

25 Years ORT in Israel—How it all Began

by Adam Penn

When Mt. Scopus, the traditional site of Hebrew University, became inaccessible to Israel because the Jordanians overran East Jerusalem in the course of Israel's War for Independence in 1948, a new campus was built at Ramat Aviv, on a Judean hill to the west.

The rugged landscape, topped by the slipper-shaped plateau that holds the structures, looks toward Mt. Herzl on one side and toward the spectacular Knesset buildings

on the other. The vista is appropriate to the contemplative precincts of academe.

The University is reached by the two forks of Jaffa Road, and last October 25th the access road had become a parking lot of bumper to bumper buses. The quiet serenity that normally prevails was shattered by a seemingly endless multitude of boisterous adolescents.

Other Side of the Hill

By contrast with this heady spectacle, the delegates had gathered the previous day on the opposite side of the University hill to inspect the cemented terraces on which is being constructed the ORT School of Engineering, a venture in technical education that contains great hopes for a breakthrough in developing the kind of science-based skilled work force Israel will need a decade or two from now.

Although the athletes and their cheering throngs of last October were but a fragment of the panoramic present-day span of ORT in Israel, and although the building activity on the University slope is a pointer to the future, each in its own way is part of the summing up of what ORT has been doing in Israel these last 25 years.

(continued on Page 3)

Glimpses of the 16,000 ORT students who piled into the Hebrew University Stadium last October.



Wall-to-Wall Youth

It was the last day of the Women's American ORT Conference, held in Jerusalem for the first time, and for this occasion students of the ORT schools had come to participate in Sports Day festivities.

They came in convoys of buses, hundreds of them, from as far as Haifa and Nazareth in the north, to Elat and Beersheba in the south, and more than a score of cities and towns between.

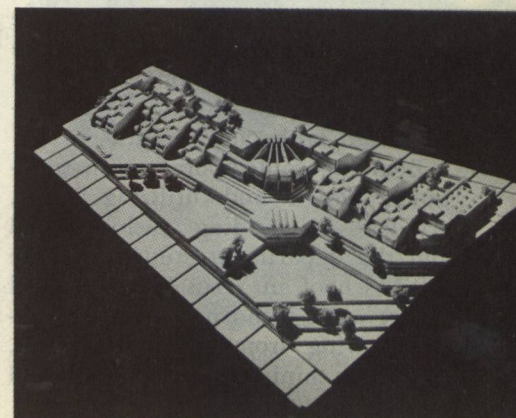
There were over 16,000 youngsters, and they poured into the University's stadium behind their respective school colors, teams heading each procession like gladiators, barely held in check by their accompanying teachers.

Though they spread across the stadium to make it seem a wall-to-wall array of boys and girls, they constituted but a sampling of the ORT student body of almost 50,000.

They came from the vocational high schools, which constitute but one of ORT's divisions. Others cover just about every kind of vocational and technical education extant—from schools to help the handicapped learn to earn, apprenticeship centers, teacher training institutes, technical colleges, adult skill upgrading and technical ulpanim for Russian immigrants who arrived just within the last year, to Israel's technical text publishing outlet in Hebrew, and Israel's largest program of correspondence courses for mechanics, homeowners and home workers.

Additions

All these are in addition to the high schools from which the youngsters came together that day last October at Hebrew University.



Architects depiction of the ORT School of Engineering now under construction at the Hebrew University campus.

On the Mount of Olives



At New York's City Hall inauguration of Chanukah with the menorah made by the students at the Ort School in Jerusalem. Dr. Gilbert Klaperman, past President of the New York Board of Rabbis and Chairman of the National Rabbinic ORT Committee, affixing the lighted candle. He is flanked (right) by Rabbi Israel Mowshowitz, of the Hillcrest Jewish Center; and (left) by Richard Lewisohn, Assistant to the Mayor, and Paul Bernick, Executive Director of American ORT Federation.

From Jerusalem—With Love

When Teddy Kollek, Mayor of Jerusalem, visited Mayor John V. Lindsay, Mayor of New York, in December, he brought an unusual gift. On behalf of the people of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek presented to Mayor Lindsay a menorah made by the students at the ORT Technical Center on the Street of the Prophets in the heart of Jerusalem, this menorah to be used in the New York's celebration of Chanukah.

