

Ladies Committee.

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Pression.

G R E E C E

Economic and Moral Situation.

Eighty-seven percent of the Jewish population in Greece perished during the war; there remain now only some 8.500 persons who returned from concentration camps or from the mountains where they shared several years the heroic fight of the Greek resistant movement.

The largest Jewish community in Greece was in Saloniki; although 68.000 strong before the war, it has today only 1.500 members. The many small provincial communities have practically ceased to exist. The few Jews who returned there found neither family nor friends alive, and could in most cases not retrieve their homes and possessions. Alone amidst a hostile population, they have left the place where they were born and where their ancestors had lived for centuries, to go to large places like Saloniki and Athens. Accordingly, the Jewish population of Athens has increased to 4.500 compared with 1.500 before the war. It is now divided into two groups:

- 1) The community of "old Greek" Jews, as they call themselves, i. e. Jews born in Athens or its surroundings. They speak only Greek and are almost completely assimilated. They are mostly artisans or employees.
- 2) Jews outside the community. They are the majority, and come from Saloniki or those parts of Greece which were under Turkish rule. These Jews have as a rule been educated in schools of the Alliance Israélite, speak fluently French and have more versatile mentality. In their ranks the few intellectual and representatives of independent professions may be found.

The Greek ORT

The "old Greek" Jews look askance at the "intruders from Saloniki" and relations between the two groups are rather strained, particularly with regards to communal affairs. Only latterly this internal strife for supremacy was ended by the creation of a coalition committee now at the head of the community. This fight had also certain repercussions upon the Committee of the Greek ORT which was founded in January 1948 on the request of some prominent personalities.

The Committee of the Greek ORT was officially recognized on August 8, 1948. It consists of the following prominent personalities; after reorganization  
President: Mr. Moïssis (former advocate, future Consul General of Israel)  
Secretary General: Mr. Semah (Secretary General of the Council of Jewish Communities in Greece)

President of the Administrative Council: Mr. Nadjari (industrialist)  
President of the Technical Council: Mr. David (engineer, former electrification director in Greece, member of the Marshall Plan Commission)  
Director of the ORT School: Engineer Noah (Secretary General of the Jewish Community of Athens)

Members: Messrs. Alhanati, Juridical Counsellor of the Committee, S. Levy, Gani, Dr. Negrin, Constantinos (postal engineer) I. Levy, Nehame.

All these persons are actively participating in the establishment of the school.

Understanding this situation, the management of the AJEC in Greece, promised to support the pupils in its former courses and to grant new scholarships.

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### Premises.

One of the most difficult problems was finding appropriate school premises. After a long search we found an isolated building a few minutes' bus drive from the centre of Athens on the Piraeus route and at 15 bus minutes' distance from the latter. It is an unused factory building, and possesses 3 communicating halls each 7 meters wide and 12 meters long, well-lit, with high ceilings, and power current fittings ( a rare thing in Athens), a courtyard and a play-ground. Some hundred pupils can be installed on those premises.

### First measures of the Greek ORT

Before the constitution of the Greek ORT, the management of the AJDC in Greece had to take the most urgent steps towards a vocational re-adaption of adults and the professional training of youth, which proved a heavy drag on its resources. With the aid of some willing persons, the AJDC set up a lingerie course for 25 pupils and an accelerated cutting course for 60 pupils. In addition, 10 girls were situated in a private school for cutting.

Quite recently, a course in spot welding was established for 10 pupils. Despite of the good will of the management and the zeal of the pupils, this course was quite naturally, an amateurs' undertaking in some respects: the training did not follow a settled program but was full of improvisations. Neither management nor instructors knew their aim or their way.

Despite all these drawbacks, the desire to learn and the exceptional ability of Greek Jews for manual work have worked wonders, and results were excellent. This is one more reason why we feel sure of the success of our school.

After detailed studies of the youngsters' tendencies, and the possibilities of Greek and Israeli industry (since the number of Greek emigrants to Israel is very high), the following training units have been set up:  
Cutting and dressmaking for girls,  
Machine shop work for boys,  
Evening classes in machine drawing.

The former AJDC courses for electrical and spot welding, cutting and lingerie were taken over by ORT. Teaching plans were elaborated by the Geneva Office, and machines and workshop tools were ordered. The machine shop training will be succeeded by a second year of electrical training, if the pupils standard is sufficiently high. At the beginning, the courses and workshops had 120 pupils.

### Personnel.

A young energetic and experienced engineer, Mr. Noah, was appointed director of the school. Having always been fond of social work, he had already set up spot welding courses for the AJDC. He has all qualities to make a good director. An excellent instructor for spot welding is about to be engaged. It is planned to engage also good instructors for machine shop work and dressmaking.

### Recruitment of Pupils and Scholarships.

An immense obstacle for the frequentation of our future schools is the children's need to work for their living. Understanding this situation, the management of the AJDC in Greece, promised to support the pupils in its former courses and to grant new scholarships.