

# Journal

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## **Federal Bureau of Prisons Mission Statement**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons protects society by confining offenders in the controlled environments of prisons and community-based facilities that are safe, humane, and appropriately secure, and which provide work and other self-improvement opportunities to assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens.

## **Cultural Anchors/Core Values**

### ■ *Bureau family*

The Bureau of Prisons recognizes that staff are the most valuable resource in accomplishing its mission, and is committed to the personal welfare and professional development of each employee. A concept of "Family" is encouraged through healthy, supportive relationships among staff and organization responsiveness to staff needs. The active participation of staff at all levels is essential to the development and accomplishment of organizational objectives.

### ■ *Sound correctional management*

The Bureau of Prisons maintains effective security and control of its institutions utilizing the least restrictive means necessary, thus providing the essential foundation for sound correctional management programs.

### ■ *Correctional workers first*

All Bureau of Prisons staff share a common role as correctional worker, which requires a mutual responsibility for maintaining safe and secure institutions and for modeling society's mainstream values and norms.

### ■ *Promotes integrity*

The Bureau of Prisons firmly adheres to a set of values that promotes honesty and integrity in the professional efforts of its staff to ensure public confidence in the Bureau's prudent use of its allocated resources.

### ■ *Recognizes the dignity of all*

Recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings and their potential for change, the Bureau of Prisons treats inmates fairly and responsively and affords them opportunities for self-improvement to facilitate their successful re-entry into the community. The Bureau further recognizes that offenders are incarcerated as punishment, not for punishment.

### ■ *Career service orientation*

The Bureau of Prisons is a career-oriented service, which has enjoyed a consistent management philosophy and a continuity of leadership, enabling it to evolve as a stable, professional leader in the field of corrections.

### ■ *Community relations*

The Bureau of Prisons recognizes and facilitates the integral role of the community in effectuating the Bureau's mission, and works cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies, the courts, and other components of government.

### ■ *High standards*

The Bureau of Prisons requires high standards of safety, security, sanitation, and discipline, which promote a physically and emotionally sound environment for both staff and inmates.

**U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice**

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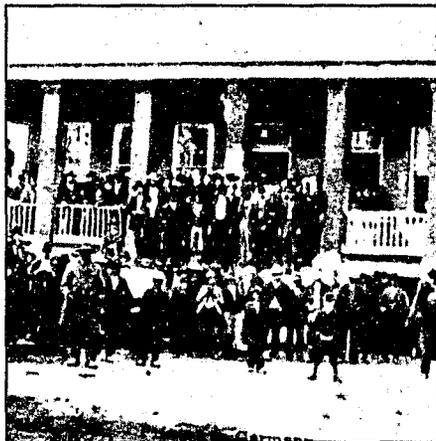
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# Prisons in Israel

*Judith D. Simon and Rita J. Simon*

In the spring of 1990, Middle East Watch, a human rights organization, received permission from the Israeli government to send a delegation to visit prisons in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. In August 1990, a three-person delegation consisting of Rita Simon, a sociologist, Judith Simon, an attorney and a former corrections officer, and Eric Goldstein, a staff member of Middle East Watch, visited four prisons run by the National Prison Service, two police lockups run by the Ministry of Police, and five detention camps run by the Israeli Defense Forces (the Israeli army). Our objective was to inspect and report on conditions inside the facilities. We were instructed not to investigate or report on the propriety of incarcerating any particular inmates or groups of inmates (such as Palestinians being held under administrative detention).<sup>1</sup> We returned in August 1992 for a followup visit to several institutions.

The National Prison Service, a division within the Ministry of Police, operates all of the prisons to which adults convicted under Israeli

criminal laws are sent. Arabs (except those convicted of security offenses) and Jews are housed in common living units in these facilities. Residents of the occupied territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) who are being held under administrative detention<sup>2</sup> or who have been convicted of a crime are not sent to Prison Service prisons, but instead are held in camps run by the army. Finally, the Police Ministry operates lockups for pretrial detainees and for convicted offenders awaiting transfer to a Prison Service facility. Israeli law requires that juveniles be separated from adult inmates, and in all facilities women are kept separate from men.

