A Proposal for Occupation Training and Work Projects

This proposal, at present in outline form, is presented in order:

a) To give the detainees an opportunity to be engaged in useful work and to occupy their time gainfully.

b) To prepare the detainees for life in Palestine.

The American Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish Agency, and other interested Palestinian organizations are ready to expend an initial sum of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds) in order to set up workshops in camps. The purpose of these workshops will be:

1. To make gift articles which can be sold in Palestine and in other countries.

2. To train young people in the following trades: tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, metal work, automobile mechanics, building trades.

3. To provide for camp use such items which now are not available, such as chairs, tables, etc.

It is proposed to set up the following workshops:

a) Tailoring. A central workshop for the making of new clothes and the repair of old clothes.

b) A carpentry workshop for the building of various items useful to camp life.

c) A shoemaker's shop for the repair of old shoes and possibly the making of orthopedic shoes.

d) An artisans shop for the making of such gift items as stone ashtrays, book-ends, etc., the knitting of sweaters, ties, socks, etc., needle work and lace work of all kinds.

e) An auto-mechanic shop for the instruction in this trade.

f) A building material shop for instruction in this trade.

Raw materials and tools will be provided by the initiative of this scheme except for those items which will be of use to the camp directly and which will not be put on sale. Thus it is hoped that the Army will provide the wood and nails for the building of chairs and tables, etc., while we will provide the tools. In the matter of camp clothing, cloth, etc., will be forthcoming in the usual way from the Army and Cyprus Government sources.

As soon as some degree of skill is reached in the building trades it is hoped that the Army will find it possible to improve the present camp installations by building permanent M.I. rooms, reading rooms, etc. In such case the work could be undertaken by the detainees on a contractual basis.

At this point further details cannot be given except to stress again the tremendous therapeutic value gainful use of time can be to the Camp. A person who has something to do obviously will be less trouble than one who has nothing to do but think of how time hangs heavily on his hands.

If this proposal is accepted in principle, we plan to invite two or three experts in the field of occupational training to work out the scheme in detail and to introduce it.

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