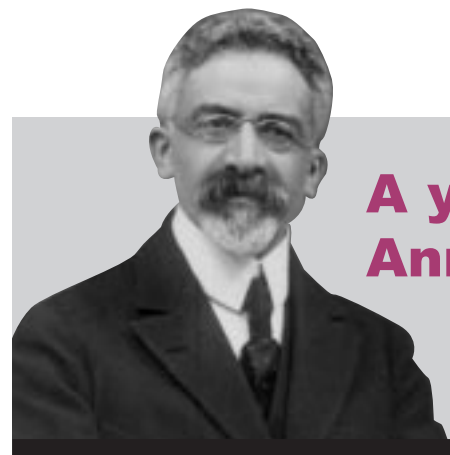


The World Times



A year of 80th Anniversaries



Jewish roots discovered at ORT India

See story on page 4

Graduation Celebration

See story on page 4



ORT moves into 21st century

ORT Israel students swap textbooks for laptops



ORT Israel student demonstrates her computer savvy for President of Israel Moshe Katsav

ORT Israel junior high school students are turning in their textbooks for laptops as the curriculum shifts into the 21st century.

At the beginning of February, ORT Ya'arat HaEmek Junior High School in Migdal HaEmek was honoured to receive a visit from President Moshe Katsav, who came especially to see for himself the reason why three classes have not purchased any exercise

books at all since starting the September 2000 school term.

The students did not need exercise books because the school had lent them laptop computers instead.

In fact, these 12 and 13 year old students do not use exercise books at all. They use the laptop computer – at school and at home – to study every subject in the curriculum, be it history, mathematics, science, etc. Educational software is

installed on each computer allowing students to study at their own pace.

The programme was initiated five years ago by Israel's Ministry of Education as a pilot. After three years the school incorporated the laptops permanently into its curriculum. In order to do this, the school looked for sponsors to buy computers, software and to provide technical assistance.

Using the computer as a

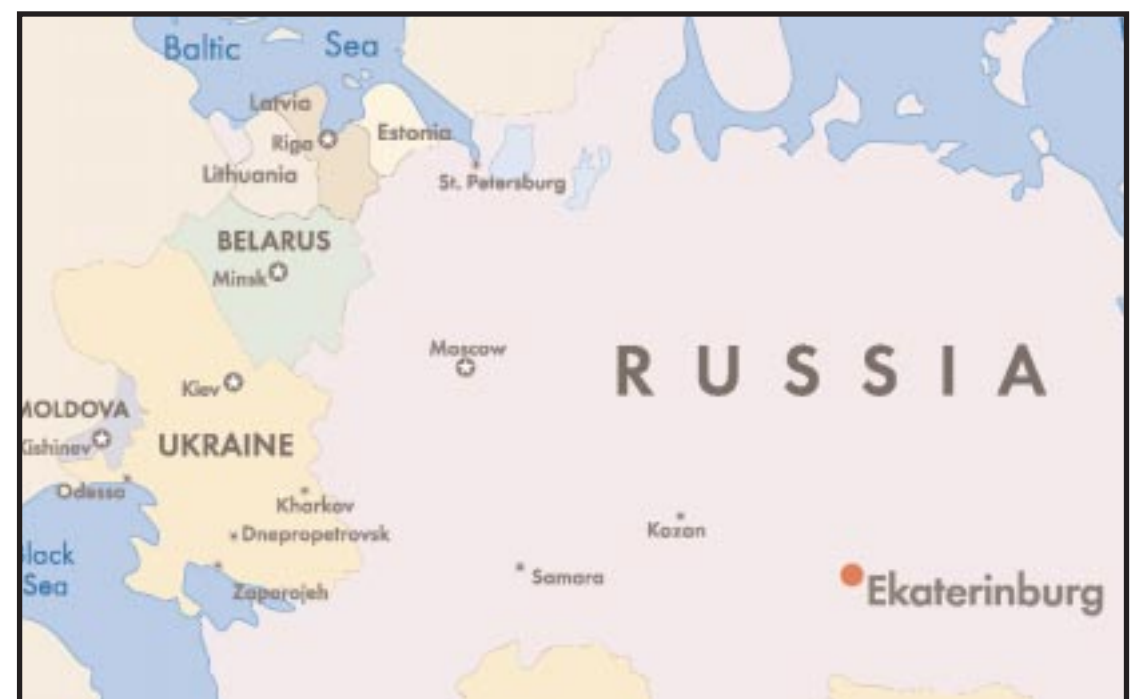
study tool, students are able to work electronically in many different ways. For example, they can find information via the Internet, access virtual study groups, prepare joint assignments with classmates and ask for help from their teachers – who have also been provided with laptops.

