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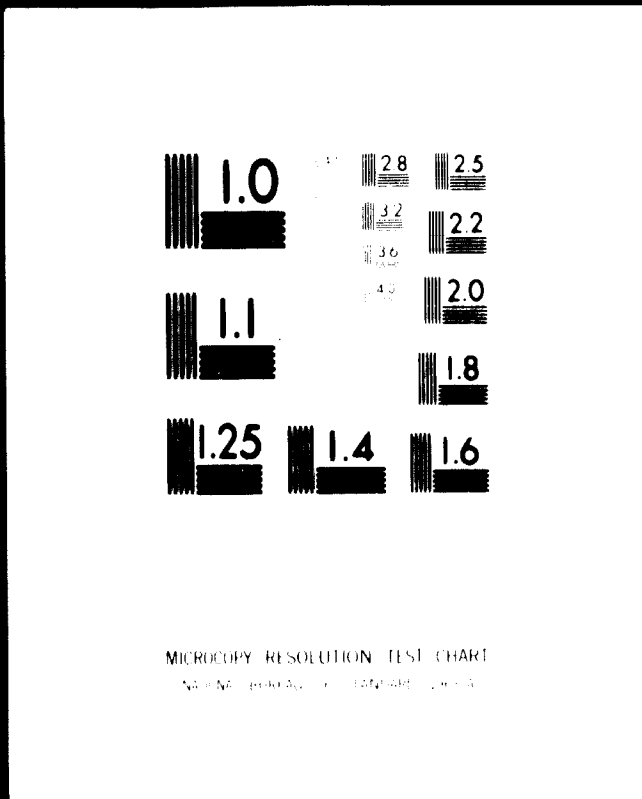
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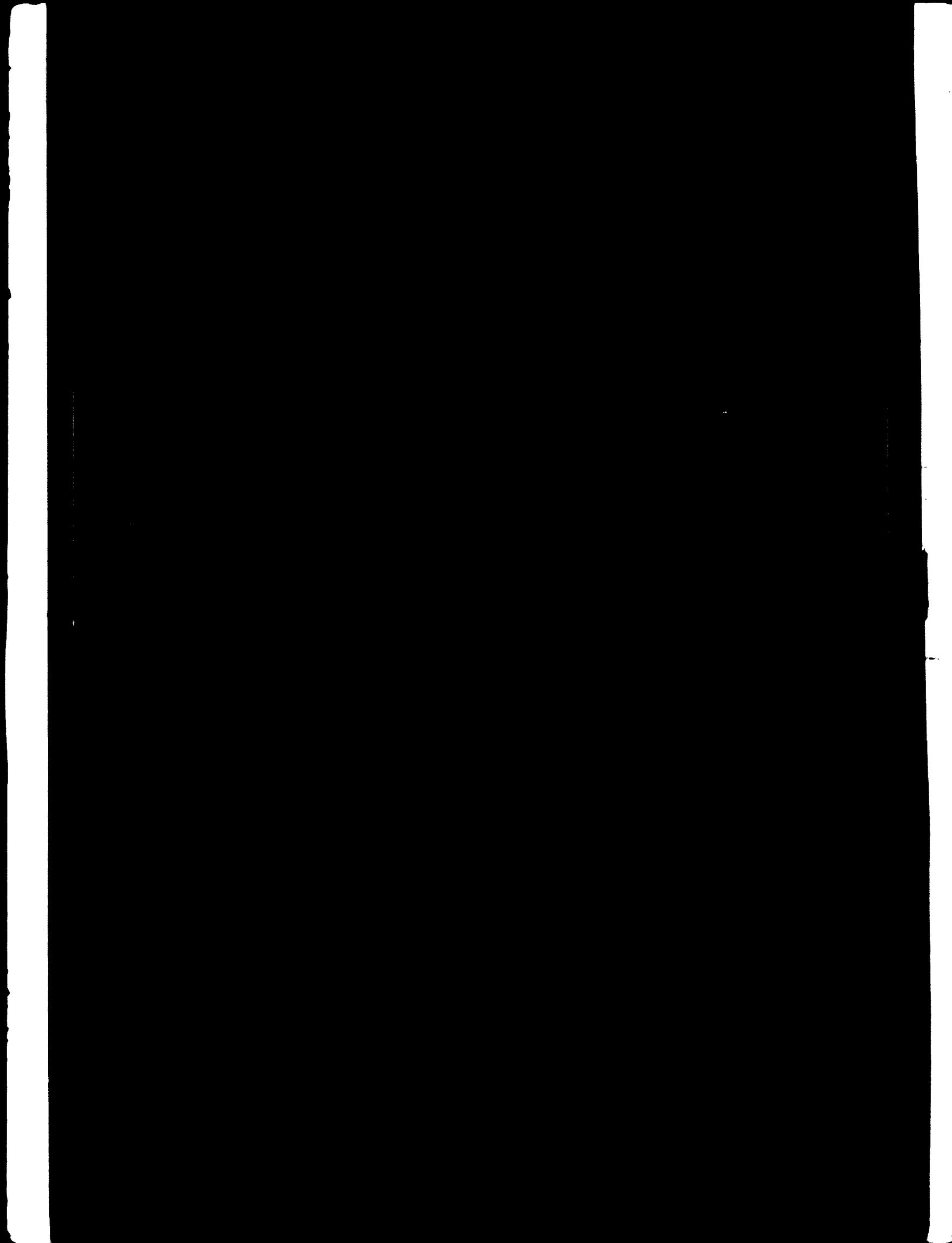
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Seminar on the Furniture
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THE FURNITURE INDUSTRIES OF CYPRUS ^{i/}

