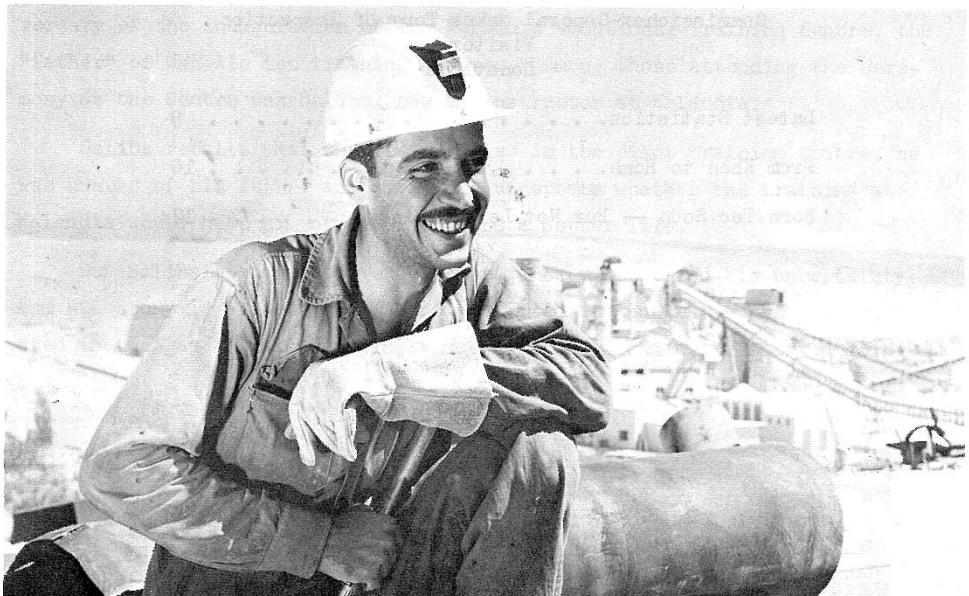




# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

## An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 32      March 1964



KALANDIA: TEN YEARS OF SUCCESS

Litho in U.N.—06083—March 1964—4,500

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The cover illustration shows the Kalandia Vocational Training Centre and a smiling example of the Centre's success. Yusuf Ibrahim Yusuf, pictured at his work at a phosphate factory near the Dead Sea in Jordan, graduated in 1960 from the blacksmith/welding course at Kalandia. For Yusuf, as for many other young refugees, the "Kalandia certificate" has been a passport to opportunity.

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KALANDIA: TEN YEARS OF SUCCESS

In December 1953, Saliba Mushahwar, then 17 years old, stepped off a bus at Kalandia, five miles north of Jerusalem, and walked to a small group of buildings, where he became one of the first young refugees to enrol in UNRWA's first, experimental vocational training centre.

In January 1964, a brief ceremony was held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, the "father" of UNRWA's ten training centres. Among those attending the ceremony at the Centre was Saliba, now an instructor at Kalandia.

Saliba recalls that when he enrolled in the pilot training centre, he was unsure of his future and even more uncertain whether the training at Kalandia would help him or his family to a better life.

But Saliba's subsequent experience quickly dispelled his uncertainty, and his story is evidence of Kalandia's immediate success. When he graduated in 1955 as a trained radio/TV mechanic and wireman, he started going



Trainees in the land surveying course practise outside, with the centre in the background.

from house to house repairing radios and other appliances. Within one year he had established his own repair shop and was appointed the agent for an internationally known radio and TV manufacturer. In 1962 he gave up his shop to return to Kalandia as an instructor.

"I made more money in my shop," said Saliba. "But once I too was a young refugee with no hope. The training I received at Kalandia gave me a new life. Now I would like to help other young refugees."

Perhaps the best indication of Kalandia's success over the past ten years is the growth of UNRWA's programme of vocational training, which has been based largely on the foundation of the experience gained at Kalandia.