ORT Ya'arat HaEmek's Headmistress Lea Golan believes that using laptops instead of exercise books encourages independence, efficient time management and creativity and motivates students to study – eventually leading to improved academic achievements.

"The students are involved in studying in a way that they enjoy – a way which allows them independence and freedom of expression. We have seen an improvement in their academic performance because they can now take more responsibility for their own learning," Golan said.

"It transfers school life, as we know it, into a whole new learning experience."

ORT hearing the sounds of success in Ekaterinburg



WHILE advancement in hi-tech education has been at the forefront of ORT's agenda in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union (NIS), an important component of education that has not been overlooked is the value of providing cultural enrichment through music.

At the ORT Computer Centre in Ekaterinburg, Russia, a Jewish music resource centre has been set up to fuse technological advancements of the 21st century with the study of classical music. Ekaterinburg's National Conservatoire is located in the Ural State University where some 5,000 students study all forms of music. The project is designed to use Information Technology (IT) for musical composition where students can collect Jewish and Israeli music and transfer it digitally to a computer database.

The first of its kind, the objective of this programme is for young Jewish musicians to learn of their heritage and gain

insight into centuries of cultural development.

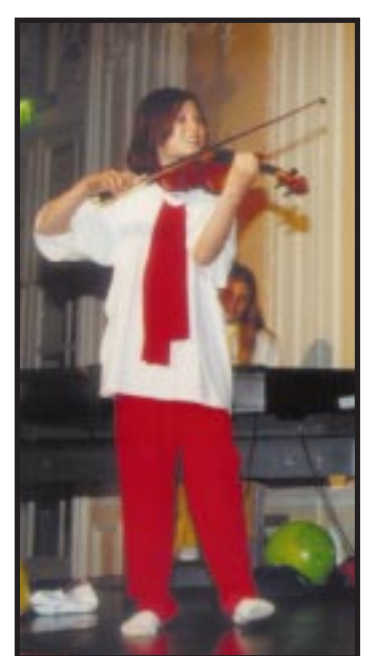
Up until this point Jewish students in the region who wanted to specialise in studying music had to sacrifice having a substantial amount of Jewish curriculum incorporated into their studies. At the same time, attending a Jewish school presented a lack in music education resources.

"The conservatoire at the ORT centre in Ekaterinburg offers students an attractive way to get the best of both worlds," said Director General of World ORT Robert Singer. "We want to expand Jewish musical heritage study in national Jewish and musical schools and conservatoires through the development of an educational musical information network."

In common with other ORT centres in Russia, the facilities are available to families of students and the local community after school hours.

The programme was made possible through the generosity

of the Lord Ashdown Foundation, who introduced ORT to one of the world's leading Jewish music scholars to advise on the project, Professor Alexander Knapp of the School of African and Oriental studies at London University.



ORT student hones music skills

Learning about the Holocaust through Art



Charlotte Buresova - "Mother and Child" monotype, Theresienstadt 1942-1944

WORLD ORT will soon launch a major new website devoted to art produced during the Holocaust.

Scheduled for completion in mid-2001, Learning about the Holocaust through Art will include high-quality digital reproductions of 150 art works, along with articles about the artists and the camps or ghettos in which they were imprisoned. In developing this resource, ORT has drawn on the collection and the expertise of Beit Lohamei Haghetaot (Ghetto Fighters House Museum) in Northern Israel. With 3,000 art works, Beit Lohamei Haghetaot have one of the world's largest collections of Holocaust-

related art.

"Art produced during the Holocaust offers a poignant testimony to the experiences of those interned in ghettos or camps," said Grant Young, a member of the ORT team developing the resource.

Young noted that many of the artists saw the importance of their work as documenting the reality of the Holocaust – against the claims of propagandists of the time.

Artists at Terezin, for example, were pressed into decorating the ghetto for a Red Cross visit, while secretly smuggling out drawings depicting the reality behind the facades. Today their work offers a strong counter to those

who try to deny the reality of the Holocaust, he said.

"This collection includes a wide range of art works," Young said. "Some are dark and disturbing, but there are others that surprise. There are humorous cartoons and caricatures, and fantasy scenes – vivid imaginings of a world beyond the wire fences."

