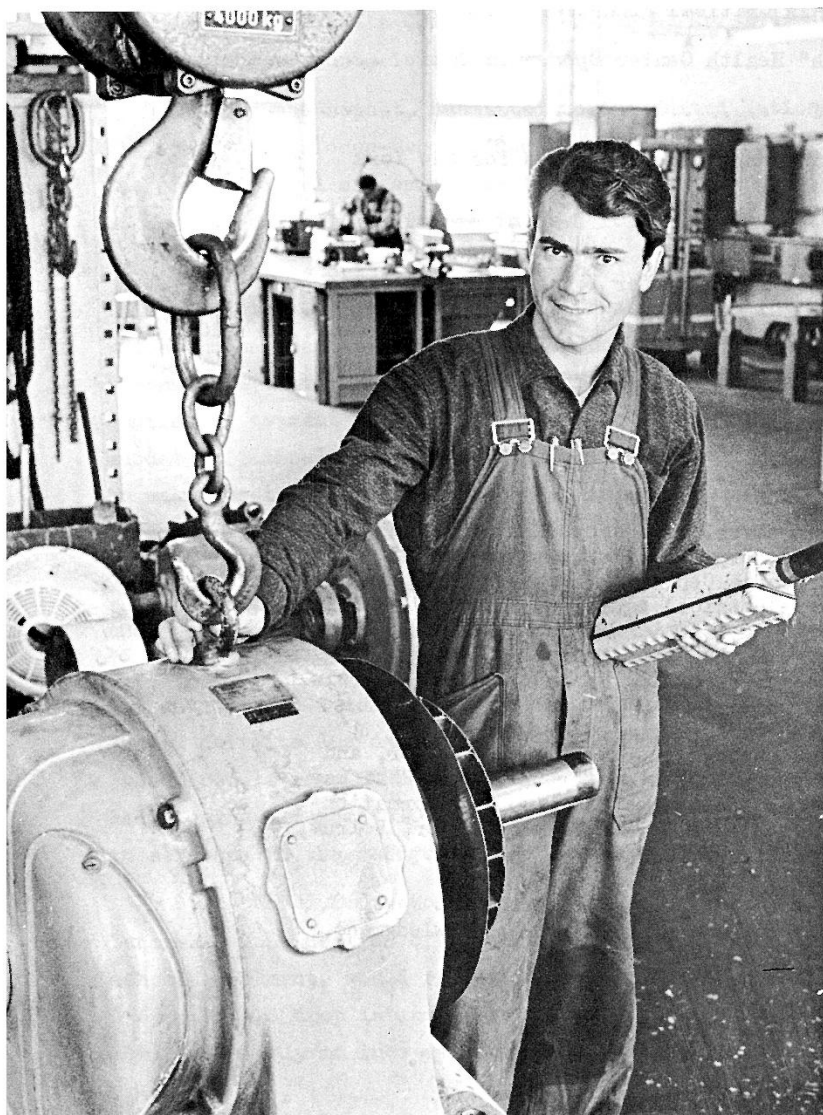




# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

*An UNRWA Newsletter*

No. 43  
Sept.—Oct. 1965



ON-THE-JOB  
TRAINING  
IN EUROPE  
... page 9

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The cover photo shows Khalid Ayyoub, a graduate from UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Center in Syria, working in a heavy electrical equipment factory in Norrkoping, Sweden. Khalid was one of the 50 young refugees who spent a year in Sweden doing on-the-job training in industry. See article on page 9.

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COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S REPORT  
REVEALS CRITICAL FINANCIAL SITUATION

A breakdown in the services provided to more than one million Palestine refugees will result, with disastrous consequences to the refugees, if the critical financial situation facing UNRWA is not resolved, warned UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, in his annual report, issued in October.

In the report, submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, the Commissioner-General made an urgent appeal for funds to maintain the present level of assistance to the refugees, pointing out that many of them were likely to remain in need for an undetermined period.

