



# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

## An **UNRWA** Newsletter

No. 28

OCTOBER 1963



REFUGEE TRAINEES LAY  
WREATH ON GRAVE OF  
DAG HAMMARSKJOLD  
IN SWEDEN.



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Cover picture (courtesy of Uppsala-Bild, Sweden) shows a group of Palestine refugees laying a wreath on the grave of Dag Hammarskjold, former United Nations Secretary-General, who was killed in 1961. The young refugee men recently returned from Sweden, where they spent a year training and working in industry (see page 8).

All photographs in this Newsletter, with the exception of the cover photo, may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, Museitbeh Quarter, Beirut, Lebanon.

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COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT ISSUED

The expansion and improvement of educational and other community services, together with the continuation of relief services for needy refugees, are the main themes of the annual report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

The report, which was submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, covers the period 1 July 1962 to 30 June 1963. In it, the Commissioner-General, John H. Davis, also reviews the Agency's activities in the light of its targets over the three-year mandate period which ended on 30 June 1963, and presents new plans for the current two-year mandate period ending on 30 June 1965.

This is Dr. Davis' fifth and last annual report as Commissioner-General of UNRWA. He has resigned, for personal reasons, with effect from 31 December 1963.

In the view of the Commissioner-General, the problem of the Palestine refugees remains "as intractable as ever". Dr. Davis pointed out that no progress appeared to have been made towards a settlement of the problem; no significant effect had been given to Paragraph 11 of General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of 1948, referring to repatriation or compensation for the refugees; nor had there been any sign that the feelings and emotions of the peoples directly concerned were growing any less intense. The whole issue of Palestine, he added, continued "seriously to complicate almost every aspect of progress in the Middle East, as well as the relationship which this region has with the outside world". In such circumstances, Dr. Davis observed, there could be no expectation that the need for services of the kind provided by UNRWA would appreciably diminish, at any rate during the Agency's current mandate.

The Past Year Reviewed

Dr. Davis said that expenditure on relief services - food, shelter, health and welfare services -- had remained at the per capita level of 1960. During the past year, UNRWA completed its three-year (1960-63) plan to expand its vocational and teacher training program, increasing the Agency's training capacity from 600 students in two centres in 1959-60 to 4,500 when all 10 UNRWA training centres are in full operation.

UNRWA had also undertaken "an ambitious program of education expansion" during the three-year period ending 30 June 1963, which had brought the educational opportunities available for refugee children up to about the level of those available for non-refugee children in the host countries, Dr. Davis reported. This expansion was reflected in an increase in UNRWA's expenditure on education from \$6.1 million in 1959 to \$8.2 million in 1963. During the year under review, the Agency had also increased the number of university scholarships to 544, compared with 371 in the 1959-60 academic year.

Financial Needs

The Commissioner-General reported that a combination of several favourable factors had enabled the Agency to keep its expenditure and commitments, totalling \$35.7 million during 1962, very nearly at the level of its total income. The report indicated, however, that there would be a "considerable budget deficit" in 1963 which would probably not be less than \$0.8 million, and could be as much as \$2 million.

The Agency proposed to spend a total of \$38 million in 1964, stated the Commissioner-General. He expressed the earnest hope that governments would make it possible for the Agency to cover its budget, and thus to ensure continuation of its programs of relief, health and welfare services, and of education and training for the refugees.

Dr. Davis pointed out the inherent difference between the Agency's expenditure for basic relief (food, shelter and clothing), and that for communal services (education and certain health and welfare services). Whereas

any significant progress towards a solution of the refugee problem should correspondingly reduce the refugees' needs for basic relief, their needs for education, health services and social welfare services of a community nature would continue. The Commissioner-General observed that UNRWA spent about three-fifths of its total expenditure on these communal services, and suggested that the cost would probably be about the same, whether they were provided by UNRWA or by some other means.