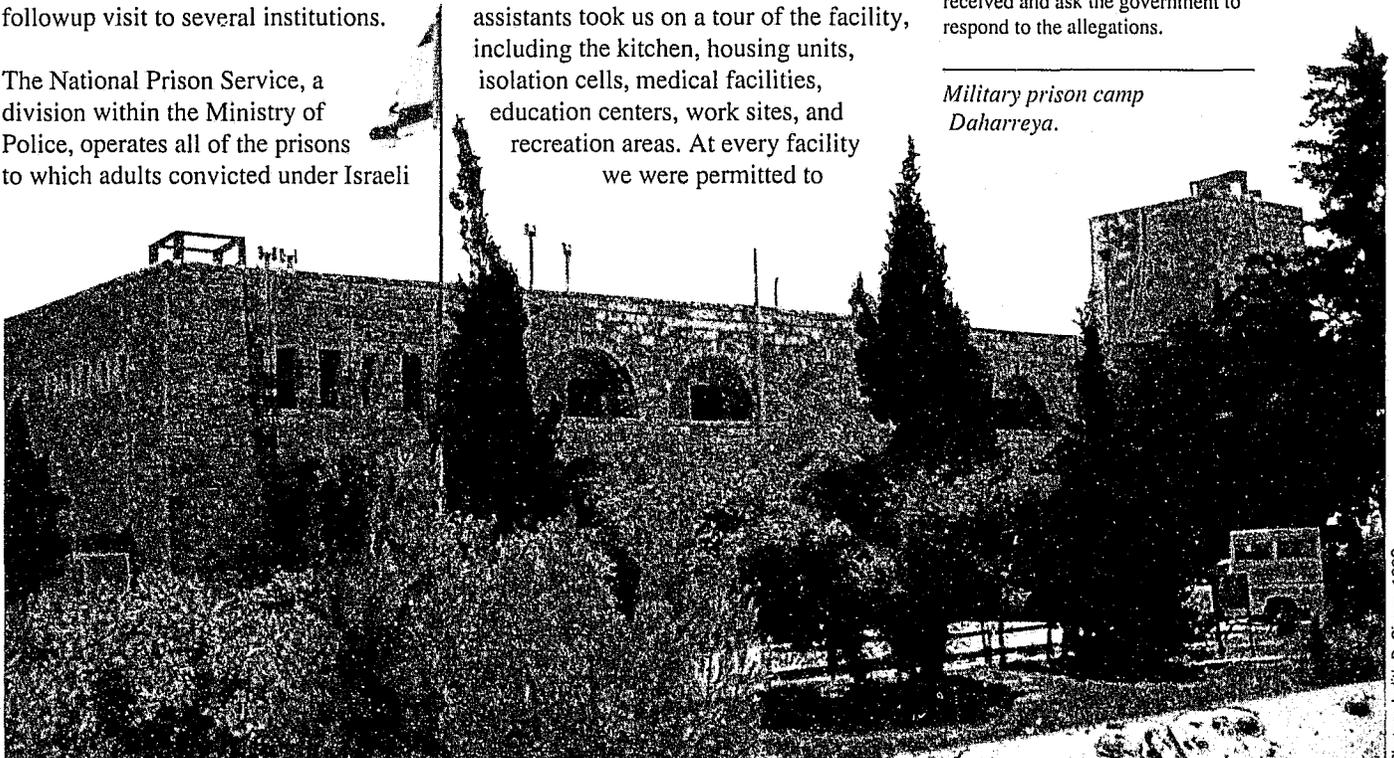
At each facility we met with the warden or commander, who gave us a brief overview of the types of prisoners housed at the institution, explained general institution policies, and answered our many questions. Following the briefing, the commander or one of his (or her) assistants took us on a tour of the facility, including the kitchen, housing units, isolation cells, medical facilities, education centers, work sites, and recreation areas. At every facility we were permitted to

talk freely with randomly selected inmates and with specific inmates whose names were known to the Middle East Watch staff member. In all facilities our conversations with the inmates took place outside the hearing of staff members. At some places we were given a private room in which to meet with prisoners and conduct extended interviews.

<sup>1</sup>The views expressed in this article are not shared by one member of the delegation, Eric Goldstein, who wrote a separate report from that written by the other two members of the team.

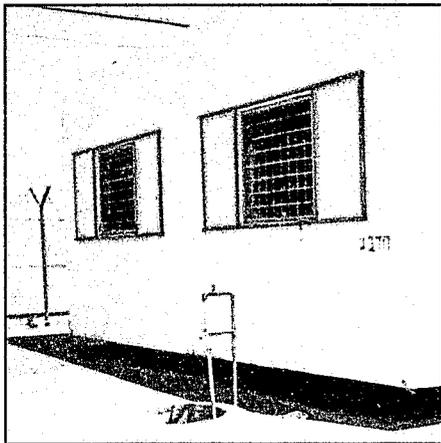
<sup>2</sup>Administrative detention is not part of Israeli law and therefore does not apply to Israeli citizens. It is a law left over from British-ruled Palestine and has been maintained pursuant to the Hague and Geneva Conventions. This law permits the Israeli government to hold detainees for up to 6 months without charging them with a specific crime. At the end of 6 months the detention may be extended for another 6-month period; there is no limit on the number of extensions. The detainee is not without legal recourse because he can always file a complaint (a "Bagatz") with the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court must review each complaint received and ask the government to respond to the allegations.

*Military prison camp  
Daharveya.*



## National Prison Service prisons

The four Prison Service facilities we visited appeared to be orderly, well-run institutions that more than adequately provide for the inmates' basic needs such as food and shelter, and provide an impressive array of educational, vocational, and recreational opportunities. Each prison has a small clinic for treating minor health problems. Inmates needing extensive treatment are sent to hospitals in the community or to the large prison medical center. The prisoners with whom we spoke appeared healthy and active.



