

CRIME AMONG JEWS* - A
A Comparative Study of Criminality
Among Minorities and Dominant Groups**
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CRIME AMONG JEWS

Zvi Hermon

A. Crime Among Jews in the Countries of the Diaspora

1. It is common knowledge that in the countries of the Diaspora Jews were generally less involved in crime than the non-Jewish dominant populations amongst whom they lived. Their loyalty to their national and religious traditions as expressed in the life of their closely knit communities, their cohesive family, their high educational standards, their moderation in the consumption of alcohol, their solidarity and consciousness of mutual responsibility, and readiness for mutual help were considered to be the main causes for the generally low crime rates among this population group.

There are only a few countries where for certain periods official crime statistics, separately for Jews and for non-Jews, were recorded and published. But even the limited available data beginning from Czarist Russian in the East prior to World War I to Canada in the West up to the present time, point to certain trends the meaning of which cannot be misunderstood.

In spite of all the problems and great difficulties involved in comparing criminal statistics in different countries and at different periods of time, we are able to establish that crime rates were lowest in countries and at periods when Jews were treated as discriminated against minorities, that crime increased with emancipation, that crime committed by Jewish

offenders in countries of discrimination and persecution was mostly different in character from that committed by members of the dominant population groups. The forms of crime committed by Jewish minorities became more similar to those of the dominant groups the more the Jews became emancipated and were accorded more opportunities to participate in the socio-economic and cultural life of the countries in which they lived.

In 1907, in Czarist Russia, a country notorious for its discrimination against the Jewish minority, conviction rates for Jews were only about 67.5% of those for the dominant population group. The criminal statistics for Poland in 1937 showed that here conviction rates were 63.9% of those for non-Jews.

While in those two Eastern European countries, where the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people had lived in utter poverty and in conditions of discrimination and oppression, crime rates for Jews were thus comparatively very low, we find that in Central Europe, Germany, Austria and Hungary the extent of criminality among Jews was somewhat higher. In Hungary between the years 1909 to 1913 where the Jews were enjoying an ever growing share in the economic, social and cultural life of the country, the yearly average was 76.5%. In Germany during the years from 1882 to 1910 when the Jewish population in that country had achieved full formal emancipation and grew to become the wealthiest and best educated Jewish community of those days, the crime rate among that Jewry rose from 76% to 91.7% of those among the

non-Jews. In Austria, in 1898 the crime rates for Jews were 90% of those of non-Jews. Jacob Lestschinsky points to the fact that in 1918 the conviction rate for the Austrian Jews who were a comparatively wealthy and well educated group were about 50% higher than those for the poorer and comparatively less educated Jews in Galitia.

Crime statistics for Germany at the time of Nazi rule in the mid 1930's seem to support the claim that there is a close correlation of an inverse character between participation of Jews in crime on the one hand and their participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country of their residence. When we deduct the very high conviction rates of Jews concerning passport violations, "racial pollution," violations of exchange regulations, violations of industrial regulations, all results of discriminating Nazi legislation, we will find that for all the other offenses together Jews were convicted proportionally only in about 30% of the cases for which non-Jews were convicted. These lowest conviction rates for Jews in Germany seem to correspond to and be the result of the discriminating legislation and the ruthless persecution of the Jews in the Germany of those days.

Going further west to the Netherlands, a country where for centuries Jews had been enjoying emancipation and equality not only in principle but also in practice, we find that the crime rates for Jews which had been only 67.7 in 1902 had in the period from 1931 to 1933 become about equal to that of the country's total population.

With the notable exception of Canada no separate criminal statistics for most of the democratic, free countries where Jews are fully emancipated, are available. We lack even approximate figures for the United States which has become the greatest concentration of Jewish communities in the modern world; simply because the United States' census does not register crime committed by Jews separately.

The only relevant data available for the United States are some prison statistics; but here the participation of Jews in crime appears to be even lower than elsewhere as only the more dangerous criminals are generally sent to prisons, where Jews, because they mostly commit offenses of less severity, are only rarely sent.

In the ten year period from 1920-1929 an average of 394,080 convicted offenders were imprisoned annually in the entire United States. Among them were 6,846 Jews or 1.74%. The Jews constituted in those days 3.5% of the total population of the United States. Their participation in the more serious offenses which were punished with imprisonment was therefore about 50% of what could be expected in view of their share in the general population.

Imprisonment figures concerning the two greatest Jewish communities in the United States, New York and Los Angeles, confirm these findings. In the first years of the twentieth century, Jews represented about 17 to 18 per cent of New York city; the percentage of Jewish prisoners was 9.2% in

1902, 9.4% in 1903, and 14.7% in 1904. In 1947, the Jews constituted only 4.7% of the prison population in New York State: only about a quarter of their share in the general population of the state.

Turning finally to the North African countries, we find that, just as was the case on the European and American continents, Jews were also here less involved in crime than the non-Jewish populations amongst whom they lived. The available statistical data refer only to Tunisia, but the situation in Algiers and Morocco was basically the same. This is documented in Andre Chouraqui's definitive study on N. African Jews in those days.

Before World War II, in 1939, about 60,000 Jews lived in Tunisia. They represented approximately 3% of the country's population, but only 1.8% of those sentenced to imprisonment. From that year on the proportionate share of the Tunisian Jews in the country's prisons gradually decreased even further until in 1955, when they represented 1.6% in the total population only 0.3% among them were incarcerated.

As is generally known, Jews in Algiers, Morocco, Tunisia and other Moslem countries had been living for many centuries as underprivileged, discriminated against and often persecuted minorities. As was the case in Eastern Europe we have to see the comparatively low crime rates in their communities as a consequence of the oppressive political and social conditions to which they were subjected. The decline in N. African Jewish populations and the even greater decrease in their proportionate crime rates after World War II has to be ascribed to the growth of nationalism and xenophobia in those countries, which later brought about their political independence, and, most particularly, the establishment of Israel, which brought the Arab moslem world up in arms not only against the Jewish state but also against the Jewish minorities living in their midst.

