



# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

*An UNRWA Newsletter*

No. 36 October 1964



GRADUATION DAY

.... page 3

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The cover picture shows a refugee girl receiving her diploma at the first graduation ceremony held at the UNRWA Ramallah Women's Training Centre in Jordan.

All photographs in this Newsletter--and other pictures of the work of UNRWA--may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, Museitbeh Quarter, Beirut, Lebanon.

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RECORD NUMBER OF TRAINEES GRADUATE

More than 1,400 young refugee men and women -- a record number -- graduated from UNRWA's 10 vocational and teacher training centres this summer.

The high number of graduates represents the first fruits of the expansion of the Agency's training facilities initiated with World Refugee Year donations.

A total of 4,318 young refugees have now successfully completed their courses since UNRWA's vocational training programme was launched 10 years ago. Last year there were 873 graduates, and there are expected to be about 1,590 next year.

This year their number included 138 girls who received their diplomas at the first graduation ceremony to be held at UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Centre in Jordan. Fifty of the young women had trained as teachers, and the others had completed courses in such subjects as hairdressing, preparatory nursing and secretarial work.

It was also the first graduation ceremony for UNRWA's Sibliin Technical and Teacher Training Institute in Lebanon. Forty young men graduated from the Institute, which began operations in October 1963. They represent a new level of training in UNRWA centres, for they are now qualified as vocational training instructors or industrial foremen, having completed four years of training and industrial experience. Most of these young men had graduated from UNRWA training centres and completed a year's training and practical experience in Sweden before enrolling in the Technical and Teacher Training Institute for a final year of training.

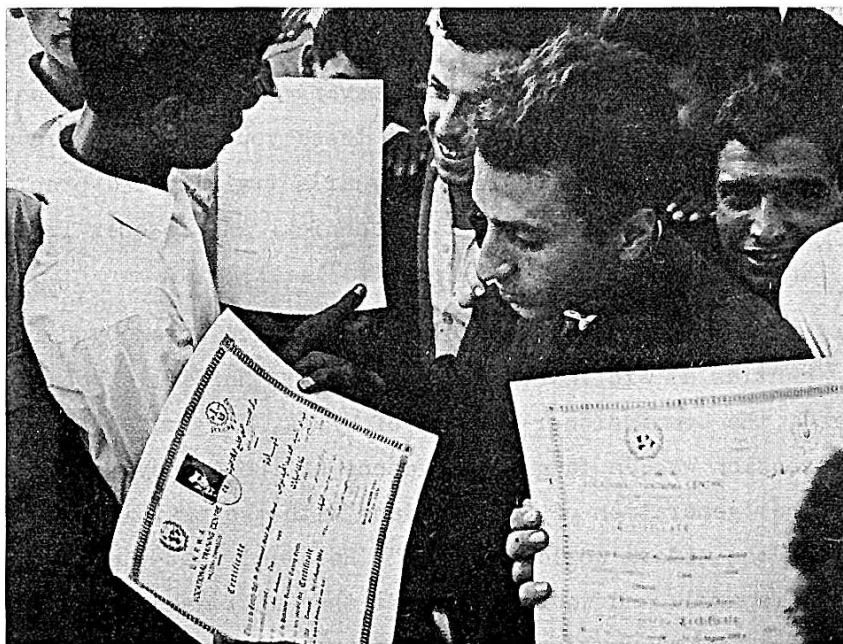
Addressing the trainees at the combined graduation ceremony for the two UNRWA training centres at Sibliin (the Institute and the Sibliin Vocational Training Centre), the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, said that the occasion was "a tangible evidence of the Agency's efforts to provide the younger generation of Palestinians with the training and the type of education that the modern world demands." He added that the graduates "have been well prepared, and we believe that they will make significant contributions to the life and development of the Arab world."

In addition to the graduates from UNRWA's training centres, another 43 young refugees received diplomas from government training centres, which they attended with the help of grants from UNRWA.