Isolation building, military prison camp Ketsiot.

National Prison Service policy requires the administration to allow inmates to receive at minimum one 30-minute visit per month, one phone call per week, and an unlimited number of incoming and outgoing letters. Inmates are permitted to visit and speak over the phone with their attorneys as often as the attorney deems necessary. None of the inmates with whom we spoke indicated that the facilities failed to adhere to these policies.

The institutions varied in population from 125 (at Nevei Terza, a women's facility) to 640 (at Maasiyahu, a minimum-security men's facility). We saw one minimum-security facility, two maximum-security facilities, and the sole women's facility. Housing accommodations vary among the facilities, but at most institutions at least two inmates are assigned to a room or cell. All cells or rooms contain a sink, a toilet, a bed for each inhabitant, and usually a shower and a window. Many inmates have personal radios, and some have televisions. Inmates are permitted to wear their own clothing and to decorate their rooms with pictures and other personal items. The rooms are not spacious, but the system is not overcrowded and in some places we even saw empty beds.<sup>3</sup> Most inmates spend a large part of the day outside of their cells at school, work, recreation, and meals. All institutions have dining halls where the prisoners take three daily meals. We noted that the kitchens and dining halls appeared clean and the food (meat and vegetables) looked appetizing.<sup>4</sup> All institutions have outside recreation areas, most with basketball courts. Nearly all of the facilities have lovely grounds with well-kept lawns and many flowers, all maintained by the inmates.

The National Prison Service maintains contracts with private companies that set up workshops at the institutions and employ inmates at the prevailing minimum wage, a rate of pay higher than that offered by the government-owned prison

<sup>3</sup>Israeli law and Prison Service regulations permit the Prison Service to refuse to accept inmates from the prison lockups if there is no space in any of the institutions. Of course, this sometimes results in the lockups becoming overcrowded, such as the Russian Compound in Jerusalem.

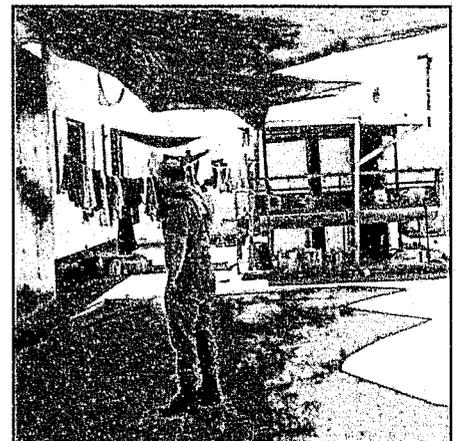
<sup>4</sup>The inmates complained that the food was bland and not often to their liking, but none complained that there was not enough to eat.

industries. These private industries include woodworking and an electrical shop. Prison industries employ inmates in print shops, and inmates work as groundskeepers, cooks, and maintenance workers. Several prisoners complained about the lack of safety in the workshops and recounted stories of inmates suffering severe injuries.

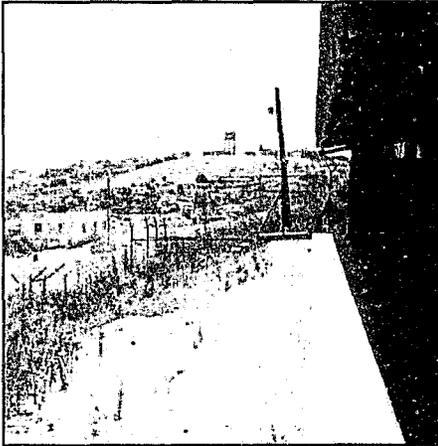
Many prisoners take classes to earn their high school equivalency, and others take specialized courses in computers, art, religious study, interpersonal skills, or languages. Correspondence courses are available for prisoners wishing to earn college credits.

The Prison Service has a number of other programs of interest:

- Most inmates are eligible for a furlough program after serving one-fourth of their sentences. The furlough program permits inmates to leave the institution for up to 72 hours. Additionally, inmates at the minimum-security facility who have 2 years or less remaining on their sentences are permitted to work outside the prison during the day and return at night.



Deputy commander in yard outside protective custody, sink and showers in background; military prison camp Ketsiot.



One side of family visiting area, village on outside of fence; military prison camp Daharreya.

