

# UNIT VI

## Relationship of Past History to Present Day



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## RELATIONSHIP OF PAST HISTORY TO PRESENT DAY

### LESSON:

International Efforts on Holocaust Education and the Greek Role

**NOTE:** The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education is changing its name to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS:

**WHST 7** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**WHST 9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**RH 9** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### KEY QUESTIONS/ISSUES ADDRESSED:

- What is the role/responsibility of government to provide the youth of the nation with an accurate, comprehensive education about causes, consequences, and individual and collective responsibility for the Holocaust, genocides, and other acts of inhumanity?
- What are the roles/responsibilities of government(s) and the individual(s) in working for recognition of responsibility, restitution and reconciliation?
- How do we preserve the knowledge of the events of the Holocaust and the memory of those lost in the Holocaust when there are no more survivors to give witness and to stand against the deniers?

### KEY TERMS:

- Humanitarian
- Confiscation
- Task force
- SHOAH
- Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust
- Detention camps
- Haganah
- A.K.E.L
- Joint

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Access to the Internet for research purposes.  
<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/index.php>
- Background readings from the lesson on the Greek government and education
- A copy of the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust; readings on the Jewish detention camps in Cyprus

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Read about the ITF (name changing to International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance - IHRA) on its website for general background information.

## GREEK GOVERNMENT:

The Greek government supports programs for the education, remembrance and research of the Holocaust and through their commitment on national policies Greece has made some legislative law changes.

In November of 2003, the Greek Deputy Minister of Interior, Nikos Bastis declared January 27<sup>th</sup> to be Holocaust Remembrance Day in Greece. These events take place in various Jewish communities throughout Greece. They are attended by religious, political, academic and other personalities, and diplomatic representatives. Foreign guests and survivors participate in the ceremonies as well as the general public. Further, the Jewish Museum of Greece presents a yearly relevant exhibition at the venues and at the same time offers a two week program of educational holocaust programs and activities for school groups.

In November of 2005 Greece became a member of The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research. It is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research both nationally and internationally.

Initiated by Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson in 1998, the Task Force currently has 31 member countries. Membership in the Task Force is open to all countries. Members must be committed to the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, and must accept the principles adopted by the Task Force regarding membership.

The Greek State became the first European country to return Jewish properties which had been confiscated in the course of the War. Further it waived its lawful right of inheritance to those properties whose owners had not left descendants to the fourth degree, and the property of the deceased was transferred to a common fund to aid Jews impoverished by war.

The 1944 decision of the Council of Ministers stated that "*the Greek Government, not willing to take advantage in any way of the persecutions against the Jews by the enemy's occupation authorities, decided that all items of property that would be placed into custody of the Greek State, as intestate heir of Jews who perished in concentration camps without any legal heirs, would not become part of the general state property. Instead they would be used for special humanitarian purposes, mainly in order to serve the needs of the Jewish community.*" This law passed in January of 1946. Law 846/1946

In 2011 the Greek Parliament voted to compensate the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki in the amount of € **9,943,697** for the confiscation during the Nazi occupation of land belonging to the Jewish Community where the historic Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki was located for centuries. The cemetery was violently destroyed and desecrated by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II.

## EDUCATION:

The Holocaust is taught in Greek schools from grade 6 to grade 12 in the context of the subjects of History, Literature and Religion.

The subject of History refers to the Holocaust as a historical event in the context of World War II and war crimes against humanity. The history of the Jewish Community in Greece and its tragic fate during World War II is an integral part of the history of the Greek nation and could not be taught as an independent section. The teachings are further supported by maps, photographs and sources.

The subject of Literature, texts and photographic material are used to inform students about anti-Semitism before and during World War II. Classic works, like the "Diary of Anne Frank", or works of Greek authors such as Yiorgos Ioannou referring to the prosecution of the Jews of Thessaloniki by Nazis, are included as teaching materials. Further, theatre performances, photo exhibitions and visits to synagogues and museums are part of these activities. Students are encouraged to discuss the devastation of the Holocaust in the classroom.

In the subject of Religion, there is a thorough discussion of Judaism as a religion, including elements on the history of the Jewish religion, a description of the synagogue, the religious symbols and rites of the Jews and a short description of a boy's religious maturity ceremony, as well as an excerpt from a Hebrew psalm. Also, teaching of the Nazis' effort to exterminate Judaism during World War II is described.

Further, teachers may spend additional time teaching about their local Jewish community where students from several schools participate in special projects on the Holocaust and on the teaching of local history with reference to Jewish life and religion, the contribution of Jews to the social and political life of Greece, and of course the Holocaust.