Those visiting the web resource will be able to read the biographies of the artists and learn about the camps. There are also resources to help teachers and students use the website in the classroom. When it is released, Learning about the Holocaust through Art will be available in both English and Hebrew. There are plans to

produce Russian and Spanish versions, but this will depend upon additional funding.

Learning about the Holocaust through Art has been made possible through a grant from the Claims Conference.

The Conference's primary mission is to support survivors' claims for compensation, but it also makes several grants each year to "support and encourage Holocaust research, documentation and education."

ORT is grateful to the Claims Conference and to Beit Lohamei Haghetaot for collaborating with World ORT on this important project.



- Ⓞ quicklinks to ORT offices and schools
- Ⓞ donate online
- Ⓞ up-to-the-minute news and information

ORTnet's new look coming soon @ www.ort.org

World ORT

A Message from the Director General



Once again we look back at the history of our organisation and marvel at the diversity of our international network. Following last year's historic 120th anniversary, we now face two more jubilees in the ORT year. The year 2001 marks 80 years since ORT France was officially founded, and also 80 years since the establishment of World ORT in Berlin.

We have come a long way since then, but there is still a lot more for us to do and I am confident that with many supporters around the world we will be able to continue to provide a future of excellence for today's and tomorrow's young people in all corners of the globe.

The year 2000 was certainly a revolutionary year for ORT activities in the NIS. Since ORT re-established itself in the region, it very rapidly gained a remarkable reputation, and demand for the education and training which ORT can provide constantly exceeds the supply.

Although it is more than a decade since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the demand for more sophisticated technology teaching is growing at an ever increasing pace in Eastern European countries and I see it as another major focus of our activities during the year to re-establish and develop ORT's presence in Sofia, Budapest, Prague, Zagreb, Warsaw, Bucharest and Bratislava.

In a changing world at the beginning of the 21st century, we are living in a time with instability in many areas where there are Jewish communities; with rapid changes in the job market and as an end result of constant new developments in technology, the help ORT can offer these communities and the tools we can provide are essential.

ORT is truly blessed with a wealth of knowledge and expertise. As we enter our second 120 years of serving needy communities around the world, we will use that knowledge and expertise to ensure that the future is a bright one.

Robert Singer
Director General
World ORT

Navigating the Bible II available in three languages on Internet and CD-ROM

THE latest version of Navigating the Bible with translations in English, Russian and Spanish is now available for purchase all on one CD-ROM.

When it was released in 1996, it was the world's first multi-media interactive rendering of the Five Books of Moses and the readings of the Prophets making thousands of years of history and tradition available at the click of a mouse.

Developed by World ORT's Information Technology Department, Navigating the Bible II has also been given a fresh new interface making

journeying into ancient tradition simple and fun for Bar and Bat Mitzvah -aged students, or for adults who want to refresh their knowledge of Torah.

"Since its initial release, we have had a tremendous response from children (and their parents) from around the world who may not have immediate access to a synagogue or rabbi within their community," according to Michael Shain, director of the Information Technology Department at World ORT in London. "Navigating the Bible makes it possible for them to study their Bar or Bat

Mitzvah online."

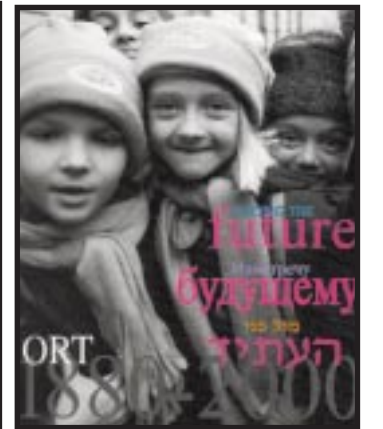
"Another great feature of Navigating the Bible is that one can weave their own path of exploration by 'navigating' to find particular areas of text that interest them."

Included in the comprehensive package is an interactive full Hebrew text plus haftarot and blessings, a tutorial and historical background of the traditional melodies, glossary of people, places, plants and animals, a word search and cross-referencing and a calendar to find a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date or any weekly reading from the



year 1900 to 2050.

The website which is linked to ORTnet, www.ort.org, currently receives more than 50,000 hits per day. The CD-ROM is available for purchase through Davka Inc., the largest distributor of Judaic software, with over 100 titles to its credit in the areas of Jewish history, Hebrew language, customs and traditions.



Facing the Future to be published in French and Spanish

FACING the Future, the highly acclaimed book with more than 100 photographs and other archive material tracing the history of ORT from its beginnings in St Petersburg to the present day, will soon be available with French and Spanish translations.