- Some of the facilities have “drug-free wards” that permit prisoners who have demonstrated a commitment to remain free of drugs and alcohol to enjoy privileges not available to the general population, such as a later “lights out” time, additional recreation time, and more spacious quarters. Some prisons also have religious wards that permit prisoners who so wish to devote many hours each day to religious studies and to lead a relatively pious life.
- Women inmates who bear children while they are in prison are permitted to keep their children at the facility until the child reaches age 2.<sup>5</sup>
- Several facilities have family therapy programs to help inmates improve communication within their families. The therapy sessions are conducted during

<sup>5</sup>We saw a woman and her child living at the women’s prison. The child seemed healthy and happy and the women seemed pleased to have him there. The mother’s roommate had volunteered to live with the woman and her child and enjoyed the responsibility of helping with the baby.

visitation times in special areas where recreational facilities are available for the children. A counselor employed by the Prison Service works with the inmate and his family each week, or whenever the family can visit.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the prisons run by the Prison Service is the relationships we observed between inmates and staff and among the inmates. None of the inmates reported violence on the part of staff members, and both inmates and staff members told us that there were very few incidents of violence between inmates. Many staff members who accompanied us on our tours knew prisoners by name, and the prisoners were obviously acquainted with the staff members (including commanders), some of whom they addressed by their first names! On several occasions inmates would approach staff members with requests and seemed satisfied with the responses they received. There was no yelling or catcalling as we passed through various parts of the institutions. Arab and Jewish inmates reportedly get along, with few problems.

The Prison Service has in its custody juveniles who, by law, must be kept separate from adult inmates. The juveniles fall into two groups: those charged with ordinary crimes such as car theft, and those charged with *intifada*<sup>6</sup>-related crimes such as stone throwing. One Prison Service facility, Ha Sharon, houses all of the youth charged with ordinary crimes, and some of the youth charged with *intifada*-related activities.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>“Intifada” refers to the uprising of the Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem that has continued since the late 1980’s.

<sup>7</sup>Arab juveniles arrested for *intifada*-related activities also were held in one of the military camps and at the Russian Compound in Jerusalem.

The two groups live in separate areas, but have similar facilities. They eat three meals each day in a dining hall; have a recreation room with books, a television, and a ping-pong table; and have weekly half-hour family visits. The youth are out of their cells most of the day, attending classes in basic education, arts and crafts, religion, and recreation. The youth convicted of ordinary crimes are permitted to work in a private industry shop.

### Police Ministry lockups

The police lockups in Israel (the equivalent of our county and city jails) are under the direct control of the Police Ministry and are staffed by police officers. The National Prison Service has no involvement with these facilities. We visited the two largest facilities, one in Tel Aviv—Abu Kabir—and the other in Jerusalem—the Russian Compound. The facilities could not have been more different.

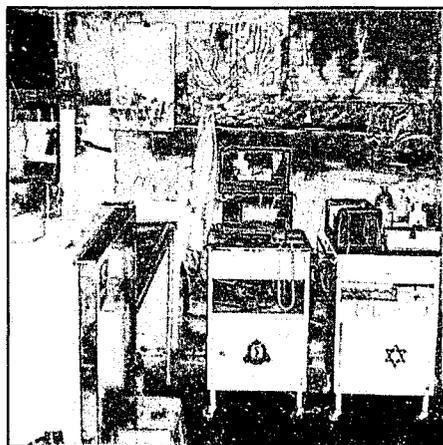
The Russian Compound, a building constructed by the British in 1856 to house Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem, was the worst facility we saw on our 1990 visit. The 300 inmates (most of whom



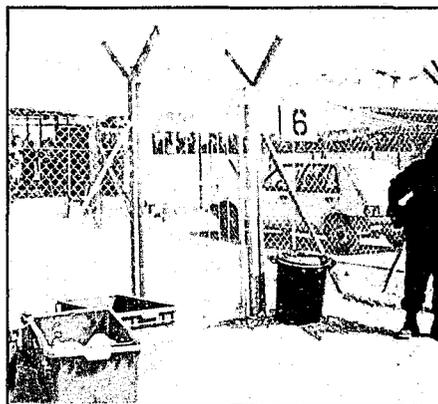
Youth living area, military prison camp Meggido.

were adult Arab men) were crammed into hot, poorly lit, poorly ventilated, smoke-filled cells, where they remain all day save for mealtime in the dining hall three times a day, and 1 hour of yard time. Prior to 1988 the Russian Compound held about 80 detainees, but the facility had since been expanded to accommodate the increase in arrests due to the *intifada*. The Police Ministry had plans to further expand the complex to improve the deplorable conditions.

Many of those held at the Russian Compound have been convicted and sentenced and are awaiting transfer to a Prison Service facility as soon as space becomes available. To accommodate sentenced inmates, who by law are entitled to rights not afforded detainees, the facility commander created a canteen and visiting area where the inmates can visit with their families on a weekly basis. A doctor is on call 24 hours a day, and a medic passes through each wing of the compound every day to speak with the prisoners and make a list of those wishing to see the doctor. Despite the poor living conditions, the inmates looked healthy. The Red Cross provides reading materials, though the detainees



Infirmary, military prison camp Ketsiot.



Family visiting area, military prison camp Ketsiot. Families place items brought to prisoners in separate bins.

reported that they receive very few newspapers and books. The kitchen looked clean and the food looked and smelled good.

