



PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 46 March—April 1966



JERUSALEM

CITY OF EASTER PILGRIMAGE;

CITY OF 40,000 REFUGEES



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EFFORTS TO REDUCE DEFICIT SHOW RESULTS

UNRWA's urgent efforts to raise funds to cover its critical budget deficit are beginning to show positive results. The Agency began 1966 with a deficit of \$4.2 million, which threatened to disrupt its assistance to the Palestine refugees.

A special contribution of \$2 million from the Government of Sweden was announced in early April, and there are indications that additional contributions or development aid grants may be forthcoming from other governments. However, UNRWA's deficit is by no means covered, and until sufficient funds have been received to ensure continuation of the Agency's aid to the refugees, the financial situation continues to be a matter of serious concern.

Commenting on the contribution from Sweden, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, said: "The response from Sweden to the appeal we sent out on behalf of the Arab refugees exceeds all our hopes and expectations. It is a wonderful demonstration of Sweden's continued deep concern for the refugees and confidence in UNRWA. It puts new heart into all of us in tackling the many difficult problems that lie ahead."

The special contribution from Sweden, and positive response from other governments, have resulted from UNRWA's urgent fund-raising efforts, which have included missions by both the Commissioner-General and the Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

The Commissioner-General visited Iraq and Kuwait in March for discussions with the governments regarding UNRWA's financial situation. Plans for further visits to Arab countries in April were also established.

The Deputy Commissioner-General, Mr. John Reddaway, returned to the Agency's headquarters in Beirut in early April at the end of a five-week mission during which he and the Director of the UNRWA Liaison Office in Europe, Mr. Raymond Courvoisier, made calls at twelve European capitals.

Mr. Reddaway brought the Agency's critical financial situation to the attention of the governments and appealed for additional contributions in response to resolution 2052 (XX) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December, which called upon all governments "as a matter of urgency" to make the most generous efforts possible to meet UNRWA's needs. Mr. Reddaway conferred with government officials in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In the Netherlands, Mr. Reddaway was received by Prince Bernhard, in the latter's capacity as Chairman of the Working Group of the European Refugee Campaign 1966. Prince Bernhard expressed deep concern over the plight of the Arab refugees, and over UNRWA's financial crisis.

The Agency's financial situation has also been the subject of further discussion in the Advisory Commission, which comprises representatives of the Governments of Belgium, France, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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ARAB PRIME MINISTERS PASS RESOLUTION ON ARAB REFUGEES

The Conference of Arab Prime Ministers, held in Cairo in March, adopted a resolution on the subject of the Palestine refugees in which they decided, among other things, to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit the "host" countries to make a first-hand inspection of the conditions of the refugees, to see the gravity of their plight.

In the paragraphs concerning UNRWA and the refugees, the Prime Ministers resolved:

"1. To present a joint Arab memorandum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for circulation among the members of the international organization, stressing the effects of reducing the Agency's budget and holding the United Nations responsible for the consequences.

"2. To invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit the Arab host countries so as to make first-hand acquaintance with the conditions of the refugees and the gravity of their plight.

"3. To exert joint Arab efforts in foreign capitals to acquaint governments with the untoward consequences arising from the application of the policy of reduction.

"4. To launch an intensive information campaign, both within the Arab countries and outside, to make the Arab attitude towards this matter known.

"5. To examine the possibilities of applying the principle of organizing the relations of Arab States with foreign States on the basis of their attitude towards the Palestine question in this respect."

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LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION SUPPORTS UNRWA'S APPEAL FOR FUNDS

At the beginning of March, the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on World Service passed a resolution supporting the appeal made by the Commissioner-General and the Advisory Commission of UNRWA for additional contributions from governments. The text of the resolution is as follows:

"The LWF Commission on World Service, assembled in Hong Kong from 7th to 10th March 1966 for its annual meeting:

1. Notes with pleasure that the 20th Session of the UN General Assembly has extended the mandate of UNRWA;
2. Records its appreciation of the cooperative relationship between UNRWA and LWF;
3. Expresses its concern that, unless the current financial crisis of UNRWA is solved, a curtailment of UNRWA's services will impose severe hardship on the refugees under its mandate;
4. Considers that the basic responsibility for the care of the Palestinian refugees rests with the UN and its member States; and therefore
5. Resolves to support the Commissioner-General and the UNRWA Advisory Commission in their appeal to all governments that they contribute the funds required by UNRWA for an effective implementation of its program."

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CO-EDUCATION COMES TO GAZA TRAINING CENTER

UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Center has become the first of the Agency's ten training centers to enrol refugee girls as well as boys.

This is something of a revolution in the Gaza Strip, where, throughout the entire school systems of both UNRWA and the Gaza authorities, boys and girls have, with only a few exceptions, always been kept separate.

