

PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

UNRWA NEWSLETTER No. 60
May June July 1969





**UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST**

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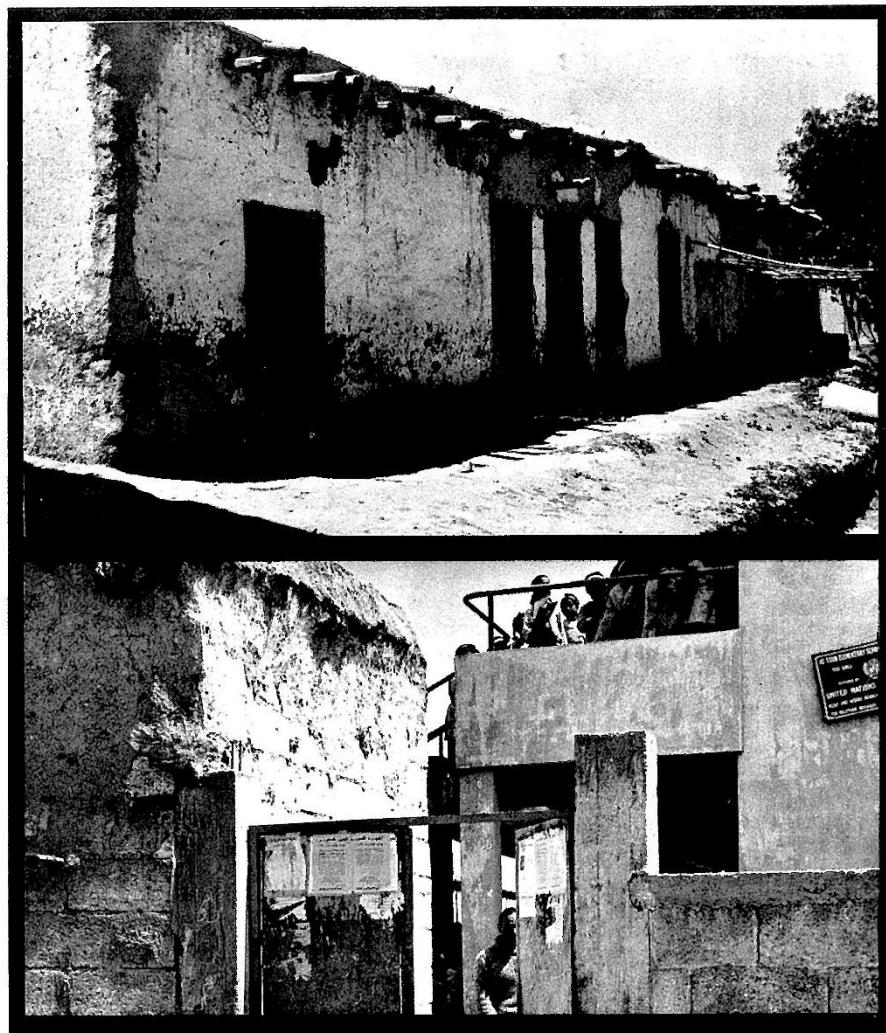
Waiting for a hot meal - an UNRWA emergency camp in east Jordan.

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Two of the sub-standard UNRWA rented school buildings in Syria which are being replaced, thanks to a Danish donation

Denmark contributes \$500,000 to UNRWA

The Government of Denmark has announced a special contribution to UNRWA of \$500,000, a sum which will be used - in accordance with the Government's wishes - to cover the operating costs of UNRWA's Men's Teacher Training Centre and a major part of the costs of the Women's Training Centre, both of which are at Ramallah, for the scholastic year 1969-70.

This donation brings the Danish Government's contributions for the refugees since UNRWA began operations in 1950 to \$2,984,000 - more than half of which has been given since the 1967 hostilities. Apart from a special grant of \$217,000 to help UNRWA during the emergency, the rapid increase is almost entirely accounted for by grants from the Danish Government's technical assistance fund.

In recent years a number of European governments, in recognition of the technical assistance role which UNRWA is playing in the field of education and training, have supplemented their regular contributions to UNRWA by special contributions from funds available for technical assistance and economic development overseas. UNRWA appealed for support of this kind from a number of European governments early in 1966, and held discussions at this time with members of the Danish Technical Cooperation Secretariat in Copenhagen.

Following this meeting the Danish Government made its first big contributions to UNRWA under the technical assistance programme in 1966, when \$133,334 was given towards the vocational and teacher training programme. Then, as now, the funds were particularly directed to the Men's Teacher Training Centre at Ramallah, established in 1960.

