



PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 9

August – September 1961



UNRWA Pioneers in Teaching Handicrafts.

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The photograph on our front cover, and other photographs of Arab refugees, may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, UNESCO Building, Beirut, Lebanon.

The text of all articles in this Newsletter may be reproduced without acknowledgment.

RUSH DIPLOMAS

Several lucky students at UNRWA's vocational training Centre at Kalandia, near Jerusalem, Jordan, this July took their final exams early and, diplomas in hand, left school and their classmates behind.

They had been offered jobs in banks, building firms, and other establishments in Jordan. They were needed right away.

And with graduation only a matter of weeks away, UNRWA officials agreed they could rush their diplomas. A job in hand was clear evidence of the value of their two-year-training.

A total of 221 young refugees graduated at the end of July from the two UNRWA vocational training centres now in operation in Jordan -- Kalandia, and a new school at Wadi Seer, near Amman. The Agency's third centre -- in the Gaza Strip -- had a small number of trainees graduating in mid-August.

Prior to graduation, UNRWA's Placement Service had been in touch with many firms in the Middle East and prospective employers, who knew the reputation of UNRWA's vocational training graduates, had been contacting the Agency, seeking trained personnel to fill their vacancies.

A new building contracting firm had ideas of hiring a large portion of its office staff straight from the Kalandia class in Business and Office Practice. The fledgling Zerqa Electric Company needed wiremen/cable jointers. A large Amman upholstering factory, after a visit from the upholsterers' class from Wadi Seer, was ready to take several boys from the group.

In all, trainees in ten different trades were available for employment, including the first class anywhere in the Middle East of young men trained as plasterers and tilers.

For the refugees, training brought out talents and abilities latent within them.

It gave them a skill with which they can make a living anywhere, in the countries where they now reside, in the Persian Gulf where many of them head temporarily, and wherever else they may decide to go, as and when United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 is implemented.

In this resolution, adopted in 1948, the General Assembly resolved that the refugees should have the opportunity of choosing between repatriation or compensation.

Training, too, has enabled these youths to leave the ranks of tens of thousands of other less fortunate young Arab refugees who, because they lack training opportunities, have today little hope of regular employment.

UNRWA's vocational training programme will increase the number of graduates year by year, to an eventual total of over 2,500.

IN BRIEF

United States Government Pledges Half a Million Dollars for Vocational Training.

The United States Government has assured UNRWA a special gift of \$500,000 to put towards its vocational training programme. The gift comes in addition to the regular U.S. contribution of \$23,000,000 for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1961. The decision was reported to the United Nations Secretary-General on 15 June by Adlai Stevenson, Permanent United States Representative to the United Nations.

Danish World Refugee Year Gift.

The Danish Refugee Council has announced a World Refugee Year gift of 1,000,000 Kroner (\$145,000) to finance an extension of UNRWA's Men's Teacher Training Centre in Ramallah, Jordan. The school, which opened last fall with a capacity of 200 students, will now be expanded to accommodate 400 trainees.

The Director of UNRWA Visits Saudi Arabia.

Director of UNRWA John H. Davis was received by His Majesty King Saud of Saudi Arabia at his summer palace in Taif on 18 June, to discuss the Palestine refugee question.

Visitors.

Members of the Experts' Committee on Palestine of the League of Arab States, during a recent conference at Bhamdoun, Lebanon, visited refugee camps near Beirut and Sidon on 30 June. Abdul Khaleq Hassouna, League Secretary-General and Chairman of the Committee, was accompanied by two of his chief aides and by various Lebanese and UNRWA officials.

Sybil Conery, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the British Columbia Branch of the Save The Children Fund, spent two weeks in June inspecting UNRWA activities in its four host countries.

Norman Vincent Peale, widely-known American clergyman and author of "The Power of Positive Thinking", led a group of 67 persons to the Middle East this July and included a visit to UNRWA camps in Jordan in their itinerary.

UNRWA's Community Development Programme Receives Spot Light.

