



# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

## An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 11

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The picture on our front cover shows the tot who won the "Cleanest Baby" award in a Health Education contest at Aqabat Jaber camp. On the back cover, we show the schoolgirl who won the "Cleanliness Award" for her group.

These and other photographs of Arab refugees may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, UNESCO Building, Beirut, Lebanon.

The text of all articles in this Newsletter may be reproduced without acknowledgement.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED

UNRWA will seek \$2,000,000 from voluntary sources over the next two years to finance vocational training grants for young refugees, UNRWA Director John H. Davis announced in his Annual Report to the United Nations General Assembly, issued on 1 October.

Dr. Davis added that the experience of raising \$4.4 million, largely as a result of World Refugee Year, had convinced him that this new drive would also meet with success.

In his report, which covers the period 1 July 1960 to 30 June 1961, Dr. Davis reviewed progress on the three-year programme he put before the General Assembly last fall.

He told the Assembly that World Refugee Year donations had enabled the Agency to "press vigorously ahead" to expand its vocational training facilities and that the building programme was now ahead of schedule.

Four centres had either been newly built or expanded, while plans were well under way for the construction or expansion of five others, he said. UNRWA's aim, he added, was to reach a point where some 2,000 young refugees are graduated from its centres annually, as against 300 in 1960.

But accelerating the three-year building programme, he said, the Agency had drawn "heavily" on its working capital. He explained this was necessary to cover the two other major aspects of the programme - continuing relief to an increasing population at present per capita levels, and making essential expansions and improvements in UNRWA's general education programme.

The report called on Governments to increase their donations by a total of \$9,800,000 over the next two years. These Governments finance UNRWA operations through annual contributions in the neighbourhood of \$34,000,000.

The report pointed out that this amount would complete financing of the \$16,200,000 programme, when added to funds received or expected from extra budgetary sources - \$4,400,000 during World Refugee Year and the \$2,000,000 being sought over the next two years.

Dr. Davis explained that of the \$2,000,000, he would seek \$1,000,000 in 1962 and the other \$1,000,000 in 1963. He said he planned to solicit the funds in the form of 2,000 scholarships of \$500 each to put young refugees through UNRWA vocational training centres.

Reviewing the refugee problem as a whole, the Director declared that it had continued for longer than was at first envisaged because no solution proposed had taken into account the "deep feelings and aspirations of the people of the Middle East as a whole".

The problem today was shifting more and more from the older to the younger adults, he said. He warned further that if these young men and women, 30,000 of whom reach maturity annually, were deprived of the chance for vocational training, many might become more of a liability than an asset to any country in which they might reside.

Pointing out that it is not in the power of either the host Arab Governments or UNRWA to find a solution, he told the General Assembly that for some time to come, there might well be "no practical alternative" to continuing to provide relief services and education to refugees.

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IN BRIEF

United Nations Day Observed

On United Nations Day, 24 October, UNRWA participated in several ceremonies to commemorate the sixteenth anniversary of the ratification of the Charter of the United Nations on 24 October, 1945.

In Lebanon, UNRWA's work was illustrated at a reception given by United Nations Missions and Agencies in Beirut. Films and photographs showing United Nations activities were exhibited. Among the guests were representatives of the Lebanese Government and members of the diplomatic corps in Beirut.

Prime Minister of Jordan Bahjat Talhouni was guest of honour at another United Nations Day celebration, the official opening in Jordan of the extension of UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre, near Amman. The extension has been financed by gifts from the Governments of Kuwait and Morocco through the Jordan Government, and from the Australian World Refugee Year Committee.

UNRWA, in the Gaza Strip, joined with the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in planning a series of events to mark United Nations Day, including a reception and a ceremonial parade.

Visitors.

During October, United States Senator Stuart Symington from Missouri studied the Palestine refugee problem and UNRWA operations in Lebanon and Jordan in the course of a five-week fact-gathering tour of the Middle East and Southern Asia, undertaken in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee of Near East and South Asian Affairs.

During an official tour in the Middle East, Mr. Phillips Talbot, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, visited UNRWA camps and installations in Lebanon and Jordan towards the end of October.

Early in the month, Dr. Charles Hill, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and a member of the British Cabinet, conferred with UNRWA officials in Beirut on the subject of the Palestine refugees.