In October 1965, 24 refugee girls who had completed their secondary education enrolled for a one-year secretarial course. The girls are day-students at what is otherwise a residential center for 360 young men. Their course, which includes English, Arabic, English shorthand, English and Arabic typewriting and general office procedures, is an abbreviated version of the two-year business and office-practice course offered at the center for men, who also take such subjects as accounting, economic geography, commerce and business administration. The girls use the same facilities as the young men, alternating in the classrooms.

The admission of girls to the Gaza Vocational Training Center reflects the significant change that is taking place in the status of women in the Arab world. In many areas, the traditional seclusion of women is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. With every passing year, more girls are going to school; more girls are thinking about taking up careers; educated women are playing increasingly active roles in their communities.

Refugee girls, too, are benefiting from this social revolution thanks to UNRWA's programs of education and training. There are today almost as many girls as boys in the 425 UNRWA-UNESCO schools. In the field of vocational training, UNRWA in 1962 opened a pioneer training center for girls at Ramallah, Jordan. With some 540 girls presently enrolled, the Ramallah center is the largest of UNRWA's ten training centers.

With their admission into the Gaza training center, another avenue of advancement has been opened up for the refugee girls in the Gaza Strip, the most traditional of the four "host" countries. They can become "career" girls in an area where career girls, apart from teachers, are almost unknown.

VISCOUNT ASTOR

"UNRWA and the Arab refugees have lost a staunch friend and champion, who will be deeply mourned," cabled the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, following news of the death of Viscount Astor, Chairman of the Standing Conference of British Organizations for Aid to Refugees. Lord Astor took a deep personal interest in the plight of the Palestine refugees and the work of UNRWA, which he saw at first hand when he visited refugee camps and UNRWA installations in 1962. Since that time, Lord and Lady Astor had made personal donations of 11 scholarships to enable young refugees to receive training at UNRWA Training centers. Shortly before his death, he attended a seminar on the Arab refugee problem organized by the Standing Conference.

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OXFAM DONATION ASSISTS REFUGEE VICTIMS OF JORDAN FLOOD DISASTER

The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) has made an emergency donation of £1,000 (\$2,800) to UNRWA to help refugees made homeless by the recent disaster in southern Jordan, when overwhelming floods swept through the town of Maan, wrecking many homes and killing more than 70 people.

Among the dead were 28 refugees, including eight children of the refugees' mukhtar, or headman. Fifty refugee families were hit by the floods; nearly all had their shelters destroyed and lost all their possessions. The donation from OXFAM, made after an appeal from UNRWA, will be used by the Agency, with other funds, to rebuild the shelters and to replace lost household goods. Immediately after the disaster, UNRWA gave emergency assistance to the refugees in the form of blankets, clothing and a special allocation of food.

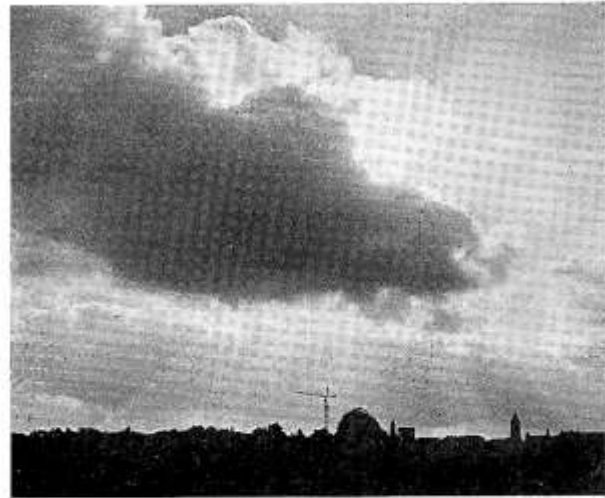
In a cable thanking UNRWA for its emergency aid, King Hussein of Jordan stated that he and his people greatly appreciated the Agency's help in alleviating the suffering.

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J E R U S A L E M

CITY OF EASTER

Each Easter, the thoughts of Christians throughout the world turn to Jerusalem. Pilgrims flock to the Holy City to follow in the last steps of Christ along the Via Dolorosa (center) to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (right) which stands on the traditional site of Calvary. Easter in Jerusalem is a time of solemn but colourful processions, such as that of the priests seen leaving the church.



CITY OF REFUGEES

But there is also another Jerusalem . . . the city of refugees. For in and around Jerusalem more than 40,000 Palestine refugees have found shelter. The Jerusalem of the refugees is a dark, a damp and a cheerless city of cellars, makeshift shacks and holes in the walls, the "homes" of many refugees. Left: not far from the Dome of the Rock Mosque, Jerusalem's most prominent landmark, refugees live in small huts on the roofs of buildings. Center: in this dark cellar a family of five lives. Right: the crumbling arches and walls of the old part of the city provide shelter for many refugees. Behind can be seen the Mount of Olives.







"INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL" PRESENTED TO KING HUSSEIN



King Hussein (right) receives a copy of "International Piano Festival" from Mr. Micheltore (center) and Mr. Louis Gendron, UNRWA's Director of Administration and Relief.

A copy of "International Piano Festival", the United Nations phonograph record in aid of refugees, was presented to His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan in February. The presentation was made in Amman, the capital of Jordan, by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Micheltore, on behalf of both the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, and UNRWA. The ceremony, which launched the sale of the record in Jordan, was also attended by the Prime Minister of Jordan, Mr. Wasfi Tall, and other senior Government and UNRWA officials.

"International Piano Festival" has been issued under a United Nations label by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist refugees throughout the world, including the Palestine Refugees. UNRWA has already

received \$16,000 from sales of the record. This sum has been used to provide vocational training scholarships for the entire class of 16 young refugee men in the electricians' course at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Center, near Jerusalem, Jordan. The scholarships will cover their two-year course.

"International Piano Festival" brings together six eminent pianists (Claudio Arrau, Wilhelm Backhaus, Alexander Brailowsky, Robert Casadesus, Byron Janis and Wilhelm Kempff) playing works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Mozart, Schubert and Schumann.

IN BRIEF

Former President of Pontifical Mission Consecrated Archbishop

The former President of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, Monsignor Joseph T. Ryan, was consecrated Archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska, at the end of March. Prior to his elevation to the archbishopric, Monsignor Ryan had served for six years as President of the Pontifical Mission, the Agency established by the then Pope to assist the Palestine refugees, and

had made frequent visits to the Middle East. He has been succeeded by Monsignor John Nolan, formerly Secretary-General of the Pontifical Mission.

Visitors

Dr. Gabriel Betancur-Majia, Assistant Director-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) spent four days in the Middle East examining and discussing the joint UNRWA-UNESCO education program for Palestine refugees. Dr. Betancur-Majia came at the invitation of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, to see the program in operation and to consider the serious effects on the program that might result from UNRWA's critical financial deficit. During his visit, Dr. Betancur-Majia visited the Sibli Vocational Training Center in Lebanon, the UNRWA-UNESCO Institute of Education's headquarters in Beirut, and a number of UNRWA-UNESCO schools.

Dr. Lucien Bernard, Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), made a ten-day tour of UNRWA's area of operation seeing the health program, which is conducted by UNRWA under the technical supervision of WHO. Dr. Bernard visited Jordan, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, where he saw clinics, rehydration/nutrition centers, supplementary-feeding centers and other health installations in operation.

Mr. Jaakko Iloniemi, Chief of the Bureau of International Development Aid of the Government of Finland, spent four days in the Middle East discussing the Palestine refugee problem and seeing UNRWA's operations. Mr. Iloniemi had talks with senior UNRWA officials, and visited UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Center, near Jerusalem, Jordan.

Mr. Wilhelm Bøe, the Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, conferred with the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during a brief stopover in Beirut and later visited UNRWA installations in Jordan. Mr. Bøe was accompanied by Mr. Lauritz Johnson, Chairman of the Norwegian Tibetan Aid and a member of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

A group of ten journalists from the Netherlands, led by Professor George Zeegers, Secretary of the Netherlands Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, saw UNRWA's operations in Lebanon and Jordan during a week-long visit to the Middle East. The tour was in connection with a fund-raising campaign to be held in the Netherlands at the beginning of April.

Fifteen delegates attending the Caritas Internationalis Executive Committee meeting in Beirut in March visited UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Center in Syria and refugee camps in the Jericho area of Jordan on their way to Jerusalem, where they continued their meeting. A number of the delegates also visited UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Center, near Jerusalem.

Dr. Emmet Holt, President of American Middle East Rehabilitation Inc. (AMER) held discussions with senior UNRWA officials during a brief visit to Beirut in March.

Donations

Bread for the World, the German relief agency, has paid the second half of its donation of \$25,000 to finance the construction and the first year's operation of two rehydration/nutrition centers in Jordan, and the operation of a third center for one year. The donation was made through the Lutheran World Federation. The two new centers have been completed and all three are in operation.

The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) has made two further donations in addition to its emergency contribution to assist the flood victims in Jordan. A contribution of \$6,300 will help to finance the operating costs of UNRWA's health center in Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, and a donation of \$7,000, representing the first instalment of a pledge of \$28,000, will go towards providing two-year vocational training scholarships for 28 young men at UNRWA's Gaza Vocational Training Center.

