



PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An UNRWA Newsletter

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The cover picture shows student nurse Fadwa Rayan, shortly before graduation day. See story on page 1.

All photographs in this Newsletter, and other pictures of Arab refugees and of UNRWA's work, may be obtained from the addresses on the last page of this Newsletter.

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

GRADUATION DAY FOR FADWA

Most of the girls had proud parents in the audience on graduation day.

Fadwa Rayan, an attractive 20-year-old refugee girl from Jordan, had something more. She knew, as she received her nursing diploma at the end of June, that she had dozens of proud foster-parents wishing her well from 5,000 miles away.

The "foster-parents" are the members of the Christian Women's Fellowship of the National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C., in the United States, who "adopted" Fadwa by providing funds for the three years of her training at the American University of Beirut.

Their help came three years ago when the situation looked bleak for Fadwa.

"I had just left school, and wanted so much to become a nurse," said Fadwa. "But where to get the money?"

Fadwa's father, who had been a Government transport manager in Palestine, had found work as a driver soon after he and his family had fled from their home near Jerusalem. He worked first for the Red Cross, and from 1950 onwards for UNRWA. Today he works as a local transport supervisor in the Ramallah area, north of Jerusalem, where they now live. He has seven children, including Fadwa.

"I wanted to be a nurse," said Fadwa, "but I knew it was more important for my brothers to be given an education. They had to come first."

But Fadwa's ambitions were not to be frustrated. The generosity of her "foster-parents" gave her the means. The Christian Women's Fellowship made a donation to UNRWA, which selected Fadwa. The cost of sponsoring her three years of training amounted to approximately \$2,250. Almost as important, the broadmindedness of her parents gave her the permission to become a nurse.

"My father told me that whatever I wanted to do, I could do. Most parents in the Middle East will not allow their daughters to go away alone, especially to be nurses. But my father never regrets letting me go, particularly since the time he saw that I was able to bring comfort and help to a sick neighbour."

"So you see, I have both my parents and my foster-parents to thank."

After three years of exacting work and study, Fadwa has accomplished her ambition. She knows that she is now in a position to contribute to the relief of her fellow refugees. She will begin work with UNRWA in September, shortly after she leaves the American University Hospital.

But graduation day did not leave Fadwa without an ambition.

"I would some day like to be a teacher of nursing ... to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing teaching ... perhaps from the United States or Canada."

A high ambition for a refugee girl from Jordan. But Fadwa is an ambitious and an industrious girl, and a good nurse. She may fulfil her ambition some day.

The generosity of a church group half-way around the world has opened up a new life for her.

But there are many thousands of refugee girls, who, like Fadwa, have a cherished ambition. One of the most tragic aspects of the Palestine refugee problem lies in the fact that, without aid such as that given by the National City Christian Church, most of these young refugee girls will not have even the opportunity of leading useful, productive lives, let alone the chance to accomplish a higher ambition.

For Fadwa is one of a very fortunate few.

IN BRIEF

Visitors

Mrs. J. Maria Pierce, International President of Zonta, met some of the refugee girls sponsored by Zonta at the Ramallah Girls' Training Centre in Jordan, during a recent visit to the Middle East. (See "Donations" below). Mrs. Pierce also visited UNRWA's Siblin Vocational Training Centre in Lebanon.

Lord Wakehurst, Governor of Northern Ireland and Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, visited the Siblin centre and some UNRWA clinics during a trip to the Middle East to see and discuss the work of the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem, Jordan.

Mr. Per-Erik Ronquist, Assistant Secretary-General of the Swedish Agency for International Assistance (NIB), visited the Gaza Strip and held discussions with senior UNRWA officials in Beirut. The Agency for International Assistance last year made a technical assistance grant of almost \$800,000 to UNRWA for the establishment of the Technical and Teacher-Training Institute in Lebanon. A grant of \$192,000, for education and health programs in the Gaza Strip, was made in June (see "Donations" below).

The Reverend Robert L. Child, Chairman of the Grants Committee of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) in the United Kingdom, visited UNRWA installations and Oxfam-financed projects in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip. Oxfam's Information Officer, Miss Pat Stott, came to the area shortly afterwards to learn more about UNRWA's Vocational Training Program, and to see the use to which Oxfam donations to the Agency have been put. (See "Oxfam Comes of Age", page 8)

Mr. Marius Durbet, Chairman of the Cultural Commission of the French Chamber of Deputies, visited the Siblin Centre.

