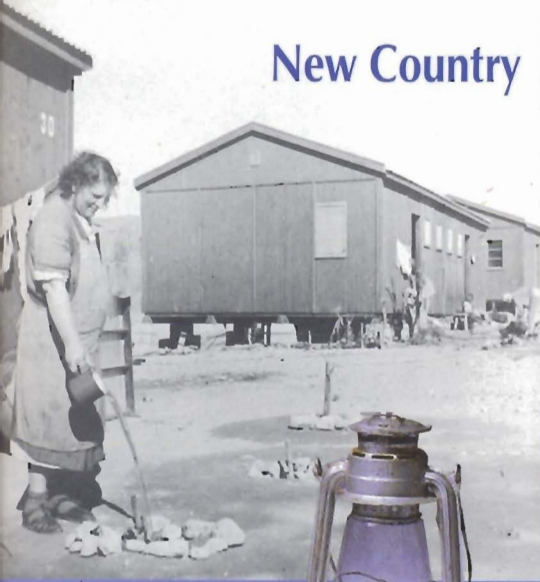


New Country



Neighborhood for immigrants in the Negev, (The Central Zionist Archives)



Holocaust survivors settled throughout the country. Some were helped by relatives, some joined kibbutzim and moshavim, and some lived in cramped transit camps. There were those who, with great organizational capacity and initiative, started new agricultural settlements that gave rise to dozens of moshavim, creating a new unrecognizable Israeli landscape in a short period of time.

“Yehudi, Daber Ivrit” - “Jew, Speak Hebrew”

The reconstructed public notice boards of the 50s exemplify the cultural pluralism and mutual influence between those already living in Israel and recent arrivals. From the moment of arrival, immigrants integrated into the local spheres of politics, culture, security, arts and entertainment, and participated in shaping the new Israeli identity. A Council for Culture, established in 1952, worked for legislation of the Language Instruction Law.



Srulik, the most well-known Israeli cartoon, was created by a Holocaust survivor, Gardos Kariel Dos.

“Under This Blazing Light”

by Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

“ You must follow my route. It is the only one for the Jewish people, for the Jewish people’s fate lies in its own hands.” Abba Naor wrote these words in a letter to his father upon leaving for Palestine three months after being liberated from Dachau. Abba Naor was one of nearly 70,000 Holocaust survivors who arrived prior to May 1948 in what was then Palestine. With the establishment of the State and until 1951, an additional 300,000 Holocaust survivors came to Israel as part of the massive aliyah wave. A black-and-white photograph of Abba Naor alongside a copy of his letter to his father introduce the new exhibition, “ Under This Blazing Light”: Holocaust Survivors in Israel: The First Decade,” which opened at Yad Vashem’s Art Museum in October.

The exhibition, which consists primarily of old photographs, posters, artifacts, a documentary film and audiovisual presentations, takes the visitor back in time, starting from 1945, to the birth and first steps of the State. The exhibition conveys the atmosphere and feeling in Eretz Yisrael at that time. Several thematic sections portray the survivors’ various experiences from the moment of their embarkation to Israel: the arrival, the search for missing relatives, the War of Independence, the settling of the land, Youth Aliyah and also, the new Israeli culture and the commemoration of the Holocaust.

Walking away from the exhibition area one cannot stop thinking of how these people, who went through hell, had the energy, strength and will to return to life and to live, learn, fight and act towards the establishment and building of the State of Israel.



Raising the makeshift ink flag in Eilat, March 1948 (The Cabor Archives, Lavon Institute)

The Whole Nation is the Army



Many myths surround the recruitment of Holocaust survivors to the war effort. The most famous myth is that of Holocaust survivors who had just disembarked from the ships and were sent off, strangers and estranged as they were, to the battlefields of Latrun, where they fell nameless. In actuality, out of a total of 43 casualties that fell in the Latrun battle, 15 were Holocaust survivors. Holocaust survivors constituted about half of the fighting force in the second phase of the war that started on May 15, 1948, a day after the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.