 71-72.

⁵²⁷ *L'Illustration*, 15 September 1900, as quoted in Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 22.

⁵²⁸ One school of thought argues that international exhibitions furthered the cause of nationalist and imperialist agendas. For a discussion of various approaches., see, for instance, Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, eds., *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States*, Introduction (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 5-7. There are several studies on the role of the exhibition in defending the stance of the imperial power to the masses at home and in creating mass culture. For France, see William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses: The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870-1900*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982). On France, Great Britain, and the United States see

architecture and urban planning was one goal of world's fairs. Another was amusement; it brought ticket holders to the gate and revenue to the organizers of the exhibitions.

These themes emerged slowly from the mid to late nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London set the standard for international, rather than national, expositions. But it was the French who designed separate pavilions, starting in 1867, to showcase technological achievements and to house the products of their imperial possessions. While Queen Victoria enunciated goals of world peace at the London Exhibition, by the time of the 1889 Exposition in Paris, education became the officially espoused dominant theme.⁵²⁹

The French international exhibitions trace their roots to Saint-Simon. His concern with industrialism and classification was evident in each successive exposition. The organizers of the 1867 exposition not only emphasized the importance of family and work, particularly work, but also the classification of knowledge.⁵³⁰ However, a didactic mission was insufficient to keep attracting crowds. Increasingly, from the 1880's on,

Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The 'Expositions Universelles', Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851 – 1939; Studies in Imperialism*, general ed., John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). For the United States, see Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). On Egypt and the role of cultural representation, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

⁵²⁹ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 12-22; Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses*, 175-177.

⁵³⁰ Pascal Ory, *1889 L'Expo Universelle* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1989), 10-16. Thus, in reference to the *expositions universelles*, Ory states: "...ces origins, les voici: elles sont saint-simoniennes. Optimisme, industrialisme, paternalisme...." *Ibid.*, 10. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 20. Attendance at the 1867 Exposition was eleven million, as stated by Greenhalgh, *Ibid.*, 37.

displays of products from the colonies and the entertainment value associated with exhibits of their inhabitants turned exhibitions into financially viable spectacles.⁵³¹

Exhibiting people, as well as products, offered a seemingly realistic representation of the world to fairgoers. It was a world backed by science, but enveloped in fantasy.⁵³² It was an image of the realm of Islam, as portrayed by the West. The phantasmagoric was especially evident in the displays of the “colonial pavilions”, or, as they were termed in the Chicago of 1893, the “foreign villages”. In her book, *Displaying the Orient*, Zeynep Çelik notes, “Muslims were often treated as curiosities in the exhibitions, not so much for any physiological abnormalities as for differences in behavior, customs, and the traditions they acted out before large audiences in the Islamic quarters built on the fair grounds.”⁵³³

However, a report by Isidor Lewi, a Jewish observer of Near Eastern and North African indigenous people displayed at the Chicago Exhibition of 1893, reveals the following:

about four-fifths of the inhabitants of the Turkish village on the Midway Plaisance at the Chicago Exposition were Jews. Merchants, clerks, actors, servants, musicians, and even dancing girls, were of the mosaic faith, though their looks and garb would lead one to believe them Mohammedans...

The Turkish mosque was so arranged that it could be used as a Jewish house of worship....

⁵³¹ Greenhalgh, 33-43..

⁵³²Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 1-2. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 79-105.

⁵³³ Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 22. Here the author is referring to the Parisian Exposition of 1889 and the Chicago Exhibition of 1893.

It was in this gorgeously equipped and dimly lighted mosque that the oriental Jews assembled on Tuesday evening, September 19, 1893, and read the Kol Nidre services....

They came from all parts of the Orient. Constantinople had the largest representation, though there were men from Adrianople, Tunis, Tripoli, Damascus, Smyrna, Bombay, Calcutta, from Algeria and other Eastern points, and two men from New York.⁵³⁴

While the exhibitions claimed to portray the Islamic world with Muslims as its representatives, many of the people on display were apparently Jews from the region. The incident described above serves as an example of a fantasy within a fantasy. It also illustrates the hybridity of Muslim-Jewish culture, at least in terms of dress.

What was the Tunisian point of view on exhibitions? In 1867 the reformer Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnīsi published his treatise, *The Surest Path*. His book is based on first hand knowledge since he stayed in France as a representative of the Tunisian government from 1853-1857. In part it is a nineteenth century Muslim Tunisian depiction of the achievements of the West. It is also an attempt by a statesman to convince the Tunisian learned scholar (*ulama*) elite of the need for reform from within.⁵³⁵

Earlier instances of Muslims looking to Europe as a guide for education also exist. For instance, the eighteenth century Ottoman ambassador to the French court, Yirmisekiz

⁵³⁴ Isidor Lewi, "Yom Kippur on the Midway," *Report of the Committee on Awards of the World's Columbian Commission*, Special Reports upon Special Subjects or Groups, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1901), 1693, as quoted in B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 97. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett accepts Lewi as a reliable source, *Ibid.*, 99-100.

⁵³⁵ Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnīsi, *Aqwam al-masalik li-ma-rifat ahwal al-mamalik*, *The Surest Path to knowledge concerning the conditions of the countries*. For an English translation see *The surest path: the political treatise of a nineteenth-century Muslim statesman/ A translation of the Introduction to The Surest Path To Knowledge concerning the Condition of Countries by Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi*. Translated from the original Arabic with introduction and notes by Leon Carl Brown. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

Çelebi Mehmed Efendi⁵³⁶, penned *Le Paradis des infidèles*, a work which falls into this category. Also, among nineteenth century Arab reformers seeking political change within Islamic models, but not calling for representative government, the Egyptian al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) is an example. Some twenty-five years younger than Tahtawi, Khayr al-Dīn follows in that tradition.⁵³⁷

In addition to noting European economic and administrative measures taken on the road to “progress”, Khayr al-Din mentions the world’s fairs:

One of the reasons for their [the Europeans’] progress is the attention given to whoever invents something new or concerns himself in any beneficial work. For example, every five years or so...important expositions are held in the capital cities, displaying the country’s produce, livestock and unusual manufactured goods....

All of this is done so that the backward may emulate the advanced in industry and the like. An additional motive is the great amount of money which the country’s merchants can obtain from business with the millions [*sic* - translator’s insertion] of foreigners coming to the country for the exposition.⁵³⁸

Khayr al-Dīn recognizes the technological, educational and economic aspects of world’s fairs, but he does not discuss the issue of displaying people. He published his treatise in Arabic in 1867, the same year as the advent of “colonial pavilions” - where people began to receive the same gaze as products.

⁵³⁶ Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, *Le paradis des infidèles: relations de Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed efendi, ambassadeur ottoman en France sous la Régence*; translated from Ottoman Turkish by Julien-Claude Galland; introduction, notes, texts, appendices by Gilles Veinstein. (Paris: F. Maspero, 1981). For a reference to Mehmed Said Efendi, see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45-46.

⁵³⁷ Khayr al-Dīn, *The Surest Path*, Introduction of Leon Carl Brown, 1, 29-30, 38-41.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, Translation of Leon Carl Brown, 168-171. For a reference to this text see Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 12-13.

France, too, as a colonial power, had its own view of expositions. After the ignominious defeat of 1871 in the Franco-Prussian War, France wanted to regain its status among the world of nations. The international arena of exhibitions could serve this purpose. However, the Exposition in Paris of 1878 did not reap the expected financial rewards; colonial display could not sufficiently distract the public from military defeat. It was only at the 1889 Exposition that there was astounding popular and financial success. Moreover, exotic displays from overseas French territories, such as the Tunisian *sūq* on the Esplanade des Invalides in 1889, demonstrated the restored glory of France to the population at home.⁵³⁹

Under the supervision of the first two *directrices*, Sara Ungar and Voley Chimènes, the school participated in exhibitions at the local and global levels. Sara Ungar celebrated the inauguration of the new school in its renovated quarters at the end of January 1883. Most of those assembled at her party were the mothers of the students where they viewed an exhibit of notebooks and handiwork.⁵⁴⁰ Ungar also promoted the work of her students internationally. During her tenure, the school won awards at the International Exhibition at Amsterdam (1883), the Exhibition in London (1884), and the Exhibition at Anvers, France (1885).⁵⁴¹ In her correspondence, Ungar barely mentions the events. Records of the achievements of the School for Girls at international exhibitions

⁵³⁹ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 34-36, 64-66, 78-80. As for attendance at these two Parisian expositions, it was sixteen million people in 1878 and thirty-two million in 1889. *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁴⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, 2 February 1883.

⁵⁴¹ Narcisse Leven, *Cinquatne Ans d'histoire: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860-1910)* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1920), v. II, p.115, n.1.

can be found in the Bulletins of the AIU (BAIU). The international jury at the Amsterdam exposition, for example, awarded the Alliance schools of Tunis *un diplôme d'honneur*. The Bulletin credits both M. Cazès and Mlle. Ungar for their efforts.⁵⁴² As for the London exhibition of 1884, Ungar says that they have been busy preparing notebooks for it. Also, they have no time to prepare new samples of needlework, but will have to send some from last year.⁵⁴³ Regarding the exhibition at Anvers in 1885, Ungar sends a package of materials to Paris for them to examine. The Secretary of the AIU, Jacques Bigart, tells her that the handiwork and the notebooks she has sent are very good.⁵⁴⁴ Somehow, after the exhibitions, Ungar does not mention that the school receives awards for the work of its students.

But when the school participates at a local exposition in Tunis in 1888, V. Chimènes, the second *directrice*, elaborates on the couture samples of her students, and the competition from “the schools of M. Machuel”, (the French schools supervised by L. Machuel, Director General of Instruction for Tunisia) and from the “schools of the Nuns”.⁵⁴⁵ That the school wins a gold medal at the exposition in Tunis is first evident

⁵⁴² See *BAIU*, Second series, No. 6, first semester 1883, 37.

⁵⁴³ “*Nous avons été bien occupées ces derniers jours à préparer des cahiers pour l'Exposition de Londres Quant aux ouvrages d'aiguille, il n'y a pas à songer à faire quoique ce soit de nouveau....*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, 4 April 1884.

⁵⁴⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Sara Ungar, Ungar to Bigart, 8 April 1885. See also, “*Nous avons examiné les travaux et les cahiers que vous avez envoyés à l'exposition d'Anvers, tout cela est très bien, et nous vous en faisons tous nos compliments.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Sara Ungar, Bigart to Sara Ungar, 4 May 1885.

⁵⁴⁵ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 22 April 1888.

from Bigart's correspondence.⁵⁴⁶ Again, this recognition does not seem to be of much interest to the *directrice*.

The school, under the direction of Voley Chimènes, also displays samples of notebooks and handicrafts at the 1889 *exposition universelle* in Paris, commemorating the centennial of the French Revolution. This event, so crucial to French interests in building nation and empire, goes unrecorded in her correspondence. Rather, it is documented in the Bulletin of the AIU. The entry states that since the Central Committee did not want to disrupt the studies of the primary schools and their apprentices, so it did not encourage AIU schools to participate in the exposition. Only the Alliance schools in Tunis sent representative items to the administration of primary instruction in Tunisia, which exhibited them with those of other Tunisian schools. In addition, schools for girls of the Alliance, whose principals were, for the most part, graduates of the Bischoffsheim training school in Paris, also sent items for display. The jury awarded a gold medal to the Schools for Boys and Girls of Tunis and a gold medal to the Bischoffsheim School.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Bigart to Chimènes, 6 May 1888.

⁵⁴⁷ *A l'ouverture de l'Exposition universelle de Paris de l'année 1889, le Comité Central a été sollicité de divers côtés d'organiser une exposition d'ensemble des travaux des écoles et des produits de l'oeuvre d'apprentissage, mais dans la crainte de causer un trop grand dérangement dans les études des écoles primaires et des apprentis, par la préparation de travaux spéciaux pour l'Exposition Universelle, le Comité n'a pas cru devoir donner suite à ces propositions. Seules, les écoles de l'Alliance de Tunis ont fourni des travaux à la direction de l'enseignement primaire en Tunisie, et, d'autre part, les écoles de filles de l'Alliance, dont la plupart des directrices sortent de l'Ecole Bischoffsheim, ont envoyé des travaux que cette école a exposés avec sa propre exposition. Le jury a néanmoins accordé de hautes récompenses à ces travaux, sous la mention spéciale de l'Alliance israélite.... Les écoles de garçons et de filles de l'Alliance israélite à Tunis ont obtenu une médaille d'or et l'Ecole Bischoffsheim a également obtenu une médaille d'or avec mention des écoles israélites de l'Alliance en Orient.* BAIU, Second series, No. 14, First and Second Semesters 1889 (Paris: Siège de la Société) 71.

Mme. Chimènes does not mention these successes. Either she considered the awards insignificant or she assumed that Paris already knew about them.

But the exposition did not only serve purposes of display. It also was an international meeting place for educators. In recognition of the forthcoming exposition in August 1889, the French Ministry of Commerce and Industry distributed a notice for an international congress on primary education to be held in Paris. With women entering the teaching profession, particularly after the law of 1881 promulgating free and compulsory education for boys and girls under the age of thirteen, an item on the agenda included the role of women as teachers, principals, and inspectors in primary education.⁵⁴⁸ The next international exhibition, at Chicago in 1893, similarly displayed items of Tunisian school girls and also included a forum for educators.

For the 1893 Columbian exhibition, celebrating the four hundredth (or four hundred first) anniversary of the landfall of Columbus in the New World, Mme. Chimènes notes the list of objects sent by the school to Chicago. It includes written work and two albums of handiwork. The handmade items are both traditional (a Tunisian doll) and nineteenth century French “modern” (a bodice, a petticoat, a nightgown, and baby clothes, among others). It is indicative of the work taught to the youngest girls in classes of pattern-cutting and couture.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁸ Archives of the AIU, France, IX E 33, No. 2667/3, *Congrès International de l'Enseignement Primaire*, received in Paris 14 March 1889.

⁵⁴⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 65, V. Chimènes, 23 January 1893.

In addition to these articles sent abroad, the AIU prepared a brochure for the World's Fair, in somewhat quaint English, explaining the goals of the Alliance, the curriculum, and the type of articles exhibited.⁵⁵⁰ The booklet was probably part of the Alliance's display at the exhibition, depicting a world in transition. Presumably the costume doll would appeal to the exotic; the other goods would represent an acceptance of French modes of dress and French modes of thought. The school population was on the road to being "civilized".

The 1893 World's Fair also hosted conferences for educators. It was here, for instance, that the American Historical Association held its meeting where Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his famous address on the role of the frontier in American history. Now that the frontier was conquered, the World's Fair could have a unifying effect on the country, still wracked by the aftermath of the Civil War. It too, could serve national purposes, as it did for the French in 1889, and by 1901, even international purposes, as America extended its interests overseas.⁵⁵¹

The Alliance may have stopped exhibiting at world's fairs due to a change in policy of the French government at the end of the 1890's. The Colonial Ministry sought

⁵⁵⁰ "In addition to general education of the children, they acquire practical knowledge in trades and agriculture; the girls are taught housework and needlework. Each school has a library of over 300 volumes... The evidence of how diversified are the several employments of the scholars attached to the schools of the Alliance is best exemplified by the products now exhibited in this Columbian Exposition, which embrace, among scores of others, such articles as: - ...clothes, embroidered and lace handkerchiefs, child's robe shirts, dressed dolls, pictures worked in embroidery, caps, tapestry, under-vests, stockings, shirt front aprons, trousers,... specimens of writing, drawings and maps... photographic views of... Tunis... *The Exhibit of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in the World's Columbian Exhibition: Chicago, USA, 1893*, pp.3,5.

⁵⁵¹ Greenhalgh, 21, 76-77. Rydell, *All the World's A Fair*, 41.

to ensure a positive image of the colonies. Until this time private exhibitors, such as the AIU, collected materials in the colonies and could cater to public whim. By 1900, the fairs presented a more official, and more positive, if not accurate image to the public.⁵⁵²

Without the co-operation of the parents, none of the initiatives for workshops and exhibitions would have succeeded. How did the *directrices* portray the attitudes of the mothers towards accepting academic or vocational education for their daughters? What was the attitude of the young girls toward receiving instruction? What was the attitude of the *directrices* toward their students and the community? Sometimes the European background or training of the *directrices* distanced them from the parents and the community. At other times the principals were more sympathetic to their coreligionists. For instance Sara Ungar, the first *directrice*, displays compassion to her students.

Sara Ungar was an unusual woman of the late nineteenth century. As Elizabeth Antébi, a grandchild of Alliance principals, notes, Ungar had a spirit of adventure and a certain sang-froid.⁵⁵³ Ungar remained single until age 47,⁵⁵⁴ in a world where most of the

⁵⁵² ‘The ethnographic exhibitions were a product of the Age of Imperialism...By the end of the 1890’s, there was an effective administrative control in the colonies, and the Colonial Ministry in Paris had a stake in emphasizing the positive role of colonies. Since the medium of the ethnographic exhibition was too influential to be left in the hands of private interests who gathered subjects in the colonies for exhibitions catering to the public whim, after 1900 another kind of exhibition, modeled on those presented at the 1889 World’s Fair, replaced the private exhibitions. The change was clearly signaled at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1900....’ Schneider, 148-149.

⁵⁵³ *Pour se retrouver seule dans un pays d’Orient, il fallait un singulier esprit d’aventure et un sang-froid certain. Telle était Sarah Ungar, qui offrait pour l’Alliance la singularité d’être allemand...elle était née à Bonn au lendemain des révolutions de 1848 en Europe.* Elizabeth Antébi, *Les Missionnaires Juifs*, 149.

⁵⁵⁴ Sara Ungar’s date of birth: October 1849; date of marriage: December 1896. She married another AIU associate. <http://www.aiu.org> (accessed November 22, 2005).

directrices were married. She was of German origin, born in Bonn, an unusual circumstance since many of her colleagues originated in Alsace-Lorraine, the regions recently lost to Germany in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Memory of this bitter French defeat by the Germans was to haunt her years in Tunis.⁵⁵⁵ But Ungar was always loyal to her students, despite any misgivings she may have felt toward her treatment by the French administration in Tunis (which never “received” her⁵⁵⁶) or to the French-trained, Moroccan-born director of the Boys’ School (who wanted a “Frenchwoman” to replace her⁵⁵⁷).

There are several instances where Sara Ungar applauds her students for their fine work. For instance, she says that the little girls come to school willingly and the parents increase their demands to admit them.⁵⁵⁸ Ungar later states that the girls are motivated to study and are quite lively but she is always on the look out for an improvement in their behavior.⁵⁵⁹ She also discusses her two higher classes with admiration: *Il faut dire parmi les élèves de ces deux divisions, il y a des petites qui travaillent non seulement avec zèle,*

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Sara Ungar, 16 July 1885.

⁵⁵⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIX E*, Reel 63, David Cazès, 20 June 1887.

⁵⁵⁸ *Je suis heureuse de pouvoir vous communiquer, que les petites Tunisiennes se prêtent bien volontiers à l’instruction, et que du côté des parents les demandes d’admission sa’croissent de jour en jour.* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 74, Sara Ungar, 16 June 1882.

⁵⁵⁹ *Presque toutes montrent beaucoup d’intérêt pour leurs leçons, joint à une grande vivacité qui ne demanderait que l’occasion pour devenir de la turbulence; mais cela vont mieux que l’indifference. Si la tenue n’est pas encore irréprochable, cela ne tient pas à bon volonté, le plus grand nombre est déjà parvenu à comprendre des orders, donnés en français et a repondre a certaines petites questions....”* *Ibid.*, 30 June 1882.