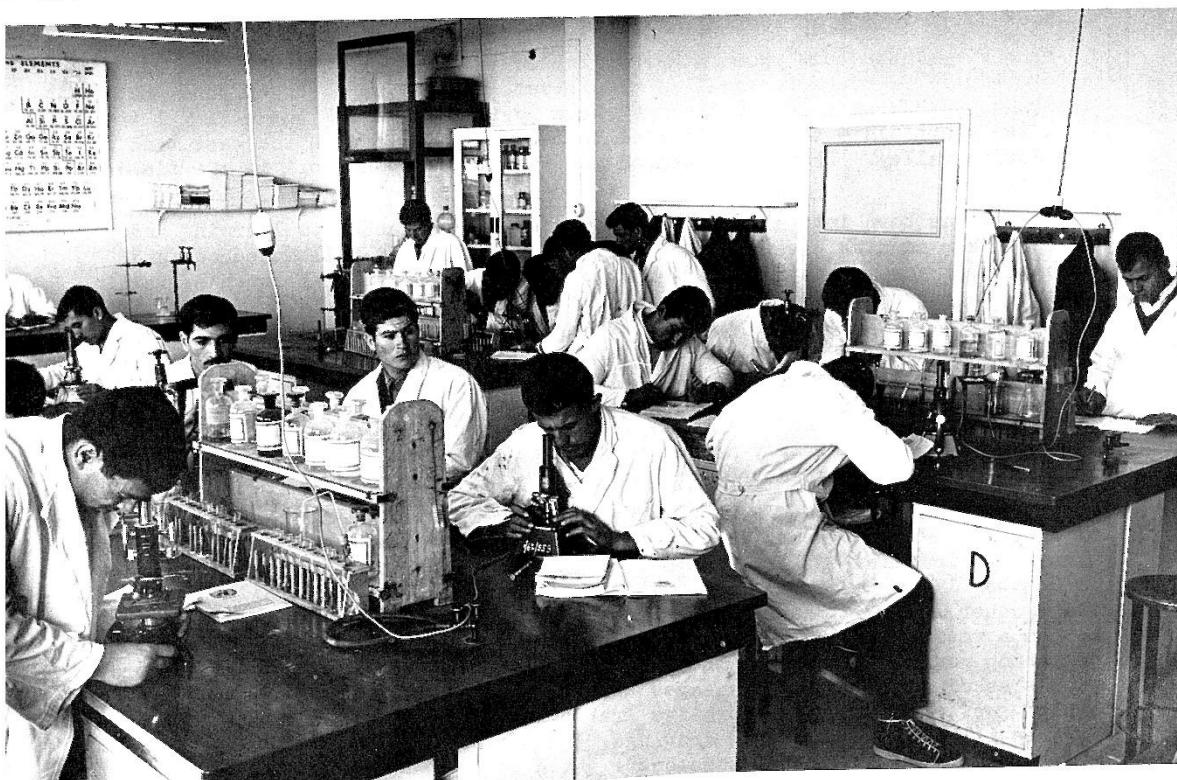
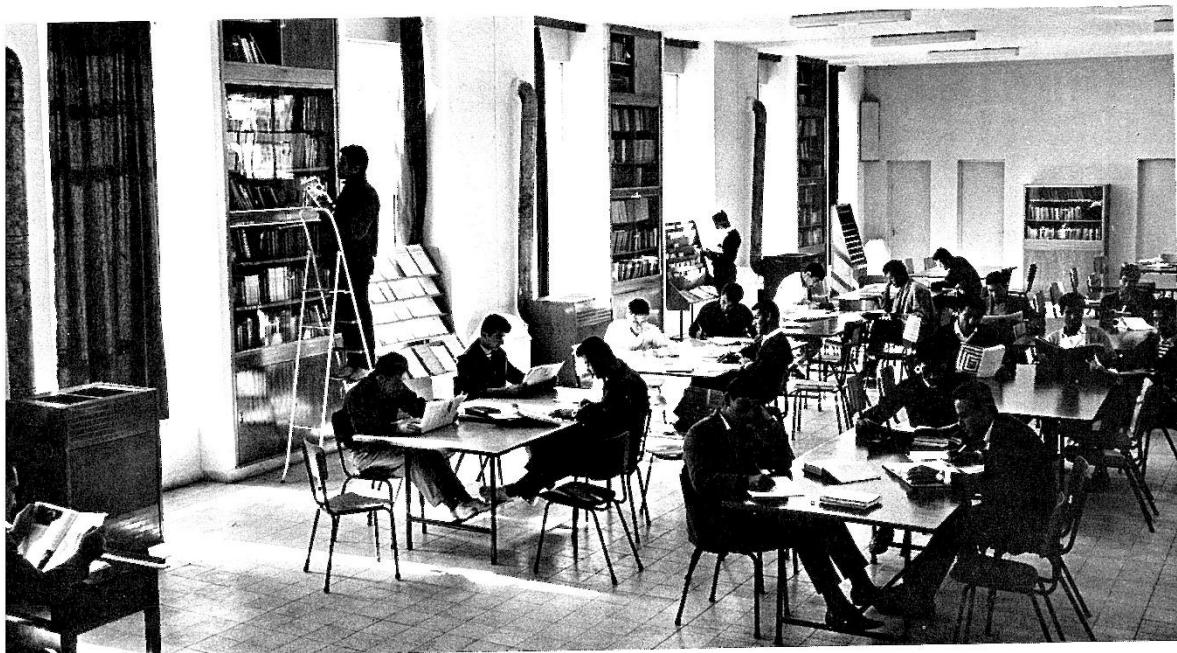
This Centre was chosen because it was partly constructed with \$145,000 donated to UNRWA by the Danish Refugee Council from collections made in Denmark during World Refugee Year (1959-60). Denmark's close ties with the Centre have been reinforced by Danish instructors appointed by UNRWA who have helped to set tuition standards.

In both 1967 and 1968 the technical assistance allocations were increased, to \$200,000 and \$286,666 respectively. The new grant of \$500,000, one-third of which will be allocated to the scholastic term beginning in September 1969, and two-thirds for the period January-July 1970, will bring the Danish Government's technical assistance allocation for 1969 up to \$473,334.

Each of these contributions is extra to the regular governmental pledge, which has also increased in recent years to the present \$80,000. In addition, a special "once-only" technical assistance grant of \$318,000 was made in 1968 for school construction in Syria.

The Danish grant for schools in Syria will enable UNRWA to replace small and sub-standard classrooms, (often in rented and unsuitable premises that are already overcrowded). Some 15 UNRWA/Unesco school projects are involved; it is expected that eight new schools will be built for refugee children, and seven extended. Quite apart from the unsuitable nature of the present classrooms, the new schools are essential if "double-shifts" are to be eliminated and "triple-shifts" avoided in the 1969-70 scholastic year. Although there were delays in obtaining suitable sites for the new schools, construction is now in progress.

As a result of the new grants, some 135 school rooms will be built in Syria for 5,100 children. Additionally, 400 students at the Men's Teacher Training Centre in Ramallah will be able to continue their studies, along with 400 students at the Women's Training Centre.



{above} The library is well-stocked with technical publications and reference books

{below} The main laboratory is well-equipped for all kinds of experiments

Firyal Shalaby: an UNRWA teacher at work



"When mother mouse went to town, she told her little daughter to keep the door closed tight until her return and not to open it until she saw her mother's tail under the door. When mother mouse had gone for perhaps an hour, an old cat came by and said in his softest voice: 'Open the door'. But little mouse replied: 'Let me see your tail', and when she saw it, she cried: 'Do you think I do not know a cat's tail when I see it?' And she kept the door closed until her mother came back."

After telling the story, the teacher asked the little girls what it meant, and the first reply was: "You should not let strangers into your house". This Arab adage comes naturally to the children's mind, although the houses where they live are small cement huts in Irbed Camp (east Jordan), where Palestine refugees have found shelter since the Arab-Israeli hostilities in 1948. The classroom is in the UNRWA girls' school attached to the camp. The teacher, Firyal Shalaby, a slim, vivacious girl, was born in the little town of Beissan, in what is now Israel, about 60 km from Irbed as the crow flies, and yet inaccessible to her for most of her life.

When Firyal was born, her father worked on the land as his ancestors had done before him. The house was small, but his own. There was not much land, but enough to give them a decent living. When hostilities broke out - Firyal was only two years old - her parents fled to Baqura, a village on the east bank of the Jordan valley. There they stayed and the father found work in the fields nearby.