Symbolic Exchange

It was a gift that Mayor Lindsay described as "symbolic of the present day Jerusalem as a city of light because it is a shining example that people of very different faiths and backgrounds can live in peace and harmony given to a city with the largest Jewish population of any, with its own tradition of welcome to people of all faiths and origins."

Blending contemporary with traditional design and utilizing lathes, grinders and welding machines, tool and die department students at the ORT school in Jerusalem produced an art work of burnished bronze circles flowing from the stylized ark, capped by thinly tapered and polished

candle holders, for all the world like blaring trumpets, making it a dramatic religious artifact. Its base carries the emblem of the City of Jerusalem.

Traditional

When both Mayors appeared on television with the menorah, Mr. Lindsay accepted it with "honor and pride," and announced that it would henceforth be New York's annual Chanukah menorah.

The ceremony of lighting the first candle took place in the City Hall rotunda in the presence of city officials, rabbinical and ORT representatives.

"You will be gratified," wrote Mayor Lindsay to the school, "to know that it was used in the traditional candle lighting ceremony at City Hall this past Chanukah, and that it will be a source of joy to have it used at Chanukah ceremonies in the future."

The original of Mayor Lindsay's letter and a photograph of the City Hall ceremony was given to Shlomo Shoham, ORT teacher, at the American ORT conference, to take back as a momento to the students in Jerusalem.

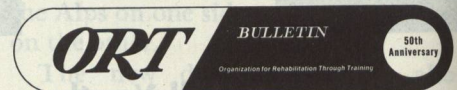
An ORT vocational department was opened at the A-Tur Junior High School in East Jerusalem when the school year began this September 1st. The school, located on the Mount of Olives, is for Arab boys and is the third East Jerusalem Junior High School to have an ORT department.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremonies, the school's principal, Muhammed Dkeidek, said: "Our society has suffered from an overemphasis on purely academic education. This has caused unemployment and dislocation, particularly for students just out of school and looking for work but untrained in any skill. . .

Good Future

"Today, we see in this school a fortunate development, in which vocational and academic education can now be provided side by side. We are profoundly thankful to all present who have contributed to the introduction of vocational education into Arab schools of this city. . ."

The A-Tur school is the latest element in a growing network of vocational education services for Arab citizens of Israel, in such ORT schools as those in Nazareth and Abu Ghosh. Arab youth in Nathanya, Jaffa, Haifa and other places attend the regular ORT schools there.



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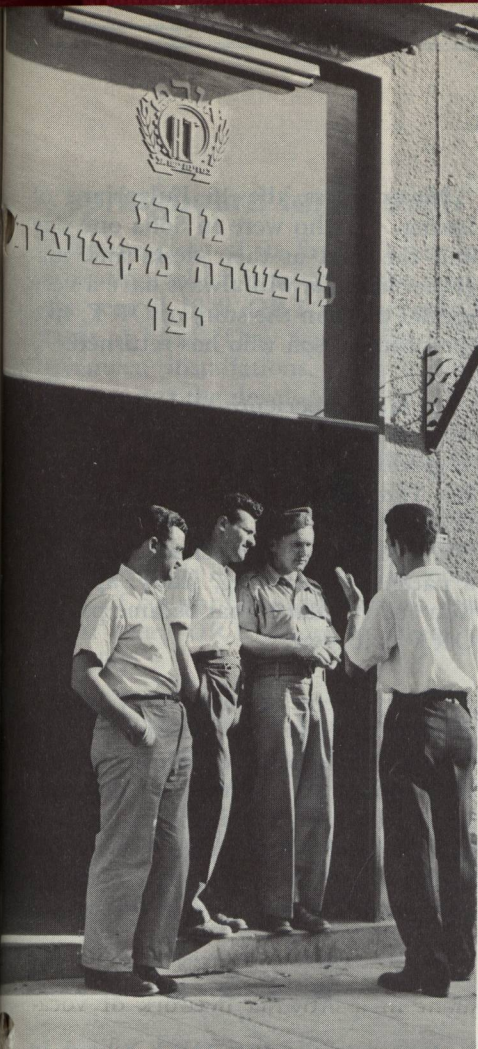
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Demobilized soldiers who were its first students, at the entrance to the first school in Israel in Jaffa.

