



—IN PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS—

## SCHOOL BELLS RING

School is a big part of any child's life. For Palestinian refugee children, the value of an education is particularly emphasized. Education means self-improvement; it is necessary to get a good job to support oneself and one's family; it is a ticket out of the refugee camps. This issue of the Newsletter is devoted to the elementary and preparatory school system, run by the United Nations (UNRWA and UNESCO), in the Palestinian refugee camps.



In school year 1973-74 (statistics are currently being compiled for school year 1974-75), a total of 268,324 children were enrolled in the 562 UNRWA/UNESCO elementary and preparatory schools. Lack of funds for additional school buildings means that almost 2/3 of the schools are on double shifts—in Jordan and Syria, double shifting occurs in almost 90% of the schools. These children in Khan Younis Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip are learning their numbers by using an abacus. (UNRWA photo by Emile Andria)

Refugee children in the UNRWA/UNESCO schools receive regular medical examinations as part of the school's health care program. Children under 15 receive vitamins 3 days a week and reconstituted skim milk 5 days a week. Children suffering from malnutrition or under-nutrition receive vitamins, milk, and a hot meal daily. Immunization against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, typhoid, smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, and measles are also a part of the health care program. If funds are available, consideration is being given to a program of preventive dental care; there is also need for a mental health program for these children. (UNRWA photo of a child in Sbeineh Refugee Camp, Syria, by Jack Madvo)



The UNRWA/UNESCO school system consists of elementary and preparatory education for children ages 6 through 15. The elementary level concludes with Elementary VI when the children are 11 years old. Preparatory school is roughly equivalent to the American junior high school, beginning at age 12 and lasting for 3 years (except in Lebanon where a fourth year is added). These two levels form the basic education available to refugee children. Most of the children are not able to continue their education by going to secondary school (high school), vocational training institutes, or college. (UNRWA photo of children in Jaramana School, Jaramana Refugee Camp, Syria, by Jack Madvo)



The teaching force in UNRWA/UNESCO schools has increased to 7,600. Elementary school teachers in the refugee camps are Palestinian refugees who have completed secondary school and have taken a two-year course of professional training at an UNRWA/UNESCO teacher-training center. Palestinian refugees who wish to be specialist teachers at the preparatory level must either be university graduates (who are encouraged to follow a course of professional training at the UNRWA/UNESCO Institute of Education) or they may be non-university-graduate teachers (who are encouraged to follow a course of in-service specialist training and, if necessary, professional training). Refresher courses are also available for teachers.

Textbooks for the children are generally those used in the host countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, or in Egypt, and are approved before procurement by the Director-General of UNESCO. Textbooks used in the areas militarily occupied by Israel are Egyptian and Jordanian but have been approved by the military authorities through the use of a special permit required for the importation of UNRWA/UNESCO books. (UNRWA photo in Baqa'a Emergency Camp, near Amman, Jordan, by Odd Uhrbom)





The most important part of any school system are the children themselves. Palestinian parents and teachers speak about the children:

.... Our children don't have much of a childhood. They don't have toys and things, and even when they play games, they are mostly war games. It is a pity that a child should lose the best years of his childhood on this ....

Education is the real thing we can give them. Through education we can help them better themselves. Help them get decent jobs. Perhaps move out of the camps.

(The children) ... are very ambitious. They are very ambitious, because it was proved that the only thing left is education to make them stand on their feet. Education and knowledge are the only things that one can carry wherever he goes.

... All (these children) are from our Karameh Camp. These are the hope of the Palestinian refugees. These will be the people who will reach the sea. The grandfathers and the fathers will die and the children will reach the sea.

**The time will come when other Arab generations more honest, more brave will understand Israel. The time will come when other Israeli generations more honest, more brave will understand the Arabs.**

### KARAMEH

On the East Bank of the Jordan River Valley lies the town of Karameh. Over the years, the name of this town has come to mean more than just a location. "Karameh" in Arabic means dignity. The town has come to symbolize the Palestinian struggle to overcome adversity; it symbolizes courage, strength, hope.

Karameh was created in 1948 when Jordan gave land to the Palestinians made homeless by the creation of the state of Israel. Jordanians and Palestinians worked together and the town soon became a thriving agricultural and market center.