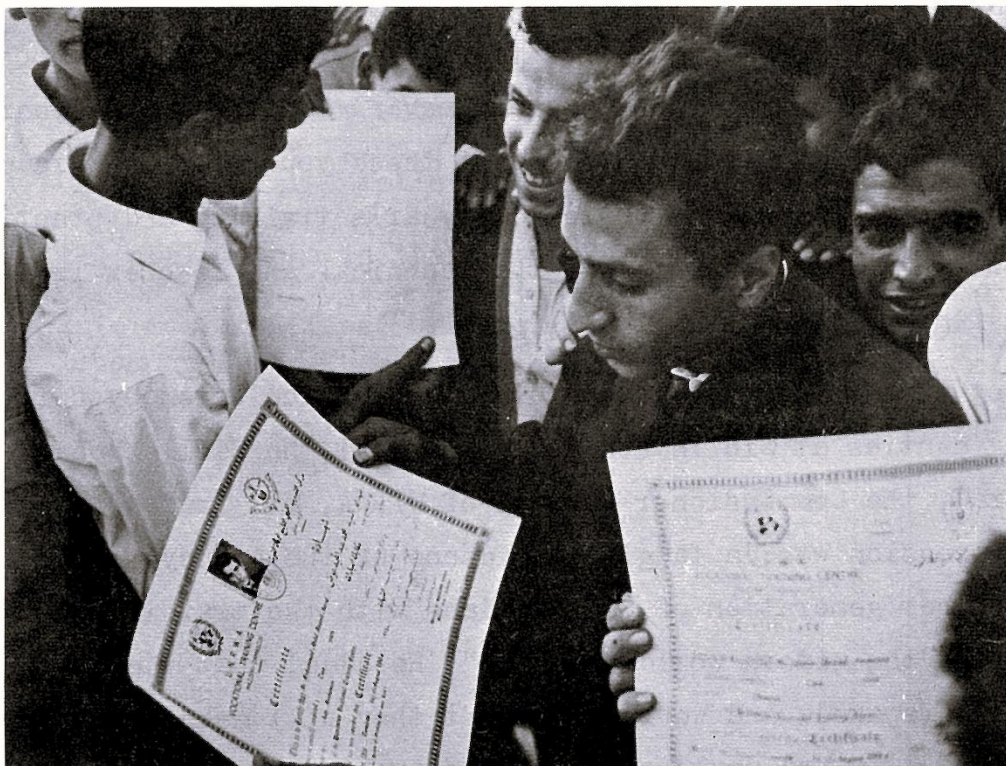
The 1964-65 academic year began at the end of September. There are about 3,250 young refugees registered at UNRWA's 10 training centres, and a further 340 entered government centres at UNRWA's expense. This is the highest enrolment yet since the training programme was initiated. This autumn, for the first time, the Agency's 10 training centres are operating at nearly full capacity. The considerable expansion in training facilities which has taken place since 1960 is evident from a comparison between the present enrolment figures and those of 1960, when the total capacity of the Agency's two training centres was approximately 600.

UNRWA's continuing emphasis on its vocational training programme reflects the Agency's firm belief that such training is the key to the future for young refugees, enabling them to lead productive, self-supporting lives wherever they may live.

Young refugees proudly display their certificates following the graduation ceremony at UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Centre.



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IN BRIEF

Visitors

Two officials of the Swedish Agency for International Assistance (NIB) accompanied the group of young refugee men who returned to the Middle East after spending a year training and working in Sweden at the expense of the Government. Miss Margareta Hagberg, Head of the Fellowship Division, and Mrs. Beate-Sophie Severin, Welfare Officer, spent almost two weeks in UNRWA's area of operations, during which they discussed UNRWA's training programmes and visited Agency installations in Jordan, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. During their visit they saw the Sibling Technical and Teacher Training Institute in Lebanon, which was established by UNRWA with a technical assistance grant from NIB.

Mr. Ralph Wendeborn, the national director of the Canadian Junior Red Cross, visited UNRWA's Sibling Vocational Training Centre in Lebanon, to which the Canadian Junior Red Cross had contributed during World Refugee Year. He also made a brief visit to Jordan to see UNRWA's operations there.

Mr. Kenric Marshall, the national director of the Canadian Save the Children Fund, inaugurated a new rehydration centre established in the Gaza Strip with funds from the Canadian Save the Children Fund. The rehydration centre, which will treat refugee children suffering from gastro-enteritis and related disorders, forms part of UNRWA's clinic in Khan Younis camp, to which the Save the Children Fund had made a previous contribution. Mr. Marshall also visited UNRWA installations in Lebanon.