UNRWA's community development programme, which aims to help refugees help themselves to improve their lot in the Agency's 57 camps, was made known to the Arab world late in July at the first Graduates' Seminar of the Arab States Training Centre for Education for Community Development, held in Beirut. The Centre, a UNESCO project located at Sirs-el-Layyan in the Southern (Egyptian) Region of the United Arab Republic, trains persons who will be leaders in various fields of community development. UNRWA has sent several of its welfare workers for training at the Centre, and Agency personnel met at the Beirut meeting with representatives of 11 Arab states to compare notes on their different problems and programmes.

American Catholics Appoint Full-time Representative in Jordan.

With the arrival in Jordan in July of Gabriel Migala and his wife Eileen, the American organization Catholic Relief Services - National Catholic Welfare Conference has its first full-time representative in the Middle East. Mr. Migala will carry on a programme in Jordan which includes distribution to "economic" refugees, and other needy persons not under UNRWA's mandate, of U.S. surplus food and of clothing donated by Catholic Relief Services. Mr. Migala also plans to set up vocational training activities and programmes for agricultural and community development.

Over a Million Refugee Patients
Treated by Lutherans.

The number of Palestine refugees treated in the Northern (Syrian) Region of the United Arab Republic by the Lutheran World Federation went over the 1,000,000 mark this May. The Federation, whose main Middle East sphere of activity is in Jordan, has provided medical and child welfare services in the Northern UAR since 1953. It presently operates six clinics there with an annual budget of over \$38,000.

Canadian Groups Donate Clothing to UNRWA.

On 20 July, two groups from Canada made a joint contribution of one ton of new and used clothing to UNRWA for distribution among needy Palestine refugees. They are the Rotary Club of Toronto and the Canadian Save The Children Fund. The gift was inspired by publicity arising from a speech given this year in Cairo by Professor Paul Ponthus, Director of the Institute of Radiology of Beirut and President of Beirut's Rotary Club.

Canadian-built "Christmas" Clinic
Handed Over to UNRWA.

A maternity clinic and infant health centre, built with a Christmas donation of \$6,000 from the soldiers and airmen of the Canadian contingent serving with the United Nations Emergency Force in the Gaza Strip, was officially handed over to UNRWA on 13 July. The clinic is for use by the refugees in the Khan Younis camp.

IPC Adds Variety to Vocational Training.

One hundred and eighty-one items, ranging from an ice-making machine to an automobile diesel generator, from telephone equipment to electric cookers, have been given to UNRWA by the Iraq Petroleum Company. The IPC donated the surplus gear, worth some \$3,000, as training media for use in the Agency's vocational training centres. The gift will save UNRWA money on certain items and will also be a bonus to trainees, providing them with types of practice materials to which they would not otherwise have had access.

Author Hands Over Royalties to
Refugee Aid Society.

Ahmad Kamal, president of the Moslem voluntary agency Jami'at al Islam, has assigned to the organisation the royalties of the first two editions of his book, "Sacred Journey" (New York--Duell, Sloan and Pearce). Jami'at al Islam is a world-wide charitable organisation which gives help to Moslem refugees including Arab refugees from Palestine.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BACKS UNRWA PROGRAMME

The Administrative Committee of the World Council of Churches, at its meeting this June, drew up a resolution declaring that a solution to the "tragic human problem" of the more than 1,000,000 Palestine refugees continues to be hindered by political considerations.

"A real solution to the problem of these men, women, and children depends on a political solution, and any constructive move must have its hard implications for either Israel or the Arab States, while it is certain that a full solution will make severe demands on both," the resolution said.

It called on the United Nations to accept, as long as the problem remains unsolved, its "full commitment" in continuing to support UNRWA, both in its relief work and its vocational training programmes.

The Council, which comprises 172 Churches from more than 40 countries working towards a common aim of promoting inter-church unity and carrying out concerted action in such fields as assistance to refugees, agreed to bring the resolution to the attention of the Governments concerned.

The text of the resolution follows in full:

"THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Taking note of the inconclusive character of the most recent United Nations action on the plight of what is now over 1 million Arab refugees and regretting that a just solution to this tragic human problem now in its 13th year continues to be hindered by political considerations.