The Right Reverend Monsignor Joseph T. Ryan, National Secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association and President of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, returned to the Middle East at the end of September to inspect progress of the Mission's work for the Palestine refugees. For two years Monsignor Ryan was Field Director of the Mission here. In this Newsletter we publish on page 9 an account of the Pontifical Mission work for the Palestine refugees.

Mr. Henry S. Moyer, President of the Philanthropic Fund of the American Council for Judaism, inspected UNRWA facilities for Palestine refugees in Lebanon and Jordan during late September and early October.

American Groups Help to Launch  
UNRWA's Scholarship Programme.

A gift of medical supplies from the American Middle East Relief Inc. (AMER) is giving ten Palestine refugee youths a year of vocational training, beginning this fall. AMER agreed that the money the Agency would otherwise have spent on the supplies - mainly antibiotics and vitamins - be used to finance one year's training for a number of refugees.

Meanwhile, donations received from the National City Christian Church, Washington and the Christian Womens' Fellowship, Wichita Falls, Texas are enabling five refugee girls to start their first year of Teacher Training. These 15 scholarships are among the first to be donated under UNRWA's new scholarship programme, announced in the Director's Annual Report (see page 2).

A Million Visitors View UNRWA at Turin.

Nearly one million persons became acquainted with UNRWA's work for the Palestine Arab refugees at the International Labour Exhibition at Turin, Italy. This was the tally of visitors to a display of photographs and films of refugees exhibited by UNRWA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at the United Nations Pavilion from 15 September to 15 October.

Case Worker Studies Social Welfare in United States.

George Tamari, a Palestine refugee and UNRWA's Assistant Field Welfare Officer for case work in Jordan, has returned to his desk in Jerusalem, after four months' study and field work sponsored by the United States Information Service at the Cleveland International Programme. Mr. Tamari was one of eighty-five participants from twenty-three countries. This is the second occasion on which an UNRWA Welfare worker has won a scholarship to attend the conference.

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Uniforms for the Deaf and Dumb.

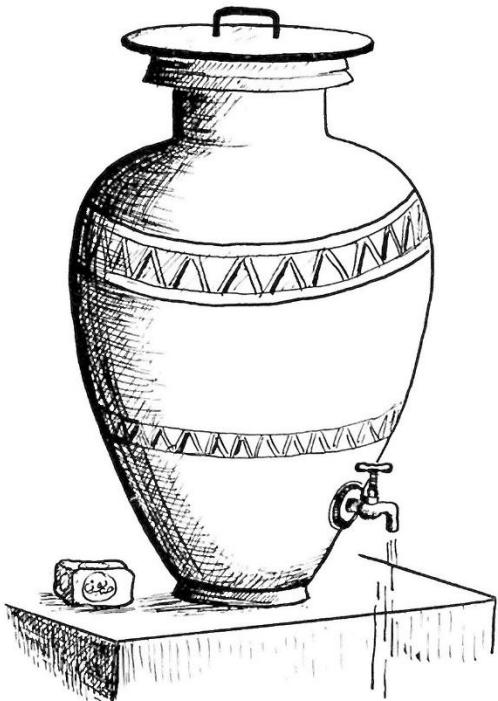
Handicapped Palestine refugee youngsters can study happily beside the sons and daughters of wealthy Arab families at Al-Amal Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Cairo. Three voluntary agencies which help Palestine refugees in the Middle East agreed to pay \$480 for school uniforms for the 43 youngsters, while UNRWA's Women's Auxiliary paid an equal sum. UNRWA, whose funds cover only the course of study at Al-Amal, asked the Near East Christian Council, the Lutheran World Federation, and the Pontifical Mission, to join in the clothing donation.

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RUNNING WATER MAKES A MODEL HOME

How can one make a "Model Home" out of a bare, one-room refugee hut?

More than 2,500 refugees in Aqabat Jaber Camp in the Jordan Valley near Jericho, one of the hottest spots on earth, came to find this out one day late this summer. Health Educator Yahya Hindi had climaxed his traditional summer cleanliness campaign with a "Model Home" exhibition. Mukhtars in Arab headdress jostled with young men at the show, and on another day set aside specially for women, the shyer mothers carrying their infants came to gaze along with fresh-faced school girls.