Women detainees and women convicted of minor crimes are also held at the Compound in a separate wing. The two cells, each holding 11 women, were not crowded, and were well lit and well ventilated. The women have reading material provided by the Red Cross and are permitted to bring their own bed linens. Like the men, they are permitted weekly family visits. In addition to the prison doctor, who they can see by placing a request with the medic, the women may have their private doctors examine them at the facility. We heard no complaints about abuse by staff or other inmates.

The Russian Compound also holds Arab juveniles arrested for *intifada*-related activities. These youth are kept in a separate wing; the cells each hold 35-41 juveniles, some of whom had to sleep on mattresses on the floor. Despite the ventilator, and in some cases a window, the rooms were stuffy and dark. There is a recreation room with a television, board games, and a ping-pong table; a proba-

tion officer spends 90 minutes to 2 hours each day with the youth in the recreation room and on the yard outside.

The second police lockup, the Abu Kabir facility in Tel Aviv, is entirely different. It is a much newer and larger building (capacity is 500 detainees) with large, well-lit, well-ventilated cells, many of which were empty. Like the inmates at the Russian Compound, the inmates spend at least 1 hour on the yard each day; eat three meals a day in the dining hall; may purchase cigarettes, toiletries, and food from a canteen; and have weekly 90-minute family visits in an open visiting area.

### Army detention camps

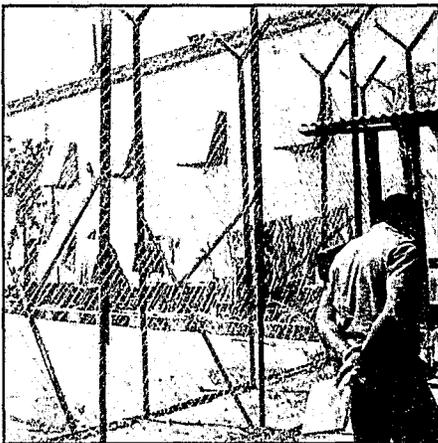
The Israeli army operates a number of detention camps in which they hold Arab residents of the occupied territories who have been arrested for *intifada*-related activities (including printing pamphlets, building explosives, and possessing weapons) or who are being administratively detained.<sup>8</sup> No Palestinian women are held in army-run facilities; rather, they are housed in a separate section of a Prison Service prison. The camps are governed by the "Military Policy Directive Concerning Detention Centers" and the Israeli Defense Forces' Standing Orders. In accordance with international law, administrative detainees are held separately from those who are awaiting trial or have been convicted.<sup>9</sup>

The need for facilities to house large numbers of detainees and persons charged with *intifada*-related crimes arose quickly; therefore, the army was

<sup>8</sup>The government explains that it is often unable to charge individuals with specific crimes; in order to prove that such crimes were committed the government would be forced to expose informants whose lives would then be in jeopardy.

forced to convert existing buildings into appropriate holding facilities,<sup>10</sup> and to construct camps similar to those set up for soldiers (with the addition of barbed-wire fencing surrounding each group of tents and surrounding the entire camp). The camps are all quite large; in 1990 the smallest held 450 prisoners, and the largest 6,200. The atmosphere at all of the camps was markedly more tense and more hostile than at the Prison Service prisons. The soldiers who guard the inmates were not specially trained in corrections, and they were forced to live in camps adjacent to the prison camps and endure the same uncomfortable conditions as the prisoners.

Most of the detainees live in large tents, each with 26 beds. They sleep on mattresses placed on top of wood pallets (as do the soldiers). In all but one of the camps, each group of tents has showers and toilet facilities accessible at all times, though hot water may only be available several times per week. Most inmates leave their tent areas only for attorney or family visits, or to see the doctor. There are few work opportunities in the camps,



Yard outside general population housing unit, military prison camp Meggido.

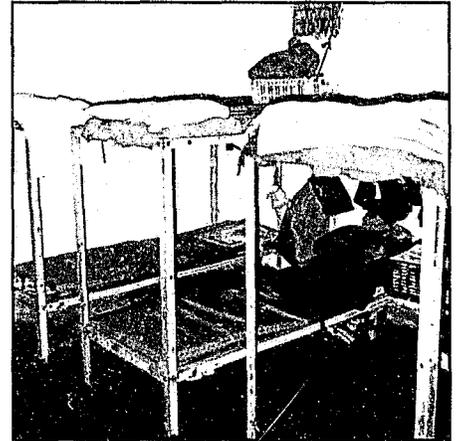
aside from food preparation and laundry. The areas are large enough to permit the men to exercise and to gather in small groups to pray.