Plans for Present Mandate Period

The Agency will maintain its relief expenditures (for food, shelter, health and welfare services) at the per capita level of 1960 for refugees genuinely in need of aid, said Dr. Davis.

However, he added, the Agency was considering expanding certain welfare services, including remedial treatment and training for handicapped refugees, youth leadership training, and the instruction of young mothers in child care.

Dr. Davis said that the Agency would aim to improve and strengthen the vocational and teacher training programs within the presently existing institutions during the two-year mandate period.

The Commissioner-General proposed that the Agency should give "high priority and emphasis" to improving the quality of the teaching staff in its schools. The quality of the education provided in UNRWA schools, and especially the quality of instruction, still remain "less than satisfactory", he said. The plans for this improvement included the establishment of an educational institute, which would give in-service training to teachers through modern techniques, the report stated. There was a parallel need to improve the curricula of Agency schools, in particular through the improvement of equipment and facilities for the teaching of science subjects, and the introduction of classes for girls in home economics.

The Commissioner-General's report will be discussed in the Special Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in November.

IN BRIEF

Commissioner-General leaves for UN General Assembly

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis, left in mid-September for New York, to present his Annual Report to the 18th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. En route to the United States, Dr. Davis visited Greece, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, France and the United Kingdom for talks with the Governments and with voluntary agencies working for refugees. Dr. Davis will return to Beirut in mid-December, before his resignation as Commissioner-General takes effect on 31 December.

UNRWA teachers receive special one-month course.

Eighty-eight English language teachers employed by UNRWA went back to school for a month during August and September. They went to UNRWA's Siblin Vocational Training Centre to take a special one-month course designed to improve the teaching of spoken English. The course was organized jointly by UNRWA and the United States Information Service. UNRWA is giving increasing emphasis to in-service training for its teachers, many of whom lack adequate training in teaching methods.

Eight UNRWA scholars on Dean's Honour List

Eight young refugees attending the American University of Beirut on UNRWA scholarships have had their names placed on the Dean's Honour List of the School of Arts and Sciences, in recognition of their high academic achievements. They were among the 33 UNRWA scholarship holders enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences during the 1962-63 academic year. Out of the 544 scholarships granted by UNRWA to outstanding refugee students during the 1962-63 school year, 130 were held by students at the American University of Beirut, most of whom studied either engineering or medicine.

Two refugees return from training course in Italy

Two graduates from UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre (Jordan) returned recently from Italy, where they had spent three months training and working under scholarships from the Government of Italy. The young men, both graduates from the auto-mechanics course, spent the first six weeks in a training school. Following that, they worked in a Fiat servicing workshop for three weeks, then spent the remainder of the time in a Fiat factory assembling engines. Before leaving for Italy, the two refugees had intensive tuition in Italian. During their stay, their expenses were covered by a monthly grant from the Italian Government, and by a token wage from the Fiat company. Both young men have been accepted into the one-year course for vocational training instructors or foremen at UNRWA's new Technical and Teacher Training Institute, beginning in October 1963.

Visitors

Two representatives of the Iranian Students' Association for the United Nations, Hassan Tabatabai and Ghassem Roghanian, spent a month in UNRWA's area of operation studying the Palestine refugee problem and UNRWA's work. During their visit, they presented a token gift from their Association of half a ton of shortening, which is being distributed as part of the basic rations given by UNRWA to most of the refugees. The two students made extensive tours of all four "host" countries (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip).

Mr. Peter Sutcliffe, Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs, Geneva, visited Lebanon, Jordan and the Gaza Strip to see UNRWA's work, and to inspect YMCA projects in the area. During his month in the Middle East, Mr. Sutcliffe made a close study of UNRWA's Youth Activities Program, which receives close cooperation from the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Mrs. Charles Bacon, an American writer, is spending six months in Jordan, doing voluntary work at a private hospital, and studying the refugee problem. She has visited UNRWA camps and training centres in Jordan and Lebanon.