*mais avec enthousiasme, ce sont de jeunes intelligences qui s'ouvrent à l'instruction, comme les fleurs à la lumière....*⁵⁶⁰ In addition, she is very sympathetic to the plight of those girls who probably would not be admitted due to lack of space.⁵⁶¹ Thus, in the first few months of her tenure, Sara expresses appreciation for the work of her students. In part, her correspondence may represent the thoughts of an employee to an employer, telling him what he wants to hear. On the other hand, her statements may express genuine emotions.

However, Sara Ungar does not hold the parents in as high regard as the students. In July 1883 she states that the parents do not yet understand the advantages of instruction. Moreover, it is the girls who implore their parents not to withdraw them from school. Since Tunisian families are essentially practical, Sara notes, she would like to open a workshop for dressmaking and embroidery. This would encourage parents to let their daughters stay and complete their primary school education.⁵⁶² Some of the details

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 February 1883.

⁵⁶¹ *“Les demandes d'admission affluent toujours. Si nous pourrions accepter toutes ces pauvres enfants! Mais pour le moment nous sommes obligés à choisir encore....Il y a des petites qui pleurent à tantes(?) larmes, si elles entendent qu'on ne peut pas les accepter. L'autre jour j'ai trouvé une petite enfant pleurant devant la porte; on l'avait renvoyée, parce qu'elle n'était pas inscrite. Il va sans dire que je l'ai fait entrer; à l'heure qu'il est, elle travaille très gentiment [sic].” Ibid.*

⁵⁶² *“Les élèves, surtout celles des premières classes, continuent à travailler avec beaucoup de zèle et se montrent très attachée à l'école. Comme malheureusement les parents ne comprennent pas encore tous les avantages que leurs petites peuvent tirer des institutions que vous leur offrez, ce sont les enfants elles-mêmes(je parle des plus grandes) qui insistent pour venir à l'école régulièrement et qui supplient leur parents de ne pas les retirer, quand ceux-ci les croient déjà assez savants....
-Je suis vivement émué de la conduite d'une jeune fille de 13 ans qui a dû quitter l'école pour travailler à la maison étant d'une famille très pauvre, et qui le soir se fait expliquer par sa jeune soeur ce qu'on a fait dans la journée pour continuer les devoirs avec sa division.-Ce cas me fait plus que jamais désirer de pouvoir attacher bientôt à notre école un ouvroir (?), où les enfants apprendraient à fond, et dans le but de*

of this letter of 6 July 1883 could also be used to bolster her own agenda with the Central Committee in Paris. In this case she hopes to find an additional teacher for couture. Here the *directrice* is an advocate for the girls and the school, but is not very impressed by the attitudes of the parents.

Sara Ungar's report of the annual party in June 1884 reveals pride in her students, but dismay in the parents. She praises the girls for their performance of skits and recitations but disparages the audience for its lack of decorum.⁵⁶³ But she omits that the parents do not understand one word of French, and that she does not speak Judeo-Arabic.

The end of the year program of June 1884 reveals the curriculum's requirements in foreign language proficiency and choral ability. The girls present recitations from Victor Hugo and Racine; they sing pieces by Mendelssohn and selections from (Wagner's) *Tannhäuser*, with piano accompaniment; they also perform a scene from Meyerbeer's *Esther* and one from (Mendelssohn's) *Athalie*.⁵⁶⁴ This training would be

s'en faire un état plus tard, le travaux de couture, voire même les broderies fines. Les familles tunisiennes, essentiellement pratiques, trouveraient alors un avantage réel à laisser leurs filles compléter leur éducation. ... nous sommes à la recherche d'une qui viendrait à certains jours de la semaine enseigner la coupe et la couture fine...." Ibid., 6 July 1883.

⁵⁶³ *"Les enfants sont très bien prêtées à cet essai. Elles sont bien su et relativement, bien recite les morceaux et les petites scènes contenus dans le programme...; elles ont chanté avec assez de goût. - Malheureusement la population de Tunis est encore peu habituées à de telles fêtes; nos coreligionnaires de basses classes sont surtout entièrement dépourvus de ces sentiments de respect qui retiennent un public européen dans les occasions pareilles. Nos braves Tunisiennes, accourent en foule, ne se gênaient pour causer haut, pour s'interpeller d'un bout de la salle à l'autre: Ya Taïta, Ya Suéra, Ya Messouda, etc. ..." Ibid., 6 June 1884.*

⁵⁶⁴ It is not likely that a school under Jewish auspices would present a piece by Wagner in the post-1945 world. The inclusion of this selection in the school program of 1884 may possibly be attributed to the German upbringing of the *directrice*, Sara Ungar. For the full text of the program, see *Programme de la Fête du 1 Juin 1884 à l'Ecole des Filles de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle à Tunis*, in *Ibid.*

similar to the education of young girls of the nineteenth century French bourgeoisie. It was not until 1907 that Muslim girls in Tunis had partial access to the French curriculum. The Louise René Millet School for Girls opened in 1900, named in honor of the wife of the Resident General, with the goal of providing a secular and Islamic education.⁵⁶⁵

In June 1886, Sara Ungar is pleased with the performance of her students at the annual commencement celebration and notes some progress in the behavior of the mothers. While she continues to praise her students, her attitude toward their mothers becomes more positive. There is still an underlying tone of disparagement (laced with optimism) in Ungar's choice of words.⁵⁶⁶ But perhaps deportment is an aspect of the "civilizing" mission, or of education.

In 1904 an article appears in the teachers' journal of the AIU admonishing the personnel to care for the cleanliness and hygiene of the students. The article states that by their "irreproachable behavior" and their personal care, people will recognize youngsters who spent their childhood in schools of the Alliance.⁵⁶⁷ Thus deportment (*la tenue*) is

⁵⁶⁵ Julia Clancy-Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge...", 110-111.

⁵⁶⁶ Her tone is evident in the passage where she describes the mothers as "our good Tunisian women...."
"La petite comédie a bien marché, et la partie musicale, ainsi que les poésies, ont beaucoup plu également....La plupart de nos bonnes femmes tunisiennes payaient le plaisir d'entendre des déclamations et des chants...et surtout pas de cries!
Nous avons constaté que leurs voix sont encore tout aussi percantes, et que le besoin de les faire entendre est chez eux tout aussi inférieux qu'à la fête d'il y a deux ans. Il y avait pourtant un petit progress, et je ne désespère pas de voir, le temps aidant, se former le goût de cette partie de notre auditoire...." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Sara Ungar, 14 June 1886. A copy of the program from 13 June 1886 is enclosed with the letter.

⁵⁶⁷ "*La Propreté à l'Ecole*", *Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance Israélite...*, 1902, 173.

another responsibility of the teacher and the *directrice*, in addition to cleanliness and health.

Sara Ungar and her successor Voley Chimènes share the same difficulty in changing the attitude of the mothers towards their daughters' schooling. Instruction, in the eyes of the mothers, is secondary to household chores. Ungar discusses this problem in her letter on the 6 July 1883, as noted above, and Chimènes still sees this as an issue in 1888.⁵⁶⁸ Both *directrices* assert that by establishing workshops, the mothers will more willingly send their daughters to school.

Moreover, if a student would receive her *certificat d'études*, this could also encourage the parents to continue sending their daughters to school. Chimènes voices this concern on 11 July 1888, stressing that the girls are willing to go to school, but the mothers are often reluctant to send them.⁵⁶⁹ The mothers are willing to send their daughters to school for the first few grades, but attendance declines once the girls are old

⁵⁶⁸ *J'ai des tres gentiles élèves, mais malheureusement les parents ne sont pas toujours comme elles. L'instruction est une chose secondaire a leur yeux et la couture et le ménage sont pour eux bien plus utiles. ... Je crois que si nous avions dans l'école un atelier préparant des couturieres ou des lingers les mamans sachant que leurs filles en sortant de l'école auraient un etat en mains les baisseraient plus volontiers venir en classe.* Archives of the AIU Tunisie XXX E, Reel 66, Voley Chimenes, 5 February 1888.

⁵⁶⁹ *"Nos enfants sont tres heureuses de venir en classe et ce n'est pas le desir qui leur manquer de continuer leurs etudes; mais les parents nous opposent de continuels obstacles. Je suis en relations avec quelques familles tunisiennes et je m'efforce de leur faire comprendre la necssite de l'instruction, j'ai gagne une d'entre elles et j'ai ainsi reussi a garder la jeune fille six mois de plus. C'est la famille de Samama. Si la filette obtenu le certificat d' etudes peut-être les parents consentiront-ils a la laisser une annee de plus."* Ibid., 11 June 1888. (Mathilde Samama would be one of the high scorers on the exam, Ibid., 2 July 1888)

enough to be useful at home.⁵⁷⁰ At this point the parents need motivation to continue to keep their girls in school. The establishment of workshops, according to the *directrice*, would provide the parents with economic incentive. Alternatively, academic achievement in the form of the *certificat* could also serve that purpose.

Once the school moves to larger quarters on 28 January 1891, Chimènes notes a change in the attitude of the mothers toward schooling their daughters. First the women are very excited to see the recently refurbished building, and enter at all times of the day to visit.⁵⁷¹ With the establishment of the workshop for girls, the mothers are happy to see the girls make their own clothes.⁵⁷² By May 1891, Chimènes can claim that several girls already work in town. Those who are employed by couturiers earn almost 2 francs per day but two others only earn 0.50 F per day making corsets. She can also exult in a victory over Tunisian customs: three years ago the parents did not want girls to have a trade. Now the parents see that far from debasing the woman, work raises and ennobles her.⁵⁷³ It is the work of the *directrice* and her students which enables the parents to

⁵⁷⁰ On the mothers preventing the girls from attending school, see for instance, *Ibid.*, 6 January 1891, or 15 June 1894. For attendance figures at the School for Girls, see for instance Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIII E*, Reel 72, S.T. Pariente, 23 June 1899.

⁵⁷¹ “...et les visites des femmes tunisiennes...ne cessent pas. Il faut, telle est l’expression ont elles se serrent, qu’elles voient l’école, et les enfants.” *Ibid.*, 11 February 1891. (In a recent study of the Jews of Jerba, the authors observe that the mothers similarly wander in and out of the school building while classes for their daughters are in session. Abraham L Udovitch and LucetteValensi, *The Last Arab Jews: The Communities of Jerba, Tunisia* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1984) 49.

⁵⁷² “Atelier de filles - Nous avons confectionné plusieurs peignoirs pour nos élèves les plus pauvres, les mères sont très heureuses de voir leurs fillettes faire leurs robes elles mêmes.” *Ibid.*, 2 March 1891.

⁵⁷³ “Atelier de filles - ...On peut dire sans exagérer qu’une véritable révolution s’est produise dans les moeurs tunisiennes, il y a seulement trois ans, les parents n’auraient pas voulu donner un état à leurs filles. La femme ne devait pas travailler, c’était presque un déshonneur. Ils commencent donc seulement à

change. In this moment of social analysis, Mme. Chimènes recognizes her own role in fostering social change, in creating a “true revolution”.

As for employment of Jewish women, there are several responses. Mme. M. Alhalel, one of the provisional *directrices* serving after the dismissal of Voley Chimènes, states in 1895 that the mothers understand the importance of French, but place the teaching of couture above all else.⁵⁷⁴ Learning dressmaking (and a trade) was undoubtedly important, and women of the *hara* most likely did not know how to construct French dresses or lingerie, but Mathilde’s statement is somewhat patronizing and naïve. She assumes that women do not know how to mend clothes, and if the school doesn’t teach them, “Where would they learn it?”

By the end of 1895, Mme. Alhalel notes her own views toward female workers and the contrasting attitudes of the parents. She says the parents do not understand that a young girl must earn her livelihood. The parents say that young Tunisian men will not marry girls who work with their hands.⁵⁷⁵

comprendre que le travail loin d'avilir la femme, la relève et l'anoblir et que par lui le bien être de la famille est augmenté si chacun y contribue dans la mesure de ses forces.” Ibid., 5 May 1891.

⁵⁷⁴ “*Ici comme partout ce que les mères de famille voudraient voir surtout enseigner à leurs filles; c’est la couture. Sans doute elles comprennent l’utilité du français, celle de l’instruction, mais avant tout elles placées la couture et elles ont raison. Ce sont des gens qui ont l’expérience de la vie, elles se disent que ces jeunes filles seront des femmes de ménage qui auront à fabriquer le linge de leur famille, à raccomoder les habits des enfants, à orner leur maison. Si à l’école on ne leur enseigne pas tout cela où l’apprendront-elles?*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXVII E*, Reel 60, Mme. Mathilde Alhalel, 4 March 1895.

⁵⁷⁵ “*Ils ne comprennent pas... que la jeune fille soit ouvrière, gagne sa vie. Ici les moeurs sont contraires à nos institutions. La principale preoccupation des parents c’est de marier leurs filles. Or, les jeunes gens tunisiens ne veulent point épouser les jeunes filles qui travaillent de leurs mains.*” Ibid., 30 December 1895.

The other provisional *directrice*, Mlle. Henriette Salomon, says the mothers are against female employment; young men won't support women who work. She reports the speech of the mothers, indicating they want their daughters to stay in school, but not learn a trade.⁵⁷⁶ Here the two women administering the school portray the opinions of the parents, with slight variations in emphasis.

The men of the Jewish artisan-tailors' "guild" later take an even harsher stance against women learning artisanal work. By 1909 the women represent a threat to the already dying trade of traditional clothing, which is in the hands of the men. This "guild", rather than setting standards for good workmanship, is primarily exclusionary. For instance, it specifically forbids the shops of the *Suq at-Truk* (Turkish Market in the *hara*, devoted to clothes) from handing over work to Jewish women and girls, instead of to Jewish men.⁵⁷⁷ The "convention" also did not allow women to fabricate vests (*les gilets*), which was a trade for men.⁵⁷⁸ Earlier, the third *directrice*, Hortense Gelbmann,

⁵⁷⁶ "D'autre part, c'est à grand'peine que nos avons recueilli 12 enfants pour la lingerie dont elle ne comprennent pas tout le rapport. Mille objections oiseuses à réfuter, maintes hésitations à combattre: "Voilà 6 ans que ma fille fréquente l'école je veux qu'elle continue à étudier"...ou bien "Ma fille ne travaillera pas pour le public, inutile qu'elle apprenne un métier.-Pourquoi—Elle ne se marierait plus; les jeunes gens ne prennent pas de fournir qui travaillent." Cette raison, émuee ou non, est une des plus sérieuses aux yeux des Tunisiens; c'est donc à leurs moeurs mêmes qu'on s'attaque en leur demandant cet effort." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Mlle. Henriette Salomon, 27 December 1895.

⁵⁷⁷ *Il est interdit aux boutiques de remettre aux femmes ou aux jeunes filles [la confection de] toutes sortes de grand "jebba" [long sack-like blouse] de soie ou de drap ou autre, ainsi que tout genre de "burnûs". Ces articles devront être remis à un ouvrier qualifié de sexe masculin afin qu'il les confectionne....* Robert Attal, "Une Guilde d'Artisans-Tailleurs Juifs à Tunis au début du XXe Siècle", *Revue des études juives*, CXXX:2-3-4, Apr.-Dec. 1971, 331.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 333.

intending to make inroads in this field in June 1900, found out she could not do it either.⁵⁷⁹

Despite changes in the leadership of the school during the late nineteenth century, the workshops continued to function, with varying degrees of success. In May 1896 one of the *institutrices*, Lucie Salomon, discusses the reasons for the economic difficulties of the workshops. Geographic proximity to Italy provides a pool of cheap labor for the merchants of Tunis, thus undercutting the Alliance.⁵⁸⁰ The historian, Julia Clancy-Smith, corroborates this view of the labor market in Tunis. She states that in the mid-nineteenth century Sicilian laborers migrated to Tunisia. The men served as masons and artisans for the construction of Italianate villas for upper middle class urban Muslims (the *baldi*) and the women worked as *mu'allimat*, in-house teachers of embroidery and lace making for the “blue bloods” of Tunis.⁵⁸¹ Thus it was easy to find workers already in the local market.

The correspondence of the third *directrice*, Mme. Hortense Gelbmann (1896-1900), substantiates the claim that the Italian workers are low paid, diverting potential clientele for the school's workshop to other arenas. In Gelbmann's letter of 28 October 1899 she states that the workshop for couture charges 12 F for an outfit. Meanwhile, she

⁵⁷⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, *Rapport sur l'Industrie des Culotières et des Giletières*, Gelbmann to Bigart, 22 June 1900 and *Ibid.*, Bigart to Gelbmann, 26 June 1900.

⁵⁸⁰ “Aux magasins, pour recruter de l'ouvrage il ne fallait pas songer. A proximité de l'Italie, ils se fournissent en grand majorité dans ce pays où le main d'oeuvre est très bon marché, employant aussi, dans leurs propres ateliers, des ouvrières siciliennes dont la journée de travail est relativement peu payée. Dans ces conditions toute demande de notre part devait être repoussée.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIV E*, Reel 73, Lucie Salomon, 4 May 1896, received in Paris on 10 May 1896.

⁵⁸¹ J. Clancy-Smith, “Envisioning Knowledge...”, 104-105.

has given up hope of courting the *livournaise* to buy the atelier's products.⁵⁸² The segment of the Jewish population originating from Leghorn probably buys clothes and handiwork from the Italian immigrants in Tunis. According to Gelbmann, in a subsequent letter, the Italians and Maltese only charge four or five francs for an outfit.⁵⁸³ Since the Leghorn Jews already live outside the confines of the *hara*, it would be easier and cheaper for them to purchase finished items from the Italians in town.

Under the tenure of Hortense Gelbmann, the workshops continue to falter and the lingerie workshop eventually fails. Her annual report for 1898-99 (5 November 1899) reveals that she closed the lingerie workshop since it could not compete with ready-made articles. The dressmaking workshop does not lack apprentices, but suffers from an insufficient clientele.⁵⁸⁴ In Gelbmann's mind, the poor results are due to outside economic forces, not to her own inadequacies.

What is Mme. Gelbmann's opinion of her young charges and their employment opportunities after graduation? After leaving the workshops, she doubts that they will find work. Women in handicrafts "are legion" in Tunis; Italian and Maltese women are

⁵⁸² "L'atelier de couture...nous promet de meilleurs resultants. Nous avons mis le prix de façon d'un costume à 12F....J'ai renoncée à l'espoir de la clientele livournaise et trop difficile pour venire chez nous." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 28 October 1899.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.* 22 May 1900.

⁵⁸⁴ "Notre atelier de lingerie n'a pas donné les resultants attendues; la lingerie ici comme partout ailleurs, s'achète toute faite et à meilleure compte. C'est un atelier qui, à mon avis, n'aurait jamais dû être créé.... La couture, par contre, est fort accréditée; les apprentices sont nombreuses, et si nous acceptions toutes celles qui se présentent, la concurrence plus tard serrait redoutable. La clientele, malheureusement, ne vient pas facilement chez nous; celle que j'ai recherchée de prime abord, est trop exigeante et trop difficile pour s'habiller à unis, à plus forte raison à l'Ecole...." *Ibid.*, 5 November 1899.

underpaid and can charge low fees.⁵⁸⁵ Market conditions no doubt play a role in Gelbmann's difficulties. But the director of the boys' school finds fault with the administration of the workshops themselves.

Shemtob Pariente, Director of the School for Boys, presents a dismal view of the girls' workshops in his report of 23 June 1899. Enrollment in the couture workshop is eleven, but only seven are present. Attendance is irregular, there is lack of work, and the only orders filled for three months were from the teaching personnel (for pay) or from Jewish charitable organizations (gratis). As for the lingerie workshop, registration indicates eight students, but only three are present. Items for pay constructed during the course of the year only amount to a few weeks' worth of work. The two workshops which cost 2400 francs per year only bring in 227 francs. He suggests closing them. The ironing workshop was cancelled at the beginning of the year.⁵⁸⁶ The workshops do not appear to be able to attract students or clientele. Only under the guidance of the fourth *directrice*, Louise Bornstein Guéron, do the workshops re-open and produce more encouraging results.