These few data about imprisonment of Jews in the United States and Tunisia show what seems to be a most important fact, that two Jewish minority populations; the one wealthy, well educated and emancipated, and living in an affluent society, and the other, generally poor, educationally backward, and living in an underdeveloped country in conditions of oppression and discrimination, are both less represented among the prison population of their country, commit less of the more serious crimes than the majority populations amongst whom they live.

Not less significant seems to be the fact that in Tunisia when following the establishment of the State of Israel the persecution of the Jews and the discrimination against them increased crime among this minority further declined. This indirectly supports our theory that criminality among Jews increases with the measure of their emancipation.

When soon after the establishment of the State of Israel it came as a surprise and to some even as a shock that Jews who in the Diaspora had always been underrepresented in crime, committed in their own country serious offenses including even murder, rape and burglary. Thus it had become clear enough that the full emancipation and full freedom the people enjoyed in Israel had resulted also in crime to an extent and of a character never known before in modern Jewish history; thus supporting the correctness of Emile Durkheim's theory that "crime is normal," that the "fundamental conditions of social organization logically imply it."

The history of crime among Jews in modern society, and in Israel in particular, show that the normalization of the people's life also results in a normalization of the measure of deviant behavior found in this society.

II. The Types of Offenses Committed by Jews in Countries of the Diaspora

a. Offenses against the person

In all countries of the Diaspora offenses against the person were committed much less by Jews than by non-Jews. This was generally explained by the higher educational level of the Jews and their very moderate consumption of alcohol. Smallest was the Jews' share in homicide, the most serious among the aggressive offenses. It seems to be noteworthy that in Europe before World War II the share of the Jews in the cases of physical assault increased as we proceed from eastern to more western countries.

In Russia in 1907 Jews were convicted in about 25% of the corresponding rates for aggressive crimes for non-Jews. In Poland in 1937 convictions of Jews were proportionately only about 55%. In Germany on the average for the years from 1899 to 1902, Jewish participation in the offenses against the person was 71.4% and in the Netherlands from 1931 to 1933 Jews were convicted for offenses against the person in about 70% of the corresponding figure for the total population of the country.

Arthur Ruppin showed that when we take the figures for the city of Amsterdam alone we will find that the conviction rate for Jews for offenses against the person were even higher.

He explains this with the fact that in Amsterdam there existed a sizeable Jewish working class employed in various industries owned mainly by Jews. It seems that we have also to consider the fact that in this country where Jews had achieved the highest measure of emancipation and equality, laborers behaved similar to other working class people which included to a certain degree also aggressive behavior and even physical assault.

The prisoner statistics for the United States and the general offender statistics for Canada show that on the North American continent convictions for assault among Jews are very low. This is explained by the fact that one or two generations after their immigration, Jews had already moved up to middle class status where such kind of aggressive behavior is less common.

In view of later developments in Israel it seems important to state that Jews also in North Africa were generally not imprisoned for physical assault in spite of the fact that here the great masses belonged to the impoverished and uneducated classes. Oppression and discrimination obviously cause Jews to contain their need for aggressive acting out. This confirms views expressed by Gustav Aschaffenburg and others, that the Jews status as a minority population in the European countries has to be considered as a crime preventing agent because potential offenders of this solidary community were constantly aware of the particular danger, which deviant behavior of a Jewish individual could mean for the group as a whole.

b. Offenses against morality

Jews were generally less involved in the aggressive offenses against morality than non-Jews. Least in eastern Europe, somewhat more in Germany, and again more in the Netherlands. The United States prison statistics and Canadian offender statistics also point to very low rates for sex offenses among Jews. The prison statistics of the North African country of Tunisia, however, show that in 1955 when Jews presented only 1.7% of the general population Jewesses represented 2% of the "filles en cartes" the prostitutes. Here we have a first indication for the fact that in North Africa where Jewish offenders belong to the poverty class they tend to commit offenses characteristic for such populations. Convictions for non-aggressive offenses against morality such as keeping brothel were in some of the countries however proportionally more numerous among Jews than among non-Jews.

Comparatively they were for the previously Austrian part of Poland 228% during 1924 to 1925 and for Germany during 1899 to 1902 127% of the rates for non-Jews. In the same years in Germany conviction rates for "diffusion of immoral writings" were 260% of those of non-Jews. All this seems to be an indication for the fact that Jews in the Diaspora were somewhat more represented in the commercial offenses belonging to the category of offenses against morality than non-Jews. This naturally is again explained by experts by the fact that Jews were living mainly in urban centers and were generally engaged in commerce.

c. Offenses against property

The participation of Jews in the common property crimes in the Diaspora was generally still lower than their share in the offenses against the person. It was lowest in Poland where in 1937 conviction rates for Jews were only 20% of those for non-Jews. In Germany from the period from 1882 to 1916 these rates moved between 30% and 40% of those of non-Jews. In the Netherlands the rates were again highest, 97.6% of those of non-Jews in the years 1931 to 1933. As to the extremely low rates in Poland we have, however, to keep in mind that most probably thefts committed by Jews within the closely knit Jewish communities were not often reported to the hated Polish police.

On the American continent, in the United States and Canada participation of Jews in common property crimes was always very low. In Los Angeles they were only about one-third of what could be expected in view of their proportion in the population of Los Angeles during the period from 1933 to 1947.