Dr. Eric Martin, Professor of Medicine at the University of Geneva, visited an UNRWA clinic and the Siblin Vocational Training Centre in Lebanon, where he was attending a medical conference.

Judge Beach Vasey, Chairman of the National Board of the YMCA (United States), visited the Leadership Training Centre in Broumana, Lebanon. The centre, which gives training to volunteer refugee leaders for UNRWA's Youth Activities Program, is operated jointly by the World Alliance of YMCAs and UNRWA.

Donations

The Australian National Committee for World Refugee Year wound up its activities by deciding, at its final meeting, to donate its remaining funds to UNRWA. The money, amounting to \$2,533, has been used to provide vocational training scholarships for three young refugees in the auto mechanics course at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre (Jordan). Two of the boys have been sponsored for two years, and one for one year.

Zonta International has passed the 50 mark in the number of refugee girls it has sponsored at UNRWA's Girls' Training Centre in Ramallah (Jordan). A further donation of \$2,000 has provided another four one-year scholarships, bringing the total to 52. Zonta International has adopted

support of the girls' centre as its two-year international project. In addition, Zonta (Northern) has donated a further one-year scholarship, and pledged another, to add to the three scholarships previously donated. The pledged scholarship came from the Helsinki (Finland) Zonta Club, which organized a piano recital to raise the funds.

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women has forwarded from its headquarters in the United States a donation of \$1,933. The money, which will provide vocational training scholarships for four refugee girls at the Ramallah centre, came from a number of countries, including the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

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#### TOP BASKETBALL COACH VISITS GAZA

Young refugees in the Gaza Strip are running, jumping and dunking with new enthusiasm following a recent coaching trip by one of the top basketball coaches in the United States.



Salvatore Verderame, of New Haven, Connecticut, made an intensive two-day coaching trip to the Strip at UNRWA's invitation. Mr. Verderame spent the summer in Lebanon coaching the Lebanese team for the Mediterranean games.

"I found the young refugees eager to learn, and very keen sportsmen," said Mr. Verderame. He spent most of his time with volunteer refugee coaches attached to UNRWA's Youth Activities Centres. The Agency has a centre in each



of the eight refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, providing educational, recreational and cultural activities for young men.

Mr. Verderame has been head coach at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven for 10 years. During that time, the school has won more basketball championships than any other high school in the United States.

The coaching sessions included practice games, viewing of films of championship games, and blackboard lectures.

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#### COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S STATEMENT TO ICVA CONFERENCE

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis, paid tribute to the substantial aid given to the Palestine refugees by voluntary agencies, in a statement read to the General Conference of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies in Geneva in September.

Dr. Davis said the total value of direct aid from voluntary agencies to the refugees since 1948 amounted to some \$20 million. "The record of the voluntary agencies has been an impressive one," he added. The voluntary agencies have complemented UNRWA's work by providing assistance both to refugees and to other claimants for relief who are outside UNRWA's mandate, and have shouldered the main burden of providing clothing for the refugees, the Commissioner-General said.

"Throughout UNRWA's existence, individual voluntary agencies have, in addition, made significant contributions to the Agency's own programs," added Dr. Davis. He called the voluntary agencies' response to UNRWA's appeal for vocational training scholarships "most heartening", with \$758,000 donated by non-governmental organizations to the scholarship fund up to the present.

Dr. Davis said there was no indication that the need of the refugees for help from the voluntary agencies is likely to decrease, and

added that "UNRWA looks forward with confidence to even closer and warmer cooperation with the voluntary agencies on behalf of the welfare of the refugees."

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#### TRAINNEES RETURN FROM SWEDEN

In the dusty summer heat of the Gaza Strip, Niman Issifan gathered his family and friends in his mud-brick home in Rafah refugee camp, and cooled them with tales of snow and skiing, and lush pine forests and frozen lakes.