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Situation of the Cyprus Furniture Industries.

During the past five years the furniture industry has developed enormously due to the increasing number of tourists visiting the country and the vast creation of new hotel complexes and apartments. Therefore industries related to this factor of the economy have also developed and increased in number. New industrial manufacturing units were created in order to meet the demand of the building industry.

This lasted till July 1974, because of the Turkish invasion.

Furniture and Joinery industries represented 5 per cent of the manufacturing sector and 1 per cent of the gross output of the economy in 1973 and early in 1974. At the time twenty large furniture manufacturing units were operating in Cyprus, each employing more than thirty employees. The total number of people employed in the large and smaller firms in 1973 was 2,854.

The gross output in 1973 was £ 5,341,000 and the value added £ 2,828,000. In 1974, from January to June, the gross output was £ 2,803,000.

There are many problems unfortunately, facing the industry today and the main one is survival.

With the Turkish invasion and the political problem unsolved, tourism has been reduced to a minimum. 95 per cent of the hotels are not operating and the populations' spending power, having in mind the 200,000 refugees, is very low.

Firms had to diversify their products for the home market and look for new markets abroad.

Diversifying the product line at short notice is an enormously difficult task. Different materials, new ways of production result in low quality, unhealthy and unplanned production, personnel problems,

sales difficulties.

Looking for new markets and the exports of furniture presents also the same and even more difficulties. Professional staff specially trained for export and new ways of production, availability of materials were and are the main requirements of the industry. Where to sell? What to sell? How to produce more economically? are the questions that managers are facing.

Part of the difficulties, though, have been overcome and with the effort and strength managers and employees show the furniture industry might obtain its previous peak again.

Timber Supply.

Before 1974 almost all timber and material, supply was imported from mainly Europe in plank form.

Although the forest supply could satisfy the home demand in Softwoods, mainly pine, very few small sawmills were operating with very small output. In 1974 an up to date, modernized sawmill started operating in the capital Nicosia, satisfying the whole demand in Softwoods.

Cyprus' pine trees which incidently are overmature provide a comparatively hard timber, much harder than the Swedish or Russian pine, suitable for furniture, door frames and building purposes.

Other species of timbers such as Beech, Teak, Oak, Sapele, which are most commonly used for furniture, are still imported from Yugoslavia, England, Thailand and Africa.

Cyprus pine is seasoned in electric kilns in the same mill where it is sawn and is sold to furniture manufacturers in an edged form already dried.

Other timber based materials, such as particle board is also

manufactured in Cyprus by the semi-government firm using the off-cuts and branches of the pine trees. The manufacturing of particle board started a few weeks ago and it is supplied to the furniture manufacturers in various standard sizes such as 4" x 3", 6" x 9", 6" x 12", 5" x 10", etc.

Plywood, Hardboard and fibreboard are mainly imported from Greece, Israel and Finland by the timber merchants.

Glues mostly used are: P.V.Ac, Hot-melt and Ureaformaldehyde and are imported from England and Germany. Furniture fittings such as hinges, metal handles, castors, knocked down fittings, latches, etc. are also imported from various European countries, mainly Germany, England and Yugoslavia.

Also imported are the finishing materials such as Melamine lacquers (clear and pigmented) and Cellulose materials. These are imported from East Germany, Holland and Denmark.