Students of Greek schools visit the three Jewish museums in Greece: the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens, the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki and the Jewish Museum of Rhodes. Further they also visit Holocaust Memorials that are located in 29 cities throughout Greece, to honor the victims of the Holocaust of the Greek Jews. This is one approach used for teaching the issues of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

Seminars and conferences for educators are held by both universities and The Minister of National Education & Religious Affairs. With financial assistance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, yearly seminars organized by the Jewish Museum of Greece and Greek Ministry of Education are held in Athens. The seminars have created a network for teachers who follow developments in the methods of teaching the Holocaust at all different grade levels. Special seminars from the International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem have also been sponsored for educators.

## RESEARCH:

Some of the recent research activities of the academic community and scholars in Greece:

The Latsis Foundation has established a grant for the Group for the Study of the History of the Greek Jews. The project entails the collecting over 500 testimonies of Greek Jews, survivors of the Holocaust, from state and private archives in Greece and abroad.

Greece is also interested in repatriating the Archives of the Greek Jewish Communities looted by the Nazi occupation forces that have been held since the end of World War II known as the Bad Arolsen Archives.

Presentation of papers on the Holocaust by three well-known European scholars of Holocaust issues, at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki.

A four-day conference organized by the Network for the Study of Civil Wars in collaboration with Yale University entitled "Holocaust as Local History" (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, June 2008).

Presentation of five documentary films on Greek Jews organized by the Group for the Study of the Jews of Greece (Byzantine Museum of Thessaloniki, February 2007).

Presentation at the European Parliament of a publication with Christian, Muslim and Jewish monuments of Xanthi, published by the Diocese of Xanthi in 2005 (June 2008).

4th international conference on the Ladino language (Thessaloniki, October 2008).

Participation in the international conference "Beyond Caps and Forced Labour: Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution" (London 2006).

Conference in Kastoria entitled "The Jews of Kastoria" (Technical University of West Macedonia, October 2008).

Presentation of new research on the Jews of Greece in the framework of the Master's program in History at the University of Thessalia (Volos, April 2008).

Meeting of Israeli and Greek historians (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, February 2008).

One of thirteen countries to participate in the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) it is a project aimed at supporting the European Holocaust research community by establishing unified online access to dispersed sources relating to the Holocaust all over Europe and Israel. Encouraging collaborative research through the development of tools through research institutions, libraries, archives, museums and memorial sites - The Digital Curation Unit IMIS-Athena Research Centre, Maroussi, Greece.

#### **ADDITIONAL TEACHING MATERIAL:**

Video about the Sonderkommando Greek Jew uprising on October 7, 1944 at Auschwitz-Birkenau

"The Revolt of the Greek Jews" <http://vimeo.com/5207246>

Documentary from the book "*Greeks in Auschwitz-Birkenau*" by Photini Tomai (Constantopoulou) Director, Minister A', Service of Diplomatic and Historical Archives

Book Published by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and documentary copyrighted by Hellenic Ministry of Foreign 2009

#### **SOURCE:**

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

[www.holocausttaskforce.org](http://www.holocausttaskforce.org)

[www.dcu.gr](http://www.dcu.gr)

#### **DECLARATION OF THE STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE HOLOCAUST:**

The members of the Task Force are committed to the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, which reads as follows:

1. The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning. After half a century, it remains an event close enough in time that survivors can still bear witness to the horrors that engulfed the Jewish people. The terrible suffering of the many millions of other victims of the Nazis has left an indelible scar across Europe as well.
2. The magnitude of the Holocaust, planned and carried out by the Nazis, must be forever seared in our collective memory. The selfless sacrifices of those who defied the Nazis, and sometimes gave their own lives to protect or rescue the Holocaust's victims, must also be inscribed in our hearts. The depths of that horror, and the heights of their heroism, can be touchstones in our understanding of the human capacity for evil and for good.
3. With humanity still scarred by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils. Together we must uphold the terrible truth of the Holocaust against those who deny it. We must strengthen the moral commitment of our peoples, and the political commitment of our governments, to ensure that future generations can understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences.
4. We pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust, both in those of our countries that have already done much and those that choose to join this effort.
5. We share a commitment to encourage the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions. We will promote education about the Holocaust in our schools and universities, in our communities and encourage it in other institutions.
6. We share a commitment to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who stood against it. We will encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries.
7. We share a commitment to throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust. We will take all necessary steps to facilitate the opening of archives in order to ensure that all documents bearing on the Holocaust are available to researchers.
8. It is appropriate that this, the first major international conference of the new millennium, declares its commitment to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past. We empathize with the victims' suffering and draw inspiration from their struggle. Our commitment must be to remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors still with us, and reaffirm humanity's common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice.