Then in March, 1968, Israeli soldiers crossed the river into Jordan and attacked the people of Karameh. The Palestinian and Jordanian defense inflicted heavy losses. But when the battle was over and the Israeli forces retreated, Karameh was completely destroyed.

For the Palestinian refugees, this had been the first real home they had known since fleeing Palestine. They committed themselves to rebuilding the

town. One of the first priorities for reconstruction was the elementary school. When this was completed, families returned as the children were once again able to attend classes.

In 1975, providing education for the children is still of primary importance to the townspeople. Unfortunately, there is now another setback to be faced—this time in the form of inflation. The cost of providing the basic needs of a child's elementary schooling for one year is \$80.00 for school year 1975-76 and is likely to increase to \$100.00 for school year 1976-77. This is quite a blow.

Last year, 115 ANERA donors provided 159 scholarships for Karameh's children. Each donor receives a picture and information about the child receiving his or her scholarship; a year-end report is sent from the Principal of Karameh School.

ANERA donors have helped these Palestinian refugees rebuild their town and their lives. Their generosity has helped to keep the school open and flourishing.

Note: Most of the quotations of the Palestinian refugees were taken from the book, *The Palestinians: A Portrait*, by Frank H. Epp and John Goddard, to be published in Canada in 1976.

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

**UNRWA greeting cards for 1975 are now available. The cards come in 5 designs and are available with or without greetings. A packet of 10 cards and envelopes costs \$2.00. Orders may be sent to: UNRWA Liaison Office, Room 1801, United Nations, New York 10017. Profits from the sale of these cards are used for UNRWA's work with the Palestinian refugees.**

Readers of the Newsletter may wish to sponsor a scholarship for one or more of these children to attend elementary school. What your generosity means to the children, to their families, and to the people of the community is perhaps best described in one word ... Karameh.

**Enclosed is my scholarship donation to provide the children of Karameh with elementary schooling:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$80 (1 child) \_\_\_\_\_ \$160 (2 children) \_\_\_\_\_ \$240 (3 children) \_\_\_\_\_ \$320 (4 children) \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Checks should be made payable to ANERA and returned to the ANERA office. Contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your help.**

ANERA assists 5 institutions which are elementary and preparatory schools and orphanages. Four of these are located on the West Bank: Dar Al-Awlad (Boys' Home), Dar El-Tifl-El-Arabi, Jeel Al-Amal (Generation of Hope), and Rawdat El-Zuhur (House of Flowers). ANERA also assists UNRWA's elementary school in Karameh, Jordan (see story in this Newsletter). Over the past seven years, approximately \$120,000 has been granted by ANERA for elementary and preparatory education to these five institutions. A total of 14 additional organizations have been assisted by ANERA which provide educational and other programs for children of elementary and preparatory school age—programs involving medical services, summer camps, special tutoring, etc. (UNRWA photo of Baqa'a Elementary Girls' School, Baqa'a Emergency Camp, near Amman, Jordan, by George Nehmeh. Most of the UNRWA/UNESCO classes are no longer held in tents but in prefabricated buildings such as these.)



**ANNUAL BOARD MEETING ....**

ANERA's Annual Board of Directors Meeting was held on September 26 and 27, 1975, at the College of Preachers, Washington National (Episcopal) Cathedral and at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.

Officers elected at the Annual Meeting are: John H. Davis, Chairman of the Board; Laurence V. Michelmore and Nestor C. Ortiz, Vice Chairmen of the Board; John P. Richardson, President; Bertram C. Cooper, Treasurer; Joyce M. Stewart, Assistant Treasurer; and Cheryl D. Stewart, Secretary.

At the Annual Meeting, Dr. Davis announced his decision to resign as ANERA's Chief Executive Officer although remaining Chairman of the Board. Dr. Davis plans to devote more time to other interests, including the possibility of further writing. Dr. Davis will remain Chairman of the Board but will no longer have an office at ANERA headquarters. (Correspondence to Dr. Davis may still be sent in care of ANERA or directly to his home address, 2500 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.)

The Board of Directors expressed their gratitude to Dr. Davis for his vital leadership of ANERA over the past seven years. We, of the ANERA staff, wish to express our respect for this distinguished member of the world community and our affection for this compassionate and vigorous man.

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