Three representatives of Misereor, the German Catholic relief organization, Dr. Paul Zajadatz, Miss Maria Blume and Mr. Karl Feldmann, visited UNRWA's area of operations and saw many of the Agency's activities. They paid a visit to the Kalandia Vocational Training Centre in Jordan where a number of young men who graduated recently had been sponsored by Misereor.

Donations

A donation of £18,286 (\$51,200) has been received from Christian Aid, the British voluntary organization formerly known as Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service. The donation, made through the United Kingdom Freedom From

Hunger Campaign, will meet the cost of training 50 young Palestine refugees as diesel plant site mechanics in UNRWA vocational training centres. Christian Aid is a branch of the British Council of Churches.

UNRWA will be able to raise the standard of science teaching in its preparatory schools with the help of a contribution of \$10,000 from the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) for the purpose of buying science laboratory kits. ARAMCO had previously donated over \$18,000 for the same purpose and has given generous support over the years for scholarships for young refugees.

The United Kingdom Save the Children Fund completed its sponsorship of an entire class of 20 refugee girls in the 1962-64 home economics course at UNRWA's girls' training centre in Ramallah, Jordan. The total contribution, which covers both years of the course, amounts to £7,200 (approximately \$20,000).

Zonta, one of the international women's organizations which has supported the Ramallah women's centre, has donated a further \$1,500 to provide training scholarships for three more girls at the centre. During the past two years Zonta has donated more than \$52,000 for vocational training scholarships at Ramallah. At its convention in San Francisco in July, Zonta International decided to undertake the support of the Ramallah women's centre as its international project for a second two-year period.

Further donations of medical supplies made through American Middle East Rehabilitation, Inc. (AMER) have enabled UNRWA to allocate 26 more training scholarships to young refugees at UNRWA training centres. The donations represented a saving to UNRWA of more than \$13,000, which the Agency would otherwise have spent to buy supplies needed for its health programme.

Contributions totalling \$12,000 have been received from various sources in Finland through Mrs. Helvi Sipila. The funds have been used to provide scholarships for young men and women at UNRWA training centres. The donors include the Finnish Radio Company, the Finnish Red Cross, the Finnish Girl Guides, the Association Against Heart Diseases and Zonta (District XIII). Mrs. Sipila, who visited UNRWA's area of operations earlier this year, was recently elected second vice-chairman of Zonta International.

The Canadian Junior Red Cross has donated \$3,160 to establish and operate for one year a woodwork training centre in Balata refugee camp in Jordan. The centre will give refugee boys a one-year course in carpentry, enabling them to improve their own homes and to earn a little money by doing odd jobs.

The New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO) has made a further contribution amounting to \$10,500 to provide scholarships for two complete classes at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre. The scholarships will cover the second year of training of the boys in the fitter machinist and plumbing courses. CORSO also sponsored them during their first year.

The Government of Iraq has donated \$2,000 through the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to sponsor four trainees for one year.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has donated a further \$8,000 to cover the second year of training of 16 young refugees in the plumbing course at UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre. The Norwegian Refugee Council also sponsored the boys in their first year. Other trainees have been provided with scholarships by the Norwegian United Nations Association and the Victorian Division of the United Nations Association of Australia.

The United Nations Staff Fund for Refugees in Geneva has earmarked \$1,600 to pay the expenses of a refugee attending the course for health inspectors at UNRWA's Technical and Teacher Training Institute at Sibliin, Lebanon.

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#### UNRWA OFFICIALS RECEIVE NORWEGIAN AWARDS

During a recent visit to UNRWA's area of operations, the Norwegian Minister for Social Affairs, Mr. Olav Gjaerevoll, announced that the Plaque of the Norwegian Refugee Council had been awarded to both the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, and to the Deputy Commissioner-General, Mr. John Reddaway.

Mr. Gjaerevoll presented one of the awards on behalf of the Norwegian Refugee Council to Mr. Reddaway. Mr. Michelmore was in New York at the time, attending meetings at United Nations Headquarters.



The Plaque of the Norwegian Refugee Council is awarded in recognition of outstanding work on behalf of refugees. Among the recipients are King Olav V of Norway, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the former Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis.