25 Years...

The road that starts at Jaffa Gate in the Walls of Old Jerusalem, and served as the mainline that carried youths and delegates to the events at the University last October, extends across the waist of Israel to the Mediterranean city of Jaffa. It stretches like a direction sign from the "now" to the point of origin.

For it was in a building located in the alleyways of Jaffa where the first ORT school was founded, and where the first classes were held on December 14, 1948.

As in the birth of many endeavors, the origins of ORT Israel are numerous, depending on the vantage point from which one looks. But there is only one genesis. ORT Israel was an outgrowth and extension to Israel of ORT as an international Jewish service agency.

When the Jaffa school was opened in 1948, ORT had a history of 68 years, during which it had given aid to over 500,000 Jews in every part of Europe, had set up programs in all the havens of the world where Jews had escaped from the holocaust, and was at that moment still deeply involved in the salvage operations in the DP camps of Germany, Austria and Italy.

ORT brought its history and experience and many of the people who had participated in it, to the task of creating ORT Israel.

The Big Decision

If there is a single charter document to this enterprise, it is in the form of a resolution adopted by the World ORT Union Congress, held in Paris, August 17-20, 1946. It was the first formal step toward putting together the pieces of an organization which had been decimated by the holocaust.

True to the ORT tradition however, ambitious plans were projected that would take ORT into completely new areas of the Jewish world outside of Europe. Among them were the recently "re-discovered" Jews of North Africa and Iran.

With regard to the *Yishuv*, a resolution carried the title: "Work for and



Welding workshop at the ORT Training Center for Ex-Servicemen in Jaffa in 1949.

in Palestine." Its language visualized such activities as an extension of ORT's work in Europe.

It pointed out that, "ORT everywhere has helped young people going to Palestine to acquire a trade. ORT has met the requests of *aliyah* organizations without regard to their ideological trends, and has admitted their members into existing schools or has established programs for that purpose.

"As regards work in Palestine itself, . . . the Conference recommends study on the spot of the conditions and manner in which it might be necessary and possible to open in Palestine a central ORT institution."

Early Steps

This language of the summer of '46 reveals the concerns and the uncertainties of the time. Palestine was a future project. Nevertheless, 80,000 who had been trained in programs for DPs and refugees scattered around Europe, eventually took their skills to Israel, armed with their ORT diplomas, and became a major segment of the skilled work-force of the new state.

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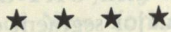


Bulgarian youth transplanted to the Jaffa school.

25 Years...

The first step to establish an ORT physical presence for the *Yishuv*, took place in the spring of '48, a few months prior to declaration of Statehood. The ORT Tool Supply Corp., established in the Twenties to provide tools and machines to Jewish artisans fighting for economic survival in the Cold Pogrom then raging throughout Eastern Europe, set up at 52 Nachlat Benjamin Street in Tel Aviv. Early in May when the *Yishuv* was in active armed struggle for its existence, the first shipment of 100 Singer sewing machines arrived from international ORT headquarters in neutral Geneva.

Dr. Aron Syngalowski, a founder of the World ORT Union in 1921 and an architect of its post-World War II reconstruction, arrived in Tel Aviv the first week of November to begin implementation of what had until then been merely resolution and plan. In his four month's stay, Dr. Syngalowski laid the groundwork upon which ORT Israel was to rise.



When the guns stopped firing and the War of Independence was over, among the manifold difficulties facing the new Israel was what to do with its demobilized soldiers and war wounded. The Ministry of Defense asked ORT to begin a program of vocational rehabilitation for them, and for this purpose made available a structure in the heart of old Jaffa.

It was not a particularly generous gift. Jaffa's Arab population having fled, the city was to all intents a ghost town. The Salti House, located at 8 Apak Street, had been a crumbling three-story Arab factory, not much of a prize even before the war. It was in the line of fire during the battles for Jaffa, and when ORT took over it was, according to an eye witness report by its first Director, Zvi Rivlin, "half demolished by shelling."

The First School

It was as if the Ministry had challenged ORT to rehabilitate the building and its soldiers simultaneously.