Labour

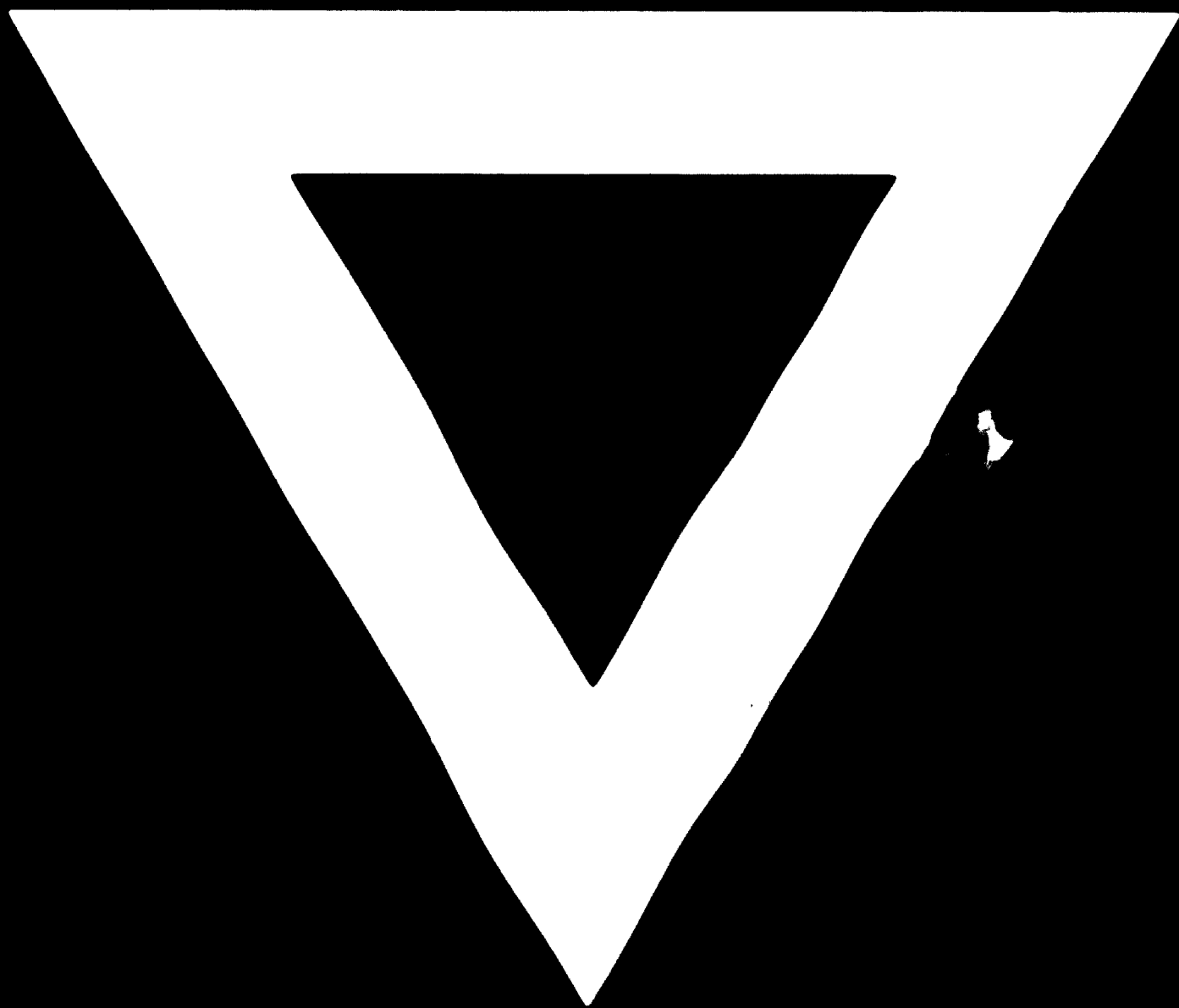
Speaking about times before the war, the position of labour was full employment and the power of the labour force was increasing all the time due to the demand.

The quality of the labour force is mainly high skilled due to the methods of production, therefore highly paid when compared to the local cost of living, but on comparing it with costs in Europe it can be said that labour in Cyprus was very cheap.

Training and higher education of employees in the furniture industry was mostly arranged by the Cyprus Productivity Centre and also the International Labour Office stationed in Nicosia. Seminars on furniture production, salesmanship, etc. were organized by the C.P.C. occasionally. There were also organized courses of small durations in order to familiarize employees in new ways of production and new machinery and materials. Planned training and courses within the firms hardly ever occurred due to the small size of the firms.



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