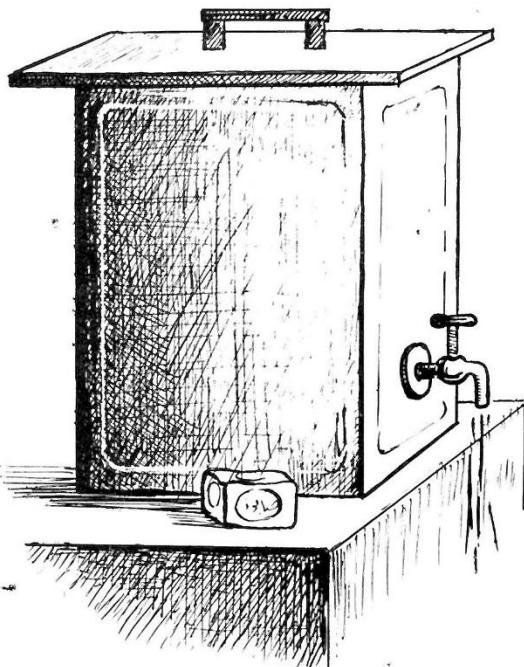


a bit of wood to cover the garbage container, to keep flies and other insects from breeding there.

Primitive as they are, these amenities represent a luxury to many refugees -- the luxury of cleanliness. But this is a luxury which more and more camp residents today are learning is a necessity, as UNRWA Health Educators continue to impress on them that personal and domestic cleanliness is the key to good health.

The house they saw boasted a large earthenware water jar and a square tin container, both covered and both with taps protruding from their sides. This meant there was clean running water. But most refugee women, when they bring their water home in jars or tins on their heads from taps furnished in camps, ladle it out afterwards to drink or pour it into a pan to be used for washing.

The house had other features -- a curtain to cover the shelves which held the family's meagre provisions; a piece of gauze to ward off the flies attempting to invade the baby's crib;



Education on a wide scale was virtually unknown in the Middle East when UNRWA health officials decided in 1953 that it was essential to embark on a programme to teach the refugee the elements of healthy living. Most refugee camp dwellers came from humble rural backgrounds in Palestine -- and many were ignorant of the dangers of insanitary habits. But garbage thrown into the streets and failure to keep public latrines clean were creating health hazards in crowded camps, and multiplying the work of UNRWA's heavily-burdened field health staff.

To teach the people, health educators were needed. And to train the health educators, the Agency brought in William Darity, American Negro Health Educator from North Carolina, who today is Regional Adviser for Health Education at the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office in Alexandria. Together with UNRWA's doctors, sanitary specialists, nurses, and nutritionists, and helped by experts in social welfare and audio-visual education, he set out to give a year's training to 20 refugees.



Among the most outstanding of these original volunteers was Yahya Hindi, a former store-keeper under the British Army in Palestine who had then served as a camp leader in Jordan for UNRWA. When Hindi returned to Jericho after his year's training, he said he found great misunderstanding and opposition among the refugees.

And small wonder, for he had before him the ticklish job of revolutionizing the most personal living habits of the 75,000 persons, most of them conservative by nature, who lived in the four large camps in the Jordan Valley. His only tool was his tongue. "But the refugees couldn't see the use in words", he said, "for they were so poor and insecure that they felt they needed more basic things, like food and clothing".

It was soon realized that the health educators could do nothing single-handed, and two new approaches were tried. On the camp level, health education became everybody's business, and everyone had to participate to keep the camp clean -- elders, doctors, nurses, school teachers, camp leaders, boys at play in the streets, mothers at home, youngsters at school, sanitary labourers, butchers, coffee house owners. Cleanliness contests were organized and awards given to all kinds of competitors from the cleanest baby to the cleanest barber. As Hindi put it: "We stopped trying to convince them, and just let them get into the middle of the work".

The other task was a stepping-up of teaching by means of visual aids. The result was work of such variety and excellence that today, for example, the Agency's health calendar is widely distributed in several Arab countries, as well as being a feature in all UNRWA clinics, schools, milk centres, and other public buildings.