How does Mme. Gelbmann portray the attitudes of the parents to education? Not surprisingly, she notes similar patterns already voiced by her predecessors. Tunisian

⁵⁸⁵ “*Sortant de nos ateliers, ...sommes-nous assurés que nos jeunes filles trouveront facilement du travail?... A Tunis, tous les métiers manuels, essayés jusque-là, sont-ils tous à mettre à la portée de nos jeunes filles? Je ne le pense pas. Les couturières, les modistes, les lingères, les repasseuses, sont légions dans notre ville; elles ont peu rétribuées; nous avons des Italiennes de des Maltais qui confectionnent des costumes à 4 et à 5 F: donc il faut chercher autre chose.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 22 May 1900.

⁵⁸⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXIII E*, Reel 72, S.T. Pariente, 23 June 1899.

parents keep their children at home on the slightest pretext. It is the children who want to come to school, but begrudgingly conform to the wishes of their parents. In the future, and only with the next generation, could there be a change.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, the first three *directrices* realize that they must educate the parents and the children. An article in the *Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance Israélite (REAI)* underscores this dual task of Alliance educators. In fact, it is a part of the schoolteacher's "mission".⁵⁸⁸

But by 1900 a segment of the Jewish population in Tunis voices criticism of the Alliance's efforts to bring "French civilization" to Tunisia. An anonymous group, belonging to the "Portuguese and Tunisian rites" sends a letter to the Chief Rabbi of France and honorary President of the AIU, M. Zadoc Kahn. Representing a portion of the Tunisian Jewish community, they state that the Alliance is creating superficial Frenchmen and Jews who are not seriously steeped in Judaism. Its work is assimilationist.⁵⁸⁹ A partial translation reads as follows:

⁵⁸⁷ "Les parents tunisiens, tout en prenant l'Ecole et ses avantages, trouvent tout, naturel, sous le moindre prétexte, de garder chez eux les enfants.... Nos enfants elles-mêmes sentent la nécessité de l'Ecole, et c'est bien souvent à contre-cœur qu'elles se conforment ainsi à la volonté de leurs parents. Dans l'avenir, et avec la nouvelle génération seulement, un(?) résultat appréciable pourra être constaté." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 5 November 1899.

⁵⁸⁸ "En Orient, l'instituteur n'a pas que les enfants à élever; il lui arrive souvent – et c n'est pas la partie la moins belle de sa mission – de faire la leçon aux parents, une leçon plus ou moins discrete, plus ou moins ostensible, suivant la condition ou le temperament du 'grand élève' qu'il a devant lui." "Miettes Pédagogiques", *REAI*..., 1901 (?), 79.

⁵⁸⁹ "Que sont les jeunes gens sortis de l'Ecole de l'Alliance Israélite? Ils sont naturellement et forcément ce que les fait cette education assimilatrice. Par l'effet de cette education, ces jeunes gens ne sont ni Juifs ni Français....si l'éducation assimilatrice arrive à atténuer considérablement, voir meme effacer, l'esprit national juif, elle est impuissante à le remplacer par un esprit national nouveau...." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie I G 3*, Reel 6, *Tunis-Sionisme [1900]*, *Lettre envoyée par des sionistes (?)*, 2 October 1900.

The Alliance Israélite...in violation of the most basic rules of conduct, is seeking to impose the French spirit, embodied by the French national educational system, on the Jewish population of Tunisia....In order to enlighten this [Tunisian Jewish] population, to introduce it to modern life, one must not replace its traditions and historical memories by other traditions and other memories. One must not seek to replace one's own national spirit by that of another nation. On the contrary, the ingredients of a nation's progress must be drawn from its own historical past. It is in one's own intellectual and national field that one must sow the seeds of civilization and progress that belong to all nations and do not bear the stamp of any nation in particular.⁵⁹⁰

This letter implies that Zionism is an alternative to the French educational model.⁵⁹¹

While not explicitly stating it, Zionism emerges here as a competing narrative to the Francophile discourse of the Alliance. The (probably male) authors of the letter project a new direction for the future of the Jewish community of Tunisia. As the twentieth century progresses, the Alliance also eventually has to re-assess its position in the French Overseas Territories.

The *directrices*, however, do not voice these concerns in their correspondence. Generally precluded from public life, neither French nor Tunisian women would be welcomed at public meetings. The *directrices*, therefore, focus their observations on their immediate realm. For instance, early in her career as *directrice*, Louise Bornstein (1900-1911), who later marries Lazare Guéron of the Boys' School, notes that "the population"

⁵⁹⁰ Michel Abitbol, "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: Analysis of a Discourse (1830-1914)," in *The Jews in Modern France*, eds. F. Malino and B. Wasserstein, translation by Jonathan Mandelbaum (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), 53.

⁵⁹¹ The First Zionist Congress had already been held in Basle, Switzerland in 1897, heralding the era of political Zionism.

is not in favor of female employment.⁵⁹² Shortly thereafter, however, she convinces a few parents to place their daughters as apprentices to fashion houses in town. But the managers, even the Jewish ones, cannot accept apprentices who do not work on Saturday; it would disorganize their workshops. Louise then considers re-opening the atelier at school.⁵⁹³ Thus Louise takes the local point of view into account, but proceeds anyway with the Alliance's agenda.

In 1901 the *directrice* states that the re-opening of the workshop attracts more students to enroll. By April 1901, Louis Bornstein claims that the workshop is the only reason the parents enroll their daughters in school.⁵⁹⁴ In her Annual Report for 1901-1902 she lists the names, class levels, ages and destinations of the students leaving school, presumably before finishing their studies. Five of the fifty-one girls become apprentices. Aged eleven to fourteen, at least two will serve as apprentices to an orthopedist and one will work for a couturier.⁵⁹⁵ Child labor was commonly accepted. Although efforts to ensure federal legislation against child labor in the United States began early in the

⁵⁹² “*J’avais à coeur de m’occuper aussi d’oeuvre apprentissage qui est encore à créer...Je prévois qu’elle rencontrera de sérieuses difficultés, la population, d’après les renseignements que je suis efforcée d’obtenir des enfants elles-mêmes, se montrent peu disposée en faveur du travail des jeunes filles.*” Archives of the AIU. *Tunisie XIV E* Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 14 November 1900.

⁵⁹³ “*...j’ai voulu essayer de placer au dehors les enfants que les parents consentiraient à laisser travailler. J’ai bien réussi à convaincre quelques parents de laisser leurs enfants travailler dans les maisons étrangères, mais j’ai dû renoncer à mon projet devant un cas de force majeure: Les patrons, mêmes israélites,...sont dans l’impossibilité d’accepter des apprentices et ouvrières qui ne travaillent pas le samedi, cela désorganiserait leurs ateliers....J’ai donc dû battre en retraite: et reprendre l’idée de rouvrir l’atelier à l’école meme.*” Ibid., 22 January 1901.

⁵⁹⁴ “*La réouverture de l’atelier a été bien accueillie parmi nos élèves. En effet les parents tiennent tous à ce que leurs enfants sachent coudre; ils ont raison en cela, mais, pour eux, c’est l’unique but de l’école et ils sollicitent l’entrée de leurs filles à l’atelier....*” Ibid., 9 April 1901.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., *Etat nominatif des élèves sorties pendant l’année 1901-1902*, continuation of Annual Report, 26 October 1902; 11 November 1902.

twentieth century, it was not until Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency that such measures became law.⁵⁹⁶ At the turn of the century, employment of children under age fourteen was the norm.

In her Annual Report of October 1902, Louise Bornstein notes that all the girls want to work as couturiers, embroiderers, or teachers to earn money, except for one; she wants to teach "to contribute to the progress of the Jews". Louise then comments: "*On ne change pas vite semblable tournure d'esprit....*" Moreover, through the prestige of the school, Louise hopes to influence the families.⁵⁹⁷ In recording the opinions of her students, Louise also includes her own thoughts. Her goal is not only to provide the girls with a livelihood, but also to instill new attitudes in their minds. Then the students will serve as catalysts for change in the family, even if it does not happen quickly. Here the principal finds one student whose views mirror that of the *directrice* and of the Alliance. It is the first time in Louise's career as principal that the voice of a student becomes intertwined with hers.

As an advocate for her students, Louise Bornstein requests a monthly subsidy of five francs (each) for two of her new apprentices who work "outside" (the school) and need support. The girls will make appliances and bandages for an orthopedist, a useful

⁵⁹⁶ Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

⁵⁹⁷ "*Toutes veulent apprendre un métier.... Pourquoi voulez-vous être couturière? - Parce qu'on gagne de l'argent. - Et vous, broderie? - Parce qu'on gagne de l'argent. - Et vous, institutrice - Parce qu'on gagne de l'argent. - Voilà le mobile general.... Une fillette seule a dit qu'elle 'voulait instruire les petits enfants pour contribuer aux progrès des Israélites.'* ... *C'est par le prestige que nous avons sur nos élèves qu'il nous est possible d'agir sur les familles.*" Ibid., Annual Report, 25 October 1902.

trade that can later be done at home. The father of one girl placed her at this apprenticeship.⁵⁹⁸ Here is a parent who clearly favors his daughter's goals. This serves as indirect evidence of change in the attitudes of the fathers. It also demonstrates the principal's resolve and her ability to engage both students and parents in her plans.

In July 1906, Lazare Guéron, now Louise's husband, draws up a table of the number of female apprentices placed from 1900-1904. Of ten possible trades, the number of apprentices is as follows: 336 in 1900, 408 in 1901, 377 in 1902, 644 in 1903, and 736 in 1904.⁵⁹⁹ These figures substantiate Louise's claim of 9 April 1901, cited above, concerning the popularity of the workshops. In a short period of time Louise manages to turn the apprenticeships around and more than double the enrollment in the program. She clearly motivates the girls to prepare them for employment. The parents presumably support these endeavors as well. But it is a male teacher who provides the statistics which define the larger context of the workshops.

⁵⁹⁸ *"Voudriez-vous accorder un mensuel de frs. 5 à deux fillettes de notre école qui travaillent au dehors. La 1ere Emilie Bismuth, a été placée chez un orthopédiste, par son père. Je place la seconde...dans la même maison. Elles apprendront à confectionner certains appareils et bandages. Ce métier est excellent, paraît-il; la femme peut le pratiquer chez elle....Les jeunes ouvrières peuvent espérer commencer à gagner leur vie (1 fr. par jour) dès leur deuxième année d'apprentissage, si elles sont adroits et assidues. Mais, en attendant comme elles sont de familles nécessiteuses, il faut les soutenir...."* Ibid., 11 November 1902.

The request for a five franc monthly subsidy is soon granted by Bigart for the first year. Ibid., Bigart to Bornstein, 20 November 1902.

⁵⁹⁹ In addition to these statistics, Lazare states: *"Les bulletins ne mentionnent pas le nombre d'apprenties exerçant les différents professions enseignées aux jeunes filles. Ces professions sont: 1. Bonnetrie 2. Broderie 3. Chemises et Cravates de l'hommes 4. Corsets 5 Couture 6. Dentelles 7. Lingerie 8. Modes 9. Orthopédie 10. Tapis (fabrication des)."* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E. 132*, Reel 37, Lazare Guéron, *II. Tableau, Nombre d'apprenties placées durant les années 1900-1904*, 12 July 1906.

Throughout the years of Louise Bornstein's assignment in Tunis she comments on her relations with the parents and families of the girls. In November 1902 she notes that she spends two hours every morning talking to parents, for example, about the cleanliness or absences of the little girls.⁶⁰⁰ A few months later her attitude toward the mothers is still negative. She derides the mothers for their unseemly apathy, negligence and abandonment of their children.⁶⁰¹ It is a view colored by her perception that the mothers do not incorporate her lessons on work, duty, and cleanliness into their daily lives. She becomes discouraged and her personal response intrudes at the end of the letter. With so many people blind to their own interests, she says, one inevitably becomes pessimistic. She wishes that it would be more encouraging.⁶⁰²

But Louise Bornstein makes inroads in the community through the use of Arabic. The Alumni Association of the Alliance (*La société des Anciens élèves de l'Alliance*) printed up a statement in Arabic which she had to deliver to the young girls of the workshop at their prize ceremony. Her remarks were then distributed to the families as circulars. Louise was soon surprised to see two of her students asking to work "outside" (the school), having gained parental consent.⁶⁰³ Although the Alumni Association may

⁶⁰⁰ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein, 28 November 1902.

⁶⁰¹ In discussing the older girls, Louise notes, "*Elles ont pris aussi l'habitude de s'occuper de leurs petites compagnes, que des mères dont je ne saurais assez blâmer l'inconvenable apathie, l'odieuse, négligence, abandonnement.*" Ibid. 4 March 1903. On the apathy of the mothers, "*l'apathie complète où vivent les femmes tunisiennes*", see also *Ibid.*, Annual Report 1903-1904, 7 December 1904.

⁶⁰² "*Avoir tant d'hommes aveugles sur leurs propres intérêt, on gagne une certaine dose de philosophie, mais d'une philosophie forcément pessimiste. J'aurais souhaite qu'elle fût plus encourageante*" Ibid.

⁶⁰³ "*La société des Anciens élèves de l'Alliance a fait imprimer en arabe quelques mots que j'avais dû prononcer lors de la distribution des prix à laquelle nos jeunes filles de l'atelier participaient pour la première fois et ces circulaires ont été répandues dans ces familles. J'ai eu la surprise de voir deux de mes*

have presented Louise with a transliterated text, at least she made an effort to reach out to the parents in their own language. She was the first *directrice* to do so. This is a far cry from Ungar's day when the principal addressed the crowd in French and had difficulty controlling her listeners. Moreover, Louise Bornstein adapted to local conditions and achieved positive results. The event underscores the significance of language to affect change. Also, Bornstein's letter serves as evidence of the "geography of place" influencing the *directrice* to take new measures in her tenure as principal.

The third bi-monthly report of Louise Bornstein for 1903 discloses her still negative opinions of the girls, modified by some optimism. "Our little Tunisians" do not impress her with original ideas or with their own observations. Rather, the little girls are capable of completely fabricating enormous lies and know how to disrupt class with "mischievously naughty playfulness". Yet, compared to girls in other schools in Tunis, they have excellent behavior. Moreover, they excel in their studies and every year the exams for the *certificat d'études primaires* prove that. This she finds encouraging.⁶⁰⁴ Bigart's response is cautiously optimistic. He says that the details she sends him about the character of Tunisian girls, their studies, and their education are most interesting. In

élèves me demander de les placer au-dehors; leurs parents y consentent, m'ont-elles dit, 'puisque je trouve que ce n'est pas mal'". Ibid., 7 April 1903.

⁶⁰⁴ "...Nos petites Tunisiennes ne manifestent une intelligence très éveillée ni par leurs idées originales, ni par leurs observations personnelles; mais elles savent, avec une audace déconcertante, une rapidité inouïe, forger de toutes pièces de mensonges énormes; elles savent, aussi, par de gamineries malicieusement méchantes, paralyser la maîtresse insuffisamment adroite.... Cependant, nos élèves comparées à celles des autres écoles de Tunis préviennent en leur faveur par leur excellente tenue.... Leur supériorité est tout aussi réelle sous le rapport des connaissances.... Ces constatations sont plutôt encourageantes.... Ibid., 5 June 1903.

addition, her impressions are now almost optimistic, although the girls are not yet very frank....⁶⁰⁵ Louis Bornstein's report indicates that after three years in Tunis, the "geography of place" forces her to change her opinions of her students and become more positive. Moreover, the girls have resumed taking the exams for the *certificat*. In addition, she receives encouraging words from her boss in Paris, Jacques Bigart.

The Annual Report of Louise Bornstein for 1903-1904 still is pessimistic about the Jewish population of Tunis, but sees the school as capable of effecting radical change in the course of time. Louise adds that the population is, really, too "backward" for this century, but hopes the school would change that.⁶⁰⁶ However, her Annual Report of 1904-1905 marks a turning point in her perception of her students. While there is a total transformation in her little girls, it will take time for a "definitive transformation" of the Tunisian Jew.⁶⁰⁷ Now that she sees positive results from the girls, she is more cheerful about the anticipated long term success of the Alliance's *oeuvre*.

To reward her apprentices in the workshop, and probably to motivate them

⁶⁰⁵ "...Les détails que vous nous donnez sur le caractère des fillettes tunisiennes, sur leurs études, sur l'éducation à laquelle v. [vous] attachez avec raison une si haute importance, sont des plus intéressants....Nous constatons avec plaisir que vos impressions sont maintenant presque optimistes. Les écolières commencent, dites-vous, à être aimantes, et studieuses; elles ne sont pas encore très franches...." Ibid., Bigart to Bornstein, 16 June 1903.

⁶⁰⁶ "...mais nous sommes convaincues que l'action prolongée de l'école doit provoquer un changement radical dans la manière de vivre, de comprendre de cette nombreuse population juive de Tunis, vraiment trop arriérée pour le siècle. Nous serions heureuses d'y avoir quelque peu contribué." Ibid., Bornstein to Bigart, 7 December 1904.

⁶⁰⁷ "...Pour la transformation définitive de l'Israélite tunisien, il faut compter sur le temps. Nous préparons le terrain et notre oeuvre sera féconde." Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XVI E, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, Received in Paris, 1 January 1906. (On the "total transformation" of the schoolgirls, see Chapter 2 above.)

further, Louise suggests that profit from sales be divided among them. It amounts to 160.55 francs in January 1906. This is the first time she would be returning profits to her workers. As for Mlle. Narboni, who manages the couture workshop,⁶⁰⁸ Louise asks if Narboni can receive fifteen percent of the atelier's total products.⁶⁰⁹ Bigart agrees to the division of cash but authorizes Louise to give Mlle. Narboni ten percent.⁶¹⁰ Through her initiative Louise inaugurates a co-operative, primarily for the benefit of her students. She maintains the co-operative for her remaining years as principal in Tunis.

In her public address on the forty-sixth anniversary of the founding of the Alliance, Louise B. Guéron, discusses the confluence of goals of both teachers and parents. Soon there would no longer be any contradiction or antagonism between what is taught in school and what is learned at home.⁶¹¹ It is her hope, apparently, that the voice of Tunisian mothers would become intertwined with voice of the women educators.

On the occasion of the Alliance's anniversary, Louise Bornstein Guéron also discusses the goals of the organization. She says that the AIU always tried to teach an occupation to poor young girls. Then she mimics the discourse of the Alliance, stating: "*La régénération morale par l'instruction et le travail, tel est le but que nous efforçons*

⁶⁰⁸ "...Mlle. Narbonni dirige notre atelier de couture depuis près de trois ans et gagne 80 fr. par mois. L'atelier comprend 27 apprenties...." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, third letter of 20 December 1903.

⁶⁰⁹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron to Bigart, 10 January 1906.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Bigart to L.B. Guéron, 16 January 1906.

⁶¹¹ "*Dans peu d'années, il n'y aura plus comme autrefois, contradiction, antagonisme même entre l'enseignement donné à l'école et les exemples, les exigences des parents. Les mères sauront ce que les maîtresses enseignent....*" *Ibid.*, L.B. Guéron, 20 May 1906.

de réaliser à l'école et à l'atelier."⁶¹² It is this goal of "moral regeneration" through education and work which the *directrice* hopes to instill at the school and at the workshop. Hopefully the good example of the girls will further motivate their mothers to accept the goals of the Alliance.