Thirty reconditioned electric typewriters donated for use in the business courses at UNRWA training centers will also provide scholarships for young refugees to attend these centers. The donation has been made by the International Business Machine Corporation (IBM) through American Middle East Rehabilitation Inc. (AMER). Valued at \$9,000, it will save UNRWA from having to purchase typewriters, and enable the Agency to use the savings for one-year scholarships for 18 refugees.

His Beatitude Benedictos, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, has made a personal donation of \$1,000 to sponsor one trainee at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Center, near Jerusalem, Jordan, and one at the Gaza center.

A further donation of \$5,000 has been received from the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, completing the pledge of \$14,000 made by the Eastbourne Freedom From Hunger Campaign Committee for the sponsorship of refugees at UNRWA training centers.

Two donations from Canada will sponsor trainees at UNRWA's Sibli Vocational Training Center, which was built with funds from Canada. A contribution of \$1,600 from the United Nations Association of Canada will provide scholarships for three young refugees in the business course, and a contribution of \$500 from the Canadian Junior Red Cross will be allocated to another trainee in the same course.

The Norwegian Aid Society for Refugees and International Development has donated almost \$1,000 to finance the training and education of two deaf and dumb refugee children in the Gaza Strip.

A donation of \$1,000 to provide two training scholarships has been received from the Association of Finnish Folk Schools and Folk Academies, and contributions of one scholarship have been made by the Austrian Federation of Business and Professional Women, the Tenby (UK) Freedom From Hunger Campaign Committee, and St. Helen's School (UK).

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING: THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Esslingen is an old county town in the Federal Republic of Germany, with about 80,000 inhabitants, several beautiful Gothic churches, a well-known school of engineering and a number of modern factories. In an engine works there, two young Palestine refugees are now employed, 18-year-old Issam Awad Natsheh and 20-year-old Lahmud Issa Nofal. Their foreman praises them: "They are industrious and well-liked", and the owner of the firm states: "They really know their job".

The two young men belong to a group of 96 refugees who went to the Federal Republic in September for a year of on-the-job training. All of them were graduates of UNRWA's vocational training centers. They had been given two years' training as fitter-machinists, blacksmiths, welders, plasterers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians or diesel-plant site-mechanics. This is the second group admitted to German factories under an agreement between UNRWA and the Federal Office for Job Placement. Of the first group who went, some have been allowed to spend a further year in the Federal Republic but most have returned to put their skills to good use in the Arab world.

Issam and Lahmud speak German quite well now for they are getting instruction twice a week at the Institute for Foreign Relations in Stuttgart. They are very studious; in spite (or because) of the difficult grammar, they would like to take more German lessons. They are pleased with their new life and thrilled with the opportunity to work in a modern factory, where they earn about one dollar an hour.

BELOW: Issam Natsheh and Ribhy Hamed, two of the young refugees in Esslingen



BELLOW: Issam Natsheh and Ribhy Hamed, two of the young refugees in Esslingen



They have a room on the fourth floor of a house in the old part of town, and pay about \$22 a month for it. The main problem is house-work. "Here I have to do everything myself", Issam complains. "At home, my mother takes care of all that."

Other Palestinians belonging to the same group, including two of the youngest, Mohammed Ismail Irbash and Yussuf Jubran, both welders, are living in a foreign workers' home belonging to the Municipality.

At first, the boys wondered about the slanted roofs of the houses, but now they have found out the reason: "This must be because of the snow," Yussuf says, for in the meantime they have discovered that winter in Germany means snow and cold. "Of course one feels it in the street," Mohammed admits, "but the work-shops and the rooms are well heated."

In the evening, unless they have German lessons, they sometimes go to the cinema, or they meet friends working in other towns near Stuttgart. In fact, they object to only one thing: work is too short. They would prefer to work more than eight hours a day, to earn and learn more. They are enthusiastic about the friendliness they have met everywhere.

This friendliness can be explained in part by their diligence and their good training. "Their qualifications are much better than those of most foreign workers," their supervisors state. Similar opinions have been expressed by foremen in Sweden where 50 young refugees are getting further training this year, the third group to be sent to that country. The 18 graduates who went to Belgium in the autumn are also doing well, like the six young men from UNRWA's Agricultural Training Center in Gaza who flew to Switzerland at the same time.

Of course the number of graduates able to benefit from on-the-job training in Europe is relatively small. In the autumn of 1965, 170 young refugees were sent to European factories and farms, while nearly ten times as many, 1,600 young refugees, graduated from UNRWA's vocational training centers. The selection is therefore very strict, and the young men are carefully prepared for life in a highly industrialized country. Perhaps for this reason, their conduct is commended everywhere: they are punctual, sociable, disciplined, and determined to make full use of the chance to get further training.

One of the graduates in Germany may have spoken for all of them, when he said: "We are grateful for the opportunity to know modern industry. Our stay here means a great deal to us. We can find further development here, not only as workers, but as human beings."

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 1969.

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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

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