Niman was one of 40 young refugee men who returned from Sweden in September after spending a year working and training in industry, as part of a technical assistance program made possible by a donation of almost \$800,000 from the Swedish Agency for International Assistance to UNRWA. Under the program, up to 50 graduates from UNRWA training centres



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go each fall to Sweden, then return for a year's training at UNRWA's new Technical and Teacher Training Institute at Siblin, Lebanon. The Institute has been established with the Swedish funds.

Niman was a member of the first group to go to Sweden. His experiences and impressions are typical of those brought back by others in the group.

Niman, who graduated from UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre in 1962 as a radio/TV mechanic, was attached to the Nofa radio and television factory in Norrköping.

"First I was put in the TV department," said Niman. "All the finished sets were tested, and the faulty ones were sent to me. I had to find the fault and repair it.

"At first it was very difficult, because I was not used to the sets. But due to my training, I soon mastered the job," he added. After five months, Niman was transferred to the radio department. "I asked for the transfer, because I had learned all there was to know about the TV sets," said Niman. He spent the last six months finding and repairing faults in radio sets.

Like most of the trainees, Niman learned Swedish.

"I am not really fluent, but I can speak and understand it quite well," he said. He also found his good command of English a great help.

Niman found the Swedish people friendly and hospitable and the Swedish winter very cold.

"I remember, back in 1944 or 1945, seeing a few snow flakes in Palestine. That was the only time I had seen snow. But in Sweden, we had one or two metres of snow. . . and we had to wear so many clothes to keep warm.

"Some friends took me skiing. It was very difficult. I kept falling. But I learned to do it after a while."

Niman, who wants to be a vocational training instructor when he graduates from the Siblin Institute, regards his year in Sweden as "wonderful trade experience, and a wonderful personal experience." One of his most vivid memories is of a trip to Uppsala, where a group of the trainees laid a wreath on the grave of Dag Hammarskjöld, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. (See cover picture).

Another of the trainees, Ahmad Mohammed Rabah, described Sweden as a "very green country". His outstanding impressions were the friendliness of the people, the lack of unemployment, and the Swedish food.

"It seemed very sweet at first, not at all like Arabic food," he said. "I admit I am happy to get back to Arabic food."

Ahmad, whose family live in UNRWA's Nuseirat camp in the Gaza Strip, worked in a machine tool factory in Lidköping, and lived in the town with a Swedish family.

"They treated me like a son. I think of them as my second family now," he said.

The trainees were accompanied on their return journey by Mrs. Sophie Severin, the Swedish welfare worker who has been their counsellor and "acting mother" during their year in Sweden. Mrs. Severin made periodic visits to each trainee to ensure that their working and lodging arrangements were satisfactory, and to offer advice on their problems.

The 40 trainees, all graduates from other UNRWA vocational training centres, enrolled in the new Siblin Technical and Teacher Training Institute in early October. When they graduate in 1964, either as vocational training instructors or industrial foremen, they will have had a total of four years of training and experience, and they and their skills will be ready to make a modest but much-needed contribution to the development of the Middle East. The new Institute, with a capacity of 264 trainees, also offers courses for teachers, telecommunications mechanics, and handicraft instructors.

The second group of 50 trainees left for Sweden aboard a chartered plane at the beginning of October.

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#### LATEST STATISTICS

Among the statistics included in the Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA are the latest registration figures. At 1 July 1963, there were 1,210,170 refugees registered with the Agency, an increase of 35,410 over the figure at the same date in 1962. The increase is accounted for almost entirely by the birth of babies to refugee families.

Country	Number of registered refugees	Per cent of registered refugees
Jordan	654,092	54
Gaza Strip	279,156	23
Lebanon	149,983	13
Syrian Arab Republic	126,939	10
 Total	 1,210,170	 100

The majority of the registered refugees (882,074 or 73 per cent) are entitled to both food rations and services (health and welfare services, and general education) from UNRWA. A smaller number (229,529 of 18 per cent) are only entitled to receive the services from UNRWA. A few (98,567 or eight per cent) are known to be able to support themselves, and therefore receive no assistance from UNRWA.

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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 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)