In Canada in the years 1936 to 1937 convictions of Jews amounted only to about two-thirds of what could be expected in view of their share in the total population. Also in North Africa participation of Jews in property offenses was much lower than that of non-Jews. But contrary to the situation in Europe and America theft and drunkenness were the offenses most often committed by Jews in North Africa. André Chouraqui observes that "le vol et alcoolisme constituent la presque

totalité des délits reproches a les Israéliens tunisiens en 1948. On pourrait generaliser cette observation qui est valable pour le Maroc et L'Algérie (pp. 195-196).

Thus we find here in Africa a criminality typical for the lower social classes. We have to keep this in mind when we will consider crime committed by members of the different ethnic groups among the immigrants in Israel.

III. Fraud

Fraud, False Pretences and Forgery are offenses in which Jews in the Diaspora were mostly over represented. In Russia in 1907 conviction rates for "commercial swindlers" were 143%, in Poland in 1937 conviction rates for fraud were 137%, and for forgery 143% of those for non-Jews. In Germany the rates moved during the years from 1882 to 1916 between 183% and 217% of those of non-Jews. In the Netherlands they were 160%, the average for 1901 to 1909, and even 249% for the period between 1931 to 1933. For Canada the adjusted rates, where the Jewish urban population is compared with the non-Jewish urban population only, the conviction rates for fraud among Jews are still 160% of those of non-Jews.

The cause for the proportionally higher conviction rate for "commercial" offenses is generally explained with the fact that Jews in Diaspora are much more represented in commerce and live mostly in urban areas, while great parts of the non-Jewish population generally live in rural areas and are engaged in non-commercial pursuits.

It is well known that in Germany Jews were about five times and Jews in Poland even about twenty times more often occupied in commerce. In view of this the 1.5 to 2.5 times higher conviction rates for the offenses of fraud and forgery do not appear to be out of proportion.

It seems however to be most revealing to note that in Poland in the years between 1924 to 1937 fraud and forgery represented about 21% of all offenses committed by Jews.

In Germany during the years from 1882 to 1901 these offenses were about 13% and in the Netherlands from 1931 to 1933 only about 5% of all fraudulent offenses committed by Jews. This shows that while proceeding from east to west, from conditions of discrimination in Poland to those of emancipation in the Germany of those days and still further West to the Netherlands the proportion of fraudulent behavior in all offenses committed by Jews decreased and that crime among the Jews became more similar to that of the majority population amongst whom they lived.

IV. Offenses against Public Order and Administration of Lawful Authority

Also in this main group of offenses against public order the participation of Jews is generally different from that of the non-Jews in the Diaspora. In countries where they were discriminated against the Jews' share in these offenses is greater than that of non-Jews. In countries of emancipation their share is proportionally smaller. Thus, the conviction

rates for these offenses seem to be a direct reflection of the manner in which governments and dominant populations in general relate to their Jewish minorities.

In Russia in 1907 when Jews were 4% of the country's total population they represented 17.1% in the offenses against the security of the State and public order which is more than four times their due share. In Poland, 1924 to 1937, offenses against the public order and the security of the State represented 43.6% of all the legal violations committed by this group. In Germany from 1899 to 1902 these offenses were only 25% and in the Netherlands 1931 to 1933 only 6.2% of all offenses committed by Jews in these categories. The very low figure for the Netherlands is somewhat distorted because the statistics available to us included only the more serious offenses against the State where Jews were only rarely represented in that country.

These figures again point to the correlation between discrimination, emancipation and Jewish participation in certain characteristic offenses.

B. Crime Among Jews Before the Establishment of the State of Israel.

During the decades beginning from the time of the first Aliyah (1882) and up to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 crime figures in the Yishuv were extremely low for all types of offenses.

The mandatory Palestine government published statistics for the different religious groups separately only during the

last years of its existence. Therefore we can refer here only to figures for the years 1940, 1943 and 1945 which give some indication of the incidence of criminality among Jews in Palestine before the establishment of the state.

Table I shows the crime rates for Jews and non-Jews in Palestine as follows:

TABLE I

Conviction Rates for Jews and non-Jews, resp., in Palestine in 1,000 of the specific population groups in the years 1940, 1943, 1945

Year	Jews	non-Jews	Ratio of Conviction Rates of Jews compared with non-Jews
1940	7.1	13.8	1:1.9
1943	5.0	17.0	1:3.4
1945	5.5	21.3	1:3.9

* * *

The very low criminality rates in the Yishuv are outstanding: 7.1 Jewish offenders in thousand of the general Jewish population in 1940, 5.0 in 1,000 in 1943, and 5.5 in 1,000 in 1945 are obviously the reflection of the particular character of this generally idealistic pioneering population.

The high ideals which generally motivated the inhabitants of the Jewish National Home and in particular the revolutionary changes which occurred in the occupational structure of the newly developing society appear to have been the main causes for the very

low general crime rates and particularly for the low incidence of offenses which have been more characteristic for criminality among Jews in some countries of the Diaspora.

Crime figures among non-Jews in Palestine were much higher than among Jews. In 1940 conviction rates in the Yishuv were only 51.4 per cent, in 1943 only 29.4 per cent, and in 1945 even only 25.7 per cent of those among non-Jews. The general decrease in crime among Jews and the coincident increase in crime among non-Jews in those years of the Second World War have to be seen against the background of world events in those years. Most young Jewish men served in the Army, a fact which naturally reduced the number of potential offenders in the Jewish civilian population. The non-Jews generally did not join the military forces but many of them worked in military camps as civilian laborers, often far away from the social control of their families and communities and under conditions which generally tend to increase criminal behavior.

C. Crime in the State of Israel

The most interesting and probably most significant fact about crime in Israel is, and this was already true for the Yishuv in Palestine, that the whole structure of the crime phenomenon among Jews changed immediately with the establishment of the new society.