News Briefs

ORT India aids in earthquake relief effort

IN February ORT India sent six of its staff members to undergo a disaster-counselling course for three days at Dignity Foundation, an organisation for the elderly in India that is providing relief and rehabilitation work in the earthquake-affected areas of Gujarat. After their course the ORT volunteers then proceeded to Gujarat for nine days each to help with counselling and rehabilitation of earthquake victims.

120+1 World ORT portfolio of projects

DURING the past few months the World ORT main administration office in London has been engaged in compiling a comprehensive portfolio of project proposals for ORT fundraising organisations' respective campaigns. 120+1 projects were chosen for the portfolio of project proposals – symbolising 121 years since the founding of ORT.

The attractive format is sure to be a useful tool for all of ORT's fundraising organisations. Donors will have

the opportunity of sponsoring projects – large or small – which are of interest to them.

New scholarship fund for needy ORT Argentina Students

WORLD ORT has just set up a new scholarship fund that will assist needy Jewish students at ORT Argentina.

The scholarship was made possible through the generosity of friends of ORT in Geneva and Zurich, and will over the next three years assist Jewish students at ORT Argentina in continuing their studies. ORT's success in Argentina has occurred against a backdrop of fluctuating fortunes for the Jewish community. Economically and politically, the Jewish community, of which ORT is an integral part, is in a beleaguered state. The scholarship will help ease their families' financial burdens by helping students with their tuition fees.

The scholarship took effect in March, coinciding with the beginning of the new academic year in South America. ORT Argentina will select the eligible students who qualify for the scholarship and report back to World ORT at the end of the school year with a detailed account of each student's progress.

When he took on the mantle of leadership of World ORT he moved into the international scene, inspiring communities

ORT leaders remembered



David Hermelin
Born 27 December 1936
Died 22 November 2000

WORLD ORT deeply mourns the passing of its former President David Hermelin.

Fully identifying with ORT's educational aims, David Hermelin worked tirelessly for the organisation as a fundraiser and as a lay leader, serving as President of World ORT from 1993 until his appointment as US Ambassador to Norway in 1997.

David Hermelin was recognised internationally as a diplomat, businessman, philanthropist, and volunteer. His charisma and his energy inspired and enthused all those who came under his spell. ORT was privileged to have him as a leader and was proud to build and name the ORT Hermelin College of Engineering in Netanya, Israel in his honour.

When he took on the mantle of leadership of World ORT he moved into the international scene, inspiring communities

everywhere through his passion and commitment. It was during his tenure as President, that ORT returned to the former Soviet Union with a mission to train and educate members of the Jewish community to the highest international standards.

Amongst the many philanthropic issues he embraced, Jewish education was high on the his list of priorities, and he once said, "If I had a wish, it would be that I could play a part in translating my excitement of the beauty and joy of being Jewish so that all our people could see how rewarding, life-affirming, just plain fun living Jewishly could be."

His counsel, his friendship and his warmth will be sadly missed by all those who knew him and who worked with him.



Paul I. Bernick
Born 31 December 1914
Died 5 March 2001

PAUL Bernick, Executive Director Emeritus of American ORT, passed away on March 5, 2001.

For more than 50 years, Paul Bernick was a key member of the American ORT family and a leader. He served as Executive Director from 1952-1981 when he retired to become an advisor to both World ORT and American ORT. He also served as Director of World ORT's New York office from 1955-1980. Bernick served as a consultant for ORT schools and programmes in France, Iran, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Switzerland and Tunisia, and was chief coordinator for a number of projects sponsored by USAID in Africa. In 1994, the American ORT Awards Committee created a new annual leadership award and named it in honor of Paul Bernick.

Born and raised in Chicago, Paul Bernick lived in New York City since 1938. A recognised authority on aid to developing nations, he has been published and invited to participate in numerous symposia and conferences concerned with the problems of education and economic development.

Until his last days, he worked daily at the American ORT office and was truly adored by his lay and professional colleagues of every generation.

"He was my mentor, a real gentleman with real class, a real ORT man," recalled Robert L. Sill, President of American ORT.

Paul Bernick is survived by his wife Adrian Mann, who formerly served American ORT as Director of Administration and interim Executive Vice President, three daughters, Joan Kopman, Dr. Elizabeth Bernick and Deborah Bernick Mishra, and two stepchildren, Stephanie Lovison and Joseph Mandese, a sister, Mary Belfrage, and ten grandchildren.