The Kalandia Centre was in many respects a pioneer institution. When it was established, it was not only the first UNRWA vocational training centre but also one of the first centres of its scope in any of the four "host" countries (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip). Kalandia was established by UNRWA with the assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The curriculum of the Centre was based on an ILO survey of the needs of the area in terms of trained men, and four ILO officials, seconded to UNRWA, established the training programmes and trained the first Arab instructors. ILO staff were also instrumental in establishing UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre, which was opened in late 1954. Kalandia's early success and the subsequent success of UNRWA's other training centres was also due in large measure to UNESCO (the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which supplied and continues to supply, experts to supervise the operation of the training programme.

Since the opening of Kalandia a decade ago, the number of UNRWA training centres has grown to ten, the newest of which was inaugurated in the autumn of 1963. When Kalandia was first opened, some 70 trainees enrolled for training. Today the Agency's training programme can accommodate more than 3,500 young refugees.

The new centres, with their more modern design, contrast with the small cluster of buildings that formed the original Kalandia centre--eight workshops with corrugated iron roofs, a dormitory block, a dining room and

kitchens and offices. But over the past ten years Kalandia has grown almost beyond recognition.. Five new workshops, an assembly hall and a library were added in 1955, and a business and office practice building, built by the trainees themselves, was opened in 1957. The capacity of the centre was increased from 224 to 392 by the addition of a second dormitory block in 1960, when six classrooms and an additional workshop were also built. The most recent addition is a new fitter/machinist workshop, donated by CORSO (the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Service Overseas) and opened in 1963. New staff accommodation is currently under construction and will be completed this year.



Charles Aoun (right) is one of the three Kalandia graduates who have returned as instructors. He graduated in 1959 from the architectural draughting course and returned to Kalandia after working in the Persian Gulf for more than a year and teaching at UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Centre for 18 months.

Kalandia's physical growth during the past decade has, however, been outstripped by the growth of its reputation. Throughout the Middle East, and further afield, the "Kalandia certificate," the diploma awarded to the trainees on graduation, is recognized as evidence of sound technical training. During the past 10 years, 1,128 young refugees have graduated from Kalandia, and the Centre's fine reputation rests largely on the successful use to which they have put their training.

Many Kalandia graduates have found employment in the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf and in Saudi Arabia, where skilled men are in great demand. Eight graduates have returned to UNRWA training centres as instructors, three of them, including Saliba Mushahwar, having come back to Kalandia. Hisham Naser Eddin, who graduated in 1955 from the fitter/machinist course and who is now an instructor at the Agency's Damascus Vocational Training Centre, has recently published the first textbook of basic machine fitting

ever to be published in Palestinian Arabic. The two-volume work is now being used by trainees in all UNRWA training centres and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Kalandia graduates are also putting their skills to use in Jordan. A number have found opportunities on the East Ghor Canal project, a major irrigation scheme in the upper Jordan Valley, and some have established their own thriving businesses. Mahmoud Abdul-Rahman Mimi, a graduate of the 1956 carpentry course, now has a flourishing carpentry shop in Jerusalem employing six carpenters, including two other Kalandia graduates.

The story of Kalandia's success is contained most eloquently in a thick file that is one of the proudest possessions of the Centre's principal, Mr. Henry Knesevitch. The file contains letters from "his boys."

"By the grace of God and your guidance, we have entered the working world equipped with the golden key handed to us by the vocational training centre," writes Zakaria Hussein, who graduated in 1963 from the land surveyor's course and who is now engaged in a road-building project in Saudi Arabia. "To my brother trainees I send hearty greetings. They should look forward to their future cheerfully and should arm themselves with self-confidence and hope."