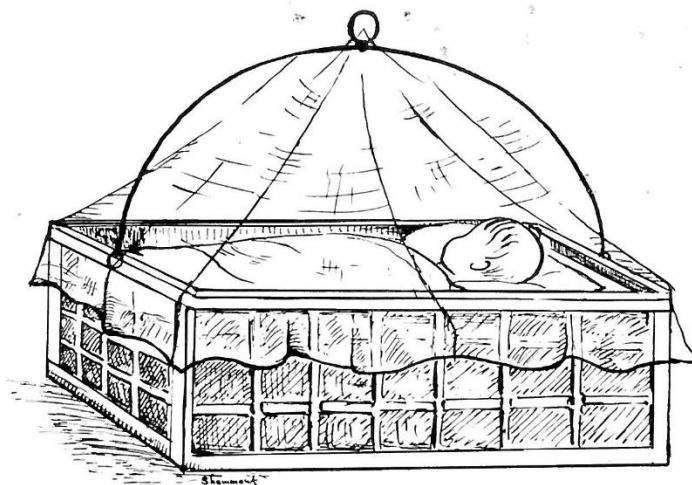
Meanwhile, UNRWA's cinema team has produced nine films and adapted seven others. The films are shown, along with an Arabic entertainment movie, by UNRWA's mobile cinema, which makes a monthly tour of the camps in all four host countries. Posters have also proved effective, and the Agency produces 15,000 on six different subjects yearly, as well as film strips, flannel graphs, pamphlets, and slogans.

The development of health education over the past eight years has been supervised by UNRWA's international staff doctors -- Dr. Prithpal Singh, a turbaned Indian epidemiologist whose main concern it was to aid in the joint Jordan Government-UNRWA campaign to wipe out malaria in the Jordan Valley; Dr. Athemas Bellerive, who came to UNRWA from his post of Director of Health in Haiti and today is senior WHO adviser to the Congolese Government; present UNRWA Deputy Director of Health, Irishman Dr. John Murphy; and the Head of the Agency's Preventive Medicine Branch, French physician Dr. John Puyet. Administrative and technical details are in the hands of Palestine refugee Shawqi Hasna, Agency Health Educator, and 25 field health education workers are stationed throughout the four host countries.

To assess results, it is best to go back to the Jericho area, the Agency's Health Education showcase. Everyone agrees that roads are cleaner, huts are neater, school-children more scrubbed, and flies noticeably fewer than they were eight years ago. But Hindi prefers to cite cases of

individual initiative and interest -- and there are hundreds of these: the doctor in Ein es-Sultan camp who, on top of his regular duties, is making a special drive to teach mothers how to combat undernourishment in their youngsters; the schoolgirls who go home and beg their mothers to cover the garbage or wash the vegetables; the mukhtar in Aqabat Jaber camp who offered his hut to install a demonstration "Model Home"; the mother who visited the Model Home show this summer and immediately fixed a tap to her water jug; the sanitation labourer who is such a stickler for cleanliness among the refugees at Nuweimeh camp that his mere appearance sets them to work clearing up any rubbish or dirt in sight.

Both the American University of Beirut and the World Health Organization have recognized the value of UNRWA's Health Education programme by sending students to Jericho for health education field training. This summer, two senior members of Iran's public health department went there under the auspices of the American University, while Saudi Arabia's Director of Health, Saleh Husein Jamal el Hariri, spent six weeks in the area on a WHO scholarship. Hariri, who will have the job of setting up a health education programme in his country when he returns, commented: "I never thought that health education especially on such a limited budget, could penetrate so deep, or be carried out on such a comprehensive scale with such variety".



THE PONTIFICAL MISSION FOR PALESTINE -  
TWELVE YEARS OF REFUGEE AID

Some 25 years ago, a young American priest visited the Middle East on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Little did he realize then that in just over a decade, he would return to these same places to direct a mission of aid to hundreds of thousands of persons made hungry and homeless by the war in Palestine in 1948.

That mission, representing His Holiness the Pope, was to become known as the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. Today, it is one of the major voluntary agencies working with the Arab refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with UNRWA.

The man was Monsignor Thomas J. McMahon, then National Secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. He was sent by the Catholic Bishops in the United States to survey for War Relief Services -- National Catholic Welfare Conference the situation resulting from the Arab-Israel conflict.

He found that, spurred on by an appeal by Pope Pius XII, Catholic representatives in the Middle East had already set up committees to direct the private religious institutions, with the aid of funds from the Holy Father.

