

## ▲ Paris

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butchery.

Like the Jews from Algeria and Morocco, Tunisian Jews lived side by side with Arabs for centuries, sharing common food, language and music. Following the dissolution of the French colonial empire in the 1950s and 1960s, North African Jews and Muslims flocked to the urban hills of northern Paris. Many Tunisian Jews settled in Belleville, replacing an older Polish Jewish community.

On a typical Sunday on the grimy side streets off the Boulevard de Belleville, old men drink mint tea and argue in Arabic outside cafes adorned with photos of the late Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, while restaurants feature live bands with Arab musicians playing for enthusiastic Jewish dancers.

“The older Jews feel at home in Belleville because it reminds them of Tunisia, where Jews and Arabs interacted daily,” says Laurent Allouche, director of a Jewish

funeral home. “But northeast Paris is the only place where this exists.”

Belleville has not always been peaceful. Significant clashes between Tunisian Jews and Arabs broke out here following the 1967 Six-Day War, and again in 1973, during the Yom Kippur War.

Last summer, tensions ran high in the district neighboring Belleville when street fights between youth gangs culminated in the savage beating of a 17-year-old Jew, Rudy Haddad. And many

French Jews remain shaken by the kidnapping, torture and murder of a 23-year-old Jew, Ilan Halimi, in 2006.

This summer, 14 of the 27 gang members responsible for Halimi’s death were convicted of abetting his murder.

Some Jews, however, say Halimi’s death had less to do with anti-Semitism than gang and class warfare.

About half a mile uphill, in the Menilmontant district, Kamel Amriou says more needs to be

done to make sure Jews and Muslims in Paris get along. Born in Paris to Algerian Muslims, he grew up in a building with plenty of Jewish North Africans.

“My mother would slap me if I refused to help the Atlan family during Shabbat,” he recalls.

Amriou now runs a successful printing business – with a Jewish partner – and has political aspirations. He wants to launch a political party that reflects the multicultural character of northern Paris.

While France officialdom holds that successful integration can take place only if minorities renounce their ethnic factionalism, pejoratively known as *communautarisme*, Amriou thinks the U.S. model would work better.

“America offers the most lasting model of integration in that communities keep their customs while respecting the other,” Amriou says. “I want to create a movement inspired by my

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## ▲ ODYSSEY

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And for the first time, the BJE is partnering with the Rothenberg Center for Family Life, a part of Jewish Family Service, to offer a series of special classes led by Sharon Simon, the Center Coordinator. Sharon will be joined by Michele Musto, Karen Schwab and Gayle Gross. Among other things the Rothenberg Center helps parents and families deal with young children, teens and that often challenging role of being part of the ‘sandwich generation.’

Interested in the folk music of many lands? Join Cantors Larisa Averbakh, Ralph Goren, Alan Smolen and Deborah Stern as they enlighten and entertain.

If you have not yet received a brochure about Odyssey 2009, or you wish to sign up for the program, call the BJE at 822-1854. Registration is \$15/person with a special rate for seniors of \$12 up until Oct. 21. After that date and at the door all registration is \$18.

The evening will begin at the JCC with a wine and cheese reception (dietary laws observed) at 6:15 p.m. and classes begin promptly at 7 p.m.