"In those days," recalls Rivlin, "we were always tearing something down and putting something up. . . . Often enough, pupils had to watch out for falling debris. Nor was the study material situation particularly satisfactory. Instructors and students would go off to scrounge in the ruins of Jaffa for old iron, strings of wire or wood boards, and adapt them to study usage. Yet we never heard any complaints about lack of material or technical deficiencies."

The students were assigned to the school, which carried the legend *Mer-kaz ORT* (ORT Center) under which was the inscription "*The ORT Training Center for ex-Servicemen.*"

These were graduates of the hard school of war, and they proved an exceptional group. Most were young men with one or another sort of war wound. The courses of study included radio communications and repair, typewriter maintenance, electrical installation and toolmaking. They took to it all with a will. Many of them volunteered for construction work on the school building.

The First Year

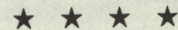
In early Spring, 1949, 46 students arrived with their instructors from the ORT school in Sofia, Bulgaria. The handwriting on the wall as to the possibility of Jewish survival in Bulgaria was writ large at that time, and a wave of exodus was sweeping the community.

ORT pledged to parents that their youth would be able to continue their schooling in Israel. These first were followed by later waves of youth and adults from all over Europe, east and west.

Nevertheless, the 46 Bulgarians of Spring '49, who were in Sofia one day and the next at their desks and machines in Jaffa, will always have a very special place in the story of ORT, like the prodigal son who has returned.

In fact, experience with this group who, augmented by the first admissions of graduates from Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Bat Yam primary schools, formed the first classes to take the full four year ORT vocational high school course, set a pattern of teaching, study, application and standards that became part of ORT as it grew.

"They were an absolutely model group," recalls Zvi Rivlin. "They served as a kind of experimental human laboratory. Neither we nor they had previous experience to go by. Which is why they helped us fix the initial shape of educational methods and vocational guidance in this school of ours."



Jaffa was the first ORT school in Israel. It was quickly joined by others. Before Syngalowski left Israel in April, 1949, initial courses which served as the nuclei for schools, were sprouting in Ben Shemen in cooperation with Youth Aliyah, as well as in Jerusalem and Pardess Hana.

By the end of the school year in June '49, there were schools for girls in Tel Aviv founded in cooperation with Mizrahi and later converted into a teacher's seminary, in addition to schools in Kfar Abraham, established with the local yeshiva and at Kfar Ganim.



Springboard for Growth

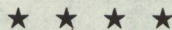
By the close of its first full year of operation, which is to say in the calendar year of 1949, ORT had an enrollment of 1,534. They were scattered in seventeen installations. This became the core for the development of ORT Israel. By that time the Jaffa school could no longer accommodate its students in its rehabilitated ruins, and sections of the vocational high school were moved to pavillions at the Levant Fair Grounds in Tel Aviv. The problems of constant growth were to confront every ORT school in Israel to this day.

Jaffa was to be the nursery for many schools in and around Tel Aviv, not the least of which is the Syngalowski ORT Center on Derech Hatayassim, the largest and most advanced technical school of its kind in the Middle East.



Early in 1950, Jacob Oleiski was appointed Director of ORT Israel, and with this began a pace of breathtaking growth.

In an atmosphere where party and ideological labels were dominant, ORT alone served no idea but vocational and technical education. This was part of the magnetism that attracted every kind of organization, Kibbutz, union, manufacturers' group, township and municipality to it—that and ORT's reputation for single-minded, single-purpose competence.



One of the first ORT schools in Israel, founded in 1949, and still going strong, at the Yeshiva Torak u' Mlacha in Kfar Avraham.

One other element had to be added to these earliest steps—official status and support—the essential *sine qua non* without which ORT could not have become, as it has, Israel's basic resource for skilled manpower to man its economic development.

This was accomplished in Spring 1950. The Government, which was formed on May 14, 1948, had many functions, but it was not until a year passed that a Ministry of Education was created.

In the Spring of 1950, an ORT delegation met with the recently appointed Minister of Education, Zalman Shazar, now Israel's President. Their discussions resulted in a declaration of policy that had far reaching implications for the future:

Official Status

"I am glad to inform you that, on *my own initiative* (italics in the original) we now propose to incorporate the ORT schools in the network of officially recognized institutions, and as a sign of our recognition, to grant them Government subsidies, although these have a more symbolic value than a monetary one. This straightens out the Medinah's (Government's) line with regard to ORT."