Four months after Monsignor McMahon's arrival in the Middle East, the Pope summoned him to Rome and made him president of a new relief agency of the Holy Father to be called the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. The aims of the new mission were to minister to the spiritual needs of the Catholic refugees and to give material aid to all the refugees, regardless of their religion. Funds were to be raised from Catholics throughout the world through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

From the beginning, it was obvious to Monsignor McMahon that no single voluntary agency could cope with the overwhelming needs of the Arab refugees and so, in cooperation with the United Nations and other voluntary agencies, he set to work, establishing tent camps, schools, soup kitchens, and clinics.

The Pontifical Mission has worked with UNRWA since the Agency's inception in 1950 and today it is still hard at work with improving the lot of the refugees.

The present field director, the Very Reverend Monsignor Stephen J. Kelleher, in stressing the continuing interest of the Pontifical Mission has stated:

"There is a particular frustration for the Palestine refugees and agencies and individuals trying to help them, in that the end of the problem cannot be clearly seen. This frustration, coupled with the natural increase of the number of refugees, makes it necessary for us to increase our efforts in their behalf. We hope that our vocational training and scholarship programmes, in addition to our basic relief programme, will at least lighten the burden of some of the refugees."

The latest and most dramatic contribution in a long history of generous aid is a gift of \$60,000 to establish a centre for the blind in the Gaza Strip. In this tiny and vastly over-crowded area, isolated from the rest of the world, only a handful out of an estimated 1,100 blind refugees have had the opportunity to travel outside to receive education and training, under UNRWA's five-year-old programme of aid to the handicapped. The Pontifical Mission's donation will cover the cost of construction and equipment and two years' operating costs. The institution will be named Pontifical Mission for Palestine Centre for the Blind, Gaza, and will be under the supervision of an Egyptian expert in the care of the blind, Dr. Abdel Mune'm Nour.

Other recent gifts from the Pontifical Mission include \$8,500 for a clinic in UNRWA's Dheisheh Camp outside Bethlehem, Jordan, and \$2,500 for small grants for individual refugees. UNRWA has also received \$5,000



through the Pontifical Mission for community centres in Fawwar and Jabal Husein, Jordan. Help has also been extended in the flood relief programme in Karameh Camp outside Jericho.

Over the years, the Pontifical Mission has supplied clothing for refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Gaza under the UNRWA distribution programme.

In Lebanon, at the UNRWA camps of Dbayeh and Jisr el Basha, where there are about 4,500 Catholics, the Pontifical Mission maintains churches, rectories and schools and provides priests to oversee the spiritual well-being of the people. Also in these camps, sewing and cooking centres have been established and a carpentry school is planned.

Although direct university scholarships are not within the province of the Pontifical Mission, students are helped with transportation and maintenance costs. Aid is also given in the form of vocational scholarships, so necessary in helping the refugees to meet the future.

Also, in cooperation with other voluntary agencies, transportation to Europe has been provided for several refugees with serious medical problems.

In addition to the projects conducted in cooperation with UNRWA, the Pontifical Mission subsidizes Catholic institutions such as hospitals, clinics, orphanages, old folks' homes and schools which give substantial aid to refugees.

The Pontifical Mission, like all voluntary agencies in the area, gives help where it is needed, regardless of an individual's religion.

On a recent visit to Rome, which we mentioned in our last Newsletter, Dr. John Davis, UNRWA Director, and Monsignor Kelleher met with His Holiness Pope John XXIII.

"His Holiness", Monsignor Kelleher reported, "is deeply concerned with the well-being of each individual refugee. He is obviously interested not in just a problem or a mass of men but in each single person who is suffering as a refugee. The words and enthusiasm of His Holiness have encouraged us in our efforts to improve our various facilities. We hope that the refugees will be heartened by the fact that the interest of those who have helped them has increased rather than decreased over the past thirteen years."

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, non-political body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949. In co-operation with the host governments (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United Arab Republic) it carries out its two-fold task: immediate: to provide food, health services, education, training and shelter for the refugees; long-term: to assist the refugees to become self-supporting.

UNRWA began work in May 1950 and its present mandate expires on 30 June 1963.

Further information may be obtained from:

UNRWA Liaison Office  
Palais des Nations  
Geneve  
Switzerland

UNRWA Public Information Office  
UNESCO Building  
Beirut  
Lebanon

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(For information purposes\* - Not an official record).

