



PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 15

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Teachers Aid Fight
Against Eye Disease

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The cover illustration shows a new medical treatment presently under way in UNRWA schools in the Damascus area, and its intended result. The treatment aims to stop eye disease before it can harm children's eyes. The intended result : clear, lively eyes.

All photographs in this Newsletter, and other pictures of Arab refugees and of UNRWA's work, 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 acknowledgment.

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THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S MISSION TO EUROPE

Dr. John H. Davis, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, was awarded the highest honor of the Norwegian Refugee Council in March, during a two-week mission to Europe.



Dr. John H. Davis, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, accepts the Plaque of the Norwegian Refugee Council from Sigurd Halvorsen, Chairman of the Council.

While in Oslo, he was presented with the Plaque of the Norwegian Refugee Council. The Plaque is awarded to those doing outstanding work for refugees, and other recipients include King Olav V of Norway.

On his mission, Dr. Davis met with government officials, private groups and voluntary organizations in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland, and discussed with them UNRWA's work and financial needs. Among the meetings addressed by Dr. Davis was the convention of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies in Geneva.

Dr. Davis proposes a toast -- in milk -- at a Swiss milk plant that is supplying UNRWA with 300 tons of whole milk powder as a gift from the Swiss Government. With him are Raymond Courvoisier, UNRWA Director of Liaison in Geneva, and plant Director Max Marti.



TEACHERS AID FIGHT AGAINST EYE
DISEASE.

Schoolteachers in the Damascus area have been enrolled in the fight against eye disease.

Teachers in 10 UNRWA schools have been trained by UNRWA medical authorities to help administer a new form of treatment designed to curb infection in the eyes of schoolchildren.

The treatment is directed primarily against trachoma, and is similar to courses of treatment which were carried out successfully by the World Health Organization in Morocco and Tunisia. Trachoma, caused by a virus and generally unsanitary conditions, is common among the refugees, and may cause partial loss of sight and even blindness if untreated.

Last year, UNRWA medical authorities examined the eyes of almost 3,000 pupils in the 10 schools, and found more than 600 cases of eye infection.

The treatment consisted of a five-month series of applications of antibiotic ointment; two applications a day for three days each month. It would have been impossible for a doctor or nurse to make each application themselves, so they trained a volunteer teacher in each school to apply the ointment. The first treatment was made by a doctor, and subsequent treatments are being made by the teachers.

The five-month series of treatments began in December and will end in May.

Last year, there were more than 40,000 cases of suspected trachoma among the refugees. In the hot, dusty summers and the crowded conditions of the camps, it is almost impossible to wipe out the disease completely.

But with UNRWA's new form of treatment in Damascus, and with the help of the teachers, many young eyes, which might otherwise be clouded or blind, will continue to shine.

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IN BRIEF

New Title for the Head of UNRWA

The title of the chief executive officer of UNRWA has been changed from "The Director of UNRWA" to "the Commissioner-General of UNRWA". Dr. John H. Davis, formerly known as the Director, will henceforth be called the Commissioner-General of UNRWA. Correspondingly, his deputy, Mr. John Reddaway, will be called "Deputy Commissioner-General."

The change, decided upon co-operatively by UNRWA and the Office of the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, will bring UNRWA titles more into line with titles used in other UN agencies, and avoid confusion with the titles of "director" which are used for other posts in UNRWA and other UN agencies.

Further Swiss Donation

The Swiss Government has donated 14 tons of processed cheese to UNRWA, over and above its regular annual contribution (which has averaged \$35,000 in recent years) and in addition to the 300 tons of powdered whole milk reported in the last Newsletter. The cheese will be used to add variety to the menus at UNRWA's vocational training centres and at hospitals which care for refugee patients.

Anonymous Swiss Donation

Some of the powdered milk mentioned above will be distributed from a new distribution centre at Rafah camp in the Gaza Strip, to be built with an anonymous Swiss donation of 10,000 Swiss francs (\$2,325). The donation was received through "L'Aide Suisse à l'Etranger".

Canadian Indians equip Refugee Barber

A community of North American Indians living in the heart of Canada is developing a close bond with Palestine refugees. Two years ago, Indians in the Fisher reserve, at Koostatak, Manitoba, sent a donation to UNRWA. They were so pleased with the use to which it was put, they have sent a second donation.