Firyal was born into a family of people greatly attached to learning and three of her cousins have also become teachers. She did well in school and when she sat for the entrance examinations at UNRWA's Ramallah Women's Training Centre, in September 1963, she was given the best marks of all. At that time, the teacher training course was of three years' duration (today, the girls must have matriculation to enter it and stay for only two years). Firyal majored in Arabic and social studies, but she was equally brilliant in nearly all subjects - all her progress reports showed "Excellent", apart from the "blemish" of "Above Average" in Religion and Sewing - and she was very popular among the trainees and the teachers for her gaiety and quick intelligence. As for the children in her "practice class", they adored her because she told such marvellous stories.

Teaching has long been a highly respected profession for Arab women, though it is only in recent years that many other occupations have been opened to them. When UNRWA inaugurated its Women's Training Centre in Ramallah, near Jerusalem, in October 1962, there were about seven applications for each available place in its Teacher Training Section. UNRWA had been training teachers before, although not in a residential centre, and had constantly improved the methods used in preparing young refugees for their future responsibilities. No longer were pupils asked to learn long passages by heart. Writing was done in many, coloured chalks, new words in the decorative Arabic script were traced in plasticine, figures illustrated by simple drawings. "One orange" is easy to recognize, as are "two apples" and "three tomatoes". Each pupils was encouraged to follow the teachers explanations closely and, when a question was asked, up shot their hands to show they knew the answers.

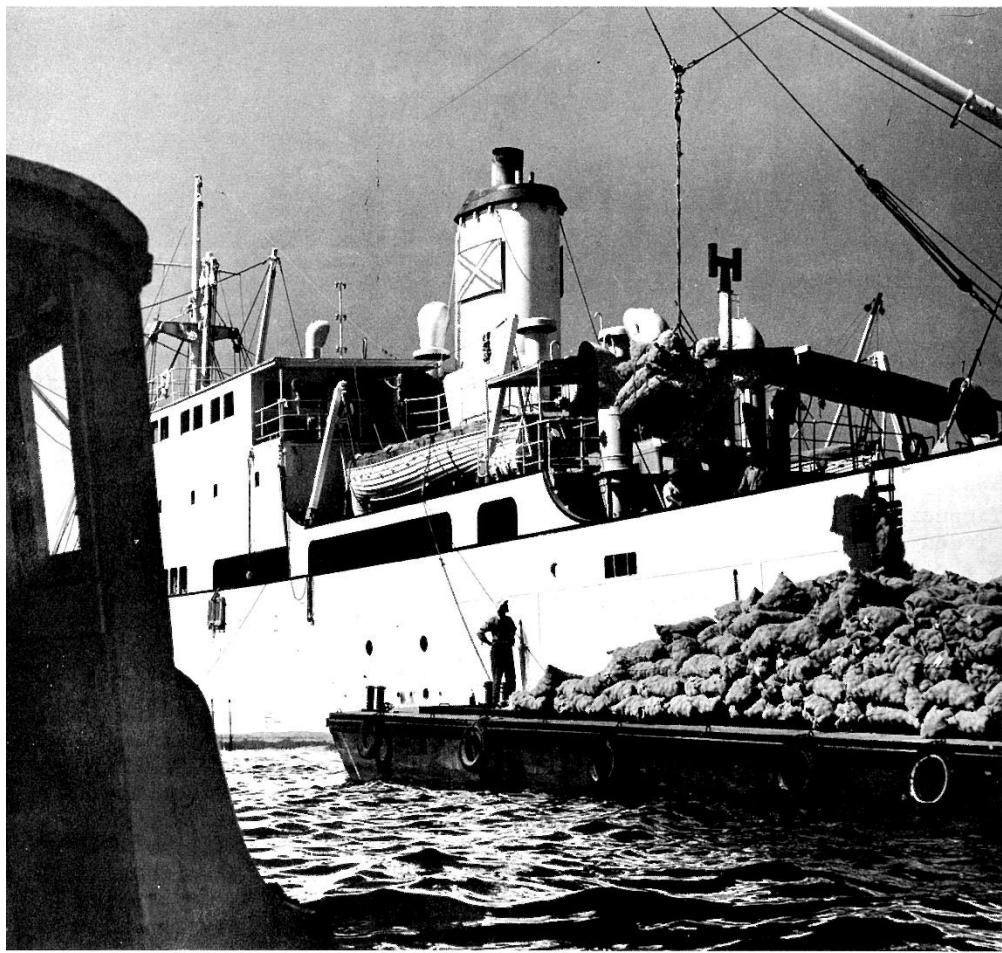


Firyal's class in session - at Irbid refugee camp

When UNRWA built, and later expanded, its training centres, it did so with funds donated for that purpose. But its tight budget has never been sufficient for operating costs, and it has therefore been requesting "scholarships" for vocational and teacher training from organizations, commercial firms and private individuals. Board, lodging and education materials for one trainee amount to about \$500 a year. Firyal's studies were financed by Dr. Wilhelm Paulus, Director of a German financial concern, who was proud of his trainee's excellent work. When she had found a job, she immediately wrote to her sponsor and he was delighted to learn that she was now teaching the first elementary class at UNRWA's girls' school in Baqura. This was in September 1966, and only a few weeks later, the family moved to Irbid town nearby, where they have rented a small house with a tiny courtyard where the smallest children can play. Firyal's older brother, now 24, is working in Kuwait; her two younger sisters, aged 18 and 12, are still at school and the youngest boy, who is four years old, is going to kindergarten.

In February 1968, after repeated military action in the Jordan Valley, the refugees living there - both in the emergency camps and in previously established camps - fled to the mountains and UNRWA closed its 18 boys' and girls' schools in the Valley, one of which was that at Baqura. Firyal is now teaching at the Camp school in Irbid, where many of her former pupils go to classes organized in double shift. Her younger sister, Hind, is one of the brightest pupils at the school. Will Hind become the fifth woman teacher of her family? Firyal will be very happy if Hind does, for, in her opinion, education is particularly important for children who are growing up among the deprivations of refugee life, but whose eagerness to learn is overwhelming.