In October 1906 Louise notes that the parents are happy to send their young children to school for three reasons. First, it is a way to get rid of them. Second, it is more difficult for children to be admitted when they are older. Third, a certain number of parents are really beginning to be happy that their children will receive an education.⁶¹³ None of the reasons stated is as noble as the goals that the principal espouses. But at least some of the parents now value an education for their daughters. This occurs twenty-four years after the school opens.

While the parents may acknowledge the need to educate their daughters, it is not a top priority. The education of their sons comes first. As Louise states in December 1907, the parents are not willing to make the smallest financial sacrifice to pay school fees for their daughters, even if they can afford it. In the eyes of the parents, girls do not have the

⁶¹² *Ibid.*

⁶¹³ "*Les parents tiennent aujourd'hui à envoyer de bonne heure leurs enfants à l'école pour les raisons suivantes: - 1 C'est tout d'abord une façon de s'en débarrasser. 2 Ils savent que nous les admettons plus difficilement si elles sont trop grandes. 3 Enfin, un certain nombre d'entre eux ont réellement le souci de commencer de bonne heure l'éducation de leurs enfants....*" *Ibid.*, Annual Report, 1905-1906, 21 October 1906.

same importance, nor do they merit the same sacrifices, as boys.⁶¹⁴ Thus, the attitude of the parents to education for girls has changed somewhat, but not entirely.

The issue of school fees (*écolage*) for girls arises again in 1910. Louise thinks that the *Commission de l'écolage* subscribes to the principle that the sisters of boys who pay tuition can attend gratuitously. Bigart disavows her of this idea and says that girls who are not from needy families should pay a fee.⁶¹⁵

How does Louise Bornstein Guéron implement the curriculum, particularly regarding workshops? During the last four years of her leadership of the school, Louise tries to locate emerging markets for the products of her workshops. She not only seeks contacts in the local Tunisian Jewish market, but in Paris and London as well. At the end of 1907 she mentions the possibility of sales abroad. Embroiderers have difficulty finding remunerative work in Tunis. Louise suggests annexing a workshop to the school for the embroidery of household items. These furnishings would be assured of sale in the department stores of Paris.⁶¹⁶ By the spring of 1909 the school receives monthly receipts

⁶¹⁴ “*Même eux qui pourraient payer se décident difficilement à consentir le moindre sacrifice pour l'éducation de leur filles. Ils dépenseraient à la rigueur pour l'instruction de leurs fils. Les filles n'ont pas, à leurs yeux, la même importance et ne méritent pas les mêmes sacrifices.*” Ibid., Annual Report, 1906-1907, 12 December 1907.

⁶¹⁵ “*La 'Commission de l'écolage' qui fuse les taxes des élèves payants, a admis ce principe que, sauf très rares exceptions, des soeurs des garçons payants sont gratuitement admises à l'école des filles.*” Ibid., Louise B. Guéron to J. Bigart, 28 November 1910. See also Bigart's response: “*Nous ne pouvons admettre que l'on reçoise gratuitement l'école de filles les soeurs de ___ les garçons payants. Nous exigeons que ___ les filles sont les parents, ne sont pas des nécessiteuses, paient un écolage*” Ibid., Bigart to L.B. Guéron, 4 December 1910. The director of the School for Boys also comments on this issue and agrees with Bigart. See Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXI E.187*, Reel 47, C. Ouziel, 11 December 1910.

⁶¹⁶ “*Nos brodeuses, malgré leur habilité, ont de la peine à trouver un travail rémunérateur; aussi y aurait-il avantage à annexer l'école un ouvroir où se confectionneraient des travaux de broderie d'ameublement*”

from the fashion house of Friedberger in Paris, not for tablecloths or drapes, but for apparel. The checks are for blouses and embroidery stemming from the recently founded Workshop of Former Apprentices (*atelier des anciennes apprenties*).⁶¹⁷

In her various projects, such as the embroidery workshop for apprentices or the one for recent graduates, Mme. Louise B. Guéron becomes a businesswoman, seeking new markets for the work of her students. In this capacity she can be considered a daring entrepreneur, a colonialist-in-reverse who sends finished goods to the mother country, or a concerned principal.

Louise B. Guéron discusses her idea to sell embroidered goods in Paris in her letter of 26 December 1907, addressed to the Director of Agriculture, Commerce, and Colonization. She states that the children who frequent the school are almost all indigent, and that she not only wants to give them the elements of practical instruction but also wants to save them from misery and misconduct by giving them an occupation (*métier*) which will permit them to earn a livelihood. The great difficulty, she continues, is to find an opening market (*un débouché*) in Tunis or France for the products of our workers. A tablecloth would bring us 16 to 17 francs. It is made with cloth and cotton purchased in France, but customs would add another 13.75 F, making it too costly for someone to purchase. Louise then invokes the civilizing mission. Then she proceeds to the heart of the matter, asking for a decrease in customs duties for the articles entering France. She

(*tapis, rideaux*) dont l'écoulement se trouverait assuré dans les grands magasins de Paris (*Printemps, Trois Quatiers* etc.)...." *Ibid.*, 17 November 1907.

⁶¹⁷ "Atelier des anciennes apprenties- ...Le succes de notre atelier de blouses et broderies s'accuse tous le jours davantage. La clientele sur place, comme celle de Londres et Paris, augmente sans cesse...J'ai pu, fin avril, distribuée 500 frs. de salaires à nos ouvrières. La journée de travail a été payee 2 frs., 1.75, 1.50 selon la capacité professionnelle des anciennes apprenties." *Ibid.* 13 May 1909.

also hopes to persuade the Director that her request is in the interest of the colonization of Tunisia.⁶¹⁸ She then writes a letter to the Central Committee of the AIU, asking it to intercede on her behalf with the Resident General of Tunisia, M. Alapetite. But the response of Jacques Bigart is negative.⁶¹⁹ Even though Bigart is unwilling to intervene with the authorities for what he views as a question of little importance, Louise continues to seek markets abroad.

In 1909 she tries to make inroads in London through a woman who visited the school, Mlle. de Montmort. In England, Louise says, goods enter duty-free.⁶²⁰ The girls who leave the apprenticeship (*l'oeuvre d'apprentissage*) in 1909 make 2 to 2.5 francs per day. Moreover, *l'oeuvre d'apprentissage* is still a cooperative. When there is a surplus from sales, the excess is divided equally among the girls.⁶²¹ On the other hand, when

⁶¹⁸ *De ce fait nous privons toute une population laborieuse d'un gagne pain suffisant et assuré, nous laissons dans la misère nombre de familles qui auraient pu en être sauvées, nous abandonnons au moment où elle produirait un résultat efficace, l'oeuvre de civilisation que nous entreprenons. Les marchandises que nous employons provenant toutes de France-...ne-serait-il pas possible d'obtenir, à l'entrée en France, sinon la franchise complete du moins la taxation de la main d'oeuvre seule, les marchandises venues de France ne subissant ici qu'une petite modification de main d'oeuvre. Dans l'intérêt de la colonisation, des precedents ont été créés. Bien des produits sol du tunisien entrent en franchise totale ou jusqu'à concurrence d'une valeur déterminée....Il est superflu d'insister sur intérêt que présente, pour la colonisation de ce pays, l'introduction du travail et du bien, être dans un milieu oisif et miserable. Ibid., 26 December 1907.*

⁶¹⁹ *Articles de Broderie – Nous ne croyons pas necessaire d'intervenir auprès de la Residence generale pour une question relative de peu importance(?). Peut-être reperez vous toute seule à obtenir l'exemption des _____ de douane. Sinon vous vous efforcez d'ecouler vos articles sur place. Ibid., Bigart, 5 January 1908.*

⁶²⁰ *Si, avec l'aide de Mlle. de Montmort je puis réussir à écouler en Angleterre, où les marchandises entrent en franchise, des broderies d'ameublement et autres travaux de couture, lingerie et de dentelles, nous assurions à un nombre relativement considerable de jeunes fille un gain suffisant pour leur faire une vie meilleure. Ibid., 10 January 1909.*

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*

boys leave their apprenticeships, they earn three to six francs per day.⁶²² They, of course, work in different trades from the girls, which are more remunerative, and in the public sphere. As Annie Benveniste notes,⁶²³ the girls were encouraged to leave the private sphere of the home to go to school, they worked in temporary jobs before marriage, but after getting married they (usually) returned home to the closed universe of child-rearing, family life, and employment at home.

In her letter of 3 March 1911 Louise Bornstein mentions other visitors to the school, who, on their return to London, will present samples of the girls' work to various fashion houses. By the 3 May 1911 she acknowledges receipt of a check of 250 francs from the fashion and fabric house, Liberty of London.⁶²⁴ Orders for work from Liberty of London continue even after Mme. Guéron leaves her post in Tunis for a new one in Algeria, at the end of 1911.

But Louise B. Guéron does not give up on the Parisian market. After the visit of Mlle. de Montmort, which she discussed in her letter of 10 January 1909, Mlle. de Montmort submitted samples to a department store in Paris and the school received an

⁶²² Bulletin of the AIU (*BAIU*), *Ecoles primaires*, Third Series, No. 34 (Paris: Siège de la Société, 1909), 100.

⁶²³ Annie Benveniste, "Le rôle des Institutrices de l'Alliance israélite à Salonique" ...20.

⁶²⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Mme. Louise B. Guéron, 3 March 1911.

order of close to 400 F. The new work was destined for the workshop of former students. It consisted of blouses and embroidery.⁶²⁵

The role of Mlle. de Montmort as a commercial intermediary is also documented in the Bulletin of the AIU. In his report on primary schools in 1909, Lazare Guéron writes that he met Mlle. de Montmort through “a happy coincidence” and spoke to her about the program. She came to visit the School for Girls and promised to help. He notes that due to her good instructions, the articles from the School for Girls are becoming popular in “the French milieu”, i. e. France.⁶²⁶ Here the husband of Louise B. Guéron takes credit for introducing Mlle. de Montmort to the school, which may have been true. But it is through the perseverance of Louise that contact with the London market survives. The school continues to receive work from Liberty of London even under Louise’s successor, Julie Cohen-Scali (Saguès).

As for the sale of items in Paris, on the 31 July 1909 the AIU Central Committee in Paris receives a check for 988 francs from the Parisian store of Friedberger. On 1

⁶²⁵ *Atelier de blouses, robes d’enfants, etc. – Je vous avais dit (lettre no.238 du 10 janvier) que Mlle. de Montmort, ayant visité notre école, s’y était intéressé vivement et nous avait promis son concours pour des oeuvres à créer afin d’assurer du travail à un grand nombre de nos anciennes élèves.*

J’avais fait préparer par des anciennes élèves de notre atelier, des blouses...et diverses broderies.

A peine de retour à Paris, Mlle. de Montmort a soumis ces modèles à une grande maison qui m’a immédiatement écrit pour me donner une commande d’échantillons de près de 400 frs. Cette seule maison pourrait nous assurer du travail régulier et constant pour une quarantaine d’ouvrières.

Mademoiselle de Montmort devait également soumettre nos échantillons à Londres avec peut-être encore plus de chances de succès.... Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XVI E, Reel 38, Mme. Louise B. Guéron, 19 March 1909.

⁶²⁶ BAIU, 1909, 100-101.

August 1909 the check is sent on to Tunis. By 21 October 1909 there are so many orders from Friedberger for the *atelier de broderies* that Louise says she will have to double the number of workers and apprentices from 7 to 16. She will have to double this number again to promptly deliver the work. In her letter of 6 February 1911 Louise notes the income and expenses for the *atelier* of embroidery for the year 1910:

<i>Recettes</i>		4,327.15 francs
<i>Dépenses:</i>		
<i>Salaires</i>	3,646.70	
<i>Fournitures</i> [Supplies]	647.85	
<i>Expéditions</i> [Shipments]	32.60	4,327.15

Louise also seeks markets locally for her finished goods. The third directrice, Mme. Hortense Gelbmann, grappled with the same issues. In any case, Louise manages to find a local Jewish merchant to sell the knitted goods that two of her students produce on knitting machines.⁶²⁷ Here she again serves as a commercial intermediary in the aid of her students. Since the era of Mme. Gelbmann the work is now mechanized.

In Louise's final Annual Report of her tenure as principal, for 1910-1911, she discusses changes in attitudes, behavior, and skill levels. She recalls her initial difficulties with the parents, the students and the teaching personnel. Her statement indicates her early negative attitudes toward her coreligionists. At that time, she thought

⁶²⁷ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron, 9 February 1909.

the parents could not understand the importance of cleanliness and attentiveness; the girls had bad habits of disorder and apathy; and the teachers had no idea of their duties. After eleven years at the helm, she feels she has triumphed in her work. The young girls are now docile, polite, and respectful, able to read and write French, do arithmetic, know the basic elements of the physical and natural sciences, hygiene, and history and geography. Added to those subjects, the girls also have an education in domestic science and the arts. As for the teachers, they bring devotion and zeal to the accomplishment of their mission.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁸ *Enseignement et éducation. - ...Je me souviens de l'école et des élèves que je trouvai en 1900, à mon arrivée à Tunis. Je pense à la lutte qu'il me fallu soutenir contre les parents, contre les enfants, contre le personnel: contre les parents, qui ne pouvaient concevoir nos exigences au sujet de la propreté, de l'assiduité des enfants; contre les fillettes dont les mauvaises habitudes de désordre, d'apathie, cédaient si lentement, malgré la bonne volonté vite éveillée en elles; contre le personnel enfin qui n'ayant nulle idée de ses devoirs, ni l'habitude du travail consciencieux....Je puis dire aujourd'hui, puisque j'en ai alors quotidiennement triomphé....*

Quel changement depuis! Nos jeunes filles dociles, polies, respectueuses, avenantes, parlent aujourd'hui, écrivent un français clair et correct, lisent avec compréhension...calculent avec aisance, connaissent les éléments les plus utiles des sciences physiques et naturelles, ont des notions d'hygiène assez étendues pour leur permettre de s'assurer une vie saine et d'éviter bien des maladies, connaissent de l'histoire, de la géographie, ...les notions nécessaires pour n'être plus étrangère au monde actuel ni au monde passé.

Ajoutez à cela une éducation ménagère où la couture, le repassage, les notions de cuisine ont leur place, une éducation du goût que cultivent des leçons de chant et de dessin, ajoutez-y surtout l'action moralisatrice qu'exercent pendant des années la pratique constante exigée en classe de la bonté, de la douceur...de la loyauté par des maîtresses dévouées qui prêchent d'exemple et apportent, dans l'accomplissement de leur mission, un dévouement et un zèle inlassables, et vous comprendrez que nos grands classes constituent un noyau de jeunes filles qui sont sur le chemin d'une évolution heureuse, pénétrées du besoin d'instruire, de s'élever, animées du désir de faire une vie mieux que leurs parents....
Archives of the AIU, France VII, F14, Annual Reports, Tunis, 1883-1926, Louise Bornstein Guéron, Annual Report, 1909-1910, received in Paris 30 November 1911.

In short, it is everything a boss in Paris would want to hear and everything a civilizing “missionary” in Africa would be prone to say. Alternatively, it is a report of a dedicated teacher and principal in the French Overseas Territories.

Since this is her last annual report before assuming a joint directorship with her husband in Constanine, Algeria, Louise only writes in glowing terms of her stewardship of the school. Noticeably absent is any reference to the parents as obstacles to her initiatives. The girls are pliant and educated and the teachers fulfill their “mission”. Earlier doubts or discouraging thoughts are downplayed as she prepares to move her family, including three children, to a new location.

What is the cause of Louise’s apparent success? First, rather than trying to capture the interest of the Grana in sales from the workshops, she reaches out to the Tuansa, usually the mothers of the girls. But since they live in abject poverty, she can not depend on them to buy blouses, dresses, or embroidered items regularly. So she seeks markets abroad for her goods, both in Paris and in London.

Moreover, in 1890 France lifted many duties on exports from Tunisia to France, and imposed low taxes on the remaining goods. Sales to France increased dramatically. Meanwhile, the agreements granting most favored-nation status to many European countries were still in force. Italy and Great Britain renounced the agreements in 1898, allowing the Protectorate to eliminate duties on items imported from France, but maintaining them for other countries. By 1900 about sixty percent of Tunisia’s exports

were to France.⁶²⁹ The *directrice* could import cotton thread and cloth from France duty free and pay little or no tax on goods exported back to the metropole. Thus international market conditions favored Louise Bornstein in her enterprises when she became *directrice* in 1900.

The fifth *directrice*, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali, born in Oran, Algeria, in 1876, was the first North African to head the school. Her tenure represents the fulfillment of the AIU educational mission. She held the *brevet elementaire* and the *brevet superieure*, taught in Tunis from 1900-1904, and served as *directrice* at three posts in Morocco: in Fez from 1904-1905, in Tangier from 1905-1911, and after serving in Tunis from 1911-1927, returned to Tangier in 1927.⁶³⁰ Her supervisor in Tunis during the first four years of the twentieth century, Mlle. Louise Bornstein, commented that Julie was very intelligent and conscientious.⁶³¹ In 1913 Julie married Albert Saguès,⁶³² director of the Ecole de la Hafsia in the *hara*. Thus she gained an ally in the AIU administration.

⁶²⁹ Perkins, *A History of Tunisia*, 52-53. For a more detailed discussion of trade between France and her North African territories at the turn of the twentieth century, see Henri Brunschwig, *Mythes et Réalités de l'Impérialisme Colonial Français, 1871-1914* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1960).

⁶³⁰ www.aiu.org, Saguès, Julie Cohen-Scali.

⁶³¹ “Je ne pourrai que vous répéter ce que je vous ai toujours dit sur Mlle. Cohen-Scali: C’est une personne très intelligente, consciencieuse, pénétrée du but moral que nous poursuivons et qui ne perd pas de vue dans les leçons.” Archives of the AIU, France VII F.14, Annual Reports, Tunis 1883-1926, Louise Bornstein, Annual Report, 1902-1903, 10 December 1903.

⁶³² Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, 19 September 1913.

Her younger sister, Elise, born in 1879, also became a *directrice* of AIU schools in North Africa and married into the Saguès family.⁶³³ Julie thereby acquired a support system through her own family and that of her husband.

Do the attitudes of a North African *directrice* towards the local population differ from those of her European predecessors? Scathing remarks about her co-religionists, or about anyone else, do not occur in her correspondence. She appears intent on performing her job well and does not reveal any inherent biases. Where appropriate, however, she notes individual cases where a parent pleads for a daughter to continue her education, with a subsidy. For instance, a father in 1912 wants his daughter, Eugénie Cohen, to prepare for the *brevet supérieure*. His economic situation is precarious since other Jews have been fired from his place of work under the French administration and he suffers from an eye disease. Eugénie is the oldest of three daughters and there were no sons. In this situation of need, the Central Committee accedes to the father's request.⁶³⁴ The case of a father petitioning the *directrice* for his daughter to advance in her studies is similar to the earlier example of the father promoting his daughter's employment by finding her a job in 1902. Here it is the fathers who seek to enhance the employability, and employment, of their daughters. But it is the *directrice* who is the facilitator.

How does the "geography of place" influence the production of the workshops under the direction of Julie Cohen-Scali? Not all innovations are a success.

⁶³³ On her marriage, see Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, , 19 September 1913. For personal information on the family, see www.aiu.org, Saguès, Julie Cohen-Scali; Saguès, Albert; Saguès, Elise Cohen-Scali. The web page on Julie states that she "*a fondé partout des ateliers pour jeunes filles et a développé le goût des travaux manuels chez ses élèves.*"

⁶³⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Cohen-Scali to Bigart, 12 June 1912; Bigart to Cohen-Scali, 25 June 1912; Cohen-Scali to Bigart, 21 June 1912 ; 10 July 1912.