The camp commanders generally leave the day-to-day living arrangements to the prisoners. Nearly all the camps employ the "shaweesh" system, whereby a group of men are selected jointly by the prison commander and the inmates to act as spokesmen for the prisoners. Prisoners other than the *shaweeshim* are generally prohibited from speaking to the soldiers, but this rule is not enforced at all facilities. The *shaweeshim* are responsible for such things as meal planning and setting portion sizes (the inmates' kitchens receive raw ingredients, the same as those given the soldiers, from which they prepare food as they see fit), for resolving problems among the inmates, and for speaking with the commanders about complaints and problems the prisoners are having. Aside from the counts taken several times a day and the weekly or monthly searches, the soldiers rarely enter the inmates' living areas, and generally have little contact with them. At several facilities the inmates offered us coffee, tea, and sweets while we spoke with them. At one facility the commander drank coffee and chatted with prisoners in the kitchen area while we wandered around and spoke with other inmates.

<sup>9</sup>Administrative detainees are entitled to greater rights and privileges than prisoners charged with or convicted of specific charges. The Israeli army provides them with somewhat better living accommodations.

<sup>10</sup>One camp, Meggido, had been a military prison for Israeli soldiers, and a second, Fara'ah, was built by the British as a prison.

<sup>11</sup>Inmates suspected of "collaborating" with the Israelis are frequently attacked or killed—often before they are aware of such suspicions. If the officials are notified, they immediately remove the suspected prisoner from the general population.



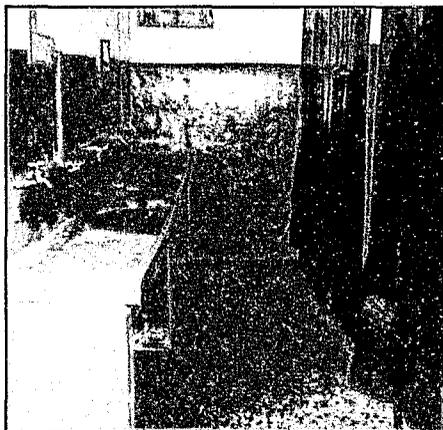
General population living unit, military prison camp Ketsiot.

In 1990, all the camps had isolation cells for prisoners who violate rules, and for inmates needing protection.<sup>11</sup> These cells were, in all cases, dark, small, and hot. In some camps the cells were empty, but those that were occupied were quite crowded and the occupants looked somewhat dazed.

Inmates are entitled to three meals a day, to visit with lawyers freely and frequently, to receive and send mail, to receive medical treatment, and to be free from physical abuse. In no facilities are the prisoners permitted to make phone calls. Personal radios and televisions are prohibited, but news and music are broadcast several times a day in Hebrew and Arabic. The Red Cross provides reading materials, including newspapers and books; only titles on an "approved book list" are permitted. Inmates wear their own clothing, but in some facilities they are prohibited from wearing red, black, or green—the colors of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Also prohibited are the giving of lectures or seminars, and wearing jewelry (though we noticed that many inmates were wearing watches and necklaces).

The inmates at the military camps had many more complaints than did those at Prison Service facilities on our 1990 visit. The physical setup at the camps was more rugged and less comfortable, but this was not the source of the complaints. Rather, the men complained that their mail was often delayed weeks and sometimes never received at all; they lacked interesting reading material and suffered from boredom; they were not permitted to visit with their lawyers or their families as often as they desired;<sup>12</sup> and they did not receive adequate medical care.

All of the members of our delegation were pleasantly surprised at the conditions we saw at the 11 facilities during our 1990 visit. The National Prison Service prisons were impressive by any standards—in terms of the physical conditions, the relations between inmates and their custodians, and the policies. The camps run by the army were less impressive in those aspects, but were far better than we expected. We saw no evidence that the prisoners are subjected



*Shower/bathroom area inside living area, military prison camp Fara'ah.*

to physical abuse. The inmates are well fed and receive medical treatment, they are free to spend time with one another, and they receive visits from their lawyers and families.

We did see problems that needed to be addressed, including the lack of family visits at the largest army camp, the deplorable conditions at the Russian Compound in Jerusalem, and the lack of activities for the prisoners held in the army camps.

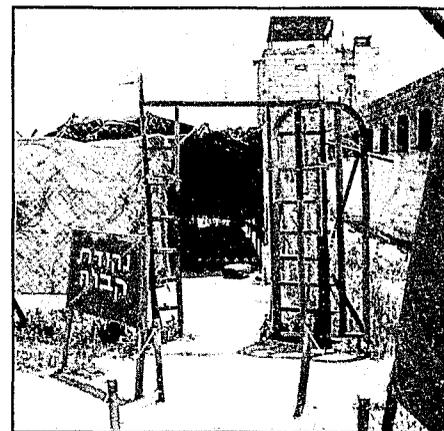
### **A second visit: 1992**

In the summer of 1992, the authors returned to three of the prison camps run by the Israeli Defense Forces that we visited 2 years earlier, and also visited an additional camp. The overall population of Palestinians held in prison camps under administrative detention has decreased significantly,<sup>13</sup> due in part to a change in the policy of the military justice system to detain only those charged with more substantial offenses.<sup>14</sup> The decrease in population has alleviated most of the overcrowding problems. As a result, living conditions have improved and there is less tension at the camps. In the past year there were only two murders, no suicides, and very little violence either on the part of inmates or staff.