UNRWA's Supply Division keeps the wheels turning





(left) Potatoes - a gift
from Spain, Beirut port

(above) Central Warehouse, Beirut -
loading flour and soap

(right) American flour reaches
needy refugees at a distribution
point in east Jordan

The UNRWA pharmacist at Jaramana Camp, Damascus, is running short of tetracycline antibiotic eye ointment; the UNRWA port official at dusty Aqaba on the Red Sea checks out a shipment of 3,000 tons of flour as a convoy of lorries sets off northward across the desert to Ma'an; a laboratory technician in Beirut pours alkaline solution into a test-tube to ascertain the qualities of a certain type of cotton.

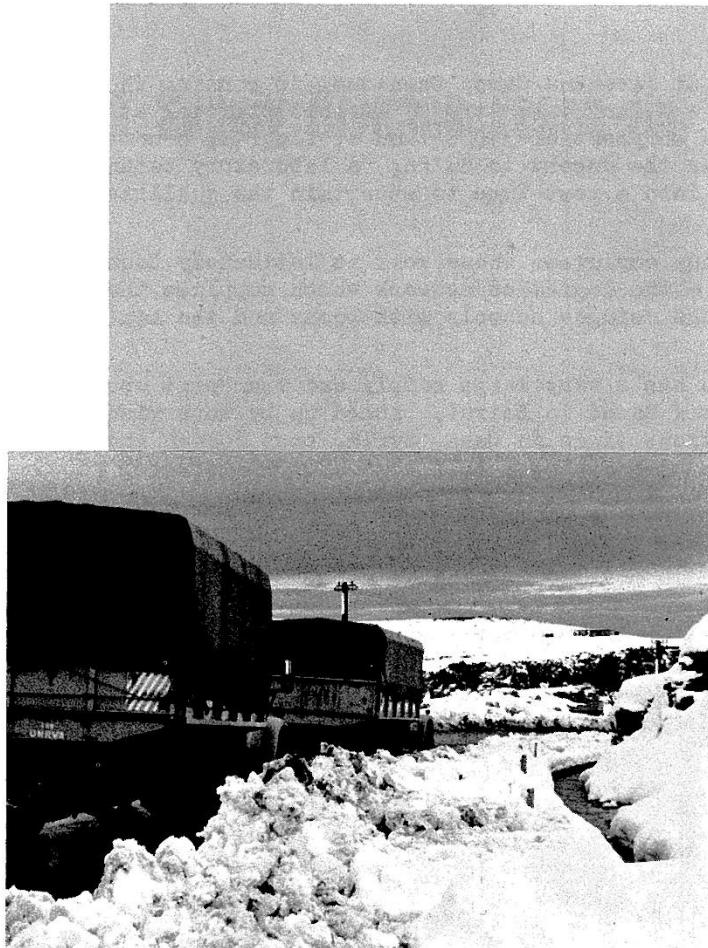
These are three of many employees whose work is intimately bound up with UNRWA's Supply Division - the logistics network which supplies the Palestine refugees with rations, the refugee schools with books and the health centres with medical supplies.

UNRWA Supply Division has a very large supply and transport operation. Each month a headquarters staff based in Beirut, backed up by supervisory staff and central warehouse operations teams in Gaza, Syria, east Jordan and the West Bank, have to make sure, among other things, that some 850,000 refugees receive their UNRWA rations.



-) Potatoes - a gift from Spain, Beirut port
- ive) Central Warehouse, Beirut - loading flour and soap
- it) American flour reaches needy refugees at a distribution point in east Jordan

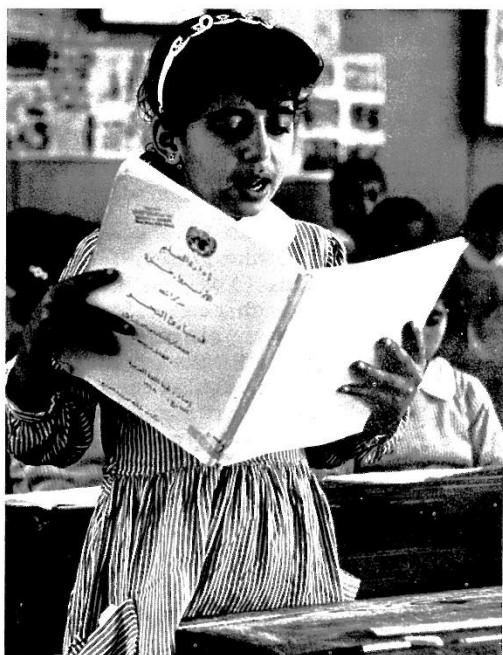
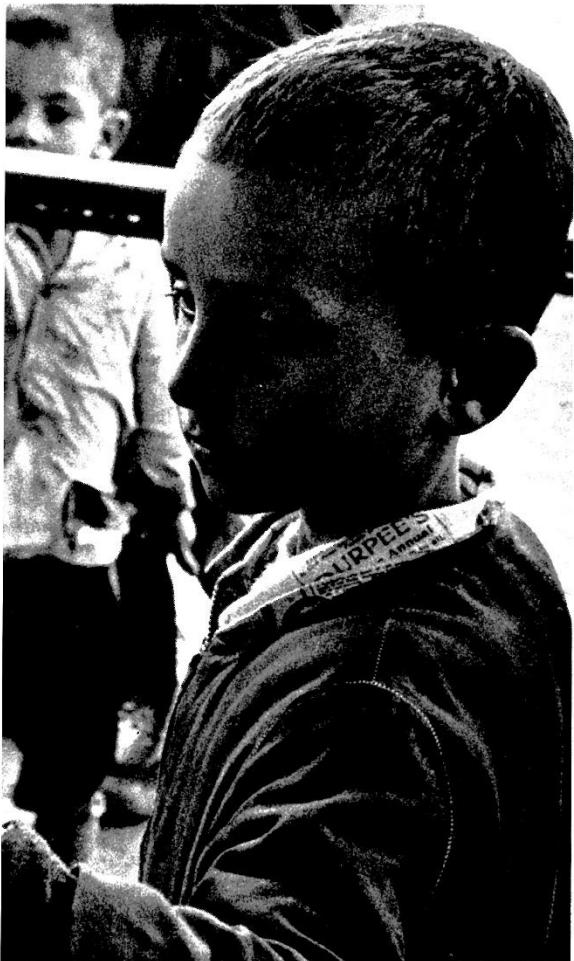




the lifeline....

