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30 July 1970

102 Khiaban Ghaani  
Tel: 43639  
Tehran

Mr. Morris Romboro  
American Joint Distribution Committee  
Teheran, Iran

Dear Mr. Romboro:

Hi! Sorry to have missed you when you were in Yazd and again this time in Teheran. Things have been proceeding slowly but I think I am gradually moving towards getting my work into high gear.

In Yazd I've been talking to Mr. Rombod and some of his teachers. I also visited the program in Shiraz and talked to Mr. Khavari. In going through the Shiraz clinic (and as a result of having talked to a geneticist at Pahlavi--a Hopkins grad.--who's interested in doing something with the Yazd Zoroastrian population), it occurred to me that the family record files of the clinic might provide a nucleus of a statistical picture of the Jewish population, and would be especially useful if parallel data could be obtained for Yazd (the school clinic) and Ispahan, and maybe also Kirman and Teheran. Mr. Khavari seemed willing to help if I could get permission from you or the head of the medical program to use the files. He did seem doubtful that they would contain much data of sociological value, but inasmuch as there are social workers acquainted with these families and I am also interested in medical data, something might be put together without terribly much trouble.

Miss Garson whom I saw in your absence suggested I detail exactly what I wanted and then you could see what might be done.

First of all, I am not aware of what reports, etc. are extant (whether confidential or not--i.e., I am aware of some of your public relations concerns about how information coming from you might be used). I have heard of a report done by an English doctor on the Shiraz community some 8-12 years ago. If that is available, I would certainly like to see it, and any other such reports. Miss Garson mentioned a survey being conducted currently for Teheran in connection with a fund-raising effort. Any other accounts that might be of interest as historical sources, memoirs and reports of social workers, etc. would be valuable.

But to return to the matter of the medical files and what might be done to build a statistical file on their basis, minimum socio-

information would be for each household;  
member of household /relation to household head/Sex/Age/Occupation


1  
2  
3

Further data of prime interest would be; education; age at marriage; relation if any to spouse; occupation of father; previous own or family residence and occupation. Medical statistics of interest are basically of two kinds: (1) most importantly, hereditary or genetic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, mental disease); (2) diseases specific to the Jewish populations (a subcategory of #1)1 Notes on prevention and combating communicable and sanitation-related disease (tracoma, malnutrition, cholera, typhoid, solak, meningitis, infant mortality, etc.) are of interest but secondary to the above. However, demographic data (birth rate, number of pregnancies per woman, number of live births per woman, death rate), esp. if possible over time, would be of more importance.

What I am asking for is (a) simple permission to look at the files (somebody like a social worker would have to help me read them, since handwritten Farsi is still a closed book to me), and (b) knowledge of and access to whatever useful reports etc. there might be. Whatever further help your staff might give in compiling such information would of course be deeply appreciated. (Also, by the way, if you know of a student with fairly good English who could do a rough translation of Habib Levy's 3 volume history of the Jews in Persia, I would be interested in hiring him subject to my financial limitations. Or might Joint even be interested in sponsoring a professional translation as a contribution to local cultural pride?)

Thanks very much. My address is either via the American Institute or in Yazd, Box 82. Hope to see you the next time I am in Teheran.

Sincerely yours,



Michael M.J. Fischer