



# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An **UNRWA** Newsletter

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## UNRWA'S LITTLEST SCHOOL



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The cover pictures show UNRWA's littlest school (see 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 acknowledgement.

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## THE LITTLEST SCHOOL

The children in UNRWA's littlest school go to class in their pyjamas.

And after class many of them trot right back to bed.

The school is a tiny one-room building in the middle of a hospital. The pupils, ranging in age from six to ten, all have tuberculosis.

The school, the smallest in UNRWA's education system, is in the

Tuberculosis Hospital in Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The hospital is operated jointly by UNRWA and the Government Authorities in the Gaza Strip, providing 250 beds for serious TB cases.

School is the day's highlight in the children's ward. Refugee children in general are eager to learn, and these

children are no exception. Those who are not too sick spend a couple of hours in class each morning. Their school is a whitewashed building (see cover picture), about ten feet wide and twenty feet long, with six junior-sized tables, little chairs and a blackboard.

With places for sixteen at most, the school operates on a double-shift basis. The first-grade pupils form one shift, and the second and



third-grade students the second shift. Their teacher, Miss Ayda Faks, follows the regular school curriculum.

The young TB patients have Swedish troops to thank for their little school. A group of officers and men from the Swedish Battalion of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) stationed in Gaza visited the hospital and wondered what happened to the children's education during the weeks and months that they were in the hospital. As a result, the Swedish Battalion made a donation to establish the school, and now makes an annual donation to pay the operating costs. The most recent donation was made only last month.

A few of the children's parents are also patients in the hospital. Until recently, the conditions of accommodation of the adult patients were decidedly un-

inviting. Compared Below: the new men's ward at the Bureij Hospital.

with the relatively spacious and light children's wards, the adult wards were dark, over-crowded and depressing. The buildings taken over for use as a hospital were formerly an army barracks, in many ways unsuitable for a TB sanatorium. The hospital provided adequate treatment, but lack of funds



prevented UNRWA from building new facilities.

But the situation is very different today. Earlier this year, two new modern wings were opened -- one for male patients and one for females. The two wings, specifically designed for use as a TB hospital, were built by UNRWA at a cost of \$40,000. They provide the space and fresh air essential for the treatment of tuberculosis, as well as better staff and medical facilities. In contrast to the old wards, which had dozens of beds crowded into large rooms, the new wings are divided into four-bed compartments.

The two new wings provide 108 beds. But the over-all capacity of the hospital, 250 beds, has not been increased. Patients have been moved from the old wards, relieving the crowded conditions. The old wards are now being completely redecorated and renovated, making them more suitable for use as a TB hospital.

With the opening of the two new wings and the renovation of the old wards, the Bureij Tuberculosis Hospital has undergone a complete face-lift, which may soon extend to the tiny school.

There are plans for the possible expansion of the school. But even if it doesn't remain as UNRWA's smallest school, it will always be unique in one respect.

It will still be the only school where children go to class in their pyjamas.

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#### Commissioner-General of UNRWA Announces Resignation

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis, announced his resignation to the UNRWA Advisory Commission on 12 August. Dr. Davis' resignation will be effective 31 December 1963.

United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, who was informed in December 1962 of Dr. Davis' intention to resign, said he was glad Dr. Davis had found it possible to remain until the end of the year.

"Dr. Davis has served the United Nations with great distinction for the past four and a half years," added U Thant's statement.

"He is to be particularly commended for his outstanding efforts to increase educational and vocational training opportunities for the Palestine refugee children and youth. Under his direction, UNRWA has made noteworthy improvements in many of its services to the refugees."

Dr. Davis joined UNRWA on 15 February 1959, and will have served as head of the Agency for a longer period than any of his predecessors. In his announcement to the Advisory Commission, Dr. Davis said he was resigning for compelling personal reasons.

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#### IN BRIEF

##### Visitors

The Reverend H. C. Dixon, National Secretary of the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO), spent a week in the Middle East discussing the refugee problem and visiting UNRWA installations in Lebanon, Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Mr. Dixon saw many of the projects that are supported with donations from CORSO to UNRWA (see "CORSO Brings Aid From Afar", page 10).

