



THE U.N. AND THE PALESTINIANS

Since its inception, the United Nations has taken an active role in seeking solutions to the problems of the world's refugees.

In 1950, the General Assembly established the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to facilitate both the provision of immediate refugee relief and to negotiate a permanent solution of the refugees' status. Because refugees are innocent victims of conflict, humanitarian concern usually leads to a speedy resolution of their plight. Normally, at the end of a war or other period of political turmoil, refugees are given a choice of returning to their original country or of resettling in the new host country. The UNHCR has been highly successful in achieving repatriation and/or resettlement for various groups of refugees.

Despite repeated U.N. resolutions to that effect, the Palestinian refugees have never been given the choice between repatriation and resettlement. Over the years, they have made the best lives possible where they came to rest. The "host country" of Jordan has provided "blanket" citizenship for Palestinians while Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, and other host countries have allowed the refugees to remain either as citizens or by virtue of their special status as refugees.

Only about 628,000 of the 3 million Palestinians are still in refugee camps; these refugees include the young, the elderly, and the unskilled who are largely unemployable in the labor market of the host countries. Most of the refugees do not consider their current status to be a permanent solution, demanding instead to return to their homeland or, at least, to be compensated for properties seized by the Government of Israel.

Because of unique and early U.N. involvement with Palestine, two special U.N. organizations, which operate independently of the UNHCR, were es-

tablished after the war of 1948 by the General Assembly. The first organization, the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)**, provides relief and rehabilitation programs for the Palestinian refugees.

The second group, known as the **Conciliation Commission**, seeks to solve the Palestinian refugee problem through repatriation, compensation, and resettlement. Although it has not been active for several years, the Conciliation Commission has proposed several solutions; its suggestions for resettlement have been implemented as far as possible but the Commission's proposals for repatriation and compensation have failed.

There are several additional U.N. agencies which are concerned with the Palestinian refugees and the promotion of peace in the area:

The **United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO)**, which was established in 1948 by the Security Council, oversees the armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan and reports violations of these agreements. UNTSO is headquartered in Jerusalem.

The **United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)** was established in 1956 by the General Assembly as a result of the invasion of Egypt by Israel, Great Britain, and France. UNEF was removed from the area prior to the June war of 1967 at the request of President Nasser. After the war of 1973, a second UNEF was created but this time by the Security Council. UNEF now operates on the Egyptian-Israeli disengagement line. In May, 1974, the **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)** was created by the Security Council and is similar in operation to the UNEF. UNDOF mans the buffer zone along the Israeli-Syrian disengagement line. Both UNEF and UNDOF are assisted by members of UNTSO.

The **United Nations Children's Fund**

(UNICEF) has provided special emergency assistance through UNRWA to the Palestinian refugees. This special assistance has included such supplies as toxoid to immunize refugee children against diphtheria. In recent years, UNICEF has contributed \$10,000 annually to UNRWA.

The **United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** has the technical responsibility for the educational program of the Palestinian refugees while UNRWA has the administrative responsibility for the program. UNESCO also seeks to protect the social and cultural heritage of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has the technical responsibility for the health program of the refugees while UNRWA has the administrative responsibility. WHO has contributed \$1,522,677 to UNRWA since 1950.

The **Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories** was established by the General Assembly in December, 1968. The Special Committee's purpose is contained in its title. The Government of Israel has denied the Special Committee access to the Occupied Territories so its conclusions have been based on the submission of evidence largely by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by individual Palestinians once living under the military occupation.

The above U.N. organizations are responsible for most of the U.N.'s work with the Palestinian refugees, although there are some additional U.N. bodies which have periodically had contact with the refugees. For a complete analysis of this subject, please consult *The U.N. and the Palestinian Refugees* by Dr. Edward H. Buehrig, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1971.

UNRWA AND THE REFUGEES

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was created as a temporary organization by the General Assembly in 1949 to assist the Palestinians made refugees as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948.

REFUGEES QUALIFYING

Those refugees eligible for the Agency's assistance who have registered with UNRWA numbered 1,583,646 as of 30 June 1974. Of this number, only slightly more than half, 52.4%, receive rations. The number of those living in refugee camps is 628,527—36% of the total registered population.

In 1953 and 1963, a limit was set on the number of Palestinian refugees able to obtain rations; new beneficiaries are added only when deletions are made, usually through death or the achievement of self-support. As of 30 June 1974, there were 401,261 children aged one year and over who are eligible for rations but for whom no rations are available.

UNRWA PROGRAMS

UNRWA's programs take the form of *relief*, mainly the basic ration of flour, rice, cooking oil, and sugar but including supplementary feeding for small children and other vulnerable groups; *health services*, including clinics; *education*, including both general education and vocational training. The host countries of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan also supplement UNRWA's services to the refugees.

General education is by far the largest single Agency activity. For school year 1973-74, 268,324 pupils were enrolled in UNRWA/UNESCO elementary and secondary schools. In elementary schools in Jordan and Syria, double-shifting of children is now approaching 90% to maximize the use of existing school facilities. UNRWA's vocational training program is highly successful in enabling the refugees to break their cycle of dependency; over 81