Practically nothing that had been called typical or characteristic of the criminality among Jews in the countries of the Diaspora appeared in the criminal statistics of Palestine or Israel.

On the other hand the common offenses against the person, such as assault, physical injury and homicide, and the common offenses against property such as theft and burglary which in the Diaspora have always been committed less by Jews, represent in Israel the type of crime for which the overwhelming majority of offenders are convicted. Together with all the other aspects of life, crime became as Durkheim had already stated one of the normal expressions of life in society.

Another remarkable feature of crime in Israel is the fact that after a rise of about 50% from 7.5 in thousand to 10.6 in one thousand of the total population during the first years of mass immigration from 1948 to 1952, the crime rates for the total Jews population never increased up to this date.

The average crime rates for Jewish adults from 1956 to 1965 was 10.1 in thousand of the Jewish total adult population of the country. In spite of the dramatic upheavals accompanying its birth, including also the mass immigration of diverse ethnic groups and the unavoidable tensions arising out of these processes, crime in Israel is not only moderate in extent but also characterized by the absence of the brutal and ruthless forms of crime which are often committed in many countries.

The normalization of crime in Israel is also reflected in the fact that Fraud and Forgery which had constituted in Poland about 21%, in Germany about 13%, and in the Netherlands about 5% of all Jewish crime were in Israel only 3.1%, average for the years 1956 to 1965.

The totally changed physiognomy of crime among Jews in Israel is obviously a direct consequence of the fulfillment of the ideal of Jewish labor, of the radical change in the occupational structure of the Jewish people in its historic homeland.

TABLE II

Jewish Adult Offenders in Israel 1951-1956; Absolute Figures, Rates in 1,000 of adult population and proportion of various types of Offenses in all Offenses

<u>Offenses</u>		<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>Average 1956-65</u>
Total	Absolute	6,222	9,600	-
Rates in 1,000	Rate	7.456	10.655	10.129
% of Rates	%	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Against Public Order	Absolute	.568	1,084	-
	Rate	0.685	1.203	2.870
	%	(9.2%)	(11.2%)	(28.4%)
Against the Person	Absolute	1,434	2,124	-
	Rate	1.717	2,356	2.894
	%	(23.1%)	(22.2%)	(28.5%)
Against Morality	Absolute	138	142	-
	Rate	0.165	0.158	0.267
	%	(2.2%)	(1.5%)	(2.6%)
Against Property	Absolute	2,898	4,284	-
	Rate	3.470	4.755	3.144
	%	(46.5%)	(44.7%)	(31.6%)
Fraud and Forgery	Absolute	120	154	-
	Rate	0.143	0.171	0.312
	%	(1.9%)	(1.6%)	(3.1%)
Economic Offenses	Absolute	814	1,464	-
	Rate	0.974	1.625	0.226
	%	(13.1%)	(15.2%)	(2.1%)
Administrative and Fiscal Offenses	Absolute	250	348	-
	Rate	0.299	0.386	0.414
	%	(4.0%)	(3.6%)	(3.9%)

Study of a number of specific offenses as committed by Jews and non-Jews in Israel will illustrate this further.

D. Offenses Against the Person

The conviction rates for all offenses against a person were on the average 2.9 in thousand among Jews and 8.8 in thousand among Arabs.

Homicide had only rarely been committed by Jews in the Diaspora. The conviction rates for this offense, if also higher than in the Diaspora remained moderate also in Israel 0.4 in thousand of the adult population, average for the years 1951 to 1965.

Motives for homicide were as follows: 34 per cent were matrimonial and other emotional conflicts, 25% resulted from quarrels between neighbors and business partners, 14% were committed in the course of robbery, 8% during quarrels among criminals, 3% were committed to restore what was called the "family honor" in traditional oriental families. Fifteen per cent of the homicides were committed for a variety of other motives.

Aggressive offenses among Jews involving bodily harm were only 7.0% of all offenses against persons in 1964 and even only 5.7% in 1965 which confirms the general impression that crime in Israel among Jews is still less violent and less brutal than in many other countries.

Offenses against the Dangerous Drug Laws are only rarely committed. Approximately about 0.1 in 1,000 Jews and 0.2 in 1,000 Arabs. The absolute figures for Jews were 133 in 1964,

and 135 cases in 1965. Our own case studies among the Israeli population showed that in most cases the offenders are immigrants from North Africa, Asia and the Levant who had acquired these habits in the countries of their origin but generally did not pass them on to the next generation in Israel.

We find however in an emerging class of habitual offenders in Israel a certain number of criminals who use drugs, deal with them or induce others to become addicted to be able to exploit them.

Offenses Against Morality

Offenses against morality were never characteristic for crime among Jews in the Diaspora. In Israel, too, the conviction rates are low. For example, 0.29 in 1,000 Jews and 0.45 in 1,000 Arabs in 1964, which was a typical year. Only very few of the serious brutal sex crimes are committed. During the years 1956 to 1965 these offenses constituted only 2.6% of all offenses against morality. In 1963 there were only 8 convictions for rape or attempted rape among Jews, in 1964 only 9 cases, in 1965 there were only 6 cases. Most of the offenses against morality constituted "indecent behavior" which was committed mostly against minors.

The offenses of keeping brothels and soliciting were also moderate in extent. There were 41 cases in 1963, 67 in 1964, and 59 in 1965.

Offenses Against Property

One of the outstanding features of criminality among Jews in Israel is the fact that here the common offenses against

property are the category most often committed. The conviction rates for all offenses against property were 3.13 in thousand Jews on the average for the ten years from 1956 to 1965. The appropriate rates for Arabs were 8.77 in thousand average for 5 alternate years from 1956 to 1964.