Aware that the XVI General Assembly of the United Nations will once again embark on a major review of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and of the future of the refugees within its mandate,

Recalling the recommendations of the First and Second Beirut Conferences and the Spittal Consultation - held under the auspices of the World Council of Churches-International Missionary Council - in particular (a) that as a comprehensive offer the refugee should be offered

- (i) A home and a job
- (ii) Continuing relief until he is established
- (iii) Compensation from Israel or the possibility of ultimate repatriation

and (b) that a final onus lies upon member governments of the U.N. who, in our view, must be made to realise that, in addition to maintaining the relief programme, much more massive sums of money will be required if we are to move towards solutions, and that more money must be contributed by more governments including members and non-members of the United Nations,

Reiterates its views that

- (i) A real solution to the problem of these men, women and children depends upon a political solution, and any constructive move must have its hard implications for either Israel or the Arab States, while it is certain that a full solution will make severe demands on both,
- (ii) So long as the problem continues unresolved, governments members of the United Nations must accept a full commitment to the political and financial cooperation necessary to the continuation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

Urges again that the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency be renewed for a period long enough to make possible constructive programmes and the funds should be provided not only for adequate relief but also for the furtherance and development of vocational training programmes."

BLIND REFUGEE SHEIKH FLIES
FREE TO GERMANY FOR TREATMENT

When a brand-new Lufthansa German Airlines Boeing 720 jet took off on its inaugural flight from Beirut to Frankfurt on 4 July, a blind Palestine refugee living in the Gaza Strip was among the guests aboard.

Sheikh Fadel el Zre'i, aged 38, was en route to one of Federal Germany's top eye specialists after local treatment had proved unsuccessful for the blindness which beset him in 1952.

Three voluntary agencies working among Palestine refugees had meanwhile offered up to \$600 to cover the cost of his stay and treatment -- the Near East Christian Council, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine and the Lutheran World Federation. UNRWA itself has no funds to finance medical treatment abroad.

Further help for the blind Sheikh, the leader of a tribe of some 100 persons, came from the Governor-General of the Gaza Strip, General El-Ajrudi.

The trip resulted from a visit to the Gaza Strip by Mrs. Hans Ebeling, wife of the Lufthansa General Manager for the Near and Middle East. She was present during a discussion about Sheikh Zre'i's problem and learned that UNRWA personnel were trying to collect money to help him.

Three days later, following her return to Beirut, a letter came from Lufthansa to UNRWA offering Sheikh Zre'i a free round-trip flight to Germany to enable him to have the treatment he needed.

LATEST STATISTICS

The total number of Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA had reached 1,151,024 as of 30 June 1961, or more than 30,000 above last year's end-of-June total.

This is the figure which will appear in the Director of UNRWA's Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 1961, to be presented to the United Nations General Assembly this fall.

We print below country-by-country statistics, based on the best available figures, of the number of registered refugees and the number of those receiving rations as of 30 June 1961, with totals compared with those of 30 June 1960.

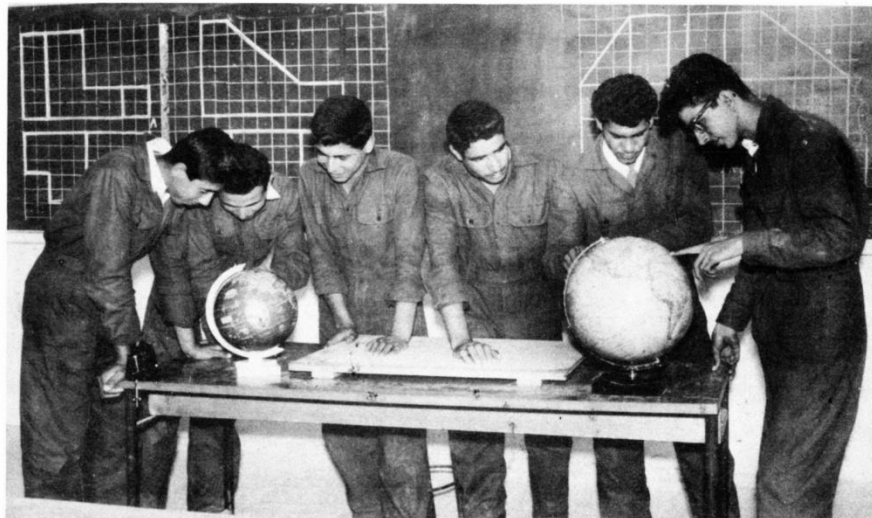
| | REFUGEES ENTITLED TO RATIONS | REGISTERED REFUGEES |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Jordan | 432,111 | 630,725 |
| Gaza | 234,259 | 261,125 |
| Lebanon | 107,719 | 140,201 |
| Syria | 96,177 | 118,973 |
| Total 30 June 1961 | 870,266 | 1,151,024 |
| Total 30 June 1960 | 849,634 | 1,120,889 |
| Increase | 20,632 | 30,024 |

