



## BAKA'A---A REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN

by John Bonar

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The cornerstone of a lasting peace in the Middle East is not the physical disengagement of the Arab and Israeli armies which face each other on the front lines, nor the return of the territory occupied by Israel in 1967 to its Arab owners, but the satisfactory settlement of the rights of Palestinians; because, as long as the national aspirations of this nascent nation are frustrated, there will be angry young men willing to sacrifice themselves for "the cause" in more terrorist attacks such as were witnessed in Munich and at Rome Airport.

Nowhere is this more evident than on a cold winter's day in the sprawling refugee camp in **Bakaa, Jordan** which houses over 50,000 refugees. Since 1967 they have been huddled here, first in tents and then in one and two roomed shacks built for them by the United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). For many of them 1967 was a second exodus. They originally lost their homes with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948....

This is the melting pot of Palestine. There is hardly a community, hardly a village not represented here. This is the largest of the UNRWA refugee camps, but the total population of near-destitute refugees living under similar conditions in Jordan is 227,088.

Those who can remember 1948 and their flight do so vividly. Ahmed AIKhatib, 52, recalls: "The Israelis came into my village of Aljour near Hebron and fired machineguns over houses and down streets." He points to a fairly busy main street in the camp and, beard quivering with indignation, says: "They fired down streets like that and everyone in the way was killed. None of us wanted to stay. I left the same day. I took my wife and children and ran. I left everything: land, documents and a herd of sheep, everything. We came in the clothes we wore."

Ismail abu Bashir, a 30-year-old clerk, fled in 1967 when "the Jews told us by loudspeakers 'go to the East Bank'. 'Go to King Hussein'."

Abu Azzam, a 25-year-old driver left Bethlehem. "We were afraid the Jews would kill all the young men they found, so we left." Abu Azzam is relatively fortunate. He earns five Jordanian pounds a week and has been able to build a concrete extension on to his asbestos hut. But to reach it is a hard slog through ankle-deep mud. On entering the door can be seen the concrete courtyard scrubbed clean with rainwater. Muddied boots are piled at the door and four-year-old Azzam, the eldest son, brings cheap plastic slippers for visitors. Inside the shack, lying on a mattress on the concrete floor, rocking her newly born daughter and comforting another infant who coughs bronchially at the foot of the bed, is Umm Azzam. Azzam and two other sisters sit, wide-eyed, on the bare floor watching their mother.

Abu Azzam has a vacation because of his wife's pregnancy and no one has left home today, although it is well past noon. They have not eaten, but hastily offer to provide the visitor with a bowl of lentils—one of the few staples doled out in meager quantities to all registered refugees by UNRWA.

Apart from miserable rations, education and free medical services of a minimal nature, there is little real help giv-

en to refugees UNRWA faces budget problems. Devaluation has sent its estimated 1974 budget rocketing from 54 million dollars to 62 million. There is no way the shortfall can be made up, and there is concern among UNRWA employees that education services may be cut back. "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," says Basil An-nab, UNRWA information officer in Amman.

Most of the refugees still clutch their tattered documents proving land ownership in Palestine. Of those who could afford it, few want to leave the camp, unless it is to return to Palestine. "Even if I get a job in Kuwait for a few years I won't use the money to build a house in Amman. I don't want to have roots in Amman. I want to return to Palestine, so why should I spend money on a house in Amman?" asks one newly graduated school teacher.

The refugees in Baka'a are confused, but hopeful. Hopeful that the peace talks in Geneva will at last bring forth a settlement which will let them return to Palestine. "Of course we all want to return to our own land, the land our fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers owned and worked," says Abu Azzam, "but even if we just get back the West Bank it is better than nothing. At least it is Palestine."