The money, \$14, was taken up at a special collection at the community's church. It has been used to buy equipment to help Ahmad Aziz 'Ali resume his trade as a barber. Ahmad, living in Rashidiyyeh camp, Lebanon, has been idle since 1948, because he was not able to afford equipment. Now he is happily at work again, earning enough money to supplement the basic UNRWA rations for himself and his family.

Refugee plays real-life role in film

When a German television team went to Damascus to film part of a documentary on the problems of finding employment, they appropriately chose a young refugee job-hunter to play the leading role. Ali Munir Ajlouni, the son of a Palestinian UNRWA driver, is a trained welder, who in real life is seeking a position as an instructor at an UNRWA vocational training centre. In the five-minute film, he portrays a refugee who finds work with the help of UNRWA's vocational training and placement services. The documentary, entitled "People Looking for Work", will show the problems of finding employment in six different sections of the world. The 30-minute film will be seen on German television when it is completed.

Visitors

David Rockefeller, president of the Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, and brother of New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller, visited the new UNRWA vocational training centre at Siblin, near Beirut, Lebanon.

British author Miss Ethel Mannin made an extensive tour of the Middle East during March to do research for two books : a travelogue and a novel about a Palestine refugee family who left their home during the conflict in 1948. Miss Mannin visited UNRWA refugee camps and vocational training centres in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

Ralph Collins, newly-appointed director of the Middle East division of Canada's Department of External Affairs, paid visits to the Siblin vocational training centre in Lebanon and refugee camps and schools in Jericho and Jerusalem during his two-week tour of the Middle East.

The Hon. Mrs. Douglas Woodruff, vice-president of the Standing Conference of British Organizations of Aid to Refugees and president of the Catholic Women's League, spent 10 days touring the Agency's operations in the four host countries.

Bernard Llewellyn, information and grants officer of The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, visited UNRWA installations in Jordan during March.

Order of St. John's gift to train nurse

The Order of St. John in Jerusalem has given a World Refugee Year gift of £850 (\$2,380) to train a Jordanian public health nurse. Fawzieh Nasr, a refugee girl living in Jordan, has been selected, and has been accepted by the American University of Beirut for the course beginning in September 1962.

Vocational Training Scholarships

UNRWA's appeal for 2,000 vocational training scholarships this year, and another 2,000 next year, continues to produce encouraging results from governments, voluntary groups and individuals.

A portion of the Jamaican Refugee Council's contribution to World Refugee Year will provide six \$500 scholarships to UNRWA's Gaza vocational training centre.

Six young refugees will benefit from a recent visit to UNRWA installations by Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Henderson, of Toronto, Canada. Following their visit, they donated \$1,000 for a two-year scholarship for one refugee boy, and Mr. Henderson's parents, Mr. and Mrs. D.C. Henderson, of King, Ont., Canada, presented five one-year scholarships.

Two two-year scholarships have been received from the United Nations Staff Fund for Refugees, and other scholarships have been given by the United Steelworkers of America; the Christian Women's Fellowship of the National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C., and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

A donation of \$500 provides a one-year scholarship for a refugee boy or girl at one of UNRWA's nine vocational and teacher-training centres. In return, UNRWA will send donors a picture and a brief biography of the recipient of the scholarship. Addresses from where further information may be obtained can be found at the end of this Newsletter.

The \$500 will cover the basic cost of a year's training, including the salaries of instructors, the cost of workshop equipment and a tool kit, uniform and a little pocket money for the trainee.

IMPROVED MEDICAL SERVICES IN SYRIA

A royal gift from Morocco has made a visit to the doctor at Yarmouk refugee settlement, near Damascus, a treat compared to what it was a few months ago.

The royal gift, from King Hassan, provided a new and more efficient clinic to replace the antiquated, inadequate rented buildings that served as a clinic previously.

The new clinic at Yarmouk, operated by a 12-man UNRWA staff, is part of a long-needed two-fold improvement in medical services in the Syrian Arab Republic, and an example of the way in which UNRWA is striving to gradually improve its medical services in each of the four host countries.