Through ice and snow on Lebanese mountain roads, UNRWA trucks hauled building materials to the east Jordan emergency camps, where previously they had rushed in tents. Each month they must travel more than a million miles to supply clinics, feeding centres, schools, etc





Each month the Palestine refugees eligible for UNRWA rations receive 10 kilos (22 lbs) of flour, 600 grams (1.3 lb) of sugar and the same of pulses (dried beans, peas, broad-beans, chickpeas and lentils), 500 grams (1.1 lb) of rice and 375 grams (13 oz.) of edible oil or fat. In the five winter months, a further 400 grams of flour and 300 grams of pulses are added to this basic ration.

Although by itself this dry ration is unbalanced and inadequate, it is a lifeline to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have little else on which to live. Come wind, come rain, snow, shipping strikes, civil disturbances, or any other adversity, they depend upon UNRWA to get the rations out to the distribution centres once a month on schedule and UNRWA has never missed a distribution in its nineteen years of operations.

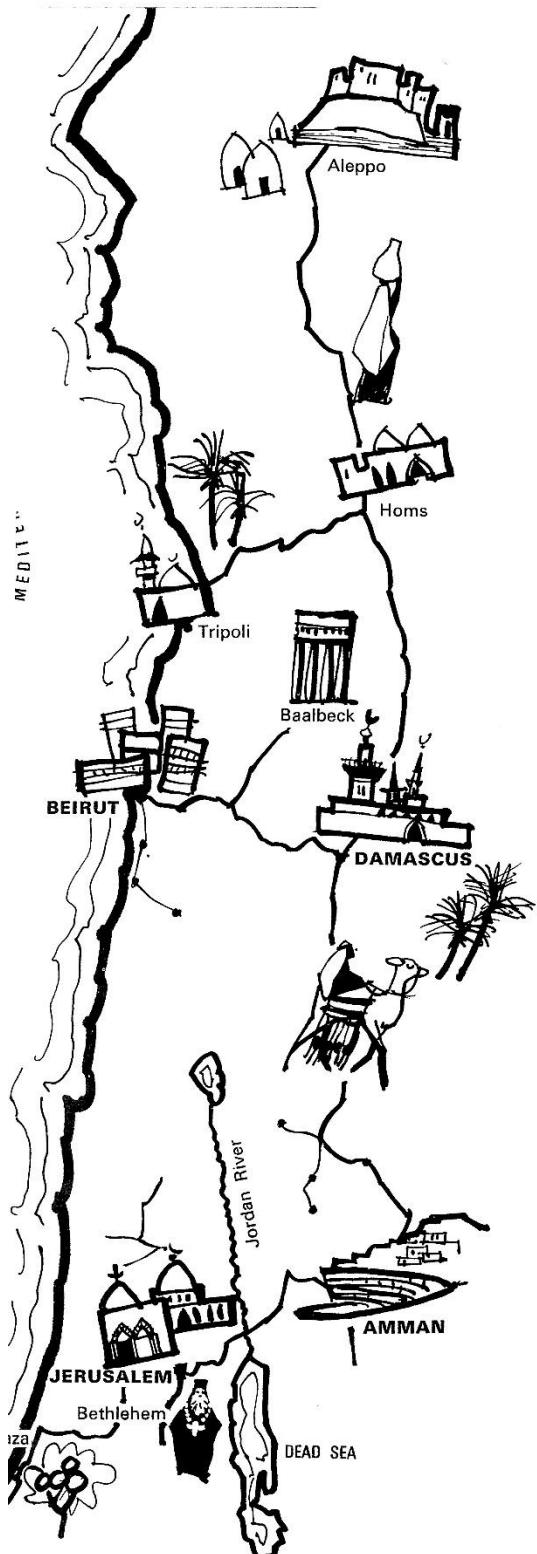
To meet these needs on a minimal budget, Supply Division has, over the years, developed a complex but flexible operation. For instance, some 110,000 tons of flour are needed each year. These supplies must be directed to the appropriate port, several months in advance, arriving at Beirut in Lebanon, Aqaba in Jordan or (since the 1967 hostilities) Ashdod or Eilat in Israel. The latter ports are used to supply the needs of the refugees in occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip areas.

Beirut is the most important port for UNRWA supplies, particularly while the Suez Canal is out of operation. Here at UNRWA's port office, flour and other supplies for Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are received, checked duty-free through the Lebanese Customs, and transported to UNRWA's Lebanon Central Warehouse near Headquarters. (In general Basic Commodities for Syria and East Jordan move direct from the Port of Beirut to Syria and East Jordan). This is a large cantonment, made up of offices, warehouses and storerooms, with a fully equipped garage and workshop for the many trucks and cars. The vehicles are used mainly in Lebanon, although a number are presently operating into neighbouring areas.

The Lebanon Central Warehouse is rather bigger than UNRWA's other warehouses in Damascus, Amman, Jerusalem and Gaza. Some 60 per cent of its space is occupied by supplies needed for Lebanon, but it also acts as a clearing house for special requirements and emergency needs elsewhere.

The details of the supply operation seem a little less complex if a working day is analysed, and it was decided to take Saturday 19 April 1969 as a typical day.

There was little activity initially at the main flour warehouses, but a new shipment was expected from Beirut port during the morning. In C.2, one of the largest, sacks were being restacked and sorted so that no flour would spend too long in the warehouse. When full, C.2



Wherever there are refugees, an UNRWA driver knows the way

can hold 3,500 tons of flour - more than three months supply for all ration recipients in the Lebanon.

In the packing unit, Supervisor Taleb A'wad was organizing his team of workers to prepare the various ration ingredients in handy packets for quick dispensing to some of the refugees. In areas where the refugees are living outside camps, or where there is no distribution centre, supplies are issued direct from trucks. The packing unit in Beirut prepare over 11,000 packed rations a month. They were fairly busy this particular morning: one of the big $5\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks had to be loaded for mobile distribution in the Jounieh area, north of Beirut, on the following Monday.

The vehicle was to be truck No.281, driven by Toufic Najameh - like almost all local employees, a Palestine refugee himself - who was at this time on his way to Baddawi Camp, near Tripoli in north Lebanon. His full load on Monday would comprise basic rations for the month for 742 refugees, weighing some 4,143 kilos (almost $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons). He would leave the warehouse at about 7.00 hours with the supplies, arriving at the distribution point at about 8.15 hrs. Distribution and checking of ration cards would take until 13.00 hours when he would return to the warehouse and check in with the Transport Office.

Transport Office at Beirut have some 30 large trucks, plus a number of smaller trucks and cars to service and schedule. In 1968, their vehicles travelled over 3,000,000 kilometres (1,875,000 miles) - the equivalent of 75 times round the world - in the service of the refugees. On 19 April, the operations plan had two trucks in the Beirut area, one on road trials following repairs, one under repair, one on mobile distribution at Aley (in the mountains behind Beirut), three carrying flour to Tripoli, and four carrying flour and commodities to Ein el-Hilweh Camp, Sidon.