And so it did, as was borne out a short time later by Prime Minister Ben Gurion, who gave ORT his blessings, put his stamp of approval on its plans for the future, cleared some of the obstacles out of its path and placed his considerable prestige behind ORT.

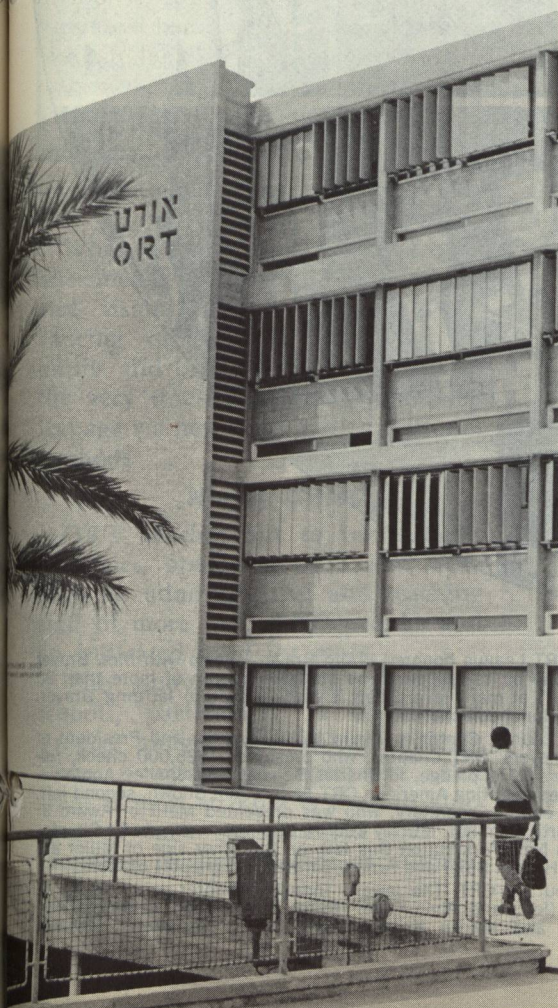


Such were the earliest chapters of a saga that has brought ORT to its present position in the year which marks its 25th anniversary in Israel on the 25th anniversary of the state.

ORT in Israel today has a student body of about 50,000. The ORT educational system comprises 84 schools of every kind and size, plus service programs that function outside of schools. Its programs are located in 45 cities, towns, hamlets, farm settlements, a map of which would cover the entire face of Israel. This network graduates 12,000 technically equipped people into Israel's society and economy annually, and that number will grow.

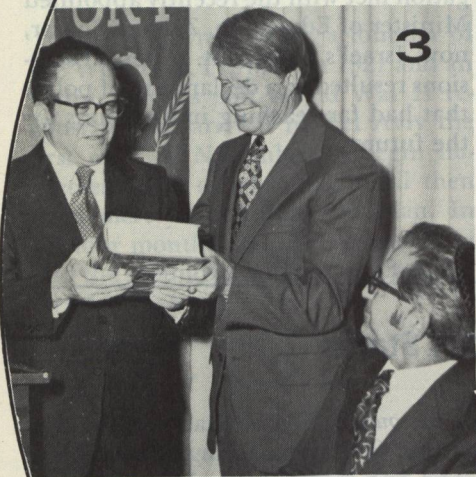
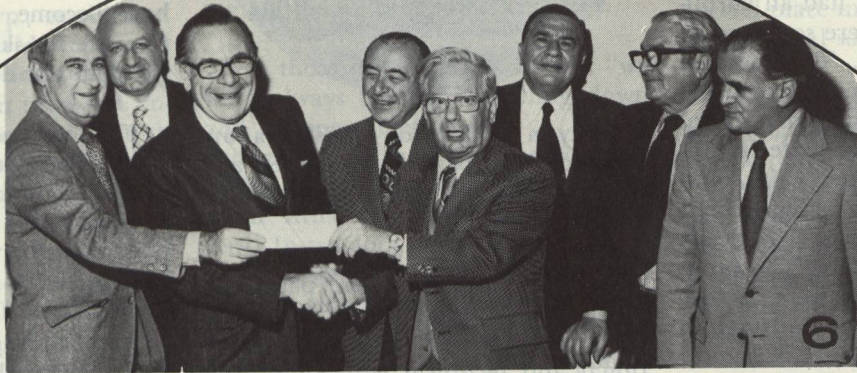
ORT is today the nation's crucible for the creation of a large segment of those who will insure its living standards and its capacity to progress and defend itself.