Portraits of individual misery emerge from the correspondence. Although it may seem laudable of the Central Committee and the school to mechanize the work, the girls on the knitting machines only earn 1 franc per day.⁶³⁵ This proves to be an insufficient amount to support themselves and their families, and to pay off debts to the Central Committee for their machines.

The *directrice* discusses the reasons for the poor results of this workshop. She inquires whether the knitting machines can be sent to a city where there is no competition from Sicilian workers.⁶³⁶ As in the 1890's, cheap Italian labor undercuts the products of the girls in their apprenticeships.

By July 1913, knitting work seems ill fated, and the girls are still in debt, compounding their misery. One of the knitters, Marie Haddad, is leaving the field to work in the newly opened child care center where she will earn 50 francs per month. After working six years she has paid off 450 of the 550 francs owed for the knitting machine. The second knitter, Mathilde Attal, has worked three years but has only

⁶³⁵ *Oeuvre d'apprentissage- Je dois d'abord vous parler de nos jeunes tricoteuses, Marie Haddad et Mathilde Attal qui sont découragées par la modicité [sic] de leur salaire et me demandent de leur chercher une autre situation. Malgré un travail soutenu, elles n'arrivent même pas à gagner 1 franc par jour.*

...Il ne leur est possible, paraît-il, ni de travailler plus rapidement—elles ne peuvent arriver à faire plus de 4 paires de bas par jour, malgré leur 10 heures de travail quotidien, ni de produire sur les machines qu'elles possèdent un ouvrage différent bas de fil ou de soie, par exemple, qui serait plus rémunérateur.

L'une de ces jeunes filles, Mathilde Attal vient de perdre son père à la suite de l'épidémie de choléra; elle se trouve maintenant l'unique soutien de sa famille; l'autre Marie Haddad, souffre de ne pas pouvoir gagner assez pour aider son vieux père, une soeur veuve et sans ressources, avec 3 enfants.
Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali, 5 January 1912.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 July 1912.

managed to pay off 65 francs.⁶³⁷ Bigart's response to all of this is that "in our country" a worker earns 8 to 9 francs per day.⁶³⁸ Here the view from Paris is not the same as the reality in Tunis. Esther Benbassa notes that a similar situation occurred between Paris and the AIU School for Girls in Galata, Istanbul.⁶³⁹ The Secretary of the Alliance, Jacques Bigart, apparently applied his local knowledge of the metropole incorrectly to other cities of the AIU network.

The correspondence of Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès reveals details about the progress of the school, especially about its role in preparing the girls for employment. First, the School for Girls in Tunis is catching up to the School for Girls in Salonika and Galata, Istanbul: there is discussion of introducing a course in typing and stenography (*steno-dactylographie*) at the end of 1912.⁶⁴⁰ The first classes are held in January

⁶³⁷ *Tricoteuses – Je vous ai à plusieurs reprises entretenu de la situation précaire de nos deux ouvrières tricoteuses. L'une des deux, Mlle. Haddad, découragée de ne pourrait gagner davantage, a préféré renoncer au bénéfice de plusieurs années de travail et veut d'obtenir une place de maîtresse à la garderie israélite récemment fondée. Elle a été engagée au traitement de début de frs. 50 par mois.*

Sur le prix de sa machine, elle a mis plus de 6 ans à vous rembourser 450 frs. et vous était encore redirable (?) d'une solde de frs.100. Sur ce solde, vous avez très voulu remettre la moitié; il lui reste donc à payer 50 frs. à s'acquitter de sa dette en vous remettant le montant (?) d'un mois de travail absentant....

La seconde tricoteuse, Mathilde Attal, est encore plus malchancieuse. Mme. Guéron vous a parlé à plusieurs reprises de l'impossibilité où elle se trouvait de vous faire le plus minime versement annuel. Ayant perdu son père pendant la dernière épidémie de choléra, ayant un frère unique gravement atteint d'une maladie incurable, elle doit, avec son salaire désisore, subvenir à toutes les dépenses des siens. Puis-je dans ces conditions exiger d'elle des versements réguliers? Depuis 3 ans qu'elle travaille, elle n'a pu jusqu'ici payer que fr. 65. Vous voudrez bien cette année encore l'autoriser à ne vous faire aucun versement. Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXIV E, Reel 54, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali, 17 July 1913.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1913.

⁶³⁹ *Force est de constater le hiatus entre les exigences de Paris et la réalité locale.* Esther Benbassa, *L'Education Feminine en Orient...*, 545.

⁶⁴⁰ Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XV E, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali, 26 November 1912. At the AIU School for Girls in Salonika, commercial courses - in bookkeeping, stenography, and sales - began around 1910. Annie Benvensite, *Le Rôle des Institutrices...*, 19.

1913.⁶⁴¹ However, by May 1914 it is apparent that the French public administrators will only hire “French” girls, not “Tunisians”, for typing and stenography. Under Gelbmann it was difficult to find a market for the products crafted in the apprenticeship program; now it is difficult to find a market for the skills gained in that program. As was the case earlier, the Jewish merchants hire the girls. They pay them 40-60 francs per month.⁶⁴² Thus, in the last few months before the outbreak of World War I, the *directrice* acknowledges that the school needs to keep pace with the times, but in the social reality of Tunis, she is unable to integrate her students into the targeted market.

What are the results of the other apprenticeships? The girls who work on the knitting machines receive one franc per day, so the principal requests funds to purchase sewing machines. Bigart approves her request. Apprentice embroiderers are more successful; they receive 3.50-3.75 francs per day. But those in couture only are paid 2-3 francs per day.⁶⁴³ The workshops thus produce uneven results. Most likely, there’s a greater demand in the foreign markets for indigenous products, such as embroidery, which evoke the exotic. The outcome, however, is mixed; funding from Paris for the apprenticeship program is suspended after the first few months of World War I. But Julie

At the AIU School for Girls in Galata, Istanbul, courses in stenography, typing, bookkeeping, calligraphy and commercial correspondence began onwards from 1910 -1911. Esther Benbassa, *L'Education Feminine en Orient.....*, 540.

⁶⁴¹ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Mlle. Julie Cohen-Scali, 10 February 1913, 17 July 1913.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, 12 May 1914.

⁶⁴³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Julie Cohen-Scali, 5 January 1912; 11 January 1912; 10 July 1912.

maintains the workshops on a shoestring budget for the duration of the War.⁶⁴⁴ While the results from the workshops are not astounding, the wages earned presumably stave off hunger and misery. Moreover the apprenticeship program demonstrates that the “Orientals” are capable of “regeneration”, an important goal of an Alliance education.

Implementing the curriculum required the concerted efforts of the *directrice*, her teaching staff, the students, and ultimately, the parents as well. The indigenous voice of this nexus emerges from the correspondence. But the letters reveal an uneven pattern. The first four *directrices* recorded changes in the behavior and attitudes of the mothers, often quoting or paraphrasing their original sources. The fifth *directrice*, an indigenous North African herself, does not regard recording changes in the attitudes of the mothers as an important aspect of her duties. Possibly, by this time, more of the parents support the goals of the *directrice* or attitudes have already changed.

The progress of the workshops is duly recorded. The principals all discuss the finances of the workshops, particularly when in need of raising salaries of the teachers, hiring better qualified personnel, or ordering materials from Paris. Above all, the workshops represent the ideal of Saint-Simon: to create a productive society.

Similarly, the world’s fairs, with their intent to teach, to classify (and also entertain) hark back to the ideals of Saint-Simon. But without the items produced either in the handiwork classes or in the workshops, there would be no products for the expositions. The exhibitions, forerunners of mass media, shaped a newly emerging mass

⁶⁴⁴ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès. 4 November 1914, 24 January 1915; 19 June 1918.

culture, where the Alliance displayed its wares, and its message, to an international audience.

The correspondence reveals that the process of educating the parents and daughters is long and arduous. It is more difficult to teach the parents than their children. Initially the parents only embrace some of the goals of the Alliance: the need to learn couture for household purposes, for instance, but not for employment. The mothers raise their voices in protest to any perceived threat that would damage their daughters' marriageability or future marriage. In time, though, they see the value of an education; as do some fathers. Yet only the most deperate endorse employment for their daughters. It is the instructors, and the girls they teach, who hope eventually to change the attitudes of the community. Thus, the voice of the indigenous emerges from the correspondence to reveal the hopes, fears, and consequences of an Alliance education.

Chapter 5

On the Verge of Modernity: The Voluntary Association

The Alliance school, as an institution, spawned separate interest groups of men and women, each guided by a specific goal and usually geared for its post-graduates. The school for girls, in turn, fostered the development of female associations, whether for its registered students, its alumnae, or for women in the community devoted to mutual aid and charity work. Such organizations, intended for educational advancement or benevolent activities, allowed women to leave the home for secular purposes, rather than ritual or domestic obligations. They functioned within the context of an emerging modernity, forming ties based on special interest rather than religious injunction or traditional custom. Moreover, they were independent precursors of the modern welfare state. Such voluntary associations were similar to women's groups in *fin-de-siècle* France or to those created during the Progressive Era in the United States. But it was not only Jewish women of Tunisia who were involved in such activities; Muslim women of Tunisia also formed educational and occupational associations, although usually during a later period.

In her contribution to a book on *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, Esther Benbassa notes that “Jewish opinion groups, acting through associations, circles, clubs, committees and even trade guilds....emerged, progressively, under the inspiration of

Western counterparts such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle....”⁶⁴⁵ Benbassa continues, “many of the new associations became the principal vectors of Jewish modernity, with various measures of success.”⁶⁴⁶ She discusses the AIU local committees, alumni/ae associations, and other circles and clubs attended by graduates of Alliance schools but not affiliated directly with any educational institution. The author, inspired in part by Huntington,⁶⁴⁷ then analyzes these associations as tools of empowerment for young community leaders moving from the periphery to the center. However, most of the interest groups analyzed by Benbassa were intended for men, while the focus here will be on women. To broaden the context of these interest groups, a discussion of women’s issues in turn of the twentieth century France and their influence on the formation of such interest groups will follow.

From the end of the nineteenth century French feminists engaged in public debate on the issue of maternity. In an era before women could vote or hold public office, feminists called for legislation to protect unmarried mothers as well as working women and their children.⁶⁴⁸ Depopulation in the industrializing countries of Great Britain,

⁶⁴⁵ Esther Benbassa, “Associational Strategies in Ottoman Jewish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Avigdor Levy, (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1994), 457.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 459. For a much earlier statement of this theme, C. Ouziel, director of the Boys’ School of Tunis, wrote: “*L’apparition de ces Sociétés constitue une manifestation de l’esprit moderne dont s’est imprégné le monde israélite tunisien après l’établissement du protectorat et à la suite de la diffusion de l’instruction qui en est résultée.*” “*Les Associations Juives en Tunisie*”, *La Revue des Ecoles de L’Alliance Israélite*, no. 9 (January-December 1904):106. (Extract of a work published by the Government of the Protectorate to be presented at the Congress of Colonial Mutualism, Algiers, April 1905, as stated in Ouziel, *Ibid.*, n.1)

⁶⁴⁷ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) as quoted in Benbassa, 481, n.55.

⁶⁴⁸ For instance, the General Congress of Feminist Societies of Paris supported the establishment of shelters for unmarried mothers and infants in 1892; the first *maison maternelle* had opened a year earlier in Paris.

France and Germany fueled the debate on the role of motherhood and employment. Lowered birth rates⁶⁴⁹ coupled with higher infant mortalities were linked to increasing numbers of women joining the labor force as domestics, factory workers, or clerks. Extreme poverty forced these women to seek employment outside the home. It also meant that mothers had to leave their infants with wet-nurses - considered a death-knell for children, due to neglect and poor health practices. The efforts of women to reduce their number of offspring as well as unsanitary conditions both at work and at home contributed to depopulation from 1850-1910. Particularly after the loss of two provinces to Germany in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, the debate on population in France came to focus on the woman question. Articles on maternalism appeared not only in the feminist press, but in French journals and newspapers.⁶⁵⁰

Maternalism has been defined as

ideologies that exalted women's capacity to mother and extended to society as a whole the values of care, nurturance and morality.... It extolled the private virtues of domesticity while simultaneously legitimating women's public relationships to politics and the state, to community, workplace and marketplace. [Maternalism] challenged the constructed boundaries between public and private, women and men, state and civil society.⁶⁵¹

In addition, in 1892 the state enacted legislation banning women from working at night in certain trades. See Anne Cova, "French Feminism and maternity: theories and policies, 1890-1918," in *Maternity and* Anne Cova, "French Feminism and maternity: theories and policies, 1890-1918," in *Maternity and*) 119-124.

⁶⁴⁹ For falling birth rates of France, England and Wales, and Germany, between 1850 and 1930, see Karen Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siecle France," *The American Historical Review* 89, 3 (June 1984): 649-651, <http://links.jstor.org> (accessed October 9, 2005). The decline was first evident in France while the population of the other industrializing countries in Europe increased in absolute numbers over that of France.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 649-656. See also, Elinor A. Acampo, "Gender, Social Policy, and the Formation of the Third Republic," in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870-1914*, eds. Elinor A. Acampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) 1-9.

⁶⁵¹ S. Coven and Sonya Michel, as quoted in Acampo, Ibid., 21.

The ideals of motherhood were brought out of the private sphere to an ever-widening public arena. Thus, bourgeois women of France could assist their working class female counterparts through the presumed bond of maternity. It would lead to the establishment of mutually beneficial institutions such as day care centers.⁶⁵² Publications bolstered the arguments of advocates for the social and legal rights of women.

Support for such rights was enunciated by the jurist, politician, and theorist, Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925). His doctrine of solidarism (*la solidarité*), based on the philosophy of Auguste Comte and J.E. Fouillée, called on elements of society to work together for the benefit of the nation. Such co-operation would further the cause of the collective unit, the family or the nation, but not the individual. Published in 1895, the work of Bourgeois noted that society depended on the obligations of men and women⁶⁵³ for past accomplishments as well as for contributions to future generations. But such mutual action would not change the traditional division of labor. Rather, it was intended to ameliorate class conflict and maintain social order.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² See Janet R. Horne, "In Pursuit of Greater France: Visions of Empire among Musée Social Reformers, 1894-1931," *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, eds. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 30-33, for the dissemination of such social reform measures from France to the colonies.

⁶⁵³ Echoing Auguste Comte, Bourgeois stated "*Nous sommes nés chargés d'obligations de toute sorte envers la Société.*" *Solidarité*. 1912 edition, as quoted and analyzed in Jacques Mièvre, "*Le Solidarisme de Léon Bourgeois: Naissance et métamorphose d'un concept*," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, vol. 63-villes et solidarité, n.d., <http://revel.unice.fr/cmedi> (accessed November 3, 2005).

⁶⁵⁴ Offen, *Ibid.*, 664 -666. See also Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), on "The 'Solidarist' Ideal and the Socially Active Bourgeois Woman," 222-226, and "Early Professional Associations: Separate, Different, and Unequal," 251-260.

The “solidarist” ideal of Bourgeois led, for instance, to the establishment of clubs for secondary school alumnae in France of the 1890’s. Eventually the clubs organized philanthropic activities to help the more unfortunate young girls of their communities. By 1904 the alumnae associations joined into a national federation (*l’Union française des associations des anciennes élèves des lycées et collèges de jeunes filles*) and promoted further social action. Fundraisers were held, for example, to establish clothing workshops. Through such activities, the secondary school and its graduates expanded contacts into the community.⁶⁵⁵

In France, reformers of the *Musée Social* (Social Museum), a Parisian think tank begun in 1894, sought to assure economic and social reform through social action. The family, and particularly the mother, was considered the central unit for transmitting values from one generation to another. To further their cause, reformers promoted courses for women in home economics and child care. One female author of the *Musée Social*, Augusta Moll-Weiss, advocated such initiatives, hoping to bridge the gap between bourgeois and working class women through mutual aid. She also penned a book on home economics before World War I; it joined the list of requested materials from the *directrice* of the Alliance School for Girls in Tunis by the 1920’s.⁶⁵⁶ Thus the practices of

⁶⁵⁵ Margadant, *Ibid.*, 222-226.

⁶⁵⁶ Horne, *Ibid.*, 21, 30-32. See also Moll-Weiss, *Manuel du foyer domestique*, Librairie Armand Colin, as noted in *Commande de matériel pour l’année scolaire 1925-26*, Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, 188-199, Reel 54, Mme. Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès. For an earlier edition, see Augusta Moll-Weiss, *Le foyer domestique: Economie, hygiène et cuisine* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1902).

social reformers in Paris could be brought to the French overseas territories by Frenchwomen or by women trained in France.

According to Janet Horne, *Musée Social* reformers not only sought changes in health standards and working conditions in France, but also in the empire of Greater France. Moreover, the reformers promoted:

the ideal of association at home and in the colonial empire. On the one hand, association referred to a new colonial policy expected to replace the traditional approach of assimilation. On the other, the model of republican association was championed by liberal reformers in numerous ways.⁶⁵⁷

Horne then discusses mutual aid societies as voluntary associations in France and in the colonies. From there she proceeds to analyze “the active association of French women with the colonial effort as moral, cultural, and social intermediaries.”⁶⁵⁸ Thus, women of French origin, or with a French education, such as the *directrices* of the Alliance schools, could serve as intermediaries between social reform measures enacted in France and similar efforts undertaken overseas.

French Colonial Policy: From Assimilation to Association

Between 1890 and World War I French official doctrine and legitimating of colonial rule shifted from assimilation to association.⁶⁵⁹ Assimilation, with its roots in the French Revolution and earlier, emphasized the necessity of France administratively

⁶⁵⁷ Horne, *Ibid.*, 31

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁹ Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914* ([1961]; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

and culturally to absorb its colonial subjects into a *plus grande France*. Closely allied with this doctrine was the idea of the *mission civilisatrice*, not limited to use by French imperialists, but certainly favored by them as a motive for colonization. Members of the colonies, particularly the elite, would be encouraged to assimilate to French culture,⁶⁶⁰ the greatest gift France could give to its benighted colonial population. The quintessential folk hero example of assimilation is none other than Babar, King of the elephants.⁶⁶¹

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, assimilation proved impractical in administering the colonies. Where would 40 million Frenchmen get the resources to build an educational system capable of transforming the cultures and social systems of 50 million colonial subjects? Instead of emphasis on a centralized unit, a new policy of association between the ruler and the ruled was developed for the French colonies. This approach encouraged co-operation between the dominant French and the “native” population, more in terms of fraternity than equality. It sought to maintain local institutions and forms of government, such as police, justice, or tax collection, but under the control of the French. The colonial power still maintained its *mission civilisatrice* to “raise” the cultural, moral, and material level of the indigenous population. It would introduce new institutions perceived as a benefit to the ruled and also new measures to

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, x,xi, 10-32.

⁶⁶¹ Jean de Brunhoff, *The Story of Babar the little elephant*, trans. Merle S. Haas ([1933] New York: Random House, 1961); and *Babar the King*, trans. Merle S. Haas ([1935] New York: Random House, 1963). The author presents an allegory of French colonial education and rule in these picture-book classics.

assure the mother country's economic control of the region.⁶⁶² Under the policy of association the French sought to select out and promote the most capable of the existing local elites. The theory of "association" in the administrative field is consonant with the structure of voluntary associations as they developed in the world of benevolent societies.