The Office was busy scheduling for Monday. Apart from the Jounieh truckload, the refugee community at Hadath on the Beirut outskirts would be awaiting their monthly rations - 8,363 kilos of flour and commodities. Two trucks would be needed for this. A special request had also come in for transport for a Canadian donation

of books destined for the UNRWA training centres at Siblin (South Lebanon). These had to be at the centres in time for a short handing-over ceremony, and some re-scheduling was needed.

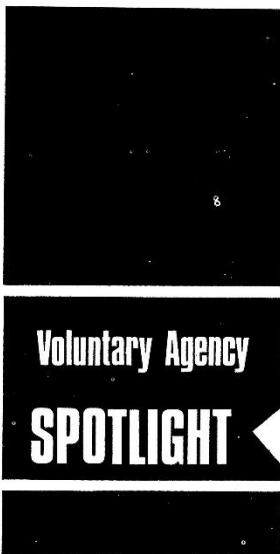
Meanwhile a very different supply operation was being organized in the medical stores by Assistant Pharmacist Fawzy Kamel. Part of his responsibilities include the many donations and dispatches of vaccines and medical supplies which pass through Beirut on their way to UNRWA health centres. Delicate handling of pharmaceuticals is necessary. Polio vaccines and other serums have to be stored in deep-freeze compartments, then transported in vacuum-flasks by UNRWA car or ambulance. Ordinary refrigeration is also needed for tetanus antitoxin, anti-scorpion serum and certain other essential drugs.

In the laboratory nearby, Mr. Kamel supervises the manufacture of many ointments, pills and tonics which are required by the Agency. A pill-making machine turns out some 20-30,000 tablets, a year, in addition to the large quantities (e.g. 5 million aspirin tablets) that are procured by UNRWA, and some 3,000 kilos (3 tons) of antibiotic ointment are manufactured and packed each year. The tonic preparations are bottled and have to be carefully transported in wooden casks lined with paper and wood shavings.

One of the most interesting aspects of UNRWA operations is the Quality Control Laboratory. Although not a part of Supply Division, laboratory work is almost exclusively on behalf of the Division. Where necessary, purchases of all kinds by UNRWA are checked before acceptance, to ensure that they comply with the Agency specifications. Samples of all batches of flour are baked and analysed, all textiles (such as donated blankets) are tested for tensile strength, warp and weft, and 1000 degree-centigrade ovens permit exhaustive ash-testing on many different materials. This is the only way in which UNRWA can be sure that the many items needed for the refugees are adequate, and that the Agency's expenditures for supplies are put to the best use. Every few months, visits are paid to supply warehouses in the fields. Sometimes, difficult problems are even referred to the unit by governmental departments. Flour samples and cotton were under scrutiny on 19 April; a batch of lentils which had been invaded by weevils had also been sent up for analysis from the Gaza Strip: laboratory investigation was showing how badly infested the lentils were, and what remedial action could be taken.

From UNRWA HQ., half a kilometre away, a staff of 870 are deployed in all fields, and from here 1969's budget for transport and supply must be stretched to cover the needs of 1,365,000 refugees, plus a large number of newly displaced Arabs in east Jordan to whom UNRWA is distributing supplies provided by the Jordan Government. In a regular year, to take a figure at random, UNRWA needs 9,600,000 bars of soap. In an emergency, as with the 1968 shelter construction programme in the tented camps in east Jordan, Supply Division has also had to find and transport components for several thousand shelters. When finished this will have involved hundreds of truckloads of building materials (including more than 270,000 cut asbestos-cement sheets and three-quarters of a million screws), in addition to all regular requirements.

But the statistics can go on forever; what matters is that the trucks and supplies will be on the road again tomorrow morning and six mornings every week, carrying food, medicine and a hundred other necessities to the Palestine refugees.



Voluntary Agency

SPOTLIGHT

CORSO, New Zealand

CORSO - The New Zealand Council of Organisations for Relief Service Overseas Incorporated - is the voluntary agency which unites some 49 different social service organizations throughout New Zealand, and it has for two decades given help and assistance to the Palestine refugees.

One of the major needs in UNRWA's early days (1950-56) was for clothing for the refugees. At that time, the refugee situation bore many parallels with the post-1967 emergency: refugees everywhere were living in tents, exposed to the hot desert winds and the biting cold of winter in the Jordanian hills and the Syrian plateaux as they are today, as well as in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. CORSO was one of a number of national voluntary societies which organized collections of good-quality used clothing and, in many cases, new clothing; UNRWA was given by CORSO over \$82,000 worth of clothing and footwear up to the year 1957.

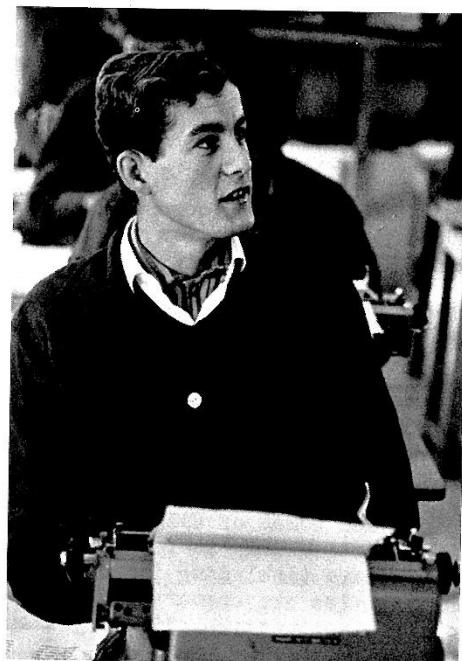
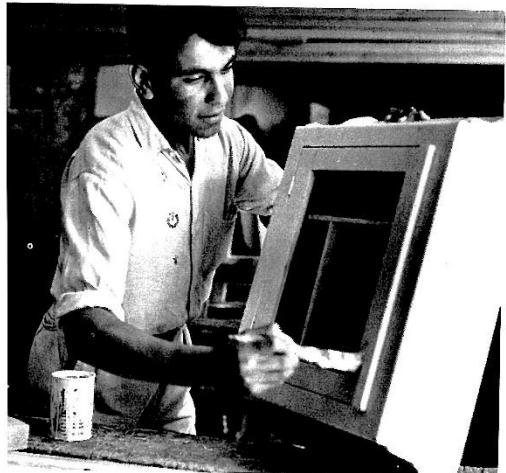
By 1959, construction of more adequate shelters for refugees had been completed in almost all areas; UNRWA was then able to devote more of its resources to the education and training of refugees (a joint UNRWA/Unesco programme) and, where possible, to assisting the camp inhabitants in their struggle towards rehabilitation.