A two-man radio team and a four-man television team from Belgium, followed by a group of six Belgian journalists, visited all four host countries in April/May. They came to study the refugee situation at first hand, in preparation for a fund-raising campaign on behalf of the Palestine refugees launched in Belgium in June.

A group of journalists from the Federal Republic of Germany made a two-week study-tour of UNRWA's operations in mid-June. Included in the group were three reporters and a Foreign Office official, Dr. Heinz Droege, who flew from Germany for the tour and two correspondents based in Beirut. Their trip included visits to UNRWA installations in all four host countries.

Donations

The Government of Kuwait celebrated its admission to the United Nations on 14 May by making a contribution of \$220,000 to UNRWA, and thus becoming the highest per capita contributor to the Agency in 1963. On the basis of Kuwait's population, the donation is the equivalent of 68 US cents per person. One hundred thousand dollars of the donation will be used to provide training scholarships for 200 young refugee men at UNRWA teacher training centres in Ramallah, Jordan, and Homs, the Syrian Arab Republic. Among the recipients are 157 second-year trainees who received first-year scholarships from a \$100,000 personal donation from the Ruler of Kuwait last year.

The Swedish Agency for International Assistance (NIB) has made a grant of one million Swedish kronor (\$192,000) to be devoted to programs of education and health care in the Gaza Strip. The contribution will be used to introduce training in home skills and child care in girls' preparatory schools operated by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, and to establish, staff and operate a health project to benefit refugee mothers and children. Under the project, nurses and midwives will receive additional instruction, and refugee mothers will be assisted to learn methods of home improvement and child care. This contribution is in addition to a technical assistance grant of almost \$800,000 made by NIB last year for the establishment of a Technical and Teacher Training Institute in Lebanon.

The Government of Saudi Arabia donated approximately \$97,800 to defray the cost of kerosene purchased by UNRWA for the refugees and for use in the Agency's installations. The donation represents about three million litres of kerosene, about enough to fulfil the Agency's needs for one year. Saudi Arabia has donated and pledged a total of \$1,505,000 to UNRWA since 1950.

A donation of \$20,833 from the Government of Qatar has provided vocational training scholarships for 41 trainees at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre in Jordan. The trainees, all in their first year, are enrolled in the builder/shutterer, carpenter/wood machinist and sheetmetal work courses.

Vocational training scholarships continue to flow in from Zonta International, which supports the Agency's Girls' Training Centre at Ramallah, Jordan, as its international project. To date, 44 refugee girls at the Centre have been sponsored by Zonta International, representing a contribution of \$22,000. In addition, two girls have been sponsored for two years by Zonta (Northern).

Mr. David Rockefeller, President of the Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, has donated a further \$10,000 towards UNRWA's Vocational Training Scholarship Program. The contribution will provide 20 one-year scholarships. Mr. Rockefeller donated \$10,000 last year.

The ties between the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre have been further strengthened by a donation from the Council of \$8,000. Through this gift, the Council will "adopt" the entire class of 16 trainees in the plumbing course for one year. Last autumn, extensions to the Gaza Vocational Training Centre, built with a \$100,000 donation from the Norwegian Refugee Council, were inaugurated by Mr. Wilhelm Bøe, the Council's Secretary-General.

The 10 young refugees sponsored last year by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) recently heard the good news that they will be sponsored again during their second year by AFL-CIO, which has made a contribution of \$5,000 to cover the cost of the 10 scholarships.

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has donated £1,080 (\$3,024) to sponsor two teacher trainees for their entire three-year courses at the Ramallah Girls' Training Centre, Jordan. The Association is also taking an active interest in the Girl Guide troop recently organized in the Centre.

The girls of Sutton High School, Surrey, (United Kingdom), thought that the Freedom From Hunger Campaign was a worthy cause, and decided to do something about it. They raised the admirable sum of £500 (almost \$1,500), which they have used to sponsor three young refugees in the Diesel Plant Site Mechanics course at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre, Jordan. The course is one of five offered in UNRWA training centres which fall within the terms of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign.

NEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING BOOKLET PUBLISHED BY UNRWA

A new booklet about UNRWA's Vocational Training Program, entitled OPPORTUNITY, has just been published by the Agency's Public Information Office.

OPPORTUNITY draws attention to the plight of the young refugees, who have been denied the traditional method of learning a trade by working alongside their fathers, who are themselves unable to find regular employment.

The 36-page booklet, which is illustrated with more than 110 photographs, gives details of UNRWA's Vocational Training Program, which aims to give training to as many as possible of the 30,000 young refugees who reach adulthood each year.