Stealing from a person which in certain European countries was occasionally described as a "typically Jewish" offense is only rarely committed in Israel. The incidence of this offense is constantly decreasing. In 1951 there were in absolute figures 44 convictions, in 1965 when the Jewish population had almost doubled there were even less, only 37 convicted for this offense.

On the other hand a real class of dangerous habitual burglars is clearly emerging among Jews in Israel. The absolute conviction figures were 379 in 1963, 468 in 1964 and 501 in 1965.

It seems however to be interesting to note that cases of robbery are still comparatively rare. In absolute figures there were seven cases in 1963, 9 cases in 1964 and only 3 cases in 1965. Contrary to burglary and theft, robbery implies direct contact with the victim, physical attack and threat to his life. It seems still to be one of the marks of crime among Jews in Israel that even the habitual criminal mostly shies away from this most aggressive and brutal form of property offense.

Offenses Against the Public Order and the Authority of the State

Offenses against the Public Order and the authority of the State among Jews in Israel represent a quarter or somewhat more

of all offenses committed by Jews in the country. Among the Arabs they represent just over half of all offenses. This greater representation of Arabs in this main group of Offenses against the Public Order is partly caused by the political situation in this part of the world when Arabs are often convicted for illegal border crossings and certain other offenses arising out of the total situation and the need to maintain certain emergency regulations.

Very different from the countries of the Diaspora where Jews tend not to be involved in violent disturbances of the peace such behavior represents in Israel more than half of the total of the Offenses Against the Public Order. The legal violations here recorded are often aggressive acts committed against public servants caused mainly by the tensions arising out of mass immigration and the accompanying absorption problems.

All the other offenses in this main group of offenses are much less committed in Israel than in the Diaspora. Needless to say that evasion of military service occurs only rarely. The conviction rates for corruption and abuse of office are low. As far as we can learn from official crime statistics these offenses do not constitute a public problem, but the public is deeply disturbed to learn that such offenses are occasionally committed in the country. An average of 24.2 individuals per year were convicted during the ten year period from 1956 to 1965 for such offenses. The tendency in recent years was towards decrease. In 1962 there were 33 cases, in 1963 only 19 in 1964 there were 18 cases and in 1965 only 15 convictions for corruption and abuse of office.

The Share of the Immigrant Groups from the Different Continents
in Crime Among Jews in Israel

Characteristic for crime among JEWS in modern Israel are the extraordinarily great differences between the participation of Jews from North Africa, Asia and Europe, respectively, in the offenses committed in the country: The study of the conviction rates for the various ethnic groups shows that there existed over the years consistently the same great differences between the crime rates for the immigrant population from these continents.

TABLE III

Jewish Offenders in Israel, 1959 and 1965: Adults, Rates in 1,000 of specific population group, according to continent of origin

Year	Total	Israel born	Asia born	Africa born	Europe- America born
1959	10.005	10.185	13.580	22.607	4.812
1965	10.199	11.088	12.595	22.601	4.272

As our table shows conviction rates in 1959 were 10.005 in thousand for the total Adult Jewish population, 10.183 for the Israeli born, 13.580 for the Asia born, 22.607 for the North Africa born, and 4.812 for the Europe and America born. In 1965 the data were practically the same. 10.199 per thousand of the total Adult Jewish population, 11.088 in thousand of the Israeli born, 12.595 in thousand of the Asia born, 22.601 in thousand of the North Africa born and 4.272 in thousand of the Europe born.

The differential crime rates for the different immigrant groups which did not change and do not show any sign of amelioration of the situation, seem to convey to us a message of the greatest importance relating to still unresolved serious problems connected with the Ingathering of the Exiles, inherent in the processes of absorption and integration of the very heterogenous groups into one Israeli society. They demand further study to serve as a basis for the planning and development of appropriate social action to prevent tension and crime in the country.

S.N. Eisenstadt in his study on the Absorption of Immigrants (1954) pointed to some of the factors which may explain the great differences between the deviant behavior among European and Oriental Jews in Israel when he stated that the Oriental Jews who immigrated into country were not so much inspired by the secular zionist and other political ideas which had motivated many European immigrants. According to Eisenstadt the Orientals hoped "to be able to follow more fully and securely their own way of life" (pp. 93-94) after their immigration. For the European

adherents of political zionism and the earlier immigrants in particular, a basic principle was the ideal of Jewish labor, the desire to engage in the basic productive occupations in agriculture, industry and public works which implies a readiness for occupational change. These pioneering immigrants wanted to create a different and new society based on social justice. They wanted to lay the foundations for a totally different way of life for themselves and for later generations of the Jewish people.

For the Oriental immigrants their Aliyah generally did not imply a break with their traditional social and cultural value systems. As a consequence they were not consciously prepared for radical changes in their economical and occupational life.

(This situation was aggravated by the fact that, as is common in all Oriental societies, the Oriental Jews communities, too, were, if also in a less extreme measure, composed of a comparatively small wealthy and educated class and great masses of impoverished and uneducated. The latter, due to lack of suitable education and training, were unable to make good use of the many opportunities offered by the quick growing and expanding Israeli society and its economy. Many among these, due to their lack of Zionist motivation often resented to do the vitally necessary work in far away development areas in affore station, agriculture, road construction and other development projects. They preferred to leave such areas where they had been settled to move into sub-standard neighborhoods in the

greater urban centers. Some left well equipped homes and opportunities for constructive work which the government had placed at their disposal, to live in slum areas. Thus problems and frustrating situations and tensions were created which in many cases resulted in crime.