GERMAN EDITOR GIVES GLOBES TO REFUGEE STUDENTS

Young refugee students at UNRWA's Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre near Amman, Jordan, need only flick a finger today to come face to face with Federal Germany, a country where many dream of going one day to increase their industrial skills.

The flick is against a world globe.

And this globe showing political boundaries, together with another globe indicating natural and industrial resources, are the gifts of editor Guenther Wolf of the paper "Schwarzwaelder Bote" of Oberndorf am Neckar in the southern part of the Federal Republic.



Mr. Wolf's idea was born after he received several articles from the Agency, including one about Wadi Seer, which he published in his newspaper. Had one of his reporters turned out the same stories, the editor would have paid him about \$20.

He decided, therefore, to send the same \$20 to the trainees at Wadi Seer.

Principal Wadi S. Dides spent the money on the globes. The young refugees, in return, from their pocket money, collected enough cash for a "Danke Schön" -- a metal cigarette box inscribed with the emblem of the centre.

FATHER OF HANDICRAFTS

A teacher from Scotland, known by his Palestine refugee protégés as the "father of handicrafts in the Middle East", is back in the area this summer, in Damascus, watching his offspring develop.

James M. Milligan from Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow has seen enormous strides forward since he came to the Middle East in 1955 with the assignment of introducing handicrafts into the regular UNRWA-UNESCO school system in the Gaza Strip.

When he came, only a handful of persons in the entire Middle East could teach the subject. And they had been trained expressly to do that task for UNRWA by four international specialists who preceded Mr. Milligan's arrival.

Today, the Agency boasts 218 instructors who handled 21,594 pupils in the 1960-1961 school year in the four host countries. Meanwhile, the Palestinians have progressed to the point that it is now they who train new instructors.

James Milligan, who left the Middle East in 1957, after establishing an UNRWA handicrafts programme in Gaza and Jordan, returns each summer to supervise in one country or another the activity which continues to be the keystone of the programme -- summer teachers' training classes. The instructors usually continue their studies over three summers, and this year there are a total of 173 men taking the regular eight-week course.

At Jordanhill, where Mr. Milligan is principal lecturer on technical subjects, his job, too, is to train handicraft instructors. But here his trainees, who come from industry and are already highly equipped in technical skills, need only to be taught methods of instruction.

Scotland, in addition, is a country where handicrafts are accepted as a normal part of the curriculum.

At the outset in Gaza, however, James Milligan had some selling to do, for nowhere in the Middle East had handicrafts been taught on the scale that UNRWA now teaches it -- six periods a week for four years to boys aged 10 to 14, with fields including woodwork, metalwork, and technical drawing.

"When the refugee parents questioned the idea, I used to ask them", said James Milligan, "whether, merely because they hoped their boy was going to be a lawyer, they planned to deny him the right to do something natural for him, working with his hands. We always had to quell their fears that we were turning their sons into carpenters or metalworkers."

But once the parents had understood, the pupils were no problem, he said. And now sometimes the doors of the handicraft units must be shut to keep the youngsters out.

As for instructors, Shakkib Bedawi, now in his third and last summer of teacher training in Damascus, related how it felt to be turned into a handicraft teacher virtually overnight.

He said he came from regular teaching, as do most of the instructors. His best qualification was an interest in art. "But the only thing I could cut was paper with a pair of scissors," he said.

The idea of how to cut wood with a saw was something he could not always get across to beginners the first year, he admitted. But after the second summer, he discovered he had learned the knack.