CORSO contributions to UNRWA began to reflect this change in policy, and in 1959 CORSO made the first of its many contributions to the UNRWA sewing and carpentry centres in the Gaza Strip and Jordan, as part of World Refugee Year. It has since extended this support to some of UNRWA's women's activities centres.

All these projects are part of UNRWA's welfare programme. The short courses in sewing and carpentry (six months and one year, respectively) do teach some refugees enough basic skill to improve their families' living conditions and sometimes earn a little money. At the women's activities centres, programmes of afternoon activities for refugee girls and women of all ages are held regularly. Classes are conducted in dressmaking (particularly in repair and remodelling), simple domestic arts and crafts, child care (including infant nutrition) and hygiene; recreational and social activities are encouraged; for any of the older women who did not have schooling opportunities, literacy classes are held.

CORSO has just announced its 1969 contribution to UNRWA of \$18,480 (NZ \$16,500). Part of this sum will pay for the running costs of four of the sewing and carpentry centres and three of the women's activities centres. These funds enable men and women to develop their domestic or trade skills and, in many cases, to become capable of earning a modest income.

(below) In a CORSO-sponsored carpentry centre
(bottom) Jihad Jayoussi, a CORSO-sponsored trainee
(right) At the CORSO-sponsored sewing centre
in Bethlehem, girls learn dressmaking
as well as embroidery



Vocational Training Scholarships

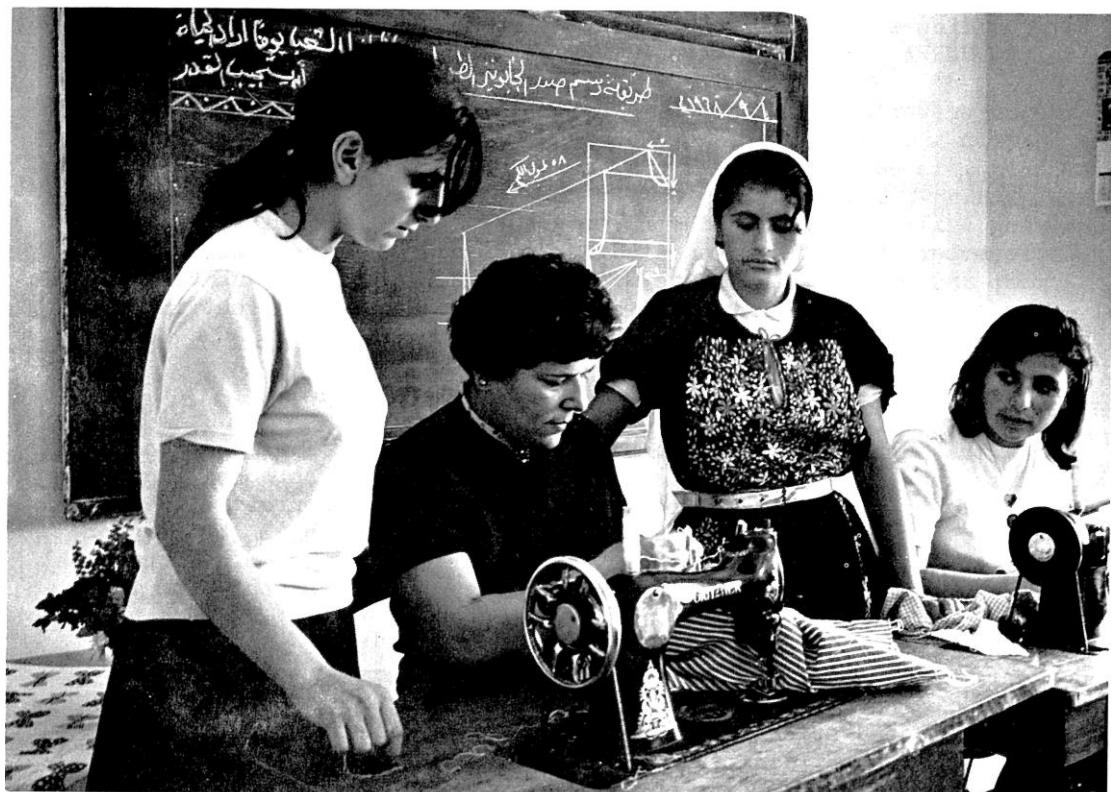
The other UNRWA project in which CORSO has also had a special interest is the vocational training programme. In 1961, 35 fitter machinists were given \$500 one-year scholarships at the UNRWA vocational training centres at Kalandia (Jerusalem) and Wadi Seer (near Amman). CORSO also donated the funds to build a new workshop at Kalandia. Each year since then, successive groups of young refugee men have been able to receive a sound two-year trade-training, with CORSO backing. Most of them are now earning sufficient money to maintain themselves and their wives and children without further need for direct economic assistance.

Typical of the young generation of Arab refugees is Jihad Jayoussi (see photograph), one of nine trainees attending the Business and Office Practice course at UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training Centre and supported by CORSO scholarships. Jihad is a young refugee who has never seen the village in Palestine his parents came from. He was born one year after the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, and was brought up with his three brothers and five sisters at Tulkarem on the West Bank of the Jordan. His father, who was a farmer is now unemployed.

This has made Jihad work all the harder. English was his best subject at school and this led him to choose business and office practice when he enrolled at Kalandia, for the course includes English shorthand and typing as well as Arabic typing, and a sound knowledge of English is essential.

Other subjects include accounting, commercial practices, business, arithmetic, statistics and commercial geography.

CORSO has given UNRWA over \$300,000 altogether towards vocational training scholarships, sewing and carpentry centres and a host of other necessary projects. Thanks to this regular support, many young Palestine refugees like Jihad have been helped to make better lives for themselves.



UNRWA and the Lutheran World Federation in the West Bank:

UNRWA and the Lutheran World Federation have worked together in Jordan for many years. An article in the July 1968 edition (No. 56) of Palestine Refugees Today recounted recent LWF operations in east Jordan, but equally important projects are being promoted by the LWF in the West Bank, both among Palestine refugees from the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict and among the other inhabitants of the West Bank.