This is the long road that began with a resolution adopted in Paris and the first school in Jaffa.



A SEASON OF HONORS

Fall '72 witnessed the largest number of organizational events of recent times, and they were attended by a record number of people. It was a season of testimonials and the men so honored brought lustre and stature to ORT in their communities, professions and trades. Photos on this page are but a sampling. Space would not permit the coverage deserved.



1. New York Plumbing Industry Chapter honored Eric Roman (left) and Jack Korman (right). Dinner Chairman Morris Olshina made the presentation.
2. Bill Ackerman was honored by Charleston Men's ORT, over which he presides, with the biggest outpouring of people and scholarships of recent memory in this cradle for the beginnings of Men's ORT in the South.
3. Three principal figures at the Southern Men's ORT Conference in Atlanta. Center is Gov. Jimmy Carter, who addressed the luncheon session of the all-day affair, receiving a silver-bound Jerusalem Bible from Dr. Harry H. Epstein, who founded Atlanta Men's ORT, and Gerald Cohen, newly installed chapter President.
4. Ohio Supreme Court Justice Leonard J. Stern was lionized at the Columbus Men's ORT dinner in his honor, to which came a blue-ribbon assemblage of civic, communal and professional leaders. Presentation is given to him by Dr. Theodore Beckman, chapter Scholarship Chairman, last year's honoree, a distinguished scholar and Professor Emeritus of the University of Ohio.

5. The National ORT League honored Philip Braver, shown with Mrs. Braver (right standing), one of its founders and stalwart veteran of more than 30 years service to ORT at many levels. Left is Walter Cavadio, lauding Braver. Seated is Leo Bell, luncheon chairman.
6. It's result that counts. Center is Chaim Miller, founder and President of the Garment Employers' ORT Chapter, who presents a \$25,000 check, fulfilling the Chapter's 1972 pledge, to Charles Bensley and Shelley Appleton, national officers representing American ORT Federation. Shown, second left, Benjamin Cohen, chapter secretary, who was presented Merit of Award at this luncheon; fourth from left, Murray Cudrin, who was honored at a Chapter testimonial at the New York Hilton this fall; on the other side of Miller are James Clemenza, Hyman Baier and Arnold Schwedock, chapter officers.
7. Jewelers turn out for ORT. The Jewelry Industry Chapter paid homage to Jerome Peterson (left) and Alvin Orgel (third) with Joseph Tarantola who emceed (second) and Martin Kritzer (right), newly designated Chapter co-Chairman.

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A Human Arithmetic

by Nathan Ziprin

From the "B'nai B'rith Messenger"

As a journalist, I have never believed in the apostasy that a single picture is worth a thousand words. In a world contorted by madness, I still believe in the priority of the word. And so it is that I am following up my recent column on ORT with some pertinent facts.

Reflecting ORT's expanding program is the enrollment growth in its schools. In the 1961-1971 decade its enrollment jumped from 36,452 to 64,936, and enrollment in its high schools leaped from 13,286 to 31,220. In addition the number of ORT

The Changes of a Decade A Statistical Profile

	1961	1971
Enrollment	36,452	64,936
18 and Under	32,286	52,417
In ORT High Schools	13,353	31,220
In Post Secondary Programs	684	2,483
In Primary Industrial Arts	3,417	8,234
No. of Educational Units	596	735
School Capacities	21,042	39,000
Graduates	9,767	16,044
Teaching Staff	1,211	2,606

training units burgeoned from 596 to 735.

What is more, the decade saw a re-assessment of educational methods and visions with the view to advancing career learning among its pupils and bringing the graduates to the very threshold of the technological age via new skills and educational methods.

Ninety Cities

ORT reaches out to twenty-eight countries, operating in ninety cities with an administrative and teaching staff of more than 3,000 people, and an indicated need for more.

