

Document E: Jews come to their homeland







Some 250,000 Holocaust survivors currently live in the State of Israel, now marking its 60th year of independence. This figure represents about half the number of survivors who arrived in the country since the State was founded. In the history of immigration, there has been no comparable story to that of the survivors who came to live in Israel. Rarely, if at all, has a group of immigrants made so profound an impact on a society, and so fully participated in charting its course.

The concept of choice is a major theme in the lives of the survivors who came to Israel. When World War II ended, most of the survivors chose to rebuild their lives, and chose to do so in the Land of Israel, the land they called home. For some, this was too late, and they were unable to rehabilitate themselves. But most discovered vast inner resources to forge new lives for themselves. Their collective story is one of individual victory and the triumph of the human spirit.

They have left their mark in all spheres: building new towns and cities, the military, industry, the economy, law and culture. Survivors in Israel include painters and graphic designers, poets and authors, athletes and dancers, academics and philosophers – most of whom are perceived by the general public as native-born Israelis. Almost from the start, their influence went beyond the personal realm and impacted the daily lives of all Israelis. With their arrival in the country, survivors pursued two different tracks, which may be called the “Israeli track” and the “Holocaust remembrance track.” Along the Israeli track survivors focused on nurturing and reinforcing their clear “Israeliness”, joining those who were shaping Israeli culture. On the other track they have engaged in the perpetuation of Holocaust remembrance through commemoration and documentation.

- Prof. Hanna Yablonka (source: http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/my_homeland/intro_a.html)