The improvement in Syria consists of 1) replacing old and totally inadequate clinics with more efficient new ones of a practical design, and 2) giving refresher courses to all UNRWA nurses, to give better nursing care to the refugee patients.

In the Damascus area, refugees will benefit from two such new clinics.

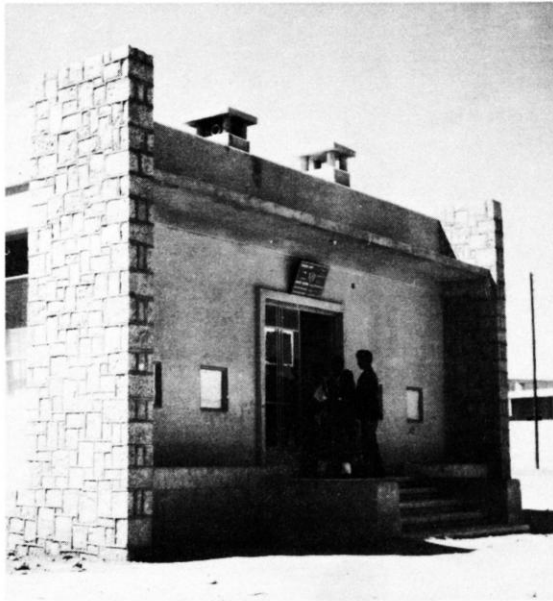
The more spacious and more adequately-equipped clinic at Yarmouk was opened at the end of 1961, replacing a temporary clinic. It has private doctors' offices, two waiting rooms, separate rooms for dressings and ophthalmic treatments, a maternity and child-health section and a well-stocked pharmacy.

The enthusiasm of the refugees for their new clinic is demonstrated by their behaviour in the waiting rooms. When the clinic first opened, some patients objected to being given numbered cards to indicate the order in which they should see the doctor. But the "numbers game" soon caught on. The ef-

ficiency of the staff and the new clinic spread to the patients, and the clerks now have no trouble making sure each patient has a numbered card.

Now the refugees march right up to the clerk to collect their numbers. They pass their time in the waiting rooms finding out who has what number -- and woe betide any patient who has no number.

The second new clinic, again replacing a totally inadequate one, is at Khan Esheh camp, and will be opened in one or two months when construction is completed. The new building will replace three older



The entrance to UNRWA's new clinic at Yarmouk, near Damascus. It was built with a gift from King Hassan of Morocco in honor of his father.

buildings, bringing the entire clinic under one roof, thus making the operation infinitely more efficient.

The second improvement is in the standard of nursing care -- the result of a seven-month series of courses designed to give every auxiliary nurse in Syria an intensive four-week refresher course, and every graduate nurse a two-week review of the essentials of service.

The series of courses was the idea of Mrs. P. A. Wright, UNRWA's Field Nursing Services Officer in the Syrian Arab Republic.

"It is designed mainly to acquaint the nurses with UNRWA's way of doing things, so that methods of treatment can be standardized. We also try to bring them up to date on new and better methods of fighting the ailments prevalent among the refugees," said Mrs. Wright.

Thirty-three nurses have already taken the course -- 14 qualified and 19 auxiliary nurses. The series, started in June 1961, has come to a temporary halt because all the nurses have taken the course, with the exception of



A heavyweight weighs in at the maternity and child-health section of the Yarmouk clinic

Below: Patients are given numbered cards as they wait in one of the clinic's two waiting rooms.





seven who joined the Agency since the series was begun. They will receive a similar course in the near future.

The course began at Khan Esheh camp, and continued at Yarmouk, where the nurses trained and worked in typical camp conditions and atmosphere. Four nurses trained at a time, combining theoretical instruction and practical work in the camp clinic. The theoretical part of the course consisted of 19 lectures given by Miss Janet Ra'ouf Kor, Assistant Field Nursing Services Officer, and additional lectures by doctors.

The beneficial results of the two programmes -- improvement of the facilities and of nursing techniques -- are already being felt.

The results: more skillful nurses who have a deeper appreciation of the refugees' situation, and healthier refugees at Yarmouk, where they are receiving better treatment in a better clinic.