Photographs, accompanied by brief statistical information, introduce each of the Agency's 10 training centres. The courses offered at the training centres are also illustrated, and there is a summary of the type of training given in each group of trades.

Pictorial case histories, of a boy and a girl, show what the training means to two specific -- but typical -- young refugees.

OPPORTUNITY includes information on how assistance can be given to the refugees. Through the Vocational Training Scholarship



Program, individual trainees or groups of trainees can be "adopted" with the donation of \$500 (£180) scholarships, each of which pays for one year's training for one refugee. OPPORTUNITY also points out the valuable role that UNRWA's training program is playing in the field of technical assistance to the Middle East, a role that has been recognized by contributions from technical assistance funds by several governments.

OPPORTUNITY is an appeal for continued financial support for the training program. Funds are needed to keep the training centres in full operation. This appeal is addressed to all those able to give help: to governments and voluntary agencies, including church and social groups, professional societies and labour unions, to foundations and to individuals. OPPORTUNITY follows an earlier UNRWA publication, BLUEPRINT FOR OPPORTUNITY, which was published two years ago.

Copies of OPPORTUNITY — also published in French and German — can be obtained, free of charge, from the addresses on the last page of this Newsletter.

LETTER FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

One of Souraya Zacharia's most cherished possessions is a letter from the White House, Washington.

Miss Zacharia, a young refugee woman from Jordan who now lives in Lebanon, makes exquisite dolls in authentic costume as a hobby. Last Christmas, she sent one as a gift to Caroline, the daughter of President John F. Kennedy of the United States.

Shortly afterwards came a letter expressing Mrs. Kennedy's thanks. States the letter: "The doll is one of the most treasured parts of Caroline's foreign doll collection, and she was fascinated by the costume and the native jewelry. You must have worked many hours making this exquisite doll, in her traditional designs of the Bethlehem area."

"Mrs. Kennedy sends you her appreciation and her very best wishes," concludes the letter.

OXFAM COMES OF AGE

The Palestine refugees are among the millions of needy throughout the world owing a debt of gratitude to the many children who faced starvation in occupied Greece more than 20 years ago.

The plight of the starving children prompted Professor Gilbert Murray, of Oxford University, to form a small committee of local citizens to raise funds for them.

They called themselves the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief.

This year, Oxfam, as it is better known, comes of age, celebrating its 21st birthday. A group that began on a local basis with a temporary mission has developed over the years into a national British fund-raising organization which last year distributed £1,430,000 (\$4,000,000) worth of aid to the hungry, the sick and the homeless throughout the world.

The Palestine refugees receive substantial assistance from Oxfam, both through UNRWA and through voluntary agencies working in the Middle East. During the year and a half from October 1961 to February 1963, Oxfam channelled more than £350,000 (\$980,000) to the refugees, in the form of cash grants to relief agencies, used clothing, blankets and other supplies.

Oxfam donations of £12,000 (\$33,600) to UNRWA in 1962 and £13,500 (\$37,800) in 1963 are currently providing vocational training for 89 young refugees at UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Centre. Fifty four of them, now in their second year, also received first-year scholarships from Oxfam.

More than one-fifth of the clothing distributed through UNRWA's used clothing program is collected by Oxfam. During 1962, 300 tons of clothing from Oxfam were distributed to needy Palestine refugees, mainly through other voluntary agencies such as the Pontifical Mission in Palestine, the Near East Christian Council Committee and the Lutheran World Federation.

The Youth Leadership Training Centre at Broumana, Lebanon — operated by the YMCA in conjunction with UNRWA — has received aid from Oxfam, including a £2,000 (\$5,600) grant when the centre was first established. Since 1960, the centre has been training young refugee men to act as volunteer leaders in UNRWA's youth activities centres.

Many refugees receive Oxfam aid through voluntary agencies. During 1961-62, Oxfam grants totaling £45,000 (\$126,000) to the Near East Christian Council Committee (NECCC) were used mainly to assist refugees and Bedouins in Jordan. The money enabled homes to be built, springs and wells to be repaired, clinics and feeding centres to be set up, and small farms to be started. A further grant of £8,000 (\$22,500) was made to the NECCC in February for its building loans program for refugee housing.

In addition to its aid to UNRWA's vocational training program, Oxfam supports vocational training through grants to the YMCA and the YWCA. Last year, the YMCA training centre in UNRWA's Aqabat Jaber camp in Jordan was able to add three new courses with Oxfam's donation. A recent grant will aid the YWCA project in Jericho where teenage girls — most of them refugees — learn to be infant leaders by helping to care for 50 children in a kindergarten/training centre.