Social Action and the School for Girls in Tunis

By the time the *Instructions pour professeurs* were published in 1903, the School for Girls in Tunis had initiated many social action programs for its pupils. A clothing project (*oeuvre d'habillement*) and a soup kitchen (*oeuvre de nourriture*), begun in 1890 in Tunis, represent two such endeavors.⁶⁶³ These programs were encouraged by the Alliance in Paris and implemented by the *directeurs* and *directrices* in their locales. Thus, there was a distribution of clothing and shoes twice per year in Tunis. As noted in the principal's letter of 5 May 1891, there was an allocation of 190 pairs of shoes, but the total number of poor students had risen to 660.⁶⁶⁴ Similar neediness existed among the Alliance school population some sixty years later, as recounted by the Tunisian Jewish author, Albert Memmi. The author returned to the *hāra* of Tunis in the winter of 1953 and received a tour of the Alliance school by the principal. At that time, Memmi

⁶⁶² Betts, *Assimilation and Association*...106-132.

⁶⁶³ "J'ai l'honneur de répondre à votre circulaire du 11 mars, concernant la création d'une oeuvre scolaire de vêtements et de nourriture.

Nos élèves ont tout d'abord accueilli cette nouvelle création avec enthousiasme et dès la première semaine, nous avons reçu pour la caisse des pauvres 22fs.50." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 30 April 1890.

⁶⁶⁴ "...Nous avons distribuée aux élèves les plus pauvres 190 paires de chaussures et naturellement nous n'avons pas contenté toute notre population scolaire le nombre des élèves pauvres s'élevant à 660." *Ibid.*, Letter No. 12, Cover letter for Report, 5 May 1891.

observed that the children wore mismatched shoes or sandals and their feet were blue with cold.⁶⁶⁵ Apparently, the barest essentials were unavailable to many Alliance pupils at any given time, despite the school system's charitable efforts.

By 1903 the *Instructions* note that almost all schools could afford food for the poorest children, thanks to a donation from Baroness de Hirsch in 1897. Moreover, the *Instructions* provide details on menus, refectories, the role of the principals in buying provisions (lunch should cost between seven and nine centimes, never more than ten, including bread), and the need for the community to contribute, either in money or in kind.⁶⁶⁶ Such social welfare activities had an influence on the girls while they were still in school and also after graduation.

Solidarism and the School for Girls in Tunis

A function of the *directrice* was to imbue her students with a sense of “solidarity”, or school spirit. Louise Bornstein (Guéron), fourth *directrice*, achieved unparalleled success in this arena. Early in her tenure, Jacques Bigart, Secretary of the AIU, offers her advice on managing the school. Among other items, he notes that it is essential for the little girls to know how to work and to create “lines of solidarity”.⁶⁶⁷ His

⁶⁶⁵ Albert Memmi, *Jews and Arabs* (Chicago: J. Philip O'Hara, 1975), “The Kingdom of the Poor”, Chapter 4, page 48.

⁶⁶⁶ See for instance, “*Oeuvre de nourriture*”, *Instructions*, 80-82.

⁶⁶⁷ “...*On travaille beaucoup à l'école des f.[filles] de Tunis – et l'on sait travailler, ce qui est essentiel. Donner aux fillettes le goût du travail, en rendant ce travail attrayant, animé, exciter chez elles le sentiment de l'émulation, ...créer des liens de solidarité, deraciner les préjugés ataviques....*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Bigart to Louise Bornstein (Guéron), 18 June 1901.

views thus reflect the themes of his generation in republican France. Solidarity, in turn, fosters the creation of mutual aid groups among the students.

In her Annual Report of 1900-01, Louise Bornstein (Guéron) discusses the willingness of the girls to work together. Their solidarity leads to community service: charity for the most poverty-stricken or the creation of a library for their use.⁶⁶⁸ In today's schools in the United States, students are similarly encouraged to participate in community service, or in assisting younger children with their studies.

At the School for Girls in Tunis, the pupils organize a fund for the clothing project (*une caisse de l'oeuvre d'habillement*), on their own initiative, for their less fortunate classmates. They set a weekly rate of one *sou* as a contribution.⁶⁶⁹ A fund for assistance and clothing (*une caisses de secours et d'habillement*) is also established by the boys' school and the girls' student organization becomes its complement. The student fund at both schools consists of participating members, who are able to afford the weekly contribution, and honorary members, who pay according to their means. The *directrice* concludes that this attempt at "solidarity in action" would produce beneficial results in the struggle against poverty.⁶⁷⁰ While social reformers in France sought to enlist adult

⁶⁶⁸ "...Elles ont pris aussi quelque peu l'habitude de s'entr'aider, d'accepter l'une de l'autre des conseils, des remontrances au besoin, de s' intéresser à leurs compagnes des autres classes, de se solidariter avec elles pour des oeuvres communes: petites charités aux plus misérables, creation d'une bibliothèque pour leur utilité, leur agrément communs." *Ibid.*, Louise Bornstein (Guéron) to Bigart, 9 October 1901.

⁶⁶⁹ "...elles ont, d'elles-mêmes, constitué une société bienfaisante dont les membres se recrutant parmi les fillettes de nos classes seront tenus de verser une cotisation hebdomadaire d'un sou; elles espèrent réussir en un an une petite somme qui serait consacrée à l'achat de vêtements pour les petites très pauvres. La société fonctionne depuis trois semaines et compte 57 adhérentes." *Ibid.*, 3 March 1904.

⁶⁷⁰ *Caisse de secours et d'habillement- Règlement*. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XX E*, Reel 45, Clément Ouziel, 21 February 1904.

women in social action, here the *directrice* admires her young pupils who engage in benevolent activities.

By October 1904, the 110 participating members in the clothing fund at the School for Girls receive a winter dress, a pair of shoes, and a black apron in return for an annual contribution of eight francs. The black aprons are all sewn at the school in the couture class and the dresses are constructed in the couture workshop. However, there would have been a deficit if the more well-off girls had not voluntarily contributed to the fund. The revenue for the 1904 financial year was 1178.80 francs of which 743.35 francs came from participating members while 435.45 francs represent donations from honorary members.⁶⁷¹ Receipts and expenses of the clothing fund for the annual year of 1903-04 for both schools, as prepared by the *directeur*, mostly corroborate the material in the report of the *directrice*. The more detailed financial statement of the *directeur*, Clément Ouziel, also includes the amount of donations for both schools (59.85 F), the results of a fundraising party (1,377.30 F), and the subsidy of the Alliance (543.60 F). In his letter of 26 October 1904, Clément Ouziel notes that the clothing fund gives the poorer students a

The *directrice* later notes: “*La société charitable fondée par nos élèves s’est étendue depuis la création de la ‘Caisse de secours et d’habillement’ dont elle est devenue la complément nécessaire. La majeure partie de nos élèves collaborent à l’oeuvre comme membres honoraries par des cotisations volontaires variant dans la mesure de leurs moyens et dont la somme augmentera sérieusement les fonds réunis par les membres participants (dont les versements sont fixés à 20 cm. par semaine), Il est certain que cet essai de solidarité en action produira en effet salutaire, parce qu’il est une démonstration pratique, de l’efficacité des petits efforts unis dans la lutte contre la misère.*” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XIV E, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein [Guéron], 13 March 1904.

⁶⁷¹ “*Caisse d’habillement - ...Les membres participants, au nombre de 110, devaient moyennant une cotisation annuelle de 8 frs. recevoir une robe d’hiver, une paire de chaussures, un tablier noir.... nos élèves plus aisées ont contribué à lui [la Caisse] en former de nouvelles, en versant volontairement, à titre des membres honoraires des cotisations variant avec leurs moyens, leur générosité.*” Ibid., 25 October 1904.

sense of economy and the more well-off pupils, the habits of charity and solidarity.⁶⁷² Such an organization would meet the criteria of a mutual aid society as defined by the Musée Social in late nineteenth century France, where the more fortunate assist the less well-off for the benefit of all.

The clothing project continues during the tenure of Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron. As of the end of 1905, Mme. Guéron does not have to appeal to the Central Committee in Paris for funding of the clothing project in order to dress 128 girls.⁶⁷³ But the following year she requests 1.35 francs per child from headquarters.⁶⁷⁴ The first surplus occurs in 1907 when the school clothes 150 girls. The *directrice* notes the connection between the practice of mutuality at school and solidarism.⁶⁷⁵ By her last year at the school in 1911, although it appears that there is a deficit, with projected contributions from participating members and with the goods in stock she states that the budget is actually healthy.⁶⁷⁶ This is the positive image that the *directrice* would like to

⁶⁷² *Etat des recettes et des dépenses de la "Caisse d'habillement" (garçons et filles), Tunis, Année Scolaire 1903-1904.* Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XX E*, Reel 45, Clément Ouziel, 25 October 1904. See also Ouziel's cover letter of the following day: "Quoique cette oeuvre n'existe que depuis sept mois, nous avons pu néanmoins faire une distribution de vêtements et de chaussures à 400 membres participants environ dont 280 à l'école de garçons et 108 à l'école des filles....L'oeuvre que nous avons créé est une caisse d'épargne doublée d'une mutualité; elle a le double avantage de donner aux élèves pauvres le goût de l'économie et, à leurs camarades aisés, l'habitude de la charité et de la solidarité." *Ibid.*, 26 October 1904.

⁶⁷³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 10 November 1905.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 November 1906.

⁶⁷⁵ "Depuis que nous avons institué cette pratique de la mutualité à l'école, nous avons la mesure matérielle de l'influence de nos constantes prédications sur la solidarité. The letter includes the budgets for 1904-1907. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1907.

⁶⁷⁶ "Oeuvre d'habillement- L'exercice 1910-1911 se solde à ce jour par un déficit apparent de Frs. 1.205, 95 [i.e. 1,205. 95 francs]....En effet, les recettes à ce jour s'élèvent à frs 2.876,05, les dépenses à frs. 4.082. Mais il faut ajouter au chapitre recettes:

portray. Increasingly, more items are made at the school for the clothing project including: dresses, aprons, woolen shawls, and knit stockings. By 1913, everything, other than shoes, is constructed by the girls themselves.⁶⁷⁷ The school starts to reflect the ideals of Saint-Simon, encouraging work and a self-sustaining community. It also meets the test of “solidarity”, as propounded by Léon Bourgeois.

Solidarity of the students becomes a recurrent theme in the correspondence. Thus, although the school canteen offers a nutritious soup (at a cost to the school of eight centimes per student⁶⁷⁸), some of the older pupils decide that the girls in the lunch program should have dessert. So the two upper grades collect money for their companions, as an act of generosity, and solidarity.⁶⁷⁹ Thus, on the elementary school level, students engage in helping other students.

1 Frs. 907.70 de cotisations que doivent les membres participants qui n'ont pas achevé de payer leurs cotisations tandis que leurs effets sont en magasin...ce qui réduit le déficit à frs. 298,25.

2 la valeur des marchandises en magasin... qui dépasse de beaucoup cette somme de frs. 298,25. L'oeuvre d'habillement reste donc, malgré l'apparence, une oeuvre prospere.” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XVI E, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 22 October 1911.

⁶⁷⁷ *“Oeuvre d'habillement – A l'exception des chaussures, tous les objets que nous distribuons: robes, tabliers, bas, châles sont faits à l'école....” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXIV E, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali, 10 February 1913.*

⁶⁷⁸ *“...en hiver une soupe chaude et quelquefois une petite portion de viande, en été un legume, qu'un repas reviendrait à 8 centimes environ par élève....” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XIV E, Reel 33, 22 February 1904.*

⁶⁷⁹ *“Oeuvre de nourriture -Je signalerai dès à présente, une bonne pensée de leur part et une heureuse initiative: les enfants de 1er et 2ème classe ont décidé de réunir entre elles les petites sommes nécessaires pour offrir chaque semaine un dessert à leur compagnes. Si l'on veut considerer que nos élèves sont loin d'être riches, que, d'autre part elles participent à titre de membres honoraries, à notre caisse d'habillement, on reconnaîtra qu'une certaine générosité parait se développer en elles et, en tout cas, le sentiment de la pitié active, de la solidarité.” Ibid., 25 October 1904.*

Mutual Aid Societies in the Community

The director of the AIU Primary School for Boys, Clément Ouziel, serves as a commentator, contemporary to the period, on the role of associations in the life of the Tunisian Jewish community. An article he published in *La Revue des Etudes d'Alliance Israélite (REAI)* in 1904 notes that the community, and not only the school, was involved in initiating and subsidizing new associations, separate from the traditional benevolent society (*Comité de Bienfaisance*) which provided for indigents, widows, orphans, the sick, and the elderly.⁶⁸⁰ Ouziel's article suggests that by the early twentieth century the structure of the community conformed to recent changes in French colonial policy. Instead of encouraging "assimilation" to French civilization in the French overseas territories, new policy endorsed "association" to maintain civic control.

Ouziel mentions the appearance of several new associations, primarily initiated by graduates of Alliance schools in Tunisia. They include the Society of the Jewish Hospital (*Société de l'Hôpital Israélite*) in Tunis and Bizerte; the Society of Charity Women (*Société des Dames de Charité*) in Tunis and Sousse; The Matrimonial Mutual Aid Society (*Société de Secours matrimoniaux et mutuels*), founded in Tunis in 1892, whose goal was to provide small dowries for poor girls and thus "shield them from the temptations and dangers of debauchery"; the Society of Fraternal Assistance and Help

⁶⁸⁰ A benevolent society existed in each Jewish community in Tunisia, supported by taxation on kosher meat and unleavened bread for Passover, and other donations. But these traditional forms of assistance tended to function ineffectively. C. Ouziel, "Les Associations Juives en Tunisie," *REAI...*, 106-107. For a summary of the activities of the *Caisse de Secours et de Bienfaisance des Israélites de Tunis*, including legislation affecting the two Jewish communities of Tunis (the *Livournais* and the *Tunisiens*), see Paul Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991) 165-166.

(*Société d'Assistance fraternelle et de secours*) in Tunis, designed to aid poor members of the association during illness, unemployment, or old age, and to help families upon the death of the breadwinner; and the Alumni Association of the Alliance (*Société des Anciens élèves d'Alliance israélite*) in Tunis and Sousse.⁶⁸¹ Clément Ouziel discusses the last four associations in detail, but omits any reference to the Alumnae Association for graduates of the School for Girls in Tunis. In the case of Ouziel (and his predecessors), omission can be as pertinent as inclusion.

Women's charitable organizations, some with greater longevity than others, were established beyond the confines of the school. Benevolent societies, based on a connection with the School for Girls and noted in the correspondence of the AIU women educators, will be discussed in this section. Such interest groups will include The Alumnae Association (*Association des anciennes élèves*), the joint program of The Alumnae Association and The Medical Mutual Aid Society (*La Société de secours mutuels organisé par le dr. Scialom*), and The Women's Charity Committee (*Les Dames de Charité/La Société des Dames*). Other groups could also be included as new associations, such as the post-elementary school Workshop of Embroidery and Blouses (*Atelier de broderie d'ameublement et de Blouses*)⁶⁸² already discussed in Chapter 5 above, or the incipient teachers' union (*L'Association Amicale des Instituteurs de l'Alliance Israélite*), mentioned in Chapter 3. However the latter two enterprises did not function as benevolent societies, and therefore will not be discussed here.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 107-109.

⁶⁸² It is first mentioned in the Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron, Annual Report, 1906-07, 12 December 1907.

The Alumni/Alumnae Associations

The General Instructions for Teachers enjoin the *directeurs* to create alumni associations and also foster solidarity among the graduates of Alliance schools. As for the *directrices*, they must involve their former students in benevolent societies and charity to help poverty-stricken girls of the school, assist in the placement of apprentices in town, and find employment for female workers.⁶⁸³ The Instructions for Teachers, however, point to many activities for students upon graduation (*oeuvres post-scolaires*). The school libraries, for instance, lend books to all readers.⁶⁸⁴ The Alumnae Association of Tunis eventually encourages graduates to continue reading books in French after graduation. The Instructions also recommend the establishment of adult education courses in the evenings (*cours d'adultes*). Their target audience would be three categories of learners: graduates of the school, students with some education, and those with none.⁶⁸⁵ In the months before the outbreak of World War I, the Alumnae Association supports the creation of such a course in French for girls with little or no prior education.

To further the goals of the Alliance, the Instructions suggest that the alumni association hold public lectures in the evening. Topics should never be on politics or religion which can arouse opposition among the population. Rather, lectures should cover

⁶⁸³ “*Les directeurs devront donc travailler à grouper les anciens élèves en sociétés ou associations. Il est bon qu’il se crée entre les élèves qui ont reçu l’instruction dans les écoles de ‘l’Alliance’ un lien de solidarité et d’union....Les directrices devront également engager leurs anciennes élèves à former des associations de bienfaisance et de charité pour venir en aide aux élèves pauvres de l’école des filles, pour aider au placement des apprenties en ville, procurer de l’ouvrage aux ouvrières, etc.*” AIU, *Instructions Générales pour les Professeurs*...89-90.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

such issues as Jewish history, health, clothing, geographical discoveries or inventions.⁶⁸⁶

The alumnae association eventually provides social and intellectual activities for its membership.

The Alumni Association affiliated with the School for Boys of Tunis (*Société des Anciens Elèves de L'Alliance israélite de Tunis*) offered a range of charitable and educational programs. The article by Clément Ouziel in the *REAI* notes the sources of revenue and the expenses for the Association from 1899 until 1904. Annual dues of four francs and a yearly fundraiser account for the Association's income. With three hundred members in 1904, it has sponsored the following activities in four years: distribution of prizes to apprentices (650 francs), organization of a course for adults (150 francs), creation of a library for use by alumni (632 francs), conferences (210 francs) and assistance to members of the Association (160 francs).⁶⁸⁷ The Alumnae Association of the School for Girls in Tunis engaged in such endeavors as well.

Although the Instructions for Teachers were not published until 1903, the *directrice* in Tunis, Hortense Gelbmann, discussed the formation of an alumnae association in the late 1890's. Both she and her successor, Louise Bornstein Guéron, attempt to start such an association, but its activities are only recorded sporadically.

⁶⁸⁶ “Les sujets à traiter sont nombreux....On devra rechercher de préférence des questions qui ne puissent soulever aucune opposition dans les milieux juifs ou non-juifs: les questions politiques et religieuses doivent être absolument écartées....L'histoire juive est une source inépuisable de sujets de conférences...; l'hygiène du corps, de l'habitation, du vêtement, les grandes découvertes géographiques....” Ibid., 103-105.

⁶⁸⁷ C. Ouziel, “Les Associations Juives en Tunisie”, *REAI*, (1904), 109.

Under the next principal, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, the Alumnae Association maintains its commitment to the Alliance goals of “regeneration” and education.

Alumni associations were also a feature of secondary education for male Muslims at the turn of the twentieth century. The Collège Sadiki/Sadiqi, founded under the reign of Muhammad al-Sadiq in 1875, increasingly emphasized a French education over a traditional Muslim curriculum. By 1905 there was an alumni association (*Association des Anciens Elèves du Collège Sadiqi*), which, in the 1930’s, served as a center of activity for the Tunisian nationalist movement. Alumni included Habib Bourguiba, first president of the republic of Tunisia, who led the struggle for independence from French rule,⁶⁸⁸ thus fulfilling the French goal of creating indigenous elites and implementing “association” policy.

The Alumnae Association of the School for Girls in Tunis

The third *directrice* of the school, Hortense Gelbmann, discusses the establishment of an alumnae association in 1897. She says she had the idea to create such an association following the example of other schools. The association met once or twice per month at her house, starting in April 1897, and would serve social, educational, and charitable purposes.⁶⁸⁹ But several months later she finds it difficult to achieve

⁶⁸⁸ Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*...34-35, 95-96, 130-133; Nouredine Sraïeb, *Le Collège Sadiki de Tunis, 1875-1956: Enseignement et nationalisme* (Tunis(?): Alif Press, n.d.), 236, 267-275.

