

Alliance Israélite Universelle



The **Alliance Israélite Universelle** is a Paris – based international Jewish organization.

The Alliance was founded in 1860 by the French statesman Adolphe Crémieux to safeguard the human rights of Jews around the world. The organization promotes the ideals of Jewish self-defense and self-

sufficiency through education and professional development. It is noted for establishing French-language schools for Jewish children throughout the Mediterranean, Iran and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th century.

The motto of the organization is the Jewish rabbinic injunction “All Jews are responsible for one another”.

The Alliance's goals were to work everywhere for the emancipation and moral uplifting of the Jews. To effectively support the Jews in the countries where they suffered from anti-Semitism, and to encourage education and publishing.

Gradually, the organization began to develop as a global organization. In the development of its educational activity, it established networking of schools in the Mediterranean basin where thousands of Jewish children attended.

From 1865 onwards, its schools began operating in ten Jewish communities in Greece.

The curriculum of its schools was an initiative for Community leaders as well as for parents' committees on the composition of



subjects, with modern methods by experienced teachers in a way that the teaching of Hebrew and the history of Judaism reaches its peak level.

In Rhodes the education of boys was given over to private teachers, usually employed by a group of families. In 1882, Moses Franco, who also was the French vice consul, opened the modern Progress school where

Hebrew, Turkish, and French were taught, but it closed after five years due to fierce objection from the local rabbis. Similar attempts had the same fate.

In 1864 a new “Talmud Torah” school was built with funds donated by Baron Jacob James Rothschild, the French financier. It was called “Bet Yakov” the House of Jacob named after its donor.

In the early 1900s the school became affiliated with the Alliance Israélite Universelle.



Forty years later his son, Baron Edmond Rothschild visited Rhodes with his wife. Seeing the plight of the community, they donated 15000 francs for the construction of an Alliance school in Rhodes. The school was completed at the end of 1904. Different from previous schools in Rhodes, the school was attended not only by boys but girls as well.

Because of their superior methods of instruction, the Alliance school attracted not only Jewish children but also some non-Jewish students,

In the Alliance schools the teaching was in French. The aim was to free the children from the prison of their home language (Judeo-Spanish), the isolation in which they lived and in bringing the community’s youth to the academic standards of Western Europe.

In June 1917 the Italians decreed that all schools in Rhodes – Turkish, Greek and Jewish- would henceforth be under the control of an Italian inspector general.

The turning point in the Italianization of Rhodes followed the Second Treaty of Lausanne 1923-1924. The directors of the Alliance schools were dismissed. The name of the Jewish schools was changed to “Scuole Israelitiche Italiane”.