Part of the well-stocked pharmacy at the new Yarmouk clinic.

JOINT CHRISTIAN COMMITTEE MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

A young refugee leaving school has an ambition which youngsters in most parts of the world take for granted :

To learn a useful skill, and live a useful life.

UNRWA tries to make their dreams come true, by giving vocational training to as many refugee boys and girls as possible. In this task, it is helped by several voluntary agencies, including the Joint Christian Committee for Refugee Work in Lebanon.

The Committee, an organization which receives funds from churches and charitable societies for helping the Palestine refugees in Lebanon, is directed by Mr. Daoud Yusef, a former judge in Palestine. During World Refugee Year, he sought and obtained donations for two training courses in Beirut, one for radio and television mechanics, the other for metal workers and auto-mechanics.

The first course is given in two big rooms near the offices of the Committee, to 23 refugee boys 16 to 18 years old. At least three years of secondary education are requested from applicants, but many trainees have matriculated. The course has been financed by a donation of \$25,000 from the United Church Board for World Ministries (U.S.A.)

The boys work 40 hours a week for eighteen months, learning the theory and practice of their trade. Their instructor, Mr. Albert Saleh, also a Palestinian, was trained at the National Radio Institute in Washington D.C. He first taught the boys to assemble radio-sets on panels; now he introduces defects which the boys must find. They also work on actual sets sent in to be repaired and will soon start their television course. Many of them hope to go to Germany for a year of specialization after the end of the course, which started in July 1961.

The trainees in metal-work and auto-mechanics have their workshops and their classroom on the grounds of the American Mission school, in one of the busiest parts of Beirut. Eighteen boys from 14

to 21, who must have a minimum of eight years' schooling, are taught all types of metal work: drilling, welding, lathing, etc. They assemble and repair engines and have lessons in mechanical drawing, cost accounting and elementary mathematics.

Their instructor, Mr. Bawarchi, himself a refugee, was trained at the Schneller School in Palestine and applies its methods: careful work with great attention to details, no theoretical explanation without immediate practical examples, and the execution of actual orders by the boys. In the workshops, smart tea-waggon and coffee-tables are built, hat-stands, candle-holders and book-shelves are made of wrought iron and brass. The course also started in July 1961, thanks to a gift from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (U.K.), which has sent \$11,300 up to now, and is due to continue until July 1964.

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ALICE LALANDE MEMORIAL

A memorial to a woman who lost her life in the service of the United Nations will help bring new lives into the world in a Gaza refugee camp.

Alice Lalonde, a Canadian, was killed in the tragic plane crash that carried United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to his death in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia, last year.

In her memory, a new wing will be added to the maternity hospital at Khan Yunis camp in the Gaza Strip.

The extension to the 12-bed hospital will be built with funds contributed to the Alice Lalonde Memorial Fund by staff of the United Nations Emergency Force, the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Women's Guild.

General P.S. Gyani, commanding officer of the U.N. Emergency Force, presented a cheque for \$866.31 in March to Mr. James M. Weldon, Director of UNRWA Affairs for Gaza.

The contributions will cover most of the cost of the \$1,000 extension, which will connect the maternity building and the outpatients' clinic.

Two of the rooms in the new wing will be used as a maternity and child health clinic: for two days each week, they will be used for examinations of expectant mothers, and during the other four days, children under two years will be examined and treated.

Construction started last month, and will finish by mid-summer.

The new hospital wing is an appropriate memorial for Miss Lalande. She lived for many years in the Gaza area, and was familiar with the problems and hardships of the refugees.

She served with the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization, and was from 1958 to 1960 secretary to the UNEF Chief of staff.

And it is fitting that a memorial to a Canadian should benefit a project built by fellow-Canadians. The hospital was built last year with a \$6,000 Christmas gift given in 1960 by the officers and men of the Canadian contingent of the UNEF.

When the new wing is completed, a memorial plaque will remind the refugee mothers of the debt they owe to Alice Lalande.

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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.

Further information may be obtained from

UNRWA Liaison Office
Palais des Nations
Geneva
Switzerland

UNRWA Public Information Office
UNESCO Building
Beirut
Lebanon

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(For information purposes - Not an official record)