⁶⁸⁹ “... j’ai l’idée de créer, à l’instar d’autres écoles, une Association des anciennes élèves d’élèves de l’Ecole de l’Alliance. Je les réunisais chez moi une ou deux fois par mois, nous causerions; les livres de la bibliothèque pourraient être mis à leur disposition; et les plus fortunées pourraient venir en aide à leurs

results.⁶⁹⁰ Despite this, the first meeting of the year is scheduled for mid-September 1897; it is anticipated that each member would contribute a layette for a needy mother every three months. By the end of October, the Association distributes fifteen layettes. This pleases the *directrice*, primarily for awakening feelings of dignity and charity among the girls.⁶⁹¹ The Alumnae Association thus meets the goals of a mutual aid society as propounded by Musée Social reformers and by the Alliance. At this stage however, the Association does not function as a network to connect employers with employees or apprentices, as advised by the Instructions of 1903.

The *directrice*, however, guides her students in the Alumnae Association according to the as yet unpublished recommendations of the Instructions for Teachers. In her Annual Report of 1898-1899 Hortense Gelbmann notes that the Alumnae Association meets regularly on a monthly basis, the alumnae receive advice; they read books from the school library; and they each provide a layette every three months to the indigent.⁶⁹² Borrowing books from the school library thus follows the future

anciennes condisciples moins fournies du sort....” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 3 April 1897.

⁶⁹⁰ “*Je m’occupe beaucoup...de l’organisation d’une Association des anciennes élèves...mais que de malheure pour arriver à un resultat, il prouver que c’est dur....*” Ibid., 12 August 1897.

⁶⁹¹ “*...L’Association des anciennes élèves aura son premier séance le 15 courant [i.e., September]; j’ai obtenu 20 [?] adhesions; et au hier d’une cotisation [?] annuelle, chaque societaire sera tenue à me fournir, tous les trios mois, une layette pour nos mères les plus pauvres*” Ibid., 10 September 1897; “*Pour les fêtes de Succouth, notre nouvelle Association des anciennes élèves nous a permis d’offrir 15 layettes....Je suis très heureuse de ce début, surtout de sentiment de dignité et de charité qui commence à s’éveiller chez nos fillettes....*” Ibid., 29 October 1897. See also *Ibid.*, 21 November 1897.

⁶⁹² “*L’Association des anciennes Elèves de l’Alliance, que j’ai crée il y a trois ans, fonctionne régulièrement . Une fois par mois je réunis nos fillettes, si heureuses de venire auprès de nous chercher un avis, un conseil, et de nous raconter ce qu’elles font.... Elles lisent beaucoup, grâce aux emprents faits à notre bibliothèque.*”

recommendations of the Instructions. That the graduates engage in charity also fulfills the guidelines.

Further advances in the education of girls beyond graduation include their participation in lectures, as advised by the Instructions to Teachers. Even though Louise Bornstein Guéron says in 1908 that the Alumnae Association was just founded “last year”, it floundered apparently after changes in leadership in 1900, but was then re-established under her tutelage. In her correspondence, Mme. Guéron states that every Saturday the alumnae attend the reading of a story or an article at the school. Moreover, the Association inaugurates Saturday discussions and lectures on hygiene, led by a medical doctor.⁶⁹³

Those who attend the Alumnae Association meetings include the girls from the graduating class (*la première classe*) and the workshop, the teachers from the girls’ school, the members of Alumni Association, and the teachers from the boys’ school.⁶⁹⁴ By 1908 it is apparent that a mixed gender audience is acceptable in Alliance circles. In addition, the Alumnae Association fulfills the goals set out for it in the General Instructions for Teachers: the Association provides opportunities for the alumnae to

En outre, elles me fournissent chacune, tous les trois mois, une layette qu’elles viennent distribuer avec moi dans les familles indigentes.” Ibid., Annual Report of 1898-99, 5 November 1899.

⁶⁹³ “*Association des anciennes élèves – Lorsque, l’année dernière, nous avons fondé l’association des anciennes élèves Durant la première année....Tous les samedis elles venaient à l’école, écoutaient la lecture d’un conte, d’un article intéressant, consultaient, un journal des modes....*

Nous avons songé ensuite à organiser des causeries et conférences. Une série de causerie sur l’hygiène nous a paru être de nécessité urgente.

M. le Dr. Scialom inaugura samedi les conférences par un développement très simple et très intéressant sur l’hygiène de l’habitation.” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XVI E, Reel 38, Mme. Louise Bornstein Guéron, 8 March 1908.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

further their education through reading and attending conferences. Moreover, the topics are non-controversial, or at least non-inflammatory, and will not cause rifts either within or between ethnic communities, as advised by the AIU's Instructions.

The Alumnae Association and the Medical Mutual Aid Society:

Mme. Gueron also notes that the Alumnae Association becomes affiliated with Doctor Scialom's Medical Mutual Aid Society (*Societe de Secours Mutual*). This affiliation grants members a fifty percent reduction in the price of doctor visits and medications⁶⁹⁵. The Society is similarly based on the mutual participation of all its members. It supports the existence of the growth of voluntary associations among women of the Tunisian Jewish community affiliated with the Alliance School for Girls. Also, it enhances the woman's role as mother and educated mother (*la mère educatrice*) through her ability to acquire accepted medical advice and treatment. The Medical Mutual Aid Society would therefore link the Tunisian women graduates of the AIU School to the theory of "maternalism" and "maternalist" activities then current in France.

The Alumnae Association and the Distribution of Annual Prizes

The Alliance schools typically encouraged their students to complete their schooling. One such measure was the distribution of prizes at the end of the year. Monetary rewards could be contributed by the Central Committee and by the alumni/alumnae associations. Thus, Julie Cohen Scali (Saguès) thanks the Secretary of

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

the AIU for authorizing 250 francs for prizes for the most worthy apprentices in 1913. She also notes that the Alumnae Association donates 150 francs for this purpose.⁶⁹⁶ Shortly thereafter, an article in praise of the girls' apprenticeship program and a report of the ceremony honoring thirty-two girls appears in the local newspaper, *La Dépêche Tunisienne*.⁶⁹⁷ Thus, the activities of the Alumnae Association paralleled those of the Alumni.

The Alumnae Association and Courses for "Adult Girls" (*Cours d'adultes filles*)

In the spring of 1914 the Alliance sponsors a new course for females who had little or no schooling. Originally held at the Hafsia School, which had opened in 1910, Ouziel, the Director of the Boys' School on Malta Srira, fears that the presence of girls in classes with "emancipated boys would lead to incidents". The *directrice*, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, agrees that Ouziel will organize a class at the Girls' School, especially since the Alumnae Association wanted to create a weekly one hour course in French. From its inception the class was very successful, with enrollment increasing from sixty to eighty in two months.⁶⁹⁸ Thus the Alumnae Association was instrumental in promoting

⁶⁹⁶ "...Je vous remercie d'avoir bien voulu m'autoriser à distribuer une somme de 250 fr. à titre de primes aux apprenties les plus méritantes. L'Association des Anciennes Elèves malgré l'insuffisance de ses ressources, a également ____ à participer à cette distribution et a fait l'effort de nous accorder 150 fr. pour la même objet." Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXIV E, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali (Saguès), 7 June 1913.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, "A L'Alliance Israélite", *La Dépêche Tunisienne*, 25 June 1913.

⁶⁹⁸ "Cours d'adultes – Jusqu'en février 1914, les cours d'adultes de l'Ecole de la Hafsia étaient suivis par quelques fillettes, que leur parents avaient retiré trop tôt de l'école pour gagner leur vie ou qui n'étaient même jamais allés en classe. M. Ouziel, craignant que la présence de fillettes dans ses classes de garçons émancipés s'amenât des incidents, me demanda si je voulais qu'il fût organisé un cours spécial à l'école de filles. J'acceptai sa

education for females even if the students lacked rudimentary academic skills. Moreover, the subject deemed most important, apparently, was French, thereby promoting French colonial policy to create an indigenous elite schooled in French.

The title, “the course for adult girls” (*cours d’adultes filles*), is indicative of French attitudes toward unmarried females in the early twentieth century. As the historian Jo Burr Margadant remarks in her book entitled *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic*,

For a middle-class boy the choice of a career amounted to his entry into manhood. Once employed, he could move on to marriage and a family of his own. By contrast, for a middle class female, far from marking her entry into adult status (something only marriage could bestow on women), a profession had the principle advantage of providing for her should she never marry.... It follows that a girl contemplating a career in teaching looked ahead to an ambivalent personal status, financially independent, but, unless she married, still officially a *fille*.⁶⁹⁹

This course for “adult girls” was probably intended for females somewhere between the age of fourteen, when a pupil would have graduated from primary school, and the age of marriage, since she remained a “girl” until she wed.

The Alumnae Association receives positive feedback in the pre-World War I era. M. Baille, School Inspector of the French Protectorate, notes the beneficial effects of the Association on its alumnae.⁷⁰⁰ In its external relations, there is unity of purpose between

proposition avec d’autant plus d’empressement que notre Association d’Anciennes Elèves venait de créer à d’une heure par semaine un cours de français qui avait dès le début obtenu un grand succes.... Notre cours d’adultes filles, inauguré le 1er mars, excita un grand enthousiasme dans la classe pauvre de la population juive et ne tarda pas à dépasser 60 élèves. Aujourd’hui ce nombre a atteint 80....” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès, 12 May 1914.

⁶⁹⁹ Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*..., 54.

⁷⁰⁰ “On comprend que les jeunes filles gardent à celles qui les ont instruites et élevées une reconnaissance et qu’elles, aient plaisir à se retrouver, en qualité de membres de la ‘Société des Anciennes Elèves’ dans l’atmosphère de l’Ecole, qui a-tant fait pour leur bien-être matériel et moral.”

it and the educational system of the Protectorate. However, on an internal level, the Alumnae Association does not appear to meet all its goals. For instance, it does not seem to find suitable places of employment for the apprentices or the graduates. This responsibility remains in the hands of the *directrices*. The Alumnae Association primarily seeks educational, social, or charitable causes.

The Committee of The Women of Charity (*Le Comité des Dames de Charité*)

An early effort to establish a women's philanthropic committee occurs in July 1889, under Voley Chimènes. It has many of the functions of today's PTA but is limited to the upper echelon in town. The Committee visits the school, plans fundraisers, and enjoys the close support of the *directrice*.⁷⁰¹ It originally consisted of nine members; however, by January 1890 their number is reduced to four. The other mothers were "Italian" (read "Grana") and sent their children to the Italian schools, so they had no continuing interest in the AIU enterprise. But the remaining committee members had

Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, Report of M. Baille, *Inspecteur primaire, Protectorat Français, Gouvernement tunisien, Directions Generale de l'Enseignement, Inspection de L'Enseignement primaire, Circonscription du centre*, 17 July 1911.

⁷⁰¹ "C'est à L'Ecole des filles que le Comité des Dames s'est réuni. A la première séance, neuf Dames étaient présentes, elles ont nommés les membres du Comité et quatre d'elles sont venues visiter l'Ecole. ... Il n'est bruit en ville que de succès de nos Eleves; aussi ces Dames savaient-elles déjà le resultat des examens lorsqu'elles sont venues Samedi. Elles ont été très heureuses". Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXX E*, Reel 66, V. Chimènes, 8 July 1889. See also the correspondence of Elvira Montefiore, Secretary of the Women's Committee, who confirms visiting the School. See Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie IB 11*, Reel 1, Elvira Montefiore, 26 July 1889.

plans to organize the workshops for the girls⁷⁰². However, by July 1890 the Committee of the Women of Charity rarely came to the school.⁷⁰³

Discussion of the Women of Charity again emerges once Hortense Gelbmann becomes principal in 1896. As *directrice*, Gelbmann receives visitors of the French administration: inspectors of education or the Patroness of the Women's Charity Committee. One such patroness was the wife of the Resident General, René Millet. He served in Tunisia from November 1894 until November 1900.⁷⁰⁴ His wife, Louise René Millet, attends a meeting of the Women's Charity Committee in December 1897. But Louise René Millet's opening statement, as Patroness of the Committee, shocks the audience. After praising their endeavor, she publicly declines the position of sales accountant (*comptoir*) for an upcoming fundraiser. She states that it will conflict with a similar event of the Catholics.⁷⁰⁵ Louise René Millet's actions thwart Hortense

⁷⁰² “*A propos de Comité des Dames j'ai constaté avec un profound regret que leur nombre diminuait. Quatre d'entre elles paraissaient vouloir s'occuper de notre école. Ce sont:*

Mme. Medina Présidente

Mme. Forty Vice-Présidente

Mlle. Montefiore Secrétaire

Mme. Taourel

Cela tient à ce que les autres dames étant italiennes et ayant leurs enfants dans les écoles italiennes, elles n'ont aucune lieu pour s'attacher à l'oeuvre qu'elles avaient entreprise. Mme. Forty et Mlle Montefiore sont venues souvent visiter l'école. Ces dames ont l'intention d'organiser des ateliers de couture et de repassage....” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXX E, Reel 66, Voley Chimènes, 12 January 1890.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, 8 July 1890.

⁷⁰⁴ For René Millet's years of service in Tunisia, see R. Brunschwig, “Tunisia”, *EI* 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill [1913-1936], 1987), 856.

⁷⁰⁵ “*Mesdames, je vous remercier infiniment de l'honneur que vous me faites...de prendre votre vente sous mon patronage., et je l'accepte de bien grand coeur. Je vous félicite de l'initiative que vous avez prise en faisant cette société de bienfaisance.... Quant à l'honneur que vous me faites de m'offrir un comptoir, je me suis forcée de le decline, parce que nous- memes possederons une vente, une vente catholique, puis qu'elle est sous la présentation de Mgr. Combes, et que par conséquent que nous n'y pourions vous offrir des comptoirs. Il vaut donc rester entre vous, puisque notre ___ congréganistes ne peut se faire qu'entre nous.” Archives of the AIU, Tunisie XXXI E, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 12 December 1897.*

Gelbmann's efforts to curry the favor of highly placed officials in the French administration. However, Mme. René Millet's early interest in the AIU School for Girls and its Women's Committee may have contributed to her later support of the first school for Muslim girls in Tunisia, aptly named for her.⁷⁰⁶

In the Annual Report of 1898-99, Hortense Gelbmann casually mentions the Women of Charity. When Gelbmann makes her charitable visits with members of the Alumnae Association to various households every Saturday, she is also accompanied by members of the Women's Committee.⁷⁰⁷ These rounds serve many purposes, in addition to the distribution of donations to the needy. First, the *directrice* can observe the living conditions of her students, and decide first hand if they need assistance. This assistance could apply not only to goods, but to the elimination of tuition. Second, since she brings her former students along with her, they can serve both as translators of the language and interpreters of the scene. Third, the Women of Charity provide a sounding board for opinions of the school among the townspeople. The presence of the Women of Charity is an additional bonus since they too provide donations at these Saturday visits in 1889-90.

⁷⁰⁶ For more details on this school, see S. Bakalti, *La femme tunisienne...* 134-141; Julia Clancy Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge..." in Mathee and Baron, *Iran and Beyond* ...106-117; Habib Kazdaghli "L'Education de la Femme dans la Tunisie Colonisée" in *Histoire des Femmes au Maghreb*, ed. Dalenda Larguèche, (Paris: Centre de Publication universitaire, 2000) 323.

⁷⁰⁷ "L'Association des anciennes Elèves de l'Alliance....Nous n'avons manqué, un seul samedi, de faire cette tournée qui pour nous est sacrée.

Quelque membres de notre Comité de Dames nous y accompagnent chaque fois, et c'est un véritable bonheur par nous d'ajoute une couverture et quelques dons en nature, et de les apporter à ceux dont la misère est si grande." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, Annual Report of 1898-99, 5 November 1899.

According to Paul Sebag, the founding date for the *Société des Dames de charité* is 1899. See his *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991), 167. He seems to have overlooked the Society's initial establishment in 1889.

The correspondence of the fourth principal, Louise Bornstein (Guéron), with Jacques Bigart, Secretary of the AIU, refers to a charitable women's committee in 1904. The *directrice* would like to institute a hot lunch program (*oeuvre de nourriture*) for the girls most in need. She requests a subsidy noting that the boys already profit from such a program. She calculates that the cost will be 200 francs per month for food and a kitchen supervisor will raise the total by another 400 francs per month. Excluding the expenses of installation, a subvention of 2400 francs from the Central Committee would suffice for the ten month school year. She also notes that if there were an *oeuvre de nourriture*, the girls could learn to prepare meals economically, manage a kitchen, and also be taught ironing, both as a trade and for later household use.⁷⁰⁸ The lunch program would serve as practical experience for the future generation of educated mothers. Such training would also prepare the girls for success on the exams for the *certificat d'études primaires*, particularly for the section on housekeeping. This new program would afford many benefits to the schoolgirls, not only in providing the neediest with nourishment.

The establishment and partial funding of the *oeuvre de nourriture* depends on the involvement of the local community. In response to Louise Bornstein Guéron's request to start such a venture, Jacques Bigart replies that he approves of the program, but advises that there should be a local contribution of 1200 francs. Bigart says that Bornstein (Guéron) should found a Society of Women to collect this sum and the Central

⁷⁰⁸ "...Si l'oeuvre de nourriture existait, il serait très facile d'y employer nos jeunes filles et de leur apprendre comment on peut faire économiquement des plats sains, comment on entretient une cuisine; le repassage pourrait également leur être enseigné, sinon de manière qu'elles puissent en faire un métier, du moins afin qu'elles sachent, plus tard, entretenir elles-mêmes le linge de la famille." Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XIV E*, Reel 33, Louise Bornstein (Guéron) to Bigart, 22 February 1904.

Committee would supply the remainder.⁷⁰⁹ As always, the AIU does not view itself as purely philanthropic, rather, it facilitates the community's attempts to meet its needs.

By May 1904 Bornstein (Gueron), confirms that she is able to raise 1200 francs through the (re-instated) benevolent society, The Women of Charity (*Les Dames de Charité*). The sum they raise will help subsidize the school canteen (*la cantine scolaire*) destined to provide a mid-day meal for 100 girls. Mme. Cesana, as President of the Society, will raise money through contributions of the 70 members and from the proceeds of a fund-raiser which will be held at the beginning of every winter. The school canteen will start at the beginning of the next month along with a course on household management (*cours de ménage*).⁷¹⁰

Two years later, in 1906, Louise Bornstein (Gueron) discusses the work of the Women of Charity. The school canteen still functions thanks to 1200 francs from the Central Committee and 1000 francs from the Women of Charity. The Society of the Women of Charity also supports the Jewish hospital (*L'hôpital Israélite*), distributes blankets and covers to the unfortunate, and aids the needy. Mme. G. Cesana continues as President and the Treasurer is Mme. V. Cattan, two very highly placed women in the

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., Bigart to Bornstein (Guéron), 1 March 1904.

⁷¹⁰ “ Dans votre letter du 1 mars no. le 232 vous avez bien voulu m'écrire que le Comité Central nous accorderait en faveur d'une cantine scolaire destinée à fournir le repas de midi à 100 fillettes, une subvention annuelle de frs 1200, à constitution qu'une somme égale peut-être recueillie sur place. C'est aujourd'hui chose faite.

Une Société de Bienfaisance – ‘les Dames de charité’ presidée par Mme. Cesana et qui, jusqu'à present s'était bornée à secourir divers pauvres et malades, à assumé cette charge et s'engager à accorder à la cantine scolaire une subvention annuelle de frs. 1200.

Cette somme sera fourni d'abord, par les cotisations de 70 membres actuels..., et par le revenu d'une fête....”

Ibid., Bornstein (Guéron) to Bigart, 8 May 1904.

Jewish-Italian (or Grana) community.⁷¹¹ The President of the Society in 1890, Mme. Medina, represents a well-known *Livournaise* family and the President in 1904, Mme. Cesana, is probably related to the Jewish banker of that name.⁷¹² That these charity women function as an elite, and fulfill their mediating role between the French *directrice* and the populace of the *hāra*, can serve as an example of “association”, in the sense employed by colonial policymakers.