#### SOURCE:

<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about-the-itf/stockholm-declaration.html>

Video about the Sonderkommando Greek Jew uprising on October 7, 1944 at Auschwitz-Birkenau

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## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES

### Part I of lesson:

1. Brief class discussion of issues: Why is it important for current and future generations to learn about the causes and consequences of the Holocaust and other genocides? How can governments and individuals act to prevent the occurrence of such human-instigated horrors in the future? What role should/could education play in the efforts to prevent future genocides and human rights violations?
2. Distribute copies of the *Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust*. (Locate on IHRA website at <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/index.php>)
3. Divide the class into small groups of 4-5 students. Assign each group one or two of the member countries of the IHRA. Students will locate the assigned country(ies) on the "Member Countries" list page and click on the page. Students will explore the information provided about the activities of the assigned country and create a summary list of the actions and activities the country has taken or is currently planning to implement. Using this list, the students should then compare and contrast the activities, projects, legislation, etc. to the goals and objectives of the Task Force as set forth in the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.
4. Each group should make a chart for its assigned countries with three columns as follows:  
Steps Taken to Meet Task Force Goals; Steps in Planning Stages; Goals to Be Addressed.  
Are there areas of similar actions between the assigned countries? A unique action by one of the countries? Goals both need to address?
5. Each group will report back to the whole class with the results of its review. From the information provided, create a master chart of all of the efforts of countries. Highlight common actions taken, unusual or unique actions taken, goals identified by the Task Force that remain to be addressed by all or most countries.
6. Using the list of goals that remain to be addressed, inform the students of the next step that they will take. Students will return to their small groups to brainstorm possible actions/activities a nation could or should take to address one or more of the list of goals. After discussion and evaluating the possible effectiveness of each idea, the students will select the one or two ideas they believe would be best to implement. The group will prepare a letter to the designated country presenting the group's idea for addressing the Task Force goal in that nation. The letter should include reference(s) to and appreciation for the work that the nation already is doing.
7. Returning to the whole class, each group will share its letter and ideas with the other groups. The class will develop a letter to be sent to the IHRA indicating their interest in the work of the Task Force and sharing the list of ideas and activities they have sent to individual member nations.

### Part II of Lesson:

1. Class Discussion: Why did the Allies establish camps for liberated survivors at the end of World War II? What services did the camps provide for those living in them? Where did those in the camps go when they departed from the camp? What process did they follow to leave the camp?
2. Locate the following on a map: England, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Palestine, and Israel. Why did many survivors decide to try to go to what was then called Palestine? What was the involvement of the British in this struggle by many survivors to reach Palestine?
3. Distribute the readings on the Jewish Detention Camps in Cyprus. Why did the British establish detention camps in Cyprus? How and why did the purpose and operation of these detention camps differ from the displaced person camps in Europe after WWII?

4. The British Army operated the camps in Cyprus under the rules for “Prisoners of War.” Research the Internet for information about these rules. Suggested web site addresses: <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/305?opendocument>  
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/y3gctpw.htm>
5. How did the detention camps established by the British in Cyprus become part of the history of the struggle for independence by both Cyprus and Israel? Although the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee opposed the existence of the camps, they became involved in the operations, directly and indirectly. Analyze how each group involved themselves in the camps and the results of their activities. How did the Cypriots involve themselves in the camps? Why were so many of those detained in the camps so young (between early teens and age 35)?
6. Identify each of the following and describe their role in the life and work of the camps as well as their roles in the struggle for independence. The Joint; Youth Aliya; Rutenberg Teachers’ Seminary; Hagana; Palmah; Jewish Agency; A.K.E.L.; summer camps; winter camps.
7. Why was so little known about the camps for so many years? Why is so little known about the former detention camps in Cyprus among the Cypriots themselves today? What are some resources for information that exist today in the United States about the camps?
8. What role does memorialization and the placement of memorials play in maintaining knowledge of such events and conditions for future generations? How and why can these efforts of remembrance also serve to influence the attitudes and actions of individuals, groups, and governments?

#### EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING:

- Design a memorial to serve as a remembrance of the Holocaust and a tribute to those murdered and to those who survived. The design may be a drawing, a model, or a written work (a poem, piece of music, etc.). Explain how your memorial can serve to educate the young and preserve the memory of what occurred as well as honor the memory of those who suffered.
- Write a brief explanation of how the British built detention camps in Cyprus failed to achieve their purpose and how they became training grounds for military resistance as well as for centers of education and culture for the Jewish prisoners.

#### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- Identify some groups that exist today that work for human rights, to document human rights violations and to assist victims of those violations. Develop a bulletin board, a chart, or some type of visual display that highlights these groups and the work that they do. Would you consider joining and supporting such a group? If so, which group(s)? How do these groups serve all people in the work that they do? Do any of these groups use tactics and strategies in their work that you find unacceptable? If so, explain the tactic and why you think it is the wrong way to operate. How would you address the issue with the group? If you agree with their cause but not their tactics, explain how you think the issue can be addressed.
- Research and identify some government groups – local, state, national, and international – that work to end the violation of human rights and to improve the lives of victims of abuse. Write to each of these government groups to request pamphlets, documents, etc. about the charge/responsibility that they have been given, the work that they have done, where they have worked, and some of their ongoing activities. Create a display of the materials that you receive. Work with your teachers and administrators to develop a series of programs involving the work of these government agencies/commissions, etc.

by inviting them to visit the school and speak with the students about what is being done and what needs to be done. Notify local newspapers and request coverage of the program. Write a blog, start and maintain a web site or other tech resource with information about the various groups and what you and your fellow students are doing to support the work of both the government and non-governmental groups working for human rights.

#### JEWISH DETENTION CAMPS IN CYPRUS:

by [www.greeknewsonline.com](http://www.greeknewsonline.com)

New York.- By Susan Drucker and Gary Gumpert

Monuments help us to remember or prevent us from forgetting. We choose who and what to commemorate and the cumulative result constitutes our shared public memory. At a time when the Holocaust moves from lived experience to historical phenomenon in the memories of succeeding generations, the function and significance of memorials becomes increasingly important in the drive to “never forget.” Monuments and memorials serve to mourn, to honor the heroic, or to pay homage to martyrdom. They create a shared memory or version of a story or events in history.

For several years we have been researching monuments that preserve and shape collective memory. This work has spanned nations with diverse relationships to the Holocaust ranging from Germany and Holland to Greece, Italy, Brussels, Hungary, Austria, England, France, and Israel among others. Simultaneously, in a very different part of our research agenda, we began visiting Cyprus. We have come to appreciate the fact that Cyprus is a land that values its history, whose collective memory is sacred.

The importance of memory in Cyprus became very clear to us as we studied the role that communication plays in the current division of Cyprus. After many visits we were reminded that part of Exodus, the 1960 motion picture directed by Otto Preminger and starring Paul Newman, was filmed in Cyprus. Exodus is the story of one of the ships that attempted to carry its Jewish passengers from Europe to Palestine immediately after World War II.

Being in the midst of work on memorials and collective memory elsewhere, it seemed natural to ask a seemingly simple question, “Are there any memorials to the Jews held in detention camps by the British on Cyprus?” The responses revealed that there was little to no memory of the Jewish presence on the island after WWII.

It is curious that most Cypriots and Cypriot Americans have not heard about this chapter in the island’s history. The few who remember have a vague sense that Cyprus had helped facilitate the transport of Jews who had survived the World War II death camps and later the displaced persons camps of Europe. These were the desperate displaced victims seeking a home in Palestine (later the state of Israel established in 1948).

We came to learn that the British authorities held Jewish “illegal” immigrants in detention camps on Cyprus from 1946 to 1949. This policy was part of an effort to deter Jewish immigration to Palestine, under British control, as was Cyprus. During that time over 53,000 Jews passed through the barbed wire camps, held against their will, with a quota of only 1,500 per month permitted to leave Cyprus for Palestine.

The Jews considered illegal immigrants by the British were intercepted by British naval forces and turned back from the shores of Palestine and escorted to Cyprus or temporarily imprisoned in Palestine (Atlit) before being deposited in the camps of Cyprus.

The two major camps were Caraolos, north of Famagusta, and in Dekhelia, outside of Larnaca. The compounds stretched for several miles. The story of these camps has been well documented as an episode in the history of the modern state of Israel. Museums and archives in Israel have extensively documented the camps. The United States Museum of Tolerance in California, the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City have devoted exhibitions to this period. Yet, in Cyprus, memories are dim, if not forgotten of this traumatic period.