**\*ANERA is a non-profit, charitable organization which seeks: to increase total assistance in cash and kind from American sources to Palestinian Arab refugees and other needy individuals in the Middle East;**

**to be responsive in crises affecting civilian populations in the area, particularly displacement and casualties caused by war; and to increase American understanding of the Palestinian refugee problem.**

# ANERA GRANTS RECORD AMOUNT

## ANERA GRANT ACTIVITY—1973-1974

During Fiscal Year 1973-1974, ANERA allocated a record total of \$2,234,082.40 to projects assisting Palestinian refugees and Arab civilian victims of the October 1973 war. Of this amount \$2,196,155.00 was given in cash grants. Shipments of drugs and medical supplies totalled \$37,927.40.

The AMER Division of ANERA allocated all of the drugs and medical supplies to UNRWA during the past year. Donors to AMER included: Dr. William Shehadi; Parke, Davis and Company; Hoffman-LaRoche, Inc.; Eli Lilly and Company; Pfizer Laboratories; Smith, Kline and French Laboratories; Warner-Chilcott Laboratories; and Squibb Company. Gifts donated consisted largely of antibiotics and vitamins for children, nursing mothers, and pregnant women.

The following table lists the projects which ANERA supported with cash grants during the past fiscal year:

Recipient	Amount
Association for Resurgence of Palestinian Camps (Beirut)	\$ 2,000
AUB Medical Students' Society (Beirut)	\$ 2,500
Beirut University College (Beirut)	\$ 2,500
Bethlehem University (West Bank)	\$ 2,000
Birzeit College (West Bank)	\$ 10,000
College des Freres (Jerusalem)	\$ 800
Dar El-Awlad (Jerusalem)	\$ 2,000
Dar El-Tifl (Jerusalem)	\$ 4,000
Egyptian Red Crescent Society (Cairo)	\$ 55,000
Four Homes of Mercy (West Bank)	\$ 1,000
Gaza College (Gaza)	\$ 5,000
Help for Children in the Holy Land (Jerusalem)	\$ 1,500
Industrial Islamic Orphanage (Jerusalem)	\$ 4,000
Jebel Hussein Rehydration/Nutrition Center (Amman)	\$ 3,300
Jeel Al-Amal (West Bank)	\$ 2,000
Lebanese Red Cross (Beirut)	\$ 5,000
Maqassed Hospital (Jerusalem)	\$ 1,000
Marjayoun National College (Lebanon)	\$ 3,000
Nablus Blood Bank (West Bank)	\$ 1,000
National Alliance of YMCA's/Lebanon (Beirut)	\$ 2,000
Palestine Arab Women's Union/ Gaza (Gaza)	\$ 2,000
Palestine Arab Women's Union/Jerusalem (Jerusalem)	\$ 2,000
Popular Committee to Aid Victims of the War (for use in 1973 war zones)	\$ 2,000,000
SWASIA (USA)	\$ 2,500
Syrian Red Crescent Society (Damascus)	\$ 40,000
UNRWA	\$ 21,055
UNRWA West Bank Summer Camp Project (West Bank)	\$ 1,000
World Alliance of YMCA's (East/West Bank)	\$ 5,000
YMCA of Jerusalem (Jerusalem)	\$ 5,000
YWCA of Jerusalem (Jerusalem)	\$ 5,000

Copies of ANERA's Annual Report and audited financial statements for 1973-1974 will be available from the ANERA office by the end of August, 1974.

## ANERA ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Several broad principles have guided ANERA project allocations over the years. Primary emphasis for cash grants is given to activities providing education (primary through post-secondary), vocational training, and community development to Palestinian refugees and others in the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza). The ANERA Projects Committee is authorized to approve grants not to exceed \$5,000 to a single recipient in a year, all other grants must receive ANERA Board approval. Shipments of drugs and medical supplies go mainly to UNRWA, with smaller allotments to individual hospitals and medical groups, allocations of gifts in kind are made by the AMER Medical Committee.

Programs supported by ANERA are most often supervised by Palestinians, provide services for Palestinians, and do not already have a strong fund-raising arm in the United States. Grants are usually made for operating expenses as distinct from capital expenditures.

In times of war in the Middle East, ANERA relief activities are expanded to include emergency relief efforts among civilian populations affected by the conflict.