The file of letters indicates the respect and admiration which the graduates have for Mr. Knesevitch, who has been connected with Kalandia since the early planning stage and who has served as principal for nine years. Mr. Knesevitch, a silver-haired man of 54, was born in Gaza and is himself a Palestine refugee, although of Austro-Hungarian ancestry. Prior to the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, he had been attached for 18 years to the Government Arab College in Jerusalem, where he had lived for 33 years. For two years following the hostilities, Mr. Knesevitch served with the International Committee of the Red Cross, one of the voluntary agencies which channelled emergency United Nations aid to the Palestine refugees before the creation of UNRWA.

"One of the graduates referred to Kalandia as a 'factory of men,' which is quite appropriate," said Mr. Knesevitch recently. "We try to develop

both the boys' talent and their character. When they first enter Kalandia, many of the boys are bitter and unruly. But a change is noticeable after five or six weeks, and by the time they graduate the bitterness has been replaced by confidence."

A sure sign of Kalandia's success is its reputation, not only among employers but among teen-age refugees who have learned from the experience of the graduates the opportunities that are opened by a Kalandia certificate. There were 166 vacancies at Kalandia in 1963. The flood of applications had to be closed at 600.

As Kalandia enters its second decade, UNRWA's expanded training programme moves into its first year of full operation with all 10 centres running. The 1750 young refugees who graduate every year will receive a priceless opportunity to build new and productive lives--an opportunity that is due in no small measure to the success of the experiment begun at Kalandia 10 years ago.

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#### IN BRIEF

##### Commissioner-General Makes Tour of Inspection



The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, visited all four "host" countries (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip) during February and early March to inspect UNRWA's activities and to meet senior Government and UNRWA officials, representatives of voluntary agencies working in the field, and refugees.

Mr. Michelmore, who took up his duties as Commissioner-General on 1 January 1964, visited many camps and inspected UNRWA training centres, schools, clinics and other installations. The picture shows Mr. Michelmore in a supplementary feeding centre in Lebanon.

##### Visitors

Mr. Patrick Gordon-Walker, the shadow Foreign Minister of the

opposition Labour Party in the United Kingdom, and Mrs. Gordon-Walker toured refugee camps and visited UNRWA schools and clinics in the Jericho area of Jordan during a brief stop in the Middle East.

Mr. Per-Erik Ronquist, Acting Secretary-General of the Swedish Agency for International Assistance, and Mr. Gunnar Wijkman, Chief of Section of the State Budget, visited UNRWA's two training centres at Siblin in Lebanon on their way through the Middle East. One of the Siblin centres, the Technical and Teacher Training Institute, was established with a technical assistance grant of \$800,000 from the Swedish Agency for International Assistance.

Mrs. Molly Thayer, the American author and journalist, visited UNRWA camps and training centres to study refugee conditions during a six-week stay in the Middle East.

Dr. Heinrich Ryffel, a Swiss educationist, came on behalf of the Government of Switzerland to discuss plans for the establishment by UNRWA of an educational institute to give additional training to teachers in UNRWA schools.

Mr. Edwin Eggins, the British writer, spent 10 days in UNRWA's area of operations studying the work of the Agency and refugee conditions.

Mr. Hugh Williams, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Copenhagen, Denmark, visited UNRWA's two training centres at Siblin on his way back to Copenhagen from his home in New Zealand.

#### Donations

A donation of cheese and powdered milk from the Government of Switzerland has resulted in a substantial saving to the Agency. The funds have been used to provide vocational training scholarships for six complete classes of trainees at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre (Jordan). The scholarships cover the first year of training for 99 young refugees. The milk and cheese will be used by the Agency in its programme of supplementary feeding and in the vocational training centres.

The Primate's World Relief Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada has made a donation of \$5,000 (Canadian) which has provided scholarships for 10 young men in the business and office practice course at UNRWA's Siblin Vocational Training Centre (Lebanon). The 10 trainees, now in their second year, were also sponsored in their first year by the Primate's World Relief Fund.

Miss Christina Naupert, of Helsinki, Finland, has pledged a personal donation of \$3,000, with which she will sponsor the complete two-year courses of two young refugees at UNRWA's girls' training centre in Ramallah (Jordan) and of one trainee at the Ramallah Men's Teacher Training Centre.