World ORT receives accolades for EnglishSpace project

ENGLISHSPACE, World ORT's free Internet resource for students and teachers of English as a foreign, second or additional language has just won the coveted ESL.net (English as a Second Language) award for the "Best Children's ESL site."

World ORT developed EnglishSpace for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students in the United Kingdom aged between 11 and 16 years old. There are more than 60 hours of interactive lesson materials in EnglishSpace for self-study or group work available free of charge. World ORT is seeking partnerships with individuals, governments or educational institutions to support the EnglishSpace project.

Famed Nazi hunters address delegates in Lyon

BEATE and Serge Klarsfeld were guests of honour who addressed delegates at the World ORT Board of Directors meeting in Lyon in January.

Serge Klarsfeld spoke warmly of his links with ORT through the photographs he recovered at the ORT France offices in Paris. The photos subsequently became part of a travelling photo exhibit called ORTworks, which the Klarsfelds formally opened in 1999.

He told delegates that the photos he recovered testify to the permanent creativity of an

institution already more than 120 years old that is still so young. The photos made an impact on the ORT members who had the opportunity to see them, a renewed sense of pride in the organization and even more, a commitment to ORT programmes.

"ORT was and remains one of the most solid pillars of Jewish education," Serge Klarsfeld said. "At first its task was to take the Jews out of misery and ignorance. ORT succeeded in that generous and uncertain enterprise. Today and tomorrow, everywhere where

education is still a luxury and where Jewish families live in precarious conditions, ORT is present and active."

Born in Berlin, on the eve of World War II, the daughter of a German soldier and goddaughter of a Nazi official, Beate Klarsfeld said she knew virtually nothing of her country's role as a perpetrator of the Holocaust.

At 21, she moved to Paris to and met Serge Klarsfeld, a French Jew who had suffered under the Nazis, he, his mother, and his sister hid from the Gestapo in Nice in 1943. His

father was arrested and eventually disappeared in the death camp of Auschwitz. The two were married in 1963. In the years to come the couple strove to publicise the pasts of Nazis and wartime collaborators, forcing some resignations from high posts.

Marcel Benichou, President of ORT France presents an ORT scroll of honour to Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, on behalf of World ORT

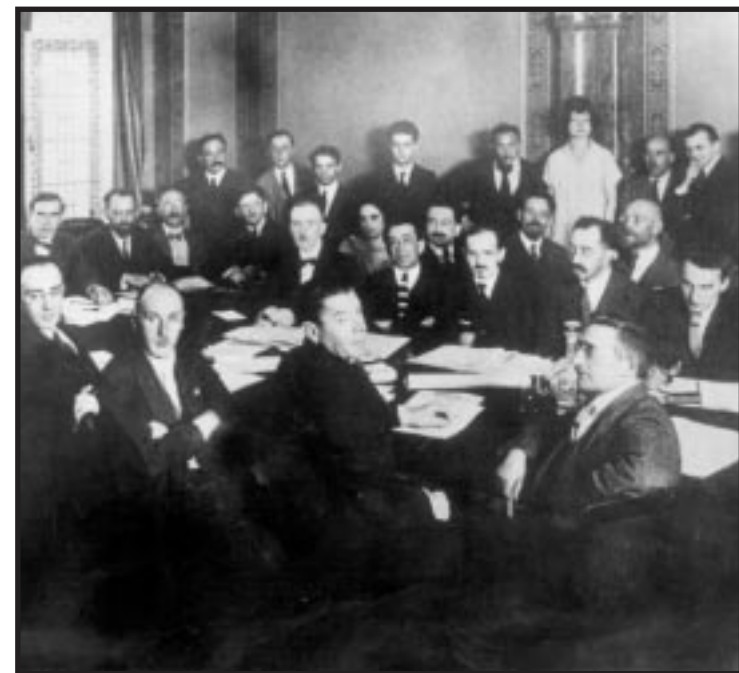


Contributions can be made to the Adrian and Paul Bernick ORT Scholarship Fund, and sent in care of American ORT, 817 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10003.

From the ORT Archive

World ORT and ORT France turn 80

ORT goes west



Foundation of World ORT in 1921

DURING its first four decades, ORT's operations were limited to Russian territories and concentrated within the Pale of Settlement, the region in which Russian Jewry was forced to live. Never easy, life in the Pale was made even less tolerable by the ravages of the First World War, revolution and civil war.