The study courses in all ORT schools, particularly in Israel and France, range over an exceedingly wide occupational spectrum. But what is most striking is the introduction of such sophisticated and demanding para-professions as automa-

tion, computer programming and computer repair, business management, industrial chemistry techniques and on and on.

Graduates

Indicative of the effectiveness of ORT's program is the fact that almost all of the 16,000 who graduated in the class of 1971 were gainfully employed within weeks after receiving their diplomas, and in upward mobile jobs, with futures.

The largest student enrollment is in Israel, with Tel Aviv showing a registration of 12,878 and Jerusalem some 5,481. The school network in

the country as of 1971 had 359 educational units and a teaching staff of more than 2,000.

Summing Up

When all the figures are summed up, it is quite clear that we are in the realm of a human arithmetic of an order quite different than numbers. They add up to a single staggering fact—ORT's imaginative dedication to meeting the unique needs arising from Israel's striving, while simultaneously reaching out to more than a score of other communities to lift their youth to dignity in this technological age.

Page 1

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From Darkness to Light

By JOSEPH HARMATZ
DIRECTOR, ORT—ISRAEL

I am acquainted with your life story because the first part of it is also my own. Some of you grew up with me since childhood. It is as though I know each of you personally. I know how you were dispossessed of your houses and torn from your families during the war. Parents murdered, brothers, sisters, butchered in cold blood, a bitter and bloody world war—this was also my lot.

Memories

I know what happened in Central Asia, in the camps in Siberia. I met those who fled and those who were forced to flee. Balakhana, Gorki, the Lithuanian division, the White Russian and Baltic fronts, Oriol and Leningrad, Koenigsberg, and up to Berlin. These are names and places engraved in our hearts and never to be forgotten.

And then the great hope as the war ended. The territories are liberated, victory is here. Hope that someone is still alive, maybe in the army, in a far-off unit. Or could he be wounded, could he be in the partisans, or perhaps in hiding? Maybe imprisoned in the camps. Big maybes—and many. And the answers: frail, few, so few, to the point of desperation.

Some Opening

Then the narrow crack through which it was possible to infiltrate and escape for weeks, months—in 1945, '46. Then, that too was closed. Few were the thousands who got out. Cruel was the regime, and sometimes even murderous.

The extraordinary fortitude of Soviet Jews in challenging their all-powerful, repressive state in their struggle for the right to leave in order to live as Jews is surely one of the great human dramas of our times. Transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society is a challenge of a different dimension, by no means easy.

In cooperation with the Ministries of Education and Absorption, ORT launched a program last summer to ease the professional acclimatization of those who had been teachers or engineers and aspired to continue their professional lives in Israel. Forty-three of them completed that course, held at the ORT Technical Center in Nathanya, and were assigned to the ORT schools, where they now work.

The concluding ceremonies for this first group graduating from the first ORT "technical ulpan" was addressed by Joseph Harmatz, Director of ORT Israel, main portions of which follow.

Hope grew thin but life went on. New families were formed, children were born, grew up and studied. Even grandchildren, yet still no hope.

Half a year ago you lived under an inhuman stress: will we receive the exit permit or will we not? And before the much awaited answer arrived, how many negative ones preceded, what tremendous stress. Resigning from work for some, dismissal for others. Receding from the place one lived in for years, lived with and built . . . made, initiated, struggled with, rejoiced in its successes and felt its pains.

You Are Here

Nevertheless, now you are here, together with us. In a matter of days you passed from exile to independence, from darkness to light, from there—to here. So now there is hope—small, grudging, unsure. You are not the first or the last but the hope of these days.

You find yourselves among people who have had a great share in the pioneering development of the country and the renewal of national inde-

pendence. Settling the country, struggling for its independence, defending its existence, developing its agriculture, its industry, the educational, social and medical services already given and still to be given to the citizens of the state, is a broad and many faceted enterprise.

The road is still long. There is still much to be done. There are some things which were not done properly and must be corrected and rebuilt.

Interwoven

ORT is interwoven in this larger pattern. Its share in the field of vocational education is serious and carries weight. We of ORT watched over the flame, we introduced love and honor in the study of a profession, and gave the right dimension to vocational education in this technological era.

We are happy to have you join our big family, and thank you for putting your faith in us. We look forward in full confidence to your marching with all of us in the path of Jewish and human education, towards a future which lies in peace and justice.

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