In all, about 10 per cent of Oxfam's non-emergency aid is devoted to the Middle East, most of which goes to aid the Palestine refugees. Of the many voluntary agencies and charitable organizations working with UNRWA to bring assistance to the refugees, Oxfam is one of the largest contributors.

LIVING LIKE (LUCKY) REFUGEES.

Three Americans and one Malayan on the staff of the Agency spend 24 hours a day living like refugees.

The four are the first voluntary workers to join the Agency on a full-time basis, as associate staff members.

However, they live like the fortunate few refugees, for they are attached to UNRWA's vocational training program, and live at the Agency's training centres. They are the only non-Arabs living at their respective centres. They eat, work, play, sleep, and spend most of their off-duty time at the centres, along with the young trainees. Besides providing room and board, UNRWA gives them an allowance of \$15 a month, and provides free medical care at its clinics.

Two young Americans, Susan Sneed, 22, and Blaine Leverknight, 23, came to the Middle East through International Voluntary Services, Inc. (IVS) an American organization giving person-to-person aid to a number of developing nations. IVS also has young workers in Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam. They are paid a token salary only, and live exactly as do the people they are assisting.

Susan Sneed (left) with Ramallah trainees



In Susan's and Blaine's case, this is no hardship, for they have found that facilities at the centres are adequate, though far from luxurious.

"I must admit it was a little strange at first, being the

only foreigner living at the centre," said Blaine, who is attached to the Siblin Vocational Training Centre (Lebanon) as a Youth Activities Leader. "But I have made many friends, both among the trainees and the instructors, and I think I am becoming more accepted by them all the time."

Blaine made so many friends that when the trainees heard that he might be transferred to another centre, they drew up a petition asking that he be allowed to stay. He was not transferred.

Blaine, whose home is in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, is organizing the centre's sports and recreation programs, and soon hopes to start a lifesaving and first aid course for the trainees.

Susan Sneed, the only girl among the four, is stationed at UNRWA's Girls Training Centre, in Ramallah, Jordan, where she is serving as Youth Activities Leader. In a recent letter home, she described one of the advantages of living at the centre: "I have only had to wash and set my hair twice since I've been here. The rest of the time I've been a willing guinea-pig for the girls in the hairdressing section, who do an excellent job".



Blaine Leverknight gives a Siblin trainee some soccer tips.

In the same letter, Susan outlined her job: "I have just finished organizing a recreation program that includes Girl Guides, a supplementary physical education class, interest groups for English and dancing, and groups for music, science, social studies, homemaking and Arabic literature. Perhaps the most important part of my job, however, is the time I spend each day just talking to the girls."

Although Susan already has a smattering of Arabic, she talks to the girls in English to help them to improve their English. "I usually find that the chattering that accompanies anything I say is someone who has understood translating for someone who hasn't."

Susan, who studied recreation and physical education at Oregon State University, is no newcomer to voluntary work, for she served as a voluntary nurse's aid in a Portland hospital for four years during her vacations.

Her first impression of the centre was "really marvelous . . . especially for what it will mean to the lives of the girls who come here to learn, and to the changing Arab World they will soon enter as adults."

Living and working at Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre (Jordan) as an English instructor is Shamsheer Singh, a 32-year-old Malayan teacher who was sent to the Middle East by the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Mr. Singh's main task is to teach English to the local Arab instructors, but he also devotes time to the centre's physical training program.

Mr. Singh, who obtained a B.A. degree from the University of Singapore, spent 10 years teaching there before coming to the Middle East.

Mr. Charles McDaniel will shortly be leaving UNRWA after spending almost a year at Kalandia Vocational Training Centre (Jordan), where he has been teaching English and helping with the centre's sports activities. Mr. McDaniel, who was on a year's sabbatical leave from his teaching post in Pennsylvania, came to the Middle East under the auspices of Volunteers for International Development, Inc.

These four are combining experience and knowledge with a sense of mission, to bring valuable assistance to the young refugees in UNRWA's training centres, who are struggling to equip themselves for a full and productive future.

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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: first: to provide food, health and welfare services, and shelter for the refugees; second: to provide education and training to refugee children and young adults including general education, vocational and teacher training, and university scholarships.

UNRWA began work in May 1950 and its mandate expires on 30 June 1965.

Further information may be obtained from :

UNRWA Liaison Office
Palais Wilson,
Geneva,
Switzerland

UNRWA Public Information Office
Museitbeh Quarter,
Beirut,
Lebanon

(For information purposes - Not an official record)