In 1919 the ORT Committee in Petrograd (St Petersburg) decided to seek help from

overseas, appointing Leon Bramson and David Lvovitch as International Delegates. Their first destination was Paris, in 1920. Around the same time, other ORT supporters sought assistance from the émigré circles of London and Berlin, forming what were to become British ORT and ORT Germany.

Bramson presented plans for the establishment of an ORT



Leon Bramson



Aaron Syngalowski

Union to a congress of ORT representatives held in Berlin in August 1921.

The congress agreed, establishing the new organisation and appointing Aaron Syngalowski as its first Secretary General (Director General). The ORT Union would be headquartered in Berlin, where Syngalowski was based.

The French Connection

ON 10 January 1921 an ORT committee in Paris was registered with the authorities and ORT France was born.

The organisation was established as part of a campaign to raise desperately needed funds from western Jewish communities in order to maintain the ORT programmes in Russia and to help the many Jews in distress there.

ORT France soon became an operational centre in its own right, and adult education classes were taking place in Paris as early as 1925.

A few years later with the rise of Nazi fascism in Germany, international Jewish organisations were not wanted in Berlin so the World ORT offices were moved to Paris in 1933. Miraculously, ORT managed to continue operating in France for a considerable time even under Nazi occupation, remaining active until the 1943 stranglehold.

As tens of thousands of German Jewish refugees arrived in France, ORT initiated vocational retraining programmes to help integrate them into French life or prepare them for jobs in other countries.

In the 1950s and 1960s,



Tailoring at an ORT vocational school in Paris, 1939

political turmoil in North Africa led to a mass exodus of long-established Jewish communities from the region. Many went to Israel, but large numbers chose to make a new life in France. ORT then found itself with a new task – to assist the

absorption and education of tens of thousands of adults and youngsters from those communities.

Today, ORT France has the largest network of ORT schools and colleges in Western Europe, and provides both schooling

and vocational adult education at its seven schools and centres in Paris, Strasbourg, Lyons, Toulouse and Marseilles.

see story on page 4



Robert Singer at the building where the first World ORT meeting took place in 1921 in Berlin



Plaque commemorating ORT's office in Berlin

The plaque reads: *In this building, the first office of World ORT was established in Berlin in 1921. ORT (Organisation-Rehabilitation-Training) was established in 1880 in St. Petersburg*

promoting handicraft and agricultural education amongst Jews. In 1937 ORT opened its first professional school in Berlin, which was in part saved by relocating to England in 1939.



THEN: Hat making at an ORT vocational school in Paris, 1939



NOW: A young student at ORT France learning how to use a pillar drill

ORT's activities in Cuba



THEN: Watchmaking course, ORT Havana vocational centre, 1949



NOW: Times have changed - from watchmaking to computers

AS early as 1935, local Jews formed an ORT committee in Cuba. In 1943, a school was established in Havana, which helped newly-arrived Jewish immigrants. In 1947, following a visit by Philip Block, a former American ORT Federation Executive Director, a vocational centre opened in Havana. It provided courses in watchmaking, dressmaking, and leatherwork. This successful programme continued until 1959.

The school ran courses in a variety of subjects: bookbinding, leatherwork, drafting, electro-techniques, cutting and sewing. It also provided an unusual opportunity for some students to train in diamond cutting. Most of the students had previously been engaged in businesses and professions in their former countries.

Nearly all first-year graduates became self-supporting immediately after graduation. However, at the end of the war, as many refugees found new homes, the school closed.

After nearly 40 years of absence from Cuba, ORT has recently renewed its presence in the country.

see story on page 4

World ORT Archive

MANY of the photographs in this paper have come from World ORT's archive. The archive has a large collection of papers and photographs documenting ORT's activities over the past 120 years.

Sonia Gomes de Mesquita, who oversees the archive programme, said the World ORT archive has two main goals: to safeguard ORT's heritage and to make that heritage easily accessible to staff, students and researchers.

Later this year, in an effort to provide greater access to ORT's history, the archive will go digital – launching its catalogue on the Internet at www.archive.ort.org. The catalogue will include many images from ORT's past and present.

Staff will also begin the task of locating material held in other archives around the world – particularly in the former Soviet Union, where many libraries and archives, including the KGB's, have only recently opened to the public.

Did You Know?



The renaming of a New York street for a day was a regular feature of ORT Day celebrations in the 1950s.

In this mid-1950s photo, a city government official joins members of Women's American ORT to rename a street "ORT Place".

Women's American ORT will kick off its 75th Anniversary year this July at their annual Convention in New York City.