<sup>12</sup>There continues to be a serious problem with family visits at Ketsiot, the largest military detention camp. Because the camp is located in a security zone, the prisoners' families may not travel there without escort. The families—as a form of protesting the civilian administration that governs the West Bank—have refused to participate in the escort program arranged by the Red Cross. The army continues to negotiate with the Palestinians in the hope of working out a mutually acceptable plan.

<sup>13</sup>Presently there are about 7,500 detainees. Persons are being detained at the rate of 10-12,000 per year, down from 20,000 per year at the high point.

<sup>14</sup>The number of administrative detainees has dropped 70 percent over the past 2 years.



*Reception area for new intakes, military prison camp Daharreja.*

During the past 2 years, the Israeli Defense Forces have been able to give additional training to the Military Police commanders in charge of the facilities, and they now have military police at nearly all facilities. These soldiers have been specifically trained to work with prisoners. These factors—the decrease in population, the additional training provided to staff, and the expertise gained from operating the prison camps for several years—has led to many changes in the prisons that render them more humane places of confinement.

Improvements have been made regarding the processing of mail, the quality of food, conditions under which family and attorney visits take place, forms of punishment for disciplinary violations, and staff-detainee relations. Two years ago, the detainees complained that they did not receive their mail in a timely fashion, they were not permitted to see their lawyers as often as needed, and that their family visits were problematic. In 1992 we heard no complaints about the mail except at Ketsiot (the largest facility), where we were told that

inmates received very little mail and were not permitted to send out letters. We investigated these allegations and saw the log where all the incoming and outgoing mail is recorded—about 2,500 pieces each week. At every facility we were told by the military commanders that the censors were able to process the mail quickly and no problems existed.

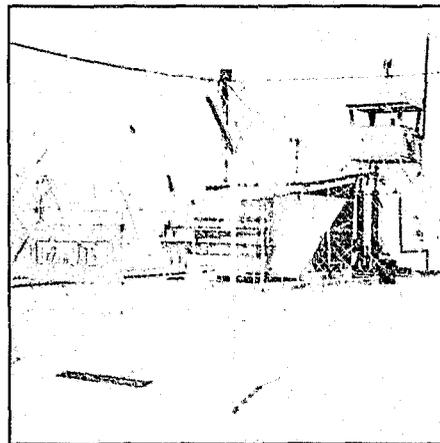
In 1992 we heard no complaints regarding lawyer visits. At every facility new structures have been built that provide the detainees and their attorneys a fair amount of privacy; the soldier who is monitoring the visit stands in a room with a closed door separating him from the detainees and lawyers. The prisoners' only complaint regarding family visits in 1992 was that the buildings are too crowded and noisy so that the visits are not as pleasant as if they were more private. An alternative would be to cut back on the frequency of visits for each detainee, but this is not an attractive possibility.

Every facility had new structures for family visits that provide shelter from the sun and rain. Even at Ketsiot, where there had been no family visits for several years, visits now take place twice a month. Family visits were taking place the day we were there, and we were able to see the families and detainees talking and visiting. When the detainee's family includes very young children the men are permitted to visit outside of the main structure (where two meshes separate the two groups) in an area where there is only a single fence. This way the father is able to put his hand through the holes in the fence and touch the child. We were able to see the orderly manner in which the army inspects and processes the packages of food, clothing, and personal supplies brought for the detainees.

The army now rarely uses isolation cells as punishment. In three of the four camps we visited, isolation cells are not used at all, and at Ketsiot, where they continue to be used, new cells are a dramatic improvement over the small, dark, hot cells we previously saw. The new cells are large (12 square meters with a maximum of four prisoners and a minimum of two), each has a big window, and, most importantly, the occupants are permitted to spend 90 minutes outside each day.

A significant number of detainees were in protective custody at Ketsiot. These men are permitted 6 hours in the yard, and they are the only prisoners held by the Israeli Defense Forces who are afforded the luxury of viewing television! To date there are still no personal radios allowed inside the facilities, but there is talk of changing this policy in the near future.

Detainees (administrative and others) are still prohibited from holding classes or giving lectures, though most of the commanders permit the inmates to sit in their tents and speak quietly about whatever they wish. The only exception to the prohibition against conducting



Recreation yard for isolation section, military prison camp Ketsiot.

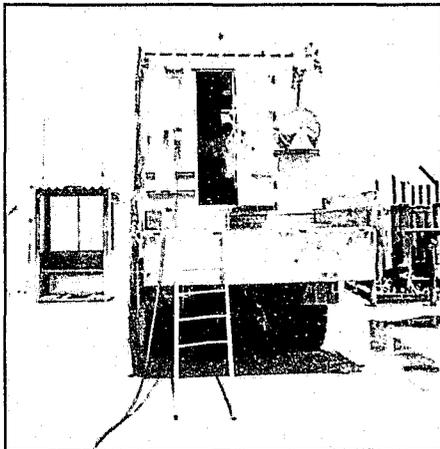
classes is at Meggido. The commander of Meggido permits one of the adults to serve as a teacher for the 300 youth (aged 14-16) and hold classes in subjects such as math and history. The adults at Meggido are also permitted to hold classes (so long as the subject is not terrorism), but the detainees rarely do so.