Dr. Franklin Murphy, the Chancellor of the University of California, accompanied by Mrs. Murphy and their two children, visited UNRWA training centres and camps in Lebanon and Jordan.

A group of 15 delegates to the Sixth Baptist World Youth Conference, held in Beirut, saw two UNRWA camps in Lebanon. Another group visited UNRWA's Girls' Training Centre in Ramallah, Jordan, after the conference

had ended. During the conference, a number of delegates were addressed by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis.

Mrs. G. E. McIlroy, President of the United Nations Council of Lubbock, Texas, visited UNRWA's Siblin Vocational Training Centre in Lebanon.

Donations

The Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) has donated a further \$55,700 to UNRWA to provide university and vocational training scholarships. The donation comprises \$40,500 for university scholarships, and \$15,000 for vocational training scholarships -- an increase of \$5,000 over last year's ARAMCO contribution. The university scholarship funds will enable 60 young refugees to receive "ARAMCO Scholarships Through UNRWA", including 48 who benefited from last year's ARAMCO donation. The increased vocational training funds will provide 30 scholarships of \$500 each. The 20 young refugees in UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre who received ARAMCO scholarships last year will receive second-year scholarships, and 10 first-year trainees will be awarded scholarships when they enrol in the centre in September.

A shipment of medical supplies donated by the American pharmaceutical firm of E. R. Squibb and Sons, through American Middle East Relief, Inc. (AMER), will enable 14 young refugees to receive vocational training. The donation, which included 2,500,000 aspirin tablets, saved UNRWA almost \$7,000, which the Agency would otherwise have spent purchasing the drugs. The savings have been credited to vocational training, providing 14 scholarships of \$500 each for trainees in the electricians' course at UNRWA's Siblin Vocational Training Centre (Lebanon).

Twenty young men will complete their auto mechanics courses, thanks to a further donation of \$10,000 from the United Auto Workers of America (U.A.W.). The trainees, at Kalandia and Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centres (Jordan), received first-year scholarships from a similar donation from the U.A.W. last year.

The number of refugee girls sponsored by Zonta International at UNRWA's Girls' Training Centre at Ramallah, Jordan, has risen to 48. The donation of another \$2,000 has provided another four scholarships. Scholarships have been flowing in regularly from Zonta ever since the organization decided to support the Girls' Training Centre as its two-year international project.

Two trainees in the clerk/typist course at the Ramallah Girls' Training Centre have been sponsored for their entire two-year courses by Business and Professional Women's Clubs "down under". Both the Australian and the New Zealand Federations of Business and Professional Women's Clubs have donated two one-year scholarships.

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These donations are helping UNRWA towards the target of 2,000 vocational training scholarships which are needed each year to ensure that as many young refugees as possible receive training. Each \$500 (£180) scholarship provides one year's training for one young refugee, including tuition, accommodation and food, clothes and tools, and the full use of the centre's facilities. In return, UNRWA will send a photograph and a brief biography of each "adopted" trainee to his or her sponsor, in addition to progress reports. UNRWA's target is still a long way away. Further information on the Vocational Training Scholarship Program may be obtained from the addresses on the back of this Newsletter.

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#### GAZA'S FIRST HAY-STACK

A group of refugees in the Gaza Strip made hay while the sun shone in July.

The result: the first hay-stack ever made in the Gaza Strip.

The hay-making took place at UNRWA's Beit Hanoun Agricultural Training Centre. The hay, the first such crop ever produced in the Strip, will be stored in preparation for the arrival of thirteen important new residents at the centre — twelve cows and a bull.

The cattle form part of a recent contribution from the Technical Co-operation Service of the Government of Switzerland, which will be used to develop the 50-acre Beit Hanoun Centre. The contribution, valued at \$44,000, will provide the services of a Swiss agricultural

expert for two years, and includes an assortment of much-needed dairy and farming equipment, in addition to the cattle.



Above: Mr. Pascalis (right) allows two of the centre's cows to sample hay from the first hay-stack ever made in Gaza.

Mr. Robert Pascalis, the agricultural specialist, arrived in Gaza at the beginning of July -- just in time to supervise the hay-making.