Diary of events

WORLD ORT SEMINARS 2001

May 6 – 11, 2001

World ORT Fundraisers Seminar
Israel

June 3 – 10, 2001

World ORT Seminar for Heads of New Computer Centres
Kiev, Ukraine

July 1 – 8, 2001

Second World ORT Wingate (I.T.) Seminar
For Heads of ORT School IT Departments only
London, UK

October 28 – November 4, 2001

World ORT Head Teachers of New ORT Schools Seminar
ORT Braude, Israel*

WORLD ORT MISSIONS 2001

June 6 – 12, 2001

American ORT & World ORT Mission to Cuba

September 2001

World ORT International Mission to Ukraine (Charkov & Zaparajé) & Moldova (Kishinev)
Chairman: Weinberg Foundation (Representative)
Chairman: Ronald Lauder of the Lauder Foundation
World ORT International Mission to Belarus (Minsk)
Chairman: Norman Seiden (Representative)

October 10 – 12, 2001

World ORT Mission to Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay & Chile
(Limited to members of the Executive Committee only)

November 2001

World ORT International Mission to Israel (Higher Education)

February 2002

World ORT International Mission to India

WORLD ORT OFFICIAL MEETINGS 2001

April 26 – 27, 2001

World ORT Executive Committee Meeting
Amsterdam, Netherlands

October 13 – 14, 2001

World ORT Executive Committee Meeting
Argentina

January 11, 2002

World ORT Executive Committee Meeting
Cape Town, South Africa

January 13 – 14, 2002

World ORT Board of Directors Meeting
Cape Town, South Africa

* To be confirmed

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American ORT gears up for conference and mission

THE American ORT National Conference and Annual Meeting will be held from July 19-22, 2001 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel at Grand Central Station in New York City. Highlights of the Conference will include an exclusive visit to the United Nations and to the Bramson ORT College facility in Brooklyn.

Just prior to the Conference, American ORT members will participate in a mission to Cuba from June 7 to 11. They will have the opportunity to visit the ORT Information Technology Laboratory at the Jewish Community Centre in Havana.

ORT makes the grade at Oxford

IN March World ORT hosted its Second Annual National Directors Forum amid the historic splendor of Oxford University.

The Forum proved to be an effective opportunity for National Directors, the highest professional body of ORT operations worldwide, to share thoughts and ideas on improving and expanding the delivery of education throughout the ORT network.

Among the topics of discussion were distance learning and adult education.

Jorge Grünberg, Rector of ORT University in Uruguay and Ephraim Buhks, Director of ORT Operations U.S.A. and Bramson ORT College presented their colleges' distance learning projects. They concurred that distance learning is an inexpensive way to educate a large number of people, and Bramson ORT's research showed that in some cases distance learners fared better than class learners.

"Some advantages to e-learning that we have found in adult students is that they become independent learners and many of them find that it is more convenient because they can take classes according to their schedules," Buhks said.

ORT South Africa Director Iris Colyn and ORT Chile Director Marcelo Lewkow presented examples of humanitarian programmes ORT offers, reaching out to the non-Jewish communities in their countries.

In South Africa, the Department of Forestry and Water works with ORT to teach adult basic education and technology to people in townships. ORT programmes teach students problem solving techniques through basic scientific experiments.

"It's amazing how confident the students become," Colyn said. "Some of them go on to start their own small businesses."

ORT Chile, with the financial help of a telecommunications company based in Spain, is helping adult blind people learn how to use the Internet and the Windows operating system by way of software that translates the program into sound.

"In a country where there is no government policy regarding disabled people, ORT is teaching computer skills and at the same time giving participants the opportunity to develop a social life," Lewkow said.

A vote by delegates determined that Colyn and Lewkow had delivered the most effective presentation. They were awarded a \$5,000 prize to be used toward their projects.

ORT was honoured to have three very distinguished guest speakers attend the Forum. Professor Philip Adey, Director of the Centre for the Advancement of Thinking at King's College London University spoke about his research in cognitive development in children. Professor Siamon Gordon, Head of the Department of Cellular Pathology at Oxford University delivered a lecture on immunology education and Professor Michael Brady also from Oxford University spoke about image analysis in education.

President of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies Professor Peter Oppenheimer also joined the Forum. Oppenheimer, who is an advisor to the World ORT Academic Advisory Council, spoke warmly of the positive contributions that ORT has made to Jewish and non-Jewish people throughout the world.