Mr. Gjaerevoll, accompanied by Mr. Nandrup Dahl, a senior official of the Norwegian Ministry for Social Affairs, saw the work of UNRWA in Lebanon, Jordan and the Gaza Strip and discussed the refugee problem with Agency officials during his visit to the Middle East.

In a letter of thanks to Mr. Gjaerevoll, Mr. Reddaway wrote: "Norway has been a good friend to the Palestine refugees, and neither the distance separating your country from the Middle East nor the fact that relatively few of your countrymen have had the opportunity of seeing for themselves the problems of this part of the world have prevented the kind and generous Norwegian people from extending the hand of help and friendship to the Palestine refugees."

UNRWA enjoys a particularly close relationship with the Norwegian Refugee Council, from which it has received generous support. Among other projects, the Norwegian Refugee Council largely financed the extensions to UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre and recently made a donation to cover the cost of training an entire class of young men there (see Donations, page 7).

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#### AID FROM THE MEN IN BLUE BERETS

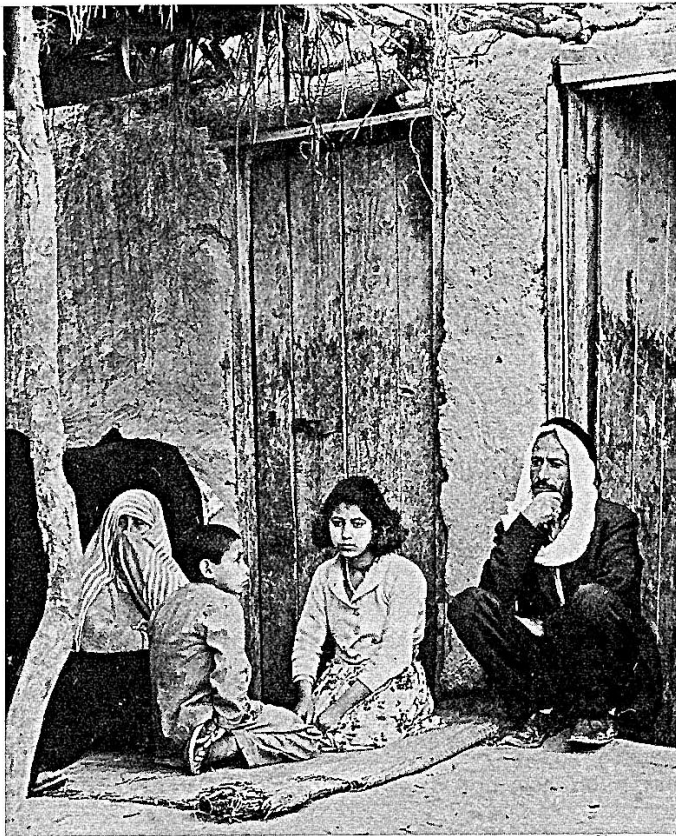
Harbah Abu Sabat ran from school one day last year with a few piastres in her pocket and one thought in her mind: her new apron.

To a 12-year-old refugee girl whose best dress is a cut-down, patched-up, second-hand garment, a new apron to wear at school is an event of great excitement.

Harbah and her friends hurried from the UNRWA school in the village of Bani Suheila in the Gaza Strip, where she lived, towards the bustling market in nearby Khan Younis. As they stopped by the railroad crossing to let a train pass, Harbah stumbled and fell under the wheels of the moving train.

When she awoke in the hospital, a doctor told her gently that she no longer had any legs. Both had had to be amputated at the knees. In one brief instant, Harbah lost not only her legs but also her hope -- and the hope of her family -- for the future. Harbah had been due to enter secondary school this autumn, with the aim of becoming a teacher. Both she and her family had lived for the day when she would start to work and would be able to provide a little money to raise the family above the level of basic subsistence at which it has been living for the past 16 years. In one brief instant those hopes were crushed.

After some weeks in the hospital, Harbah returned to the two-room clay-brick hut where she lives with her parents, her three sisters and her brother.



Harbah (centre) sits with her family outside the camp shelter before going to Cairo for rehabilitation.

tation centre in Cairo, where she is learning to walk on artificial legs.

For almost six months, she scarcely ventured outside the door, unable to move about except by crawling over the floor.