The report covers the period 1 July 1964 to 30 June 1965. This year, the General Assembly will consider the future of the Agency, whose current mandate expires on 30 June 1966. The Commissioner-General recommended that, if the Assembly agreed that the appropriate means of continuing to meet the needs of the refugees was by extending UNRWA's mandate, it should be "for a reasonably long period, such as five years," to make possible more efficient planning and use of resources.

The financial crisis

The Commissioner-General reported that the "financial stress" under which the Agency operated had increased sharply. UNRWA had incurred a deficit of \$0.5 million in the financial year 1963, \$2 million in 1964, and anticipated a deficit of \$2.5 million in 1965. Faced with increasing annual deficits due mainly to the rising cost of education for an expanding school population, UNRWA had intensified its fundraising efforts, and had sought all possible administrative savings as well as minor reductions in services to the refugees.

"For 1966 the outlook is even more serious," said the Commissioner-General. Continuation of present services, with a further increase in school enrolment, would result in expenditure \$0.8 million higher than in 1965. With a drop in income estimated at \$0.9 million, the 1966 deficit would be likely to increase to a total of \$4.2 million.

By the end of 1965, the Agency's working capital would have dropped to below the minimum amount needed to ensure continued operations for the first half of 1966, and UNRWA would not be able to cover the 1966 deficit from working capital, as it had done in previous years.

"The present imbalance cannot continue, since it would rapidly result in insolvency and perhaps in the collapse of the whole structure of the Agency's services and cause fresh hardship to the Arab refugees, who, for the last seventeen years, have led tragically insecure and poverty-stricken lives. It may also well have serious social and political repercussions in the host countries."

"With the reserves exhausted, remedial action either to increase income or to decrease costs can no longer be put off. Failure to meet the issue can only result in a breakdown of the services, with disastrous consequences for the refugees," said the Commissioner-General.

The Commissioner-General went on to urge "that the General Assembly seek all possible means of providing the Agency with additional funds to enable the continuance of the present services on which the welfare of the refugees so greatly depends."

"If adequate funds cannot be provided, the Commissioner-General asks the General Assembly to direct him on how to deal with the situation that would result," stated the report, warning that there might be wide political ramifications of any radical reduction in UNRWA's services, and a serious risk to public order and security should there be any abrupt disruption of a program which over the years has become "a basis of life for the Arab refugee population."

#### The situation of the refugees

The Commissioner-General expressed the opinion that the international community and its agent, UNRWA, were confronted with a long-term problem in providing for the needs of the refugees. In the absence of a political solution, as envisaged in the General Assembly's resolution 194 (III), referring to repatriation or compensation, the plight of the refugees was likely to continue to demand the sympathy and support of the international community for a period to which a time limit could not be fixed at present.

During the year under review, the number of refugees registered with UNRWA rose by 2.7 per cent, the number eligible for health services by 2.8 per cent, the number living in UNRWA camps by 3.7 per cent, and the number of refugee children in UNRWA schools by 8.7 per cent. "These figures alone would seem to be a clear indication that the needs of the refugees for health and sanitation services, and particularly for education, are constantly growing, dramatically so in the case of schooling," stated the report.

In the view of the Commissioner-General, the attitudes and feelings of the refugees continued unchanged. "Their longing to return to their homes, encouraged by the General Assembly's declaration on repatriation and compensation in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) and referred to in many subsequent resolutions, remains unabated."

Mr. Michelmores added that in his opinion the Palestine refugee problem had not grown any less complex or less dangerous to the peace and stability of the Middle East.

The problem of ration roll rectification

The Commissioner-General also reported on new developments in the long-standing problem of the rectification of UNRWA's ration rolls. Discussions with the host Governments had resulted in proposals that the Governments would undertake certain responsibilities regarding the rectification of the rolls if the Commissioner-General would agree to extend the Agency's assistance to the third generation of refugees (children of persons who were themselves born after 14 May 1948), and if the Agency were assured of sufficient income to continue its assistance at the present level and to cover the increased costs arising in the future from the natural growth of the refugee population.