The Lutheran World Federation programme can be divided into three main project groupings: those for the relief of pain and suffering (running the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem and medical clinics), the alleviation of physical want (material aid in the form of rations and supplies) and assistance and encouragement towards rehabilitation and self-reliance (schools for the blind and crippled, scholarships, advanced training, self-help loans, etc.)

UNRWA is working closely with the LWF only with regard to the first of these, but the two agencies learn from each other in the issuing of self-help loans, in the administration and methods of their respective vocational training centres and schools for the blind and crippled. UNRWA is also particularly interested in the LWF nursing training scheme as many of the graduates from this course go on to join the staff of the Augusta Victoria Hospital, which is operated by the LWF with UNRWA subsidies exclusively for Palestine refugee patients recommended to the hospital by UNRWA doctors.

There are at present 22 students in the first year nursing class 1968-69, 18 of whom are girls and four of whom are young men. One interesting feature is that 10 of the girls come from Gaza. The second-year class contains 11 students, who are now gaining practical experience with refugee patients in the wards while receiving daily lectures in the nursing school. At a small graduation ceremony in December 1968, the seven students in the graduating class received their diplomas, and six of them are now full staff nurses of the Augusta Victoria Hospital - the other student is working among old people at a convent in Jerusalem.

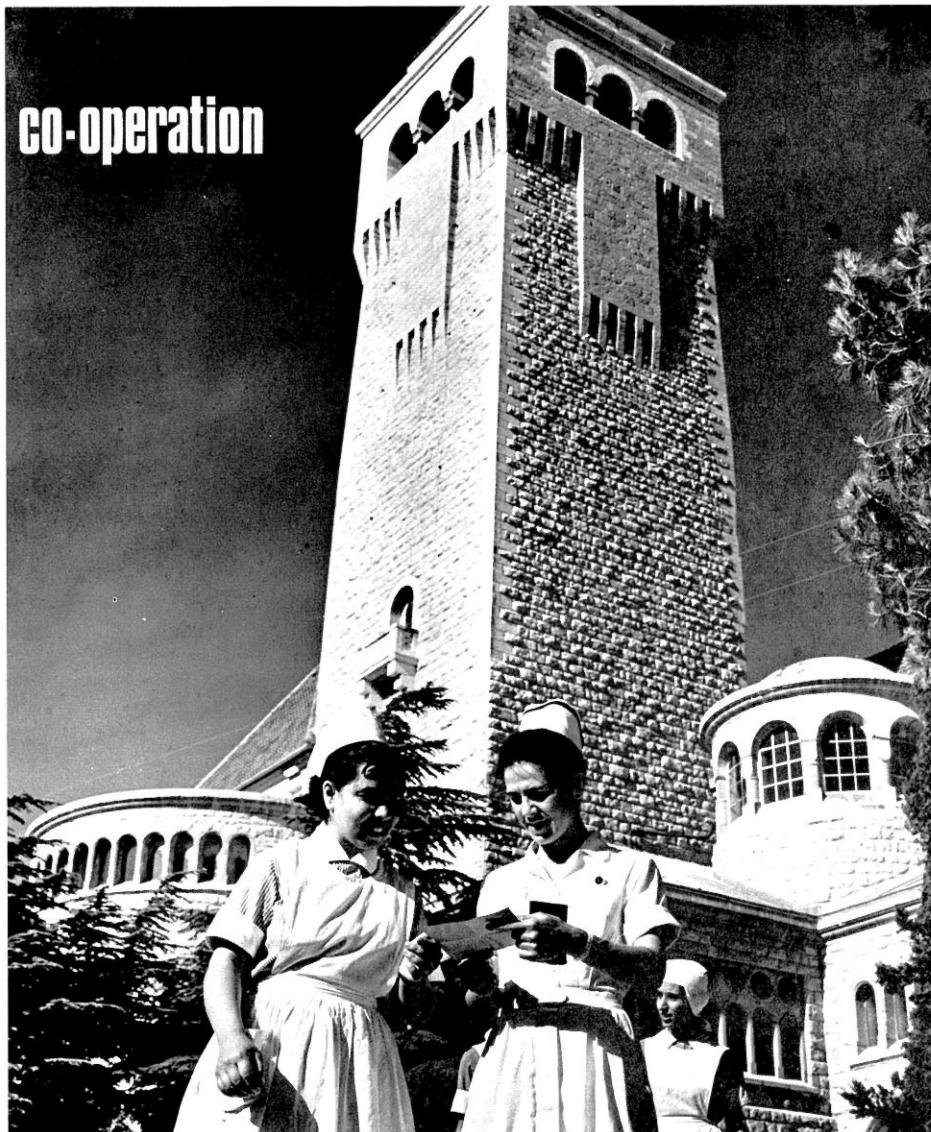
The Augusta Victoria Hospital

Since 1948, the Augusta Victoria Hospital has been a symbol of the concern of Protestant Christians overseas for the Palestine refugees. The hospital was founded originally as a pilgrims' rest-house, and was later converted to its present function. It had an operating capacity of 150 beds until the time of the 1967 hostilities. During the fighting in and around Jerusalem, the hospital suffered severely. Almost the whole of the top storey was burnt out, and the capacity was reduced to some 125 beds.

In the aftermath of the hostilities a number of emergency cases who had been injured or otherwise physically affected by the fighting had to be cared for. The hospital staff coped splendidly with the patients, despite the obvious problems of working in a damaged building and in conditions where their own personal affairs were often matters of grave anxiety.

an essay in co-operation

The Augusta Victoria
Hospital,
east Jerusalem



A regular programme of improvements to the hospital has been maintained since 1967. Apart from complete white-washing of all rooms in the hospital, a number of rooms in the children's ward, the surgical male section and the operating theatre were completely re-modelled. The loss of the top floor meant that additional weather-proofing had to be carried out. Loose brick walls were dismantled, cracks were refilled, and the entire roof was covered with millboard, jute and asphalt. Finally, a new autoclave - a specialized piece of garment sterilizing equipment - was installed at the hospital, offering increased protection for patients in the operating theatre. The tuberculosis section continued its regular services throughout this period, with 25 beds reserved for patients.

The Lutheran World Federation's work at the Augusta Victoria Hospital not only aids UNRWA by caring for sick refugees, it also offers the refugees themselves a high standard of care and medical attention. The spirit of international co-operation that the Augusta Victoria Hospital embodies, is valued as much by the refugees as by the LWF and UNRWA.

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