These developments can certainly go a long way to explain the basic difference between the crime rates for the two main immigrant groups in the population of Israel, the low rates for the Europeans and the higher rates for the Orientals. But they cannot explain the very great differences in the crime rates between the orientals themselves. Our study of the process of the Ingathering of the Exiles of the different groups of origin shows that the basic difference in the crime rates of the European on the other hand and the Orientals on the other is obviously caused by the different backgrounds of those Jews, their different histories and traditions and cultures and resulting thereof the different character of their motivation for Aliyah which was more religious for the Orientals and generally more political for the European-American groups.

The very great differences between the crime rates among the Orientals themselves, however, in addition to being in many ways influenced by the presence or absence of zionist motivation, seems to have been caused mainly by the condition under which the absorption and integration into the society of the country proceeds and the measure in which the expectations and aspirations are fulfilled in the realities of present day life in Israel.

It is very easy to explain the very low conviction rates for the European and American immigrants. In Central and Western Europe social, economic and educational standards had been high. In Eastern Europe there lived the great majority of the Jewish people, most of them deeply religious and devoted to their traditions and to their people, living in solidary, closely knit communities. The pioneering sons and daughters of these European Jews who at the turn of the century began to migrate to barren Palestine in order to build a homeland with their own hands and thus to live a fully satisfying life as human beings and as Jews were a positive selection of their communities, an idealistic elite. It is this group which provides practically all the leaders who up to this day fulfill the functions of importance and occupy the positions of influence in the country's power structure.

When after the establishment of the state of Israel those survivors of the holocaust from Europe, who decided to immigrate into Israel, arrived, they found ideal conditions for their absorption and integration into the newly emerging society. They not only came into a beleaguered country where these highly educated and skilled immigrants were wanted and urgently needed, but they also came into town and villages established and administered by their fellow countrymen who spoke their language and in many ways still lived according to their old common customs. Many found friends from their home towns many joined members of their families. It seems that in addition to the high socio-

economical and educational standards of the European immigrants also the existence of this dominating element of their European fellow countrymen within the receiving Yishuv was of primary importance for the absence of serious absorption problems and the consequently low crime rates for European Jews in Israel.

When we now try to understand the differences between the crime rates among the specific Oriental immigrant groups we make the seemingly surprising observation that the crime rates for immigrants from all Asian countries are not only much lower than those for the North African countries but that they are also very similar to each other in spite of the fact that the Asian immigrants notably those from Iraq and Yemen, respectively, come from extremely different political social, economic and cultural conditions.

Among the immigrants from Iraq we find a substantial class of well educated, wealthy leaders some of whom had taken a very active part in the political economic and cultural life in the country of their origin, and even occupied official positions of importance and influence.

The Yemenites Jews on the other hand before coming to Israel lived with very few exceptions in utmost poverty in a culturally backward country in conditions similar to serfdom. They were considered the property of the Iman, had no political or civil rights, no modern education. But the extreme difference in the background of these two immigrant groups from Asia, the Iraqis and the Yemenites, had seemingly no influence whatsoever on the extent of their participation in crime in Israel.

Crime rates for 1956 - 1957 among the Yemenites were 11.5 in thousand of this specific group of all ages and for 1958 - 1960 only 10.9 in thousand. Rates for 1956 - 1957 among the Iraqis were likewise 11.5 in thousand and for 1958 - 1960 only 11.3 in thousand of the general population of Iraqi in Israel.

The common factor operating in the two otherwise so different groups of Asian Jews from Iraq and the Yemen seems to be that during the very long period of their life in their Galuyoth they always remained deeply emerged in the lifestream of the Jewish people, that they faithfully studied and observed the religious traditions, that they always and unreservedly felt part of the Jewish people, and that, after the establishment of the state both of these communities practically in their totally 121,512 Iraqis and 45,159 Yemenites returned during the very short period between May 1948 to December 1951 to their homeland, to Israel.

The fact that practically all Iraqis and the total Yemenite Jewish communities left the countries of their birth immediately after the establishment of the State of Israel as fully intact groups with their religious and political leaders, the wealthy, and the poor the young and the old, that they came as solidary truly cohesive groups, surely bears witness to the supreme importance of their common Jewish values for their lives as individuals and as communities. Their feelings of mutual responsibility gives them a sense of security and strength and pride which sustained them through the inevitable difficulties and strains of the initial period in Israel until they could find their own place in the country.

Different from the situation relative to the European immigrants there was however practically no substantial Iraqi community in the country before the establishment of the state. So there were no fonctionnaires of Iraqi origin in the Yishuv to receive the masses who were transplanted within about two years to Israel. But the totality of the transfer of this highly developed middle eastern community which included all their trusted community leaders and rabbis, their intellectuals and the wealthy, the doctors and the bankers, the nurses and the social workers, and many who had fulfilled public and social functions on the different levels of governmental and other organizations in Iraq made it possible that the poor and the sick, and the otherwise dependent could soon turn in their own language for advice, guidance and support to their own countrymen who due to their own background had soon found positions in the hospitals and clinics, the labour exchange, the housing and the settlement departments, the social welfare bureaus and in the other agencies concerned with the absorption of immigrants. There seems to be no doubt that these developments very substantially helped to ameliorate the absorption problems among the Iraqi immigrants and thus kept crime in this group in reasonable proportions.

The Yemenites. Before the 45,000 or so Yemenite Jews constituting the totality of the Golah immigrated into Israel immediately after the establishment of the state, there had been a substantial immigration of Yemenite Jews into Palestine. Due to century long and constant oppression, and motivated by their

devout love for Zion about 18,000 of them had succeeded in escaping from the Yemen in order to immigrate into Palestine before the establishment of the state between the 1881 and 1948.

Coming from one of the most backward and underdeveloped countries of the whole world, without any modern education, these early immigrants were unprepared to take up positions of influence in the power structure of the newly emerging Jewish society. But the early groups of immigrants already had displayed certain characteristics and skills which paved the way for the smooth integration and the speedy absorption of the community in the country and its society after the state had been established.