A contribution of \$1,300 has been received from the National City Christian Church in Washington, D. C. (United States), which has provided scholarships covering the third year of training of two refugee girls in the teacher-training course at the Ramallah girls' centre who were also sponsored by the National City Christian Church during their first two years. Another scholarship has been given to a second-year trainee in the same course.

A further donation of medical supplies from American Middle East Rehabilitation, Inc. (AMER), has saved UNRWA more than \$3,000. The savings have been allocated to vocational training, providing scholarships for six young men in the second year of the electricians' course at the Siblin Vocational Training Centre. The six trainees are among the 14 in that course who received first-year scholarships from AMER.

Mrs. D. C. Henderson, of King, Ontario, Canada, has donated a further \$1,000 (Canadian) to provide two vocational training scholarships. She has previously contributed 5 two-year scholarships, amounting to a donation of \$5,000 (Canadian).

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women has made a donation of \$1,300 to enable two of the five girls sponsored by the International Federation in the "Business and Professional Women's Class" to complete their two years of training as clerk-typists. The donation of a scholarship from the Finnish Federation of Business and Professional Women has completed the sponsorship of the 26 girls in the class by various branches of the Business and Professional Women's organization.

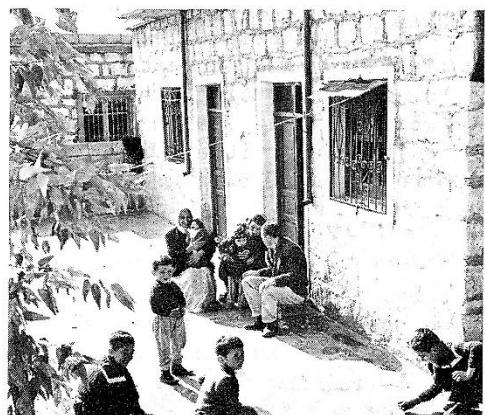
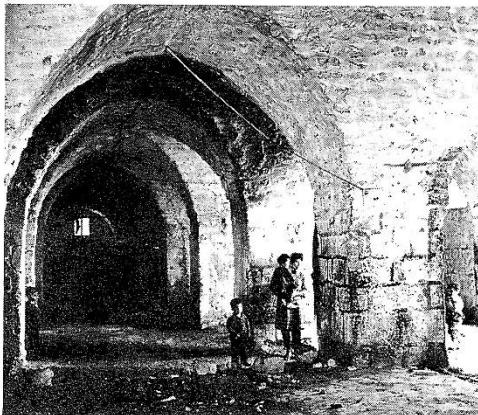
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#### LATEST STATISTICS

Year-end statistics show that the number of registered refugees eligible for UNRWA rations decreased during 1963, although the total number of refugees registered with the Agency increased by 38,491. At 31 December 1963, 879,874 refugees were on UNRWA's ration rolls, compared with 881,496 at 1 January 1963. The decrease is largely a result of UNRWA's continuing efforts to rectify its ration rolls to ensure that rations are given only to those refugees genuinely in need of them.

Total registration figures as at 31 December 1963, with the number eligible for UNRWA rations, are as follows:

| <u>Country</u> | <u>Registered Refugees</u> | <u>Ration Recipients</u> |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jordan         | 662,525                    | 431,998                  |
| Gaza Strip     | 283,782                    | 240,776                  |
| Lebanon        | 152,747                    | 108,430                  |
| Syria          | 129,010                    | 98,670                   |
| TOTAL          | <u>1,228,064</u>           | <u>879,874</u>           |



FROM KHAN . . . . . TO HOME

Caravans wending their way between Damascus and Constantinople two hundred years ago usually broke their journey at Aleppo in northern Syria at a Khan, or inn, built to give overnight shelter to both man and camel.

The massive stone vaults of the khan, built by the Ottoman Turks in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, provided rough but adequate accommodation for the weary travellers.

