



She'arit Hapleta (the Surviving Remnant)

Term of biblical origin. After the war, the term "She'arit Hapleta" was used to refer to the Jewish survivors and refugees who refused to begin life again in Holocaust-devastated Europe -- especially in eastern Europe, which was infected with anti-Semitism. Most of them gathered in the DP camps and organized and demanded to leave Europe, mainly in order to immigrate to Palestine. In this sense, the term "She'arit Hapleta" describes a group that distinguished itself from the remnants of European Jewry after the war. The term is usually used in reference to the period after the war from 1945 to the dismantling of the Central Committee of She'arit Hapleta in December 1950.

After the Allies' victory over Germany in May 1945, there were about eight million DPs in Europe, including 200,000 Jews: survivors of the concentration camps, the death camps and the death marches. Several thousand Jews were in a state of collapse at liberation and died from weakness, disease and the shock of liberation. Thousands returned to their lands of origin as repatriates, or travelled to southern Europe in order to immigrate to Palestine. About 50,000 were left, gathered in DP camps in the occupied zones in Germany and Austria. They were joined by many Jewish refugees who arrived from eastern Europe, particularly Poland, with the help of the Bericha organization; there were also survivors, repatriates, who returned to the west, and refugees from Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia. It has been estimated that the number of Jewish DPs stood at 250,000 in 1946: 185,000 of them were living in Germany, 45,000 in Austria, and about 20,000 in Italy. Most of the members of She'arit Hapleta came from eastern Europe, while most of the survivors from western countries returned to their countries of origin and renewed their lives there.