But the horizons of Harbah's world, confined for so long by the walls of her home, have now expanded again, thanks to the generosity of the men of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the international peace-keeping force that patrols the armistice demarcation lines that form the borders of the Gaza Strip.

A recent donation from the civilian and military staff of UNEF has enabled Harbah to go to a rehabili-





Harbah (centre) sits with her family outside the camp shelter before going to Cairo for rehabilitation.

Harbah Abu Sabat is only one among many thousands of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip who have been assisted, either directly or indirectly, by UNEF's helping hand since the men in blue berets came to the Middle East eight years ago. The most recent donation also provided a two-year vocational training scholarship for a young man now attending UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Centre and enabled UNRWA to supply some 200 refugees, almost all schoolchildren, with spectacles.

Throughout the Gaza Strip there are many evidences of the assistance given by UNEF, which presently comprises contingents from Brazil, Canada, Denmark, India, Norway, Sweden and Yugoslavia. UNRWA provides medical care for the refugees in Khan Younis camp in a modern clinic, the nucleus of which was a Christmas gift from the Canadian contingent in 1960. The clinic has since been expanded with contributions from other organizations in Canada, but the Canadian UNEF troops still regard it as "their" clinic, making additional donations to improve the facilities and visiting it regularly.

The Swedish Battalion's special project is a little school in the middle of a hospital. UNRWA established the school some years ago with a donation from the battalion to give education to children undergoing lengthy treatment in the tuberculosis hospital in Bureij refugee camp. Before returning home at the end of their tours of duty, each Swedish Battalion makes a donation to UNRWA to cover the cost of operating the little school.

Most other contingents of UNEF also make regular contributions to UNRWA. Over the years these donations have enabled the Agency to help the refugees in a variety of ways -- including the operation of play centres for refugee children, the provision of artificial limbs, the acquisition of medical equipment for UNRWA clinics and the improvement of the facilities in various UNRWA installations.

The men in blue berets are soldiers of peace and men of good will, as Harbah Abu Sabat, walking proudly on her new legs, will readily affirm.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE STRESSED  
IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSES

There is only one main highway running down the 25-mile length of the Gaza Strip, and many of the side streets in the town of Gaza are "surfaced" with sand.

But even though the network of roads in the Strip is limited, knowledge of the rules of the road is important, especially to youngsters.

Children in many UNRWA-UNESCO schools in the Gaza Strip will be taught about road safety this year by volunteer refugee youth leaders, as one result of a youth leadership training programme held this summer in the Gaza Strip. The programme, organized jointly by the YMCA and UNRWA, included two sports courses, a course on cultural and recreational programmes, a course for Sea-Scout leaders and two courses on leadership in service to the community. The young refugee volunteers, most of them in their late teens or early twenties, are leaders in UNRWA's eight youth activities centres in the Gaza Strip.

Those taking part in the community service courses had lectures on traffic safety from government traffic officers. The volunteers plan to tour UNRWA-UNESCO schools to conduct their safety campaign.

The community service courses included lectures and discussions of the many ways in which youngsters can help the community and opportunities to put into practice what they learned in theory. The service projects undertaken as part of the courses included the building of a wall around a women's activities centre, the levelling of a volleyball court, the digging of waste water pits in one of the camps, clean-up campaigns in two other camps and the improvement of a road in yet another camp. Tools for the service projects were bought with funds donated by the Near East Christian Council.

The summer youth leadership training programme in Gaza, which was attended by 230 volunteer refugee youth leaders, was assisted by three young volunteer workers from abroad who spent the summer in the Middle East under a joint UNRWA-YMCA arrangement. Richard Patten and Neil Griggs from Canada and Henrik Berlin from Sweden participated as instructors and worked alongside the young refugees in the service projects.

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A similar series of leadership training courses began in Jordan in late September.

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TO BECOME A MAN

A New Television Film with Hugh Downs

A new film about the UNRWA education and training programme has just been released.

It uses a new technique of unrehearsed discussion with the refugee boys and girls in the training centres. It has captured delightful glimpses of the essential and universal youngster on the brink of life and placed these against the setting of the rapidly developing Middle East.

The opening, closing and commentary are by Hugh Downs.

. . .

"To Become a Man," which is a half-hour programme, is being distributed to television stations in the United States by Association Films. Readers should check with their local stations for date and time of showing.

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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: 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; 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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