"There was a good crop of Sudan grass, which had been planted here as an experiment," said Mr. Pascalis. "As far as we know, it's the first hay ever made in the Gaza Strip. The fodder is usually cut gradually and fed fresh to the cattle."

Mr. Pascalis, whose previous experience includes eight years of cattle breeding and dairy farming in South Africa and three years in Rhodesia, said the Swiss cattle will form the basis of a high-quality dairy herd. They will arrive during the mild Gaza winter, to avoid a sudden change of climate, accompanied by a cow-hand who will stay for

six months to train the instructors and trainees how to care for them.

The Swiss donation also includes a tractor, ploughs and other implements, and a variety of dairy equipment, including a pasteuriser. The milk, butter and cheese produced in the centre's little dairy will be consumed by the trainees themselves. The meals served at the centre will also include eggs, vegetables, olives, fruit and other foods grown or produced at the centre.

A list of crops currently growing at Beit Hanoun for training purposes indicates the large variety: citrus fruits, tomatoes, olives, vines, maize, sugar cane, alfalfa, wheat, barley, rice, oats, soy beans, onions, Sudan grass and assorted vegetables. Some of the crops, including rice and Sudan grass, are being grown as experiments, to see what crops are best suited to the sandy soil of Gaza. Each of the four agricultural instructors has a small area of land with which he can experiment.

The training in the care of livestock is equally diversified, for the centre has cattle, merino sheep, rabbits, chickens, turkeys, pigeons, a horse and a mule.

The Swiss contribution will supplement additions being built by UNRWA, to make Beit Hanoun an adequately-equipped, residential agricultural training centre. The additions include dormitories, facilities for the new cattle, and staff accommodation. The extensions will enable trainees in the second and third years to live at the centre, giving them essential round-the-clock experience. The centre offers a three-year course, and has a capacity of 75 trainees (25 in each year). Previously, all trainees had attended on a day-school basis, thus missing much of a farmer's daily routine.

In addition to practical work with crops and livestock, the trainees at Beit Hanoun take classes in the theories of horticulture, animal husbandry and dairy farming, and also learn chemistry, mathematics, biology and English.

When the Beit Hanoun Centre reopens in September after the summer vacation, it will have undergone a complete change. With the new equipment and livestock provided by the generosity of the Swiss Government, the new facilities built by UNRWA, and the supervision of an agricultural specialist, the centre will be in a position to give better training to the young refugees, thus improving their chances of leading worthwhile lives, wherever they may live.

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#### THE CLINIC THAT GREW FROM A CHRISTMAS GIFT

Canadian troops in the Gaza Strip had little idea of what they were starting when they decided to give a Christmas gift to the refugees in 1961.

The troops, members of the Canadian contingent of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), gave \$6,000 to UNRWA to build a maternity centre at Khan Yunis camp.

During the past year, the maternity centre has grown by stages, thanks to contributions from Canadians all over the world, and is now a complete clinic. The third and largest stage was opened in July.

The newest addition, a wing providing accommodation for an out-patient clinic and a small dental unit, was built and equipped with a donation of \$11,000 from the Canadian Save the Children Fund. A plaque paying tribute to the Fund was unveiled by Col. D. H. Rochester, Commanding Officer of the Canadian UNEF Contingent.

Two other plaques trace the clinic's growth. The first, on the wall of the original maternity centre, tells visitors about the Christmas gift from the Canadian officers and men. A further donation from

the Canadian UNEF troops has been used to redecorate the maternity centre, and to provide additional facilities.

The second stage of the clinic is marked by another plaque, paying tribute to the memory of Miss Alice Lalande, a Canadian United Nations official who died in the same plane crash that took the life of former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold. Following her death in 1961, a memorial fund was established. The money was used to add a maternal and child health unit to the maternity centre.

The complete clinic, one of the most modern and best-equipped in the Agency, was built at a total cost of about \$20,000. It provides only the basic necessities for adequate medical care, for there are no funds available for luxuries. But the clean, modern lines and bright rooms of the new clinic are in striking contrast to the dark, crowded and unsuitable barn-like structure that formed the old clinic.

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#### CORSO BRINGS AID FROM AFAR

Aid to the Palestine refugees comes from all over the world, from near and far.