The camel caravans dwindled and died out with the advent of modern methods of communication and transportation, and for many years the old Turkish khan was unused--a dark, deserted labyrinth of corridors and immense stone arches, unsuitable for human habitation.

In 1948 came the conflict in Palestine. Refugees fled from Palestine, finding shelter wherever they could. Some wandered as far north as Aleppo, more than 250 miles from the northern border of Palestine. There, desperate and homeless, many set up camp in the empty khan.

For almost 15 years, Khan Abu Bakr served as a refugee camp, giving shelter to almost 400 refugees, in conditions that could only be deplored.

Today, however, the khan is once again deserted.

The last refugees left the khan early this year, under a rehousing programme carried out jointly by UNRWA and the Palestine Arab Refugee Institute (PARI), the branch of the Syrian Government responsible for refugee matters.

A new village has been established near Aleppo to accommodate the refugees from Khan Abu Bakr and from Quarantine camp, another unsatisfactory camp in Aleppo, which has also been closed.

Abed Ahmad Juma'a and his wife and six children (pictured on page 10, right, at their new home) were among the refugees who moved from Khan Abu Bakr to the new village at Ein el Tall. Their "home" in the khan was a makeshift cubicle separated from other "homes" by walls consisting only of old sacks or blankets strung between the massive stone columns. With 75 such cubicles and 370 people crowded into the old khan, Abed and his family had little privacy, little air and little light. His wife cooked, as did the other wives, on a primus stove; there was no ventilation to disperse the accumulated fumes. They lived in semi-darkness, for the maze of makeshift walls and narrow passages blocked what light there was from the tiny windows. Their four boys and two girls amused themselves as best they could in their crowded, primitive home, for there was little space for them to play.

For Abed Juma'a, who had been a farmer in Palestine, accustomed to living and working in the open country near Acre, life in the damp, dark, crowded khan was unbearable. Conditions were not much better in nearby Quarantine camp, where 360 refugees were crowded together in a jumble of crudely-built shacks constructed of mud bricks, corrugated iron and flattened oil drums.

Well aware that conditions in the two camps were wholly unsatisfactory, UNRWA and PARI tried for many years to find a suitable alternative site. The land for the new village, purchased by PARI, was carefully selected and is located on the industrial fringe of Aleppo, giving refugees a better opportunity of finding work. Plots of land were made available to refugees who wished to build huts at Ein el Tall. Grants to help cover the building costs were provided by both PARI and UNRWA. PARI offered from 200 to 500 Syrian pounds (\$50 to \$125) per family, depending on the number of persons, and UNRWA gave grants of 150 Syrian pounds (\$37) for each room, to assist with the roofing. These grants did not cover the full cost of building the huts, but most refugees were able to provide some money from their limited earnings or to borrow money. A small number of families who were unable to raise the necessary funds were given additional help by UNRWA and PARI.

Over the past three years, refugees from Khan Abu Bakr and Quarantine camps have been building their new homes, providing most of the labour themselves and using the stone plentifully available on the site. The move from the old camps to Ein el Tall has been a gradual process, with families moving as soon as their new homes were completed. The last families left the old camps in January. Quarantine camp has already been demolished.

Abed Juma'a and his family now live in a solidly-built stone hut, with two rooms and a kitchen, a concrete roof and a small yard in front where the children may play. From the money he earns as a watchman at a school in Aleppo, Abed is paying back in installments the money he had to borrow to complete his new home.

Ein el Tall has a good water supply, provided jointly by PARI and UNRWA, and electricity will be made available in the near future. UNRWA has built two new schools, one for boys and one for girls. The village has a total population of almost 1,100, of whom about 500 have come from surrounding villages and the remainder from the two old camps.

The neat little stone huts built by the refugees contrast strikingly with the cavernous and gloomy stone khan built by the Turks two centuries ago. They symbolize the determination of the refugees to make the most of every opportunity to improve the circumstances into which fate has thrust them.