Some of the elderly do remember but have not shared their experiences and memories with the younger generations. On a hot summer morning last year one 73-year-old farmer who lived in Xylotymbou, the village adjacent to the camps, told us, "I never told my children about this."

Anecdotes tell of Cypriots working in the camps, smuggling in potatoes to the undernourished internees, assisting in escapes from the camps through underground tunnels. Local Cypriots from laborers to doctors worked in the camps. Translators were British employees. The Jews were prisoners living in overcrowded tents and barracks under harsh conditions with inadequate food supply. The barbed wire camp was also a vibrant community with marriages, illness, deaths, and celebrations. 2,200 children were born in the camps during this period – pregnancy moved the family up on the Palestine waiting list.

But the relationship between Cyprus and the detention camps is more than a momentary historical inconvenience. The tale of the camps is entwined with the independence movements of Cyprus and Israel. They became the training ground for Jewish combatants who would eventually reach Palestine. Cultural workers were sent from Palestine/Israel to teach Hebrew, geography, history and culture of their future homeland and skills that would be valuable upon eventual release. Workshops teaching tailoring, carpentry and other trades were held.

Both Cyprus and Palestine were in the colonial grasp of the United Kingdom and the camps contained thousands of military age men British authorities were particularly concerned with detaining from entry to Palestine/Israel and who were of great interest to those groups in Israel fighting for independence. Groups from the Haganah, the militant Israeli faction, came into the camps to secretly train and drill the interned. There is evidence that by 1948 there was contact between A.K.E.L and members of the Haganah. Haganah personnel were smuggled into the camp to provide military training in the guise of organized sports activities that included drilling, calisthenics, throwing, marching and negotiating an obstacle course. While there is some question as to whether it was A.K.E.L. alone or whether the British identified anyone in Cyprus seeking independence as part of A.K.E.L., there is no question that relationship between Cypriots seeking independence and the activities in the camps did in fact come to the attention of the British administration of Cyprus.

British documents were kept secret as classified documents for many years; secrecy agreements prevented British employees from speaking. After 60 years many of these documents have been declassified and secrecy agreements have expired. Documentation is now available to support the intertwined relationship between the camps and Cypriot history.

In an interview with President Dimitris Christofias in 2005, at that time head of Parliament and General Secretary of A.K.E.L, Mr. Christofias pointed out that A.K.E.L. tried to help the Jews at the time and that the relationship between the camps and A.K.E.L. was part of the history of his party.

Returning to our initial question "Are there any memorials to the Jews held in detention camps by the British on Cyprus?", we learned that in 1950 a group of former internees, by then citizens of Israel, expressed their gratitude, by funding a children's playground in Famagusta. The only other commemorative evidence is a plaque dedicated in 1998 in the port of Larnaca. A formal dedication of the plaque made by the Jewish organization Keren Hayesod in June of that year thanked the Cypriots for their friendship and particularly honored Prodromos Papavasilliou of Famagusta who played a major role in aiding the Jews in their flight to Palestine (Mr. Papavasilliou died in 2006. Few, even those working at the Larnaca port, are currently aware of its existence.

For those for whom this chapter of history was part of their personal recollections, the years are passing and most are in their late seventies and eighties. They remain willing to speak to those who know to ask about this time in history, but their story needs to be told and preserved. This is not merely a tale of the elderly and a time long past, but rather it is a memorial and indicator along the path to the independence of Cypriots and Jews.

Another site regarding detention camps in Cyprus –  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nntyErlgAw>

## SHOAH RESOURCE CENTER, THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

### CYPRUS DETENTION CAMPS

Transshipment and detention camps on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, in which the British authorities held Jewish "illegal" immigrants, most of them European survivors of the Holocaust trying to enter Palestine. On August 7, 1946, the British government made a decision to detain these Jews in Cyprus, hoping that this deterrent would put an end to Jewish immigration. The decision was geared to the British policy of breaking the power of the "Hebrew resistance movement" in Palestine. But before long the British came to realize that detention was not achieving the desired aim. The would-be immigrants continued their attempts to reach Palestine despite violent clashes with British troops and transshipment to Cyprus. By December 1946 the British government, under pressure from the Jewish Agency and in view of the rapid rise in the number of people interned in the Cyprus camps, was allotting half the legal immigration quota (that is, 750 visas, or certificates, a month) to the Cyprus detainees.