Most of the Yemenite Jews had been the artisans and craftsmen in their country of origin. Some had worked in agriculture. Immediately after their immigration in the 1880's they had established for themselves a name as highly skilled, most reliable and competent workers. Their industry, cleanliness, modesty and reliability contributed to turn them soon into a respected and sought after element in the emerging pioneering, laboring class. There was no need for occupational change. The Yemenites were easily and eagerly absorbed into the country's society and economic system. Their life as a Jewish community had never been influenced, bent or broken by European experiences. They enjoy life in Israel as the fulfillment of their hopes and prayers. Thus, the Yemenites feel they belong to the country's society. It is obvious that these fortunate developments are the main reason for the fact that Yemenites are only to a

reasonable extent involved in Crime Israel. The similarity in crime rates among the often wealthy and well educated immigrants from Iraq and those of the Yemenites who only a few years ago left conditions of utter backwardness and poverty seems to indicate that their traditional values and in particular the cohesiveness and the solidarity of the Jewish community can go a long way to explain the comparatively low crime rates among Jews everywhere.

The North African Immigrants. The historic developments which formed the fate of the North African Jewish communities were altogether different from those of the Asian communities. When the French established their protectorates in that part of the world, they brought the Jews the promise of emancipation, equality and full possibilities to participate in the economic and social life of those countries. Many took good advantage of the opportunities offered. French became the language of every aspiring Jew, French culture was absorbed by the successful. France was experienced as a country from which support and security and wealth and the promise of continued freedom came. Most important, the French government tended not to accord autonomy rights to the Jewish communities in the North African protectorate, but preferred to give them the status of French citizens. The younger generations of the more educated Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian Jews, thus, became gradually more and more estranged from their Jewish communities and their own traditions. They very much enjoyed and took pride in being

considered French which they interpreted as being Europeans, a fact which has become the source of severe disappointments, frustrations and tensions among North African Jews who later immigrated into the Israel where they were confronted with a society formed and led by representatives of a European Jewry who had a very different background from their own.

When one after the other North African protectorates achieved sovereignty, the Jews had to pay for their loyalty to their French liberators and protectors. With the establishment of the state of Israel, their life became even more threatened than before. The time for the exodus of the Jews from North Africa had come. But due to the particular historical developments which had conditioned the life of this Jewry, the totality of their political, intellectual and economical leadership with only very singular exceptions moved to the great metropolitan centers of the France, especially to Paris. For the wealthy and educated who had been brought up in the French culture this meant, probably to some degree also due to the geographical neighborhood to France, not much more than moving within the same country from one Province to another.

Those who remained in North Africa were mostly the poor, the helpless and the uneducated who had simply been left to their fate by their leaders. Together with their elite groups, the less developed social classes had lost contact with Jewish traditions. But they had been unable to acquire or share in new modern values. As a result of these developments many among the poor North African Jewish communities had become alienated from

their own people and thus lost the moral and material supports which group solidarity can give.

The fact that during the period 1919 to 1937, only about a mere 1,000 immigrants came to Palestine from Morocco seems to be symptomatic for the absence of Zionist motivation in North African Jewry. Even after the establishment of the state of Israel when the life of Jews became very precarious and practically all Iraqi and Yemenite Jews returned to Israel only one third of this Jewry, about 45,000 immigrants from North Africa came to Israel. The majority of that community, about 88,000 came only from 1955 to 1957 when Morocco had become independent and the life of the Jews was actually threatened. But as those who immigrated were practically only the less educated, and less skilled masses, the North African immigrants were unable to provide representatives of their community even for the lower levels of the power structure of the country. It seems that in this fact we have to see the basic cause for the conditions which created the extreme overrepresentation of North African Jews in crime in Israel. After the establishment of the state the immigrants from Europe found the mainly European Yishuv to receive them. The Asians, the Iraqis and the Yemenites, in particular, came as practically intact total communities, together with their political and religious and economic leaders, who immediately after their arrival took up appropriate functions in the bureaucratic structure of Israel, and could therefore represent their fellow countrymen in the different organizations and give support to those in need. The members of these Aliyoth

thus experienced the sense of belonging to the people of Israel, the consciousness of being able to enjoy the privileges as citizens of their own sovereign homeland. But when 133,000 Moroccan Jews arrived in two immigration waves, at first during 1948-1951 and then during 1955-1957 there were practically no members of their communities in the country to receive them. There were no sufficiently educated among them to be trained in a reasonable time to represent the North African immigration in the different echelons of the country's administration and public services.

The tragedy of the North African Jews communities is, that in a time of crisis and danger to their very existence in their country of origin they were abandoned and betrayed by their leaders who preferred to go to Paris instead of to Jerusalem.

The particularly severe frustrations and bitterness often generated among the North African Jews in the process of their Aliyah and their absorption, intensified by the fact that they are not suitably represented in the administrating and governing bodies of the country, are obviously at the root of the proportionally higher crime rates for this group.

This insight achieved through criminological scientific inquiry points to one of the problems of the emerging society in Israel. It calls for action primarily in the field of education to produce potential leaders in this community and thus foster and develop an elite among them which will eventually represent this community in the leadership of the country in general, generate in them feelings of self respect and of pride

and the sense of truly belonging to the Israeli society and thus create the pre-conditions for their acceptance and their defence, of the moral values and standards which are cherished by the Israeli society in general.

Juvenile Delinquency Before The Establishment of the State

No reliable separate crime statistics relating to Jewish juveniles in the Golah are available. But in the criminological literature, we find generally statements to the effect that in the countries of the Diaspora there was only little juvenile delinquency among Jews. The authors explained this by the particular cohesiveness and warmth of the traditional Jewish family life in the countries of their dispersion, the particular concern of Jewish parents for their children and the efforts they make to give their children a good education.