But no aid comes quite as far as that given by CORSO -- the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Service Overseas.

In terms of distance, CORSO and the refugees are half a world apart. In terms of assistance, CORSO acts like a next-door neighbour to the refugees.

Examples of CORSO's aid to the refugees are evident from plaques erected on UNRWA projects supported by CORSO donations.

"SEWING TRAINING CENTRE, JABALIA. FINANCED BY CORSO" (Jabalia camp,



Above: Rev. H. C. Dixon (left) inspected refugees' work at the Jabalya sewing Centre, one of the many UNRWA projects supported by CORSO donations.

UNRWA camps and training centres.

In the Gaza Strip, Mr. Dixon saw UNRWA's Beit Hanoun Agricultural Training Centre (see page 6), where CORSO has sponsored a class of 25 trainees for their entire three-year course, with a donation of £8,000 (\$22,500). In addition to the trainees sponsored in Gaza, CORSO is also sponsoring two classes (16 young refugees in the plumbing course and 12 in the fitter/machinist course) at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre (Jordan) for their complete two-year courses. The class of fitter/machinists who graduated from Kalandia this past spring had also received two-year scholarships from CORSO, and 12 young men began their fitter/

Gaza Strip).

"WOODWORK TRAINING CENTRE, DONATED BY CORSO" (Karameh camp, Jordan).

"KALANDIA VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE. THE TRAINEES OF THIS CLASS ARE SPONSORED THROUGH A DONATION FROM CORSO".

But the plaques do not tell the complete story. For over the years, CORSO has donated almost £78,500 (\$220,000) worth of aid to the refugees through UNRWA. This aid has been channeled into a variety of programs of assistance, including vocational training, shelter construction, and welfare services.

In a recent visit to the Middle East, CORSO's National Secretary, the Reverend H. C. Dixon, visited many CORSO-supported projects in



Above: Rev. H. C. Dixon (left) inspected refugees' work at the Jabalya sewing Centre, one of the many UNRWA projects supported by CORSO donations.

machinist course at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre in 1962 with one-year CORSO scholarships. The value of vocational training scholarships donated or pledged by CORSO since 1960 amounts to almost £30,000 (\$85,000).

The "CORSO Class" of fitter/machinists at Kalandia will be even more indebted to CORSO when they return in September after their summer holidays. They will move into a new workshop built with CORSO funds. During Mr. Dixon's visit, the trainees presented him with an olive-wood cross and candle-sticks for his church altar, made at the centre, as a token of their appreciation.

The pitiful shacks and hovels that some refugees are forced to call "home" are of particular concern to CORSO. Donations totaling more than £29,000 (\$80,000) have been made for programs of shelter improvement. The funds are to be used mainly to improve the conditions of refugees in Jordan living outside UNRWA camps. Some of these refugees have been living for years in crude huts patched together with flattened oil-drums, with mud floors and barely enough room to stand upright. The funds from CORSO will enable UNRWA to build new shelters for them, or to improve their old huts. Their new homes will be far from elaborate: stone rubble huts with one small (12 feet square) room for every five or six people. But they will be like palaces to these refugees.

Two sewing and two carpentry centres (one of each in Jordan and the Gaza Strip) have been established by UNRWA with CORSO donations totaling more than £4,200 (\$12,000). At the sewing centres, young refugee women take a six-month course in basic sewing. Similarly, in the carpentry centres, young men learn the principles of carpentry during a one-year course. The training enables them to earn a little money, or to improve their own living conditions by making clothes or simple furniture.

Other examples of CORSO's aid to the refugees include the financing of an UNRWA clinic in Lebanon, the provision of used clothing for cases of particular hardship in Jordan (CORSO sent 35 tons of clothing in 1962), and the donation of more than £4,000 (\$11,000) worth of medical supplies to UNRWA in 1961.

The links between CORSO and the Palestine refugees are strong, although they stretch half way around the world.

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 for Europe,  
Palais Des Nations,  
Geneva,  
Switzerland.

UNRWA Public Information Office  
Museitbeh Quarter,  
Beirut,  
Lebanon

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(For information purposes - Not an official record)