In none of the camps did we hear allegations of staff brutality and in only one facility did we hear a legations of staff misconduct: at Ketsiot the *shaweeshim* with whom we spoke claimed that soldiers have stolen from the families during the course of searching them before the visit. The Commander and his staff reported that such allegations had never been raised before, either to them or to the members of the Red Cross who visit Ketsiot.

In general, both detainees and staff felt that relations were much improved as compared to several years ago and that there was little hostility or animosity at the camps. At Meggido, where relations between staff and the detainees were remarkably good 2 years ago, the situation is extraordinary. Not only did both the detainees and the staff mention this in our discussions, but their actions made this eminently clear. For example, as we sat and talked with the *shaweeshim*, they welcomed the commander, his deputy, and the officer in charge of the section to sit at their table under a tent, smoke their cigarettes, drink their coffee, and eat their pastries and candies. They also provided these refreshments to the officer standing watch outside the gate! One of the *shaweeshim* explained:

The commander has taught us how to live together in peace. My dream is for our own country, for peace, for our children, mine and his, to go to the same school.

At the time of the Israeli elections we held a congress that met for 10 days to discuss the *intifada*, prison, and the world. This was our experience with democracy.



Mobile dental unit treating prisoners, military prison camp Ketsiot.

The detainees were not without complaints: there is not enough variety in the food, medical treatment is not as good as it should be, the rooms are hot, and visits are too short. But it was clear that the situation at the prisons run by the Israeli Defense Forces had improved dramatically in the past 2 years, and they cannot now be said to violate accepted standards for care of prisoners.

In addition to the army prison camps, we also returned to the Russian Compound, the city jail in Jerusalem that is run by the Police Ministry. Two years ago we found conditions in the Russian Compound to be substantially worse than at

any of the army prison camps or the National Prison Service facilities. In early August 1992, several Knesset members visited the Russian Compound and reported deplorable conditions, similar to those we witnessed in 1990. When we visited the Russian Compound on August 16, 1992, we were pleasantly surprised at the remarkable improvements that had been made! The most important difference was the size of the population, down from 300, at the time of our 1990 visit, to just 204.<sup>15</sup> (It was interesting to note that at the time of our visit, 56 out of the 174 adult men were Jews.)

This reduction has led to a dramatic improvement in the living conditions inside the cells; no longer were large numbers of inmates sleeping on the floor, no longer was the air in the rooms so hot and stale that breathing was difficult. Instead, the ventilators seemed to keep the air circulating; one could even feel a breeze in some of the rooms. Very few inmates were forced to sleep on the floor. There was enough room in the cells for the inmates to have a little table and chair, to keep their personal property, to hang their laundry to dry, and to walk around without stepping on someone. Other improvements included new paint on the walls, beautiful murals on the walls in the dining halls (where every prisoner eats three meals a day), clean cells, and much less tension.

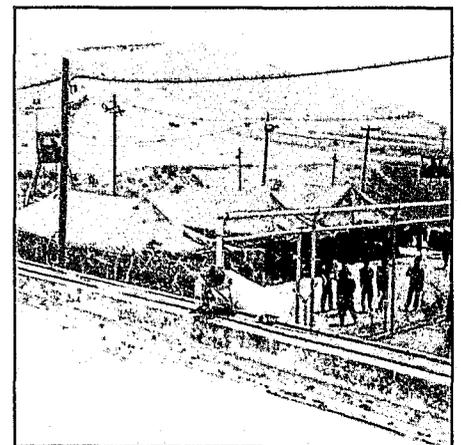
The inmates at the Russian Compound had some complaints, but many fewer than we heard in 1990. No longer is there a problem with inmates notifying their families that they are being held; the

<sup>15</sup>This reduction was the result of the National Prison Service accepting from the jail a significant number of sentenced prisoners. The population could again rise if the National Prison Service waits a long time before accepting another batch of prisoners.

police telephone or personally visit the inmate's family within 48 hours of his or her arrival at the jail. Every inmate (except those in interrogation) is permitted to visit with family once a week, and to place a phone call to family once a week as well. The complaints are that the 30 minutes outside in the yard is not enough, the food lacks variety, and the medical care is not as good as it should be (though there have been no outbreaks of disease). Conditions at the Russian Compound did not, at the time of our visit, differ dramatically from those at the army prison camps.

Both the Israeli Defense Forces and the Ministry of Police should be commended on the significant efforts they have made to improve the facilities we visited. The Israeli army should also be commended for the extraordinary access they granted us to visit their facilities and to speak with the inmates. ■

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Overlooking general population living area, military prison camp Fara'ah.