\* \* \*

#### BORN TOO SOON -- BUT NOT LEFT BEHIND

If Huda Said Flaifel had been born 10 years later, she would probably be able to read and write.

But Huda, now 20 years old, was born too soon to be part of the recent revolution in education which is apparent in the greatly increased school enrolment figures for girls.

The number of refugee girls attending school and remaining in school is increasing so rapidly year by year that today most girls complete elementary school, and many continue into preparatory school.

But Huda left school without completing her elementary education or learning to read or write.

However, thanks to a programme of women's activities established recently by UNRWA, Huda and hundreds of other refugee girls and women are catching up on their reading and writing and broadening their knowledge of homecraft.

The programme is designed to provide educational and recreational activities for women, particularly for those who have not been able to obtain the full benefits of school education. They meet during the afternoons, usually on the premises used as sewing training centres in the mornings. The women's activities programme is presently being conducted in nine centres--four in Jordan, three in the Gaza Strip and two in Lebanon--which have a total enrolment of some 700 members. Another group will soon be started in Syria. It has proved immensely popular with the women and girls, many of whom are in their late teens and twenties, and some of whom are already married. In Khan Younis camp in the Gaza Strip, 260 women have registered, and the group has had to be divided into two sections. The members attend whenever they can, and most of them come on three or four afternoons a week.

Regular classes in Arabic are held, and in Lebanon, English is also taught. The women can learn a wide variety of household skills, including washing and ironing, knitting, embroidery, sewing and how to make suitable modifications to used clothing that is donated for distribution to the refugees. Cooking lessons and demonstrations teach them how to prepare dietetically balanced meals and how to make the best use of their UNRWA dry rations and locally available foods. The women also receive instruction in child care and first aid from the camp nurses and lessons in health education.

Most centres have small libraries, which include books in both Arabic and English and magazines of interest to women. As all over the world, fashion magazines are most popular, and the women use the more conservative styles illustrated as models for modifying second-hand clothing.

More than 40 members of the women's activities group in Amman New Camp (Jordan) seized the opportunity to learn about tuberculosis when one of the members' neighbours was sent to the hospital for treatment. The group arranged to visit the hospital, where a doctor gave them a brief talk on the causes of tuberculosis and the measures that can be taken to prevent it.

The women's activities programme was started in mid-1962 on an experimental basis in Ein el Hilweh camp in Lebanon, where Huda Flaifel and her family live along with 15,000 other refugees. The experiment, financed by a donation from Caritas in Belgium, was so successful that the other centres were established in 1963. The entire programme is financed from special donations to UNRWA, mainly from the Women's Auxiliary of UNRWA, from UNESCO gift coupons and from the Wings of Friendship (U. K.), and not from the Agency's regular funds. It costs approximately \$350 to maintain one women's activities group for one year. The programme can only be maintained if the Agency continues to receive donations for this purpose.

Like many of the women and girls, Huda joined the women's activities group after she had completed the six-month sewing course offered by

UNRWA. Huda comes most afternoons to the women's activities centre, where she uses the centre's sewing machine or knits clothes for her four sisters and four brothers. Huda's skill with the needle is a valuable asset, for her father, who works as a stone-crusher, cannot afford to buy clothes for his large family.

Huda is proud of the new skills she is learning. But her proudest possession is an exercise book in which, with meticulous neatness, she writes out her lessons in Arabic. As a result of the women's activities programme, hundreds of refugee women and girls are broadening their horizons and becoming, or preparing to become, more enlightened wives and mothers, with untold benefits to their families.

Even though she was born 10 years too early to take advantage of the full benefits of education, Huda has not been left behind.

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, nonpolitical body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949. In cooperation 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; its current mandate expires on 30 June 1965.

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Further information may be obtained from

UNRWA Liaison Office  
United Nations  
New York

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In the United States, the United States Committee for Refugees is an organization cooperating with UNRWA.

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