The use of the Cyprus detention camps began on August 13, 1946, and ended on February 10, 1949, when the last group of detainees left for what had become the state of Israel. During this period, fifty-two thousand Jews passed through the Cyprus camps, having been taken off thirty-nine boats in their attempts to get to Palestine. Twenty-two hundred children who were born in the camps must be added to this number. Some of the detainees spent only a few months in Cyprus, but many were held there for a year and longer. Responsibility for setting up the camps and for their administration and security was of the British army in Cyprus, which handled the camps according to the rules applicable to prisoner-of-war camps.

There were two kinds of camps. The "summer camps," of which there were five, were located at Kraolos, near Famagusta, and the detainees in them were housed in tents. The seven "winter camps" were located at Dekalia, north of Larnaca. Here the housing consisted of tin huts and some tents.

Conditions in the camps were quite harsh, especially for mothers of children.

## SHOAH RESOURCE CENTER, THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES AND BABIES:

The tents and barracks were overcrowded. There was no privacy, and families had to share accommodations with single persons. There were no partitions, no lighting fixtures, and no furniture except beds. The food supplied by the British army was of poor quality. Because of the inadequate facilities in the field kitchens, food was wasted and people went hungry. The detainees also suffered from a lack of clothing and shoes, which the British supplied only in limited quantities from army surplus. The insufficient supply of water, particularly in the hot summer months, caused sanitary conditions to deteriorate and led to skin diseases and infections. Most of the British officers and troops in charge of the camps carried out their duties indifferently or unwillingly. Those who wanted to ease the refugees' lot for humanitarian reasons had little authority or resources. The British administration in Palestine, which was charged with establishing and maintaining the camps, had to bear the costs out of its budget, which in any case showed a deficit, and it sought to put the responsibility for the welfare of the detainees on the Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee (also known as the Joint).

This put the Jewish Agency in a dilemma. It did not recognize the legality of the detention, nor did it want to relieve the British authorities of their responsibility for the maintenance of the camps and the detainees' state of health. The Agency therefore asked the Joint Distribution Committee to take on responsibility for the welfare of the camp population, which the Joint readily did. As early as September 1946, a few weeks after the camps were set up, the Joint was already engaged in welfare operations there, which they maintained throughout the camps' existence.

The Joint greatly reduced the hardships from which the refugees suffered. It recruited medical and welfare teams in Palestine to run nurseries and clinics in the camps, it improved the quality of food rations for those in special need and supplemented the basic food supplies of the general camp population, it catered to religious requirements, and it set up a bureau for the search of missing relatives.

## SHOAH RESOURCE CENTER, THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES:

Teenagers (of whom there were large numbers in the camps, most having been orphaned in the Holocaust) was yet another task taken on by the Joint, in partnership with Youth Aliya. The majority of the youngsters were put into one camp, Camp 65, which became a kind of youth village. There, Youth Aliya educational teams established a school system based on the few teachers found among the refugees. The welfare teams recruited in Palestine included Jewish Agency appointed emissaries of various political movements. Morris Laub, the Joint's director in Cyprus, became the spokesman and representative of the detainees vis-à-vis the British authorities on the island. The detainees in the Cyprus camps were relatively young, with 80 percent of them between the ages of thirteen and thirty-five. Thus, they were among the more spirited and lively survivors of the Holocaust. They came to the camps as members of youth movements, immigration groups, and political parties imbued with a strong Zionist ideology.

Their ideology and self-discipline enabled them to adapt to the conditions in the camps. In addition to being deprived of their liberty and exposed to harsh physical conditions, the detainees also suffered greatly from the enforced idleness of the camps. Efforts to keep them busy with cultural activities met with difficulties, owing to lack of means and scarcity of qualified personnel. An important contribution was made by emissaries from Palestine who lived with the

refugees in the camps. Some of these were "legal": representatives of the various Zionist movements, welfare workers under Joint auspices, and teachers dispatched to Cyprus by the Rutenberg Teachers' Seminary. Others were "illegal": they were sent to Cyprus by the Palmah, the underground strike force of the Hagana (the Yishuv's underground military organization), to provide the young people in the camps with military training and prepare them for service with the Hagana when they arrived in Palestine. Living among the detainees and sharing their lot, these emissaries had great influence. They represented the Jewish national institutions and were the link between the refugees and the Jewish population in Palestine.

#### SHOAH RESOURCE CENTER, THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES:

A few of the refugees who had second thoughts applied to the British authorities to return to the country from which they had set out. But generally, despite all their suffering, the Cyprus detainees displayed impressive moral strength and staying power during their internment. Though there were no written laws and no real sanctions that could have been applied, not a single criminal act was recorded among the detainees.