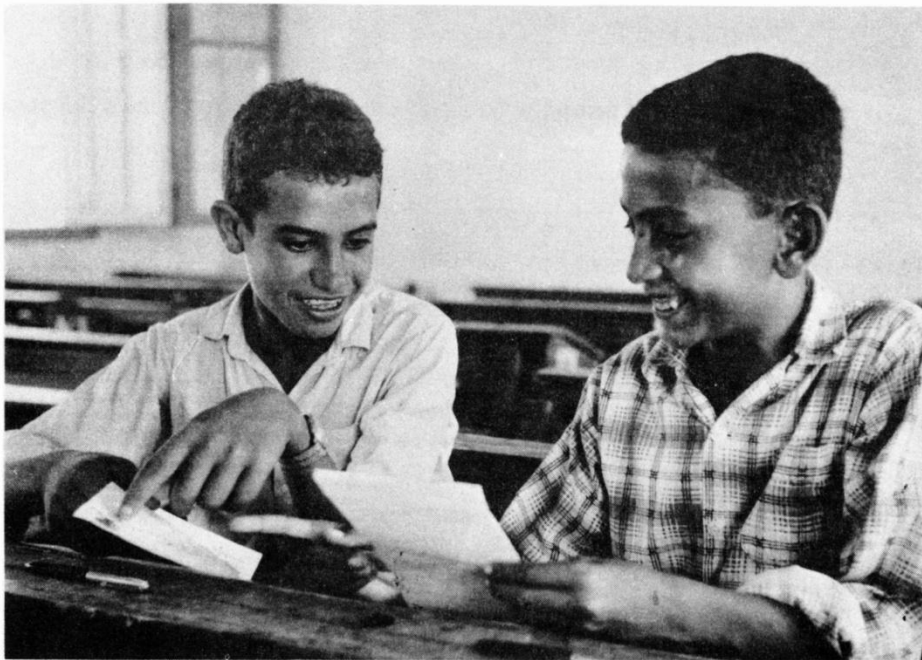
And perhaps, if his progress continues this winter, next July will see him teaching other teachers.

THE PALM-TREE AND THE PINE-TREE

Mohammed Hamdan Abid and Khalil Tawfiq Imbark are two from a group of ten 14-year-old refugee boys in the Gaza Strip who have written their first letters to girls. The experiment strikes them differently.

Both go to Deir El Balah Boys' Preparatory School. Both are products of the still rigidly segregated society of the Strip where boys and girls, outside of immediate family circles, never even play together. And both received, just before school broke up this summer, one of the 27 letters sent to Gaza by the 17 boys and 10 girls in a class at Boltelokke School in Oslo, Norway.

These letters mark the second round in a correspondence which began last fall after a visit to Gaza by Wilhelm S. Boe, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. The Norwegians sent a letter to refugee school children along with a picture album of life in Norway and a gift of \$20. The Gaza class, at Christmas time, replied and sent a picture book of the life they lead.



The Gaza gift had such success that it toured Norway this spring aboard a ship as part of an exhibition called "The World in Pocket Size." And the letter drew forth individual responses from all the members of the Norway class.

When Mohammed was selected to write to Elisabeth Engh, whose smiling, blond picture was enclosed with her note, he was delighted. One of five brothers, he had never had any sisters to play with.

Elisabeth had written: "In Oslo, it's now bitterly cold and all the people feel very cold and they stay inside as much as they can."

Mohammed, in answer, told her about his life: "My school is very beautiful beside the seashore, there are many palm trees all around it. Now it is summer with fine weather."

Khalil, however, admitted he would have preferred a boy pen-pal.

"After all," said the agile teen-ager, whose favourite sport is climbing palm trees, "how can I play with girls?"

But he admitted that another of his hobbies was collecting pictures and added that he wouldn't mind should the picture of his correspondent, Hedda Elisabeth Moe, find its way into his album.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, non-political body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949. In co-operation with the host governments (Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Republic) it carries out its two-fold task: immediate: to provide food, health services, education, training and shelter for the refugees; long-term: to assist the refugees to become self-supporting.

UNRWA began work in May of 1950 and its present mandate expires on 30 June 1963.

All inquiries for information should be addressed to:

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(For information purposes - Not an official record).