**Nabatieh Refugee Camp**—The majority of the Palestinian refugees at Nabatieh camp are from Gallilee. In 1948, as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the villagers fled from their homes and land and scattered, most of them finding refuge in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. In 1959, UNRWA completed the construction of this camp which is located near the small town of Nabatieh in South Lebanon. By 1974, long concrete buildings divided into separate shelters provided accommodation for more than 3,000 refugees. The above photos show Nabatieh camp as it looked before and after May 16, 1974. On that date, Israeli attacks on the people of Nabatieh camp caused damage to 80% of the structures. In addition, 20% of the remaining structures were partially damaged, 10% slightly damaged, and 10% with roofing damages. The temporary UNRWA clinic (temporary because the permanent buildings for the clinic were destroyed in an Israeli attack in February, 1973), the feeding center, the ration distribution center, the camp services office, and 20 public latrines were also demolished (UNRWA photos by F. Samia)



**Nabatieh Camp** for Palestinian refugees was the most severely damaged during the Israeli raids in South Lebanon from May 16-19, 1974. Forty-nine men, women, and children were killed during the raids, 70 were injured, and most of the camp was obliterated. The refugees are currently living in schools, mosques, churches, and on the open countryside. (UNRWA photo by Jack Madvo)

## ARAB AMERICANS CHALLENGED

A distinguished member of the Lebanese-American community, Mr. Joseph Robbie, has issued a fund-raising challenge for ANERA donors of Arabian heritage. Mr. Robbie, the founder and Managing General Partner of the Miami Dolphins, has offered to contribute \$5,000 to ANERA for sports programs among Palestinian refugees. His donation will be made if the sum can be matched by individual contributions from other Arab-Americans. ANERA urges its contributors to send donations to the ANERA office with an indication that the donation is in answer to the Robbie challenge.

## ANERA ON THE RADIO

A public service radio campaign has been designed for ANERA by an advertising firm in Washington, D.C. Throughout the United States, a packet of information and phonograph records are being distributed in July and September to 2000 radio stations (excluding those stations whose programs consist largely of music) for use as public service announcements. The campaign attempts to raise funds for ANERA and bring the plight of the Palestinian refugees to the attention of the American listening audience. Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Ore), Senator James Abourezk (D-SD), The Hon. Charles Yost, and Dr. John Davis have recorded the announcements on behalf of ANERA.

*Newsletter* readers are requested to contact the ANERA office with the name of any radio station broadcasting the announcements. Readers who may know of radio stations and/or radio programs which might be particularly receptive to the public service packet are also asked to contact ANERA.

## THANKS

ANERA extends its gratitude to those serving on the Projects Committee and AMER Medical Committee during the past Fiscal Year.





**Burj El-Shamali and Rashidieh Refugee Camps**—These photos show a portion of the destruction of the Palestinian refugee camps, Burj El-Shamali and Rashidieh, both located in South Lebanon. Rashidieh Camp suffered as the result of an Israeli sea-strike on May 19, 1974. Burj El-Shamali camp was attacked from the air by Israel on June 20, 1974. About 80 civilians—Lebanese and Palestinian—were killed and more than 250 wounded in Israeli air attacks during May and June, 1974. (UNRWA photo by Jack Madvo)

#### TESTIMONY AVAILABLE

As reported in *Newsletter* Number 26, a Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on April 4, 1974, on the "Problems of Protecting Civilians Under International Law in the Middle East Conflict". The hearing was devoted to the human rights grievances of Arab civilians resulting from the October, 1973, war in the Middle East. Free copies of the hearing may be ordered from: Subcommittee on International Organization and Movements, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

#### BOOKS ON PALESTINE

The Institute for Palestine Studies is an independent, non-profit Arab research organization. The aim of the Institute is to provide clear, objective studies of matters related to the Palestine problem, with the object of promoting a better understanding of it. A catalogue of Institute publications is available from: Institute for Palestine Studies, P.O. Box 329A, R.D. 1, Oxford, Pennsylvania 19363.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

Monsignor John G. Nolan, National Secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, was recently awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from St. John's University. Msgr. Nolan is a member of the ANERA Board of Directors.



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