Also, in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel, juvenile delinquency was very low. As no relevant and detailed population statistics were published by the Mandatory Government, it is impossible to establish conviction rates for this group.

The few available figures merely show that during the years 1932-1943, when the Jewish population of all age groups in the country grew from about 175,000 to about 500,000, the number of juvenile offenders increased from 191 per year (average for 1932 to 1937) to 322.5 per year (average for 1938 to 1943). Unsatisfactory as these absolute figures may be for our purpose, they clearly indicate that in the Yishuv delinquency rates were very moderate for the young.

Among non-Jews the situation appears to have been similar during 1932-1937, when the differences in the demographic data and developments are taken into consideration. But, during a later period from 1938 to 1943, Arab juvenile delinquency increased by almost 100% while the non-Jewish general population grew only by less than 30%, which may again be explained by the impact of the War on the Arab population and the opportunities for crime in and around military camps by which also many among the young Arabs were attracted.

After the establishment of the State, however, the incidence of juvenile delinquency among Jews started to increase. In 1951, the conviction rates of the appropriate age groups (9 to 16 for boys, 9 to 18 for girls) were 4.5 per 1000 for this specific group. At that time, the share of juvenile delinquency in all crimes committed in Israel was 12.1%; in 1965, conviction rates for juveniles had reached through continuous gradual increase 9.8 per 1000 of a specific population. Juvenile delinquency now represented 23.8% of all crimes committed by Jews in Israel.

Closer study of the juvenile delinquency figures shows that the constant upward movement of these crime rates was caused by the ever-growing participation of Jews of oriental origin in juvenile crime. Of 4,453 Jewish young offenders dealt with by the authorities in 1965, only 430 were of European origin, which includes those born in Europe or born to European parents in Israel. In that year, the conviction rates for all offenses committed by juvenile offenders born in Israel were 7.4 per 1000. The conviction rates for the Asian-born were 11.9 per

1000, for the North African-born 23.0 per 1000, and for the European--or American-born 3.6 per 1000. These figures show that differences in the conviction rates between the ethnic groups were even somewhat more extreme for the young than for the adult offenders.

One of the reasons for these alarming developments has probably to be seen in the transition of these youths from one life style to another. In modern Israel, the Oriental family went through a severe crisis after immigration. The authority and functions of the family and particularly those of the previously authoritative father were substantially reduced. Living in a modern state with a generally European culture, many sons and daughters of Oriental families no longer feel the binding authority of their family and their traditional values. But, at the same time, they do not yet feel the security which comes from belonging to the new society in which they live. Many remain without a compelling system of values and without effective social control, and often live in a cultural and social vacuum. Most threw off the burden of religion and other traditions without at the same time achieving the educational and cultural standards of their peers of European origin. This creates deep and painful feelings of frustrations and tensions which find expression in the comparatively high crime rates among Jewish youth.

It is characteristic for juvenile delinquency among Jews in Israel that almost exclusively property offenses are committed. All the other types of offenses constitute only a small fraction of juvenile delinquency in Israel.

Criminality figures for Arab young offenders about twice those for Jews, and the forms of their delinquency were different from those of Jewish juveniles. In 1961, for instance, when 85.7% of all young Jewish offenders committed property offenses, only 46.7% among the Arab juveniles were found guilty of this type of crime. The other offenses were mainly offenses against the person, including acts of aggression resulting in physical injury. Frequently committed were also trespassing on agricultural lands, and illegal border crossing. The particular form of the delinquencies committed by Arab juveniles are thus caused partly by the traditional behaviour patterns characteristic of rural societies in that part of the world, and partly by the tensions and conflicts arising out of the present-day political situation in Israel and its neighbouring countries.

Crime Among Females

In the countries of the Golah, authors had always stressed the fact that crime among Jewish females has been very rare. Some even claimed that the comparatively low crime rates for Jews in the Diaspora in general stems from the fact that crime was practically unknown among Jewish women, while among other populations, women always had some more substantial share in the crime committed in a country. Here, again the high values placed on Jewish family life and the honored role and position of the mother, and the particular concern for the daughter in the traditional Jewish family are considered important factors.

In Israel, the share of Jewish females has only slightly increased. In 1951, females represented 8.5% in all crimes committed by Jews. In 1965 it had risen to 13.8% in all crimes committed. In 1951, crime rates for Jewish females were 1.3 per 1000; in 1965, the rates were 2.9 per 1000.

It is very interesting to note that, similar to the situation relative to males, the offenses committed by Jewish women were mainly offenses against public order and lawful authority, against the person and against property. These three types were represented with nearly equal figures. Among the females the juveniles committed mainly property offenses. Offenses against morality are rarely committed. In 1961 a census year, 10 adult females and two juveniles were convicted for offenses against morality.

Our own study on Jewish offenders received in prisons since the establishing of the State also show that most were sentenced for common theft. In the second place come the disturbances of public order and common assault, including the assault on police officers. These again seem to be reflections of absorption problems in immigrant families who have not been able to find their place in the country and express their dissatisfaction in aggressive deviant behavior mostly in governmental or other institutions dealing with public welfare and public health problems. Crime rates for non-Jewish females are even somewhat lower than for Jewesses.

This is obviously caused by the traditional cultural patterns of the Arab village where life of women is still today generally protected and sheltered and very much confined to the family home. Offenses committed by non-Jewish females are mostly acts of assault and the breach of the peace in public places. This can be explained by the fact that Arab women often actively participate in feuds between clans in villages. Offenses against morality are very rare among Arab women in Israel.

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