The School, The Society for the Women of Charity, and The Jewish Hospital

In addition to activities for the direct benefit of the AIU School and its students, The Women of Charity work in close collaboration with other organizations. The Committee of Women organized a fundraiser for the profit of the Jewish Hospital and gained permission to hold it at the Alliance School for Girls.⁷¹³ In the self-contained worlds of the girls’ school and women’s associations, the *directrice* could serve as the

⁷¹¹ “Notre cantine scolaire fonctionne, grâce à la subvention de frs. 1200 que vous lui accorder et à celle de frs. 1000 que lui donne la Société des Dames de Charité. Cette société s’occupe encore de soutenir l’hôpital israélite, de donner à l’entrée de d’hiver un certain nombre de couvertures à des malheureux, de distribuer divers secours à des nécessiteurs intéressants. Elle a comme présidente Mme. G. Cesana; comme trésorière Mme. V. Cattan, deux des dames des plus haut placées parmi la communauté israélite italienne.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 25 February 1906. See also *Ibid*, 20 May 1906.

The Bulletin of the AIU (BAIU) also notes the 1000 franc contribution of the Women of Charity to the budget of the School for Girls in 1906. *BAIU*, Third Series, No. 31, 1906, 145.

By 1912, the Women of Charity contribute 130 francs per month to the hot lunch program. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XV E*, Julie Cohen-Scali, 8 May 1912.

⁷¹² Sebag, *Histoire des Juifs...*, 82, 138.

⁷¹³ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XVI E*, Reel 38, Louise Bornstein Guéron, 12 February 1908.

president of the Alumnae Association and of the Women of Charity.⁷¹⁴ Thus a certain amount of interdependence prevailed among the School for Girls, the Alumnae Association, the Committee of Women, and, also, the Jewish Hospital.

As noted by the historian Paul Sebag, most of the doctors in the Jewish Hospital were “*Livournais*”, of Italian (Jewish) nationality, who had studied medicine in Italy. The Jewish hospital was created in Tunis during 1893 and opened its doors in 1895. Twice per week doctors provided services, gratis, to the indigent without regard to religion or nationality.⁷¹⁵ Also, by 1897, the Director of the Hospital and his staff give free inoculations to the girls of the Alliance school (*L’Ecole de Filles*) and to the kindergarten children (*l’Ecole Maternelle*).⁷¹⁶ However, by 1914 the Jewish Hospital no longer functions, according to the correspondence of Clément Ouziel. He blames it on the negligence of the Committee for the Hospital.⁷¹⁷ Although the School for Girls and its ancillary groups try to assist the hospital, their support was not enough to overcome apparent failures in the leadership of the hospital’s governing committee. Thus, not all associations founded in the pre-World War I era necessarily survived for more than a few years.

⁷¹⁴ For instance, Hortense Gelbmann served as president of the Alumnae Association. Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI*, Reel 67, Bigart to Gelbmann, 25 November 1897. She also held the presidency of the Women of Charity. *Ibid.*, Gelbmann to Bigart, 12 October 1898.

⁷¹⁵ Paul Sebag. *Histoire des Juifs de Tunisie*. (Paris L’Harmattan, 1991) page 166; page 177, note 106.

⁷¹⁶ Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXXI E*, Reel 67, Hortense Gelbmann, 3 November 1897.

⁷¹⁷ “Hôpital...le comité actuel de l’Hôpital israélite, qui, quoique élu pour un an seulement, reste en fonction depuis plus de quatre ans, a perdu tout crédit auprès de nos coreligionnaires, et, en outré, a laissé tomber l’hôpital dans un état d’abandon tel que les rares malades qui consente à y entrer y risquent leur santé; on y manqué de tout de ligne, de nourriture, et surtout, de surtout de soins.” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXI E* 187, Reel 48, C. Ouziel, 27 July 1914.

To place this in the overall context of medical aid available in Tunis, each community had its own hospital. An Arab hospital, for instance, was established for the care of poor Muslims. Known as the Sadiki/Sadiqi Hospital, inaugurated in 1880 under the reign of Muhammed al-Sadiq Bey, it was subsidized by the organization of religious endowments (*habus* in North Africa or *waqf* in Egypt and the Arab East) and the beylical government. In the course of the twentieth century “indigenous” women became more willing to frequent it.⁷¹⁸ Frenchwomen also made certain health services available to the indigent through the Union of French Women (*Union de Femmes de France* or *UFF*). Louise René Millet, wife of the Resident General, founded the first group of the *UFF* in 1895 and opened a dispensary staffed by nurses to provide health counseling and vaccinations to Arab families.⁷¹⁹ Thus, medical advice and vaccinations were available to Jewish and Muslim women and girls before the turn of the twentieth century, due to charitable ventures and the work of voluntary associations in Tunis.

The Society of the Women of Charity continues its work of fundraising and support of the hot lunch program at the School for Girls in the years prior to World War I. However, after the outbreak of the War, the Central Committee can no longer uphold its financial commitment to the food or apprenticeships programs.⁷²⁰ Despite this,

⁷¹⁸ Souad Bakalti, *La femme tunisienne au temps de la colonisation (1881-1956)*...253.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 253-254.

⁷²⁰ “*Oeuvres de nourriture et d’apprentissage-Nos subventions pour ces deux oeuvres resteront supprimés pendant la durée de la guerre.*” Archives of the AIU, *Tunisie XXIV E*, Reel 54, Bigart to Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès (n.d.), in response to her letter of 26 October 1914.

the Women of Charity still maintain their fundraising activities and the hot lunch program is able to persist.⁷²¹ Thus, the Women of Charity, first organized in 1889, becomes an enduring reality in the life of the school. In the context of Muslim associations for charity women, *La Société des Dames Musulmans* existed from 1932-1936.⁷²²

The Alliance's programs not only educated its pupils, but reached out to the community through continuing education and charity. Consistent with social activism in France, the Alliance supported the growth of voluntary associations in the school for its students, outside the school for its graduates, and among willing members of the community who would volunteer their time and effort for the school. Two student initiated voluntary associations emerge at the School for Girls: the clothing project (*oeuvre d'habillement*) and the dessert program. The clothing project remains a feature of school life, both at the School for Girls and the School for Boys, with partial financial backing from Paris. Once the girls graduate, they are encouraged to join the Alumnae Association to foster solidarity, engage in benevolent activities, and further their education through reading, lectures, and conferences. It is the *directrice* who initiates and promotes the Association. In the community, upper class women organize a Society for the Women of Charity, under the tutelage of the *directrice*. They are responsible for many social welfare activities: they arrange fundraisers, visit households to donate

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès to Bigart, 10 May 1916.

⁷²² Bakalti, 75.

charitable gifts, support a hot lunch program (*oeuvre de nourriture*), and indirectly sponsor inoculations. The hot lunch program becomes an enduring institution of the school.

The benevolent activities organized in conjunction with the School for Girls in Tunis generally conform to ideas of social reform and social action initiated in France at the turn of the twentieth century. The ideal of solidarism is re-enforced through the active participation of girls and women in voluntary associations. Engagement in voluntary associations encourages mutualism, a goal of social reformers and educators alike. Such endeavors validate women's activities beyond traditional confines, bringing girls and women into the modern era, building indigenous elites, not only among men.

Conclusion

Many themes converge to form a portrait of Alliance women educators in Tunis between 1882 and 1914. These themes concentrate on two areas: first, female educators, or the *directrices* of the AIU School for Girls, and second, the education of females, whether teachers, students, parents, or the community. Within these units there are differing perspectives: The historical context is at the outset; the text then proceeds to present the *directrices* from two perspectives. First, the *directrice* on a north-south, or vertical axis, as the title indicates: “From Paris to Tunis and Back: Local Responses to European Directives.” This chapter examines the views of the literary, administrative, or religious “authorities” and the responses of the principals to political, social, and educational issues of the pre-World War I era. Such concerns include: colonialism, the utility of correspondence, the educator-mother, the “civilizing” mission, cleanliness and order, and the value of manual labor/ handiwork. (These same themes recur in later chapters and underscore their centrality to a study of women as agents, or possibly only symbols, of social change.) Following, the *directrice* is discussed as cultural intermediary of language and literacy in the chapter “From the Margins to the Center”; this chapter utilizes a horizontal axis. The next chapter views the school as a whole, over time, for both vertical and horizontal connections. The linkages occurred at the same time, but may have happened at other times and places, or at somewhat earlier or later historical periods. The last two chapters explore the influence of the school and the environment in changing the outlook of teachers, parents, children, and the community.

This study will contribute to work others are doing in allied fields. The first issue concerns the scope of the colonial archive. In November 2005, the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago sponsored a symposium on “The Thing Speaks for Itself: Articulating Evidence and Discourse in Colonial Studies”. The organizers of this workshop asked:

How is the evidence of colonialism constituted within the disciplines that study coloniality? What objects evidence colonialism, and how are they made to speak? Does evidence transcend disciplines, histories, and regions?⁷²³

Such questions can lead to a broad discussion within the field of colonial studies.

While colonialism is only one of several themes of this research project, certainly traditional historical sources, such as the archives of the Alliance, provide evidence of the colonial state of mind. The letters of the AIU *directrices* and *directeurs* can give proof of colonialism, but it is the historian, or other specialist, who interprets the correspondence and makes it speak. Granted, there are AIU educators in Tunis, such as Mme. Voley Chimènes or M. Albert Saguès, who confront the “civilizing mission” directly. However, other factors, such as the use of language, may convey a colonial relationship. Thus, when Louise Bornstein disparages her students as “little savages”, she implies that her superiority as a Frenchwoman and as a *directrice*, permits her to “civilize” the subordinate indigenous Tunisian girls, and by extension, their parents too.

Evidence from the Alliance archives can definitely “transcend disciplines, histories and regions”. Until now, mostly historians have utilized the AIU archives for the publication of books and articles. But the material is suitable for researchers in the other

⁷²³ MESA (Middle East Studies Association) On Line Newsletter, November 2005, p.2, http://fp.arizona.edu/mesa_assoc/Onlinenews/conferences.htm (accessed December 4, 2005)

social sciences and humanities. Moreover, since the AIU archives house documents stemming from several former empires, the histories of these regions would not be complete without consulting the AIU's holdings. Geography defines the AIU archives, at least in its system of classification. The territorial units cover Europe, including France, as well as the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa. Since many of the Alliance schools functioned in regions of French and British control, the archives provide evidence of colonial rule from more than one setting. A comparison of the French in Tunisia to the British in Egypt, for instance, could evolve into a prospective study on comparative colonialisms. Thus, the correspondence offers multi-disciplinary, multi-historical, and multi-regional possibilities.

Women and girls as agents of social change is another theme of this investigation. Arguably they are agents of change, or, symbols of change. To a large extent though, a conclusive answer depends on the evidence from sources. Since the most important primary source for this study is the correspondence of the educators, it dictates both the methods and limitations of this study. The documents of the *directrices* were the first sources read. This was followed by the correspondence of the *directeurs*. Where appropriate, the letters of the female teaching staff (*adjointes*) were also surveyed, particularly in research on the second *directrice*, Mme. V. Chimènes. The correspondence provides many of the answers to the questions raised in the introduction and in the various chapters.

What emerges is a multilayered arena of change. Gradual transformation affects not only the *directrices*, but also the students, their families, and members of the

community who have a more tangential, though not less influential, relationship with the school. In some instances the women educators view themselves as catalysts for change. For instance, Louise Bornstein Guéron, the fourth *directrice*, depicts herself in this role. Similarly, Voley Chimènes proudly reports on the acceptance of European clothes by daughters and mothers, implying that it is a sign of successful social change. Language and literacy emerge as another arena for Tunisian young girls and women to take responsibility for their lives. According to Tunisian (and Libyan) mothers, French language proves an asset on the marriage market; according to Alliance *directrices* in Tunis and administrators in Paris, an education raises the age of marriage and eliminates child marriages. It provides increased employment opportunities in the Alliance school itself. Learning a trade is also a measure for theoretically ensuring a livelihood. Thus, alterations in attitudes and expectations occurred for the *directrices*, her students, and their families. In addition, the *directrices* reached out to local female elites, engaging them in the formation of voluntary associations, a sign of an emerging modernity.

The teachers brought French language and culture to the Jewish Quarter of Tunis, which led to various results. Whether for the male or female population, the Francophonie of the schools soon led to the acceptance of European norms and an uneasy alliance with the traditional way of life. The first schoolgirls of the 1880's received French first names to replace the Arabic ones used at home. But if the girls usually employed Hebrew first names, they continued to do so. Also, the schoolgirls wore European clothes in school but changed into traditional clothing in the house. By 1900, however, the Alliance faced opposition to its assumed policies of assimilation to French

culture. Other voices in the Jewish community spoke for a return to their own culture, rather than emulating a foreign import.

The problems of marginalization and erasure of women are closely allied to the issue of women as agents of change. Within her domain, a *directrice* had a certain freedom of action. She could alter the curriculum; hire and fire personnel; engage in trade as an intermediary between the school and merchants in Tunis, London, and Paris; conduct public lectures and host fundraisers; and enlist the aid of elite women in the community to further the goals of the school. But her official role as principal of the School for Girls was often denied, especially by the first two *directeurs*, David Cazès and S.T. Pariente. They preferred the Tunisian public to believe that there was one *directeur* for both schools. The *directrice*'s presumed colleagues sought not only to marginalize her, but to erase her from existence.

The announcement of a forthcoming conference in the Department of French and Romance Philology at Columbia on “Marking Loss: Reading and Writing Erasure in French and Francophone Literature”, raises the following question: “Can texts and interpretations erase meaning, history, memory, boundaries or identity?”⁷²⁴ If the texts at hand are the correspondence of the first two *directeurs*, or Narcisse Leven's *Cinquante ans d'histoire: L'Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860-1920)*, then these sources can erase history and identity. But the voices of the women emerge from their own correspondence, as they depict their daily struggle in the “little world” of the School for Girls. Thus, even

⁷²⁴ H-Net Network on the History of French Colonialism <H-FRENCH COLONIALISM@H-NET.MSU.EDU>. (Received October 6, 2005). Conference to be held on Feb.17, 2006.

though Narcisse Leven chooses not to acknowledge the existence of the first *directrice*, Sara Ungar, her act of writing restores her to history.

While the sources for this study guide its method, they also inform its limitations. Just as the correspondence of the men leaves lacunae about the women, the correspondence of the women leaves gaps about those areas of the School for Girls which are in the hands of the men. These issues usually concern the budget and the overall administration of the School for Girls. Since the *directeur* of the School for Boys in Tunis supervised all the Alliance schools in Tunisia, his reports are more comprehensive, and different. For instance, he was encouraged to travel to various North African cities to set up new schools or seek new personnel. Denied that freedom of movement, the women were confined to the school and its immediate environs and their reports reflect that. Moreover, since the men, not the women, participated in public life, the men are more likely to comment on political events than the women. Thus, the correspondence of the men and the women needs to be read to gain a more comprehensive picture of the School for Girls and of the status of women in Tunisia.

Certain assertions by the Alliance are difficult to quantify, adding to the limitations of this study. Thus, as far as is known, there are no statistics to prove that French was an asset in marriage. In this case it is necessary to rely on statements of the mothers and the *directrices*, and substantiate their claims from the secondary sources. For Russian, Tunisian, and Libyan Jewish girls, and Tunisian Muslim girls, French was the passport to a better life, as it probably was for many others. Although the Alliance did not

want its schools to be mere centers for foreign language acquisition, to this day one aspect of the heritage of French rule in North Africa is the continued use of French language in daily life and scholarly activity.

A further limitation concerns child marriage. Jacques Bigart and Louise Bornstein Guéron claim that child marriages are all but eliminated due to the influence of the school. But they do not provide statistics on the age of marriage after the introduction of schooling to young girls. Such information may only be available in marriage contracts. An investigation of this kind remains beyond the scope of this study.

Similarly, long term employment figures for trades are lacking in the AIU archives surveyed. When girls leave school before completing their education, the *directrice* may provide a list of names, ages, and their intended occupations or destinations. However, no follow up information on length of employment seems to be available for those who completed their schooling and their apprenticeships. An indication of the acceptance of women as workers outside the home would be found in later census figures. Yet, it is possible to reconstruct the working lives of the *monitrices*, especially when they remained in the AIU school system and within the accountability of the *directrice*.

Future research may involve a longitudinal study of the women educators to assess change, reaction to local and world events, and the school's possible influence on the education of Muslim and Christian girls in Tunisia. Furthermore, the introduction of apprenticeship programs for girls in the Alliance school may indicate that it stood as a model for other educational systems, whether Muslim or French. That girls attended

school at all was a clear break from the world of their mothers. The effects of this schooling on the individual girls, the *directrices*, and on society in the course of the twentieth century may point to new directions for future study.

The corresponding lives of the women, writing to Paris, or in their similarity with each other, indicate the necessity to expand the meaning of social change for women educators. Their correspondence does not often discuss changes in attitudes, but usually focuses on tangible change, such as apparel, or the number of students enrolled in school. The attitudes and expectations they bring from the metropole in Paris to their post in Tunis may not have varied originally from the attitudes that teachers may have brought to a classroom in France. But as they face the realities of life in the *hāra*, the “geography of place” and the indigenous voice contribute to change among the educational community.

The correspondence provides an enduring legacy to the tenacity of the *éducatrices* and the strength of the Alliance school system. It highlights the multiple roles of women as emissaries, intermediaries, and leaders in the French Overseas Territories. The letters reveal personal hardship and public celebration. But for the historian, they document the lives of women otherwise overlooked or erased, educational pioneers in the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic North African city of Tunis.

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Note: The original correspondence of the Alliance educators is housed in the AIU Archives at 45 rue de Bruyères, Paris. Microfilm copies of the letters are available in Jerusalem and Cambridge, MA. Harvard has a microfilm collection of eighty-six reels for Tunisia, filed under the rubric of *AIU Archives: Collection 01: Tunisia*. The collection can be accessed through the Hollis Catalog, Widener Harvard Depository Film A 1075. Since there are restrictions on the use of the collection, the microfilm reels can only be viewed in the Phillips Reading Room at Widener Library. The files entitled *France* are located at the AIU Archives in Paris, and they are not on microfilm. In addition to unpublished archival records, the holdings of the Archives in Paris include published primary sources such as the Bulletins of the AIU.

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Unpublished documents

	Archives Box Shelf Number	Reel Number
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	I C Situation, Générale intérieure des Juifs	5
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	XIV E, Louise Bornstein	33
	XV E, Julie Cohen-Scali	35
	XVI E, Lazare Guéron	37
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	XX E, Clément Ouziel	45
	XXI E 187g, Clément Ouziel	47
	XXIV E, Albert Saguès	53
	XXIV E 188-199, Julie Cohen-Scali Saguès	54
	XXVI E 215 e, f, Sidi Oro Tahar	57
	XXVII E, Mathilde Twersky Alhalel	60
	XXVIII E, David Cazès	62
	XXIX E, David Cazès	63
	XXIX E, David Cazès	64
	XXX E, David Cazès, Voley Chimènes	65
	XXX E, Voley Chimènes	66
	XXXI E, B. Féraud, Léonie Féraud, Hortense Gelbmann	67
	XXXII E, S.T. Pariente	69
	XXXII E, S.T. Pariente	70
	XXXIII E, S.T. Pariente	71
	XXXIII E, S. T. Pariente, Rachael Pisa	72

Archives Box Shelf Number	Reel Number
XXXIV E, Sara Ungar, Mathilde Twersky, Henriette Salomon (Antébi)	73
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