The Commissioner-General went on to say that, subject to any direction from the General Assembly, he thought he should seize this opportunity of a "fresh, more hopeful" approach to the persistent problem of rectifying the ration rolls. However, although he was prepared to amend the definition of eligibility for UNRWA assistance to include persons in need among the third generation of refugees, he was not in a position to guarantee that there would be adequate funds to continue the Agency's program at existing levels and to take care of the natural increase in the refugee population. In these

circumstances, the Commissioner-General considered that he had no choice but to report the situation to the General Assembly.

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#### "SWEDISH" HEALTH CENTER OPENED IN GAZA

UNRWA's largest and newest health installation, established with a technical assistance grant from Sweden, was officially opened in the Gaza Strip at the end of September.

The UNRWA-Swedish Health Center in Gaza Town forms the focal point of a joint health and education project in the Gaza Strip financed by a substantial grant from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).



ABOVE: The Governor-General of the Gaza Strip, General Yousef el Agroudi, officially opens the Center. With him (left to right) are Mr. Henricsson, Mr. Reddaway and Mr. Alex Squadrilli, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza.

At the inauguration ceremony, the Acting Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. John Reddaway, said that the combined health and education project would be of "inestimable benefit to the refugee community in Gaza.

"We are extremely glad to have the opportunity today of acknowledging the gratitude we owe to the Swedish Government, and to the good and generous people of Sweden who have always taken such a sympathetic and helpful interest in the tragic plight of the Palestine Refugees," said Mr. Reddaway. He also paid tribute to the Governor-General and to the Authorities of the Gaza Strip for making available the land on which the Center was built and for their constant help and cooperation.

Mr. Sven Henricsson, an official of SIDA, attended the ceremony representing the Government of Sweden.

Mr. Henricsson told the assembled guests that the new health and education project was one in which SIDA had taken a special interest, and which was expected to be of great benefit to the refugees in the Gaza Strip.

The Governor-General of the Gaza Strip, General Yousef el Agroudi, cut a ribbon to open the Center officially.

The technical assistance grant from Sweden covers the cost of building and equipping the Center, of operating it for the first two years and of providing two Swedish staff members to direct the operations. The first, Dr. Lillemor Eriksson, arrived in early September. Dr. Eriksson, a pediatrician, came to Gaza after spending two and a half years working in Uganda. She will direct the operations of the Center, assisted by a Swedish nurse.

The Health Center will perform two important functions. First, it will provide improved health care for refugees from nearby Beach camp and from the surrounding area, with emphasis on care for mothers and their children.

BELOW: During a tour of the Center after the opening ceremony, Mr. Henricsson (left) and the other guests stop to admire the two refugee babies born the day before.



Its facilities include a maternal and child health clinic to provide pre-natal and post-natal care for refugee women and their babies, some of whom will be born in the Center's 12-bed maternity ward. Sick children will be treated in a special children's clinic, which will include a pediatric ward. A 20-bed rehydration/nutrition center will give treatment to infants suffering from gastro-enteritis. A general medical clinic has been incorporated at UNRWA's expense.

The Center's second role is to act as the nerve-center for programs of training and health education. UNRWA doctors, nurses and midwives will attend in-service training courses at the Center. A course to train midwives is also planned. As part of the overall health and education project, classes in home economics and hygiene have been instituted in 16 UNRWA girls' schools in the Gaza Strip. (See article in Newsletter No. 43). The medical and health aspects of this course will be conducted by staff attached to the Health Center

The "Swedish" Health Center is a significant improvement in UNRWA's health service in the Gaza Strip -- as two refugee mothers found out even before the inauguration. They delivered their babies in the maternity ward two days before the Center was officially opened.

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#### IN BRIEF

##### Commissioner-General Leaves for New York

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, flew to New York in mid-September to attend the XXth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will consider his annual report for the year ended 30 June 1965. Mr. Michelmore will also hold discussions with United Nations delegates, government officials and representatives of voluntary organizations, with a view to increasing contributions to enable the Agency to continue providing assistance to needy refugees.

