

## G R E E C E

Eighty seven percent of the Jewish population in Greece perished during the war; there remain now only about 9.000 persons who returned from concentration camps or from the mountains where they shared several years of the heroic fight with the Greek resistance 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. Athens has today about 4500 Jews. The ORT work has been welcomed by the Greek authorities and by the Jewish communities.

### The Greek ORT Organization.

The first task of the Foundation Committee of the Greek ORT was to legalize its existence and to create different committees and an administrative body necessary for its proper functioning.

In July 1948, the Greek ORT Association was registered in the tribunal of the first instance and the status has been published. Through this legalization the Committee of the Founders became the Board of Directors of the ORT, a provisional council which has been called upon to give up its functions as soon as the Assembly of ORT members, foreseen for coming october, will commence its sittings.

The Board of Directors, presided by Mr. A. Moissis, Israeli Consul General and Mr. Benousiglion, has delegated a part of its powers to the Executive Committee, headed by Mr. Nadjari. Mr. Semah is acting as Secretary General. The Technical Council, headed by Mr. David, former electrification director in Greece, assumes the technical supervision of the schools and gives technical advice to the Committee. The Ladies' Committee takes active part in the social work.

### Vocational Training.

From the very start our Committee occupied itself with the creation of a vocational school, knowing that this was its principal task and the very reason for its existence. After a preliminary examination of various solutions with regard to professions to be taught and after numerous visits to different premises, the Committee, guided by the advices of the ORT Union's delegate, Mr. Berlant, decided to lease the premises where the ORT school of Athens is presently housed for the duration of two years. The question of the premises still constitutes a major problem. The Committee has further decided that this school should train young girls and boys in dressmaking and mechanics during the day, whilst evening courses for adults should be created in autogenous welding, technical drawings as well as courses in cutting for ladies.

The Committee got down to work carrying out the necessary transformations and ordered furniture for the school. Thus were created spacious rooms, well lit and nicely furnished. Recreation takes place in a yard connected to a garden.

The Committee and the AJDC reached an agreement with the result that the ORT took over courses which were originally arranged by the AJDC. Thus a part of machines and installations required for the functioning of the ORT school was supplied by the JDC. Another part has been lent the ORT by the Society "Oxygen".

On the other hand the Committee proceeded with the engagement of administrative and teaching personnel and has kept a constant supervision over the internal organization of the school. January 10th, 1949, began the regular

functioning of the center of professional education in Athens with the opening of a school for mechanics, a school for cutting and dressmaking, and a training workshop for autogenous welding. Later, additional courses for technical design and cutting courses for ladies as well as an accelerated course for mechanics-welders were opened.

The 78 pupils of the school are distributed as follows:

School for mechanics, 15 pupils, duration - three years;

" " cutting and dressmaking, 22 pupils, duration - 2 years;

Accelerated course for mechanics-welders, 7 pupils, 12 months;

Training workshop for welding, 10 pupils, 12 months duration;

Course in technical drawing for former Tb., 9 pupils, 10 months duration;

" " cutting for ladies, 15 pupils, 6 months duration.

The courses which are given on various subjects of Jewish history and civilization form part of the general education and are followed with a particular interest by the pupils.

Simultaneously with the supervision of the professional training the Committee took care to ensure the supply of good food rations for the pupils. A canteen is run by the school and the pupils receive a hot drink in the morning, a midday meal and a supper in the evening. The food rations for the canteen are supplied by the JDC. The Ladies Committee of the ORT actively contributes towards the amelioration of this social work.

In accordance with an agreement reached with the IDC the latter not only grants financial help to our needy pupils, but even supplies them clothes. Our pupils from the province are housed free of charge in the lodging center.

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The Greek ORT has from the very beginning, attached the greatest importance to the establishment of good relations with the Jewish Communities, for whose benefit the entire work of our organization is being carried out. The ORT idea, first circulated amongst the upper Jewish circles of our country, has spread through the masses of the Jewish population with the result that the ORT activity became more and more real.

Through a series of articles and photographs published in Jewish local papers, the Jewish population in Greece became acquainted with the ORT and its work. As soon as the equipment and furnishing of the school were terminated, the Committee organized a religious ceremony for the inauguration of the school. In spite of unfavourable weather 300 people participated at the ceremony, thus expressing the interest which the entire population has for our work. The Committee was consequently in a position to organize a campaign with a view to the recruiting of members, which campaign has at the present moment reached its height in Athens. Artistically printed prospectuses with photographs showing the different phases of the school-life, describing the accomplished work, and inviting all the Greek Jews to participate in the task of the Greek ORT Organization have been published. We hope that the number of inscriptions will be quite large in proportion to the size of the local population and its economic possibilities.

Another aspect of the activity constitutes the relation between ORT and the Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in Greece. Among those, AJDC occupies the main place. From the beginning very amicable relations have been established between the ORT and the management of the AJDC. The cooperation thus established has given very good results, of greatest importance to both organisations. Thus IDC furnished us with some machines and installations necessary for the functioning of our school. In accordance with the

agreement reached between the ORT and the IDC, the latter has undertaken to provide financial aid for ORT pupils. A preliminary budget of 20.000.000 drachmas for the six first months has been reserved for stipendia granted to pupils. Furthermore JDC is regularly supplying us with foodstuffs for the canteen attached to the school and is taking an active interest in the lives of our students, is supplying them with clothes and shoes and is also supplying bedding for our students from out of town.

With the same aim in view the ORT Committee has established the very best contacts with the official Greek authorities. On many occasions officials of the Ministry of National Economy have visited the ORT School and have expressed their satisfaction at the efficient organization and the excellent methods of our vocational education. Many Greek vocational schools requested ORT to furnish them with the programmes of our courses. The competent authorities, approving of the efficiency of the ORT training methods, requested the Greek ORT to lend them the collection of programmes and teaching plans elaborated by the ORT Union in Geneva in order that they might base on them their own programmes.

The Greek ORT Committee intends to arrange an official inauguration of the school in the presence of the Minister of National Economy and the Minister of Education as soon as the machines destined for our school will be installed.

The Committee has further prepared a very detailed working programme for the school which will be submitted for the approval of the Council of Vocational Training. Upon the ratification of the programme in question by the Ministry, the diplomas issued by our school will be as equally valid as those issued by the vocational schools of the State.

As regards the relations between the ORT Organization and the competent authorities of the American Mission to Greece, the ORT has done everything in its power in order to ensure the most cordial relations. The Director and the chiefs of the Section of Vocational Education of the Mission have visited the ORT school and expressed their astonishment that such good results were obtained in so short a period of time. A memorandum was submitted the day after the visit took place, underlining the aims and the tasks of the ORT in Greece and requesting moral as well as material aid of the Mission. In the course of discussions held with the Mission, we were assured that transport fees for machines and material sent from America to Greece will be reimbursed to the Greek ORT.

On the eve of his departure, Mr. Berlant, Delegate of the ORT-Union, has been asked by the ECA representatives whether ORT would be ready to organize in its schools perfecting courses for instructors of the Greek public vocational schools or at least to admit them as "stagiaires". The ECA would be ready to intervene in order that ORT should get the exemption of import duties for machinery and tools. That last fact proves that the ORT school is already very popular and occupies one of the first places among the trade schools in Greece as well by its international organization as by the high standard of the training. That position is recognized not only by the Greek authorities, but also by the American Missions.