The Forum leader Robert Singer, Director General of World ORT, said that Oxford University reflects ORT's ideals by combining a rich history, a dedication to learning and a firm commitment to scientific and technological progress.

"I'm sure that this seminar has inspired all who attended to intensify our efforts as we continue with ORT's vital work in education," he said.



ORT Argentina graduates proudly wave their diplomas

ORT Argentina holds largest graduation ever

MORE than 9,000 people filled the Luna Park Stadium in Buenos Aires to watch as 1,400 ORT students received their diplomas.

This year's graduating class was so large that ORT Argentina had to stage two separate graduation ceremonies in order to accommodate family and friends of the graduating class as well as special guests from the federal and city governments, education officials, the Israeli Ambassador, community leaders and various ORT Argentina committee members.

At each ceremony a multimedia extravaganza with a live musical performance and a laser light display set the mood for the 1400 students to celebrate their commencement in style. As each graduate approached the stage decorated with Argentine and Israeli flags, they received diplomas, a medal and a Jewish National Fund certificate for a tree to be planted in their honour in ORT Argentina's "Grove of Graduates" located in Karmiel.

"As these students receive their diplomas, they take on the right and duty of constructing a better world for us and for the generations to come," said Baruj Zaidenknop, director general of ORT Argentina.

ORT and Jewish community open IT Laboratory in Cuba



Sarita Gantz unveils the plaque at the new computer laboratory in the Havana Synagogue

FOR the first time since the 1940s, ORT renewed its operations in Cuba when the Ana & Ben Dizik ORT Technology Centre was opened in the Jewish Community Centre in Havana.

Mrs Sarita Gantz generously sponsored the project, which is named in memory of her parents who were once leaders of the Jewish community in Cuba. Gantz, together with her children and members of her family and friends attended the ceremony. Representatives of World ORT, Women's

American ORT, ORT Mexico (who were instrumental in the establishment of the laboratory) and ORT Argentina were also present.

Since the centre's inauguration, more than 90 members of the local community have enrolled in Information Technology courses. This programme was undertaken by World ORT with the assistance and participation of ORT Mexico and fully coordinated with the Cuban Jewish community and its leader Dr Miller.

Renovation revelation at ORT France

ORT has been a pillar of the Jewish community in France for the past 80 years. In maintaining its highly-regarded reputation, ORT France is in the process of rebuilding and re-equipping the interior of its ORT Montreuil school.

The first part of the four-year renewal plan commenced during the summer of 1999 enabling activities at the school to continue while the work is in progress. The new wing of the school will be fitted to deliver a series of new computer and technology-related courses.

The ORT school in the Montreuil suburb of Paris is

renowned for providing advanced courses in science and technology for the Jewish community, and prepares students for university entrance and for high-level occupations in Industry.

Today, within France's Jewish population of 650,000, ORT schools provide an important choice for the community in two important respects, according to Guy Seniak, director of ORT France.

"ORT France offers a sound Jewish education without making demands for religious conformity, whereas most Jewish schools are religious in character. Also ORT schools provide a practical approach to the study of science and technology while Jewish schools generally deliver their secular education in a traditional, European academic manner," Seniak said.



Construction begins on the ORT Montreuil School

Lost tribe finds its roots at ORT India

TWELVE Jewish youngsters from the tribe of Menashe in Manipur began studying at ORT India in Bombay this term.

The Manipuri Jewish community sees itself as descendants of the Menashe Tribe, one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel. They believe that after their forefathers were exiled and enslaved by the Assyrians, they escaped from slavery and arrived in China and eventually settled in the northeast part of India.

During a recent visit to Bombay, secretary of the B'nai Menashe Council, Lemeul Haokip, met with the director of ORT India Dr Edward Haecms, at which time Haokip stressed the importance of sending Jewish youth from Manipur to begin courses at ORT.

"This is a major breakthrough and we are hoping that we will admit several more students in the near future," Haecms said.

In addition to Jewish education courses, pupils are learning computer skills and basic electronics. The six young

women in the group are also learning hairdressing and beauty care. All of the students have also enrolled in a government recognized six-month certificate course in Information Technology.

The 12 students were chosen out of a group of 30 who applied to come to ORT India for vocational training and Jewish education. More youngsters wanted to participate, however, many could not afford to make

the journey. There have also been requests for ORT to accommodate students aged nine to 12 from Manipur so that they can have a formal Jewish education.

Dr Haecms said that ORT India is seriously considering this proposal but the initiative will require funds for accommodation, clothing, transportation, books and stationery for these additional students.



ORT India students from Manipur