##### Volunteer Workers arrive

Six young Britons arrived in the Middle East in September to spend a year working as volunteers in UNRWA training centers, under a joint project of UNRWA and the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The six -- Pamela Pulling, Glen Birkett, Alistair Scott, Peter Aley, John Harvey and David Closs -- will live at the training centers, assisting with sports and extra-curricula activities and doing some teaching. Their travel costs are being borne by the United Nations Association, and UNRWA covers their living expenses.

In addition to the six new volunteers, eight young Netherlanders are beginning their second year of voluntary service at UNRWA training centers in a program wholly financed by the Netherlands Government.

Two young Canadians, Gordon Ball and David Beatty, also arrived in September to join the YMCA as volunteers, working in the joint UNRWA-YMCA Leadership Training and Youth Activities Program.

#### Visitors

A parliamentary delegation from Argentina visited the Middle East at the end of July. The party, which included Mr. Eduardo Gamond, Vice President of the Senate, Senator Dante Lovaglio, Mr. Juan Carlos Linares, a member of Parliament, and Mr. Jorge Farias Gomez, a lawyer, visited UNRWA installations in the Gaza Strip and refugee camps in Lebanon.

Mrs. Nancy B. Stanton, of Midland, Texas, spent three weeks in UNRWA's area of operations in August studying the Palestine refugee problem and the work of UNRWA under a United Nations Fellowship granted by the United States Federation of Business and Professional Women. Mrs. Stanton visited all four "host" countries (Lebanon, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip), and made a point of inspecting UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Center, at which many refugee girls are receiving training with scholarships donated by various national federations under a project of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women.

Mr. Martin Dyas, Deputy Director of the UNESCO Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Services, visited UNRWA's Sibliin Vocational Training Center during his brief stay in Lebanon.

A group of 12 young Americans, mostly college students, visited the Gaza Strip as part of the Experiment for International Living project, under which they spent two months living with families in the United Arab Republic. During their three days in the Gaza Strip, they visited refugee camps, training centers, schools, clinics and other UNRWA installations.

Thirty members of the Middle East Study Seminar, including many teachers and students, visited UNRWA installations in Lebanon and Jordan.

Two officials of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) made recent visits to the Middle East. Mr. Kjell Nordenskjold, Chief of the Fellowships Section, flew to Beirut with the third group of refugees returning after spending a year in Sweden. Mr. Nordenskjold attended the graduation ceremony at the SIDA-financed Sibliin Technical and Teacher Training Institute in Lebanon. Mr. Sven Henricsson represented the Government of Sweden at the inauguration ceremony of the Swedish-financed health center in Gaza (see page 4) and also visited the Sibliin Technical and Teacher Training Institute.

Mr. Wolf-Dieter Bopst, a member of the staff of the Munich Institute of Economic Geography in the Federal Republic of Germany, spent his summer in the Middle East preparing a thesis on the problem of the Palestine refugees and on the work of UNRWA.

### Donations

A total of £8,280 (approximately \$23,200) has been received from the New Zealand Council of Organizations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO). The contribution includes £2,780 to finance a year's operation of one sewing center and one carpentry training center in Jordan, and £5,500 towards the cost of sponsoring the 53 refugee trainees at UNRWA training centers already "adopted" by CORSO. The funds will provide training scholarships for the entire enrolment of 25 young men in their third year at UNRWA's Agricultural Training Center in Gaza, and for 28 trainees in the electricians and fitter machinist courses at Kalandia Vocational Training Center in Jordan.

A contribution of \$7,000 from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) in the United Kingdom has completed OXFAM's sponsorship of 28 young refugees for the second year of their training. OXFAM also provided scholarships to cover their first year. Another donation of \$2,240 was made by OXFAM to purchase polio vaccine.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has made two further donations: \$5,100 for the construction of a rehydration/nutrition center at Nuseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, and \$8,000 to provide vocational training scholarships for the first year of 16 young men in the auto mechanics course at UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Center.

Another contribution from Norway will finance the construction and the first year's operation of a rehydration/nutrition center at Rafah camp in the Gaza Strip. The donation of \$9,800 has come from the Wenche Myhre Fund. Wenche Myhre, one of Norway's most popular singing stars, has dedicated her fan-club to raising funds for this center. Twenty-year-old Wenche unveiled a plaque at the rehydration center during a visit to the Gaza Strip earlier this year. (Newsletter No. 41)

The Swedish Save the Children Fund has made a contribution of \$7,800 for UNRWA's layette program, under which pregnant refugee women visiting UNRWA maternal and child health centers are given a small layette before the birth of their babies.

A donation of \$2,000 from the International Federation of Business and Professional Women will provide vocational training scholarships to cover the first year of training of four refugee girls in the clerk/typist course at UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Center in Jordan. This brings the total contributions from the Business and Professional Women's Organization to \$35,000.

A further \$1,600, making a total to date of approximately \$12,000, has been received from the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland towards the cost of providing scholarships for 23 trainees at the Agricultural Training Center in Gaza and for 16 young refugees at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Center, Jordan.

The Association of Girl Guides of Luxembourg has donated \$1,500 to sponsor the second year of a teacher trainee at the Ramallah Girls' Center, and the full two years of another girl in the same course.

Donations of \$1,000 have been received from Zonta District XIII, the American Friends of the Middle East and from two German firms, Bayerische Motoren-Werke and Siemens und Halske AG. Each donation will provide two vocational training scholarships.

Scholarships have also been received from the Finnish Association of Kindergarten Teachers, the Abqaiq Women's Group of the Arabian American Oil Company, the Norwegian magazine Illustrert Familieblad, and the United Nations Association Refugee Department at Cambridge University.

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#### ON-THE-JOB TRAINING FOR YOUNG REFUGEES

Three groups of young refugees -- all graduates from UNRWA training centers -- flew to Europe in September for a year of on-the-job training in industry. Following their year abroad, the 166 young men will return to the Middle East to put their training and experience to use in the Arab world. (An article written by a member of the second group to go to Sweden appears on page 10).

Ninety-six refugees are now working in factories in the Federal Republic of Germany, 50 in Sweden and 20 in Belgium.

The young men who went to Germany constituted the second group to spend a year there, under arrangements made jointly by UNRWA and the Federal Office for Placement. The first group of 43 returned to the Middle East in September.

Fifty graduates from UNRWA training centers have gone to Sweden each year for the past three years. The fourth group flew to Stockholm at the end of September, a month after the return of the third group. The program is part of the technical assistance agreement between UNRWA and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The young men spend one year in Sweden, then return to Lebanon for a further year of training at UNRWA's Sibilin Technical and Teacher Training Institute, which was itself established with a technical assistance grant from SIDA. On graduation after, in most cases, four years of training and experience, they are qualified as vocational training instructors or industrial foremen.

The on-the-job training program in Belgium was initiated this year when 20 graduates from UNRWA training centers in Jordan and Lebanon flew to Brussels. Transportation costs are being shared by UNRWA and L'Entraide Socialiste Belge, the Belgian voluntary agency that was instrumental in setting up the project.

In all three countries, the young men are self-supporting once they are placed in factories, being paid regular wages for their work. Many of them live in private homes during the year, and others stay in hostels.



ABOVE: Muhssen Ibrahim, a welder who graduated from UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Center in Jordan, relaxes after work at Norrköping. Most of the young men learn Swedish very quickly.

In addition to the on-the-job training programs in Europe, almost all the graduates from UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Center spend a further year training and working in the United Arab Republic. Some do a year of practical work in a factory, within the framework of a training program supervised by the Egyptian Ministry of Industry, and others enrol in the third year of a secondary technical school to continue their training.

These on-the-job training programs enable the best of the graduates from UNRWA training centers to gain practical experience in modern industrial methods — experience that is invaluable both to the young refugees in making their way in life and in serving their community, and also to the developing industry of the Arab world.

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#### COME WITH ME TO SWEDEN

By Suleimen Farran

(Note: This article was written by one of the young refugees who spent a year training and working in Sweden under a joint program of UNRWA and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The article "On-the-job training for young refugees" on page 9 of this Newsletter gives details of the program. Suleimen Farran graduated from the Sibliin Technical and Teacher Training Institute in August, and is now an instructor at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Center in Jordan).

Early in my childhood, I learned that to be something, I have got to do something.

When I finished the fourth secondary class, I found that academic education is not everything in a student's life. Therefore, I enrolled in UNRWA's Vocational Training Center at Wadi Seer, Jordan, to have an industrial background. I chose the Mechanical Drawing course.

After a year, examinations were over, and I acquired good marks which won me the congratulations of my instructors. I continued to work hard, bearing in mind one thing: success.

My instructors encouraged me to continue my training. To obtain experience in Europe was my goal. I had no money, but luckily for me, and thanks to SIDA, I got a scholarship in Sweden and my dreams came true.

#### In Sweden

Malmo was the first city we saw in Sweden. There, I felt that I was a total stranger; the weather was cold at that night. The Swedish people at the airport greeted us with a kind smile.

Later on, we left on buses running through the city, but I was at a loss to understand why they were going on the left side, when traffic in Jordan kept to the right except when overtaking.

At 10 p.m. it was time to go into the hostel, where we slept four in a room. There were 50 of us. In the morning, the sun came shining through the windows as to say "Welcome to Sweden. This is your first morning in Sweden. You have to look around and see what you missed at night." I opened my eyes and looked, and what I saw: high buildings, buildings with slanted roofs, and cars and bicycles running to factories.

At 8 a.m., we grouped in the refectory to have breakfast. We found sandwiches with butter and jam, and cold milk, which we had never taken before. Most of us disliked the cold milk, but we asked for more bread. It is difficult to change customs. At lunch time, we ate boneless fish, and I could not understand how they can take out the bones without cutting the fish into pieces.

We lived in Malmo for one full week, in a world completely different from ours: drinking cold milk, eating potatoes instead of bread, fish without bones, high buildings, green trees, and large factories. One night, we were invited to a club for dancing, but I never danced before. Some of us tried to dance, but not as well as the Swedish do.

On the seventh day in Malmo, the Swedish Agency had a meeting with us to inform us of our work places and duties.

Next day I travelled with five boys to a town called Gävle, north of Stockholm. The way was very long, but the beautiful nature and wonderful scenery made us forget the tiring journey.

It was evening when the train arrived at Gävle. A lady and three gentlemen were waiting to take us into town and offer us any help we might need.

At 9 o'clock, a journalist came and photographed us for the morning paper. The next day we went to the labor office in Gävle as we were instructed in the evening. There, after a meeting of two hours, we went together with the Director to the vocational school where we were to receive further training, and met the Principal, who was very kind to us.

In the school, they gave us special attention. All the instructors were so kind and patient with us. Knowing no Swedish yet, we were given courses in English.

In Gävle, I lived with a family of four: a man, his wife, and their two daughters. They were very nice to me. Living with them was like being at home. Although I was only hiring a room, the family helped me in every way and they even did my laundry. I shall never forget their beautiful Christmas present, and the many parties I was invited to.

In Gävle, I made a lot of friends, for Swedish people are very friendly, helpful, and sincere.

We spent four months in Gävle. I wish I had stayed four years. After Gävle, we had to leave to Malmo to work in a factory. On the eve of our departure, we were given a beautiful farewell party attended by all our instructors and friends.

Malmo is about 500 miles south of Gävle. Upon our arrival there, my school mate and I went directly to the Kockums factory where we signed our contracts and went home for rest. We worked in that factory for eight months, during which period we gained extensive experience. We had difficulties at the beginning, but our supervisor was very patient and nice to us. He gave us so much of his attention that in three months we were able to depend completely on ourselves. Our supervisor was very pleased with our work, and with the results we were achieving. Eight months passed, and we returned to Lebanon for one more year of education at the UNRWA Technical and Teacher Training Institute, Sibliin.

I was sorry to leave the beautiful, peaceful and joyful country of Sweden, in which I recollected the best memories of my life. It was a country where people loved each other, a country of people who liked to give, people who loved peace and hated war, people who loved other people and respected them. I almost cried when I left Sweden.

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 1966.

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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 and American Middle East Rehabilitation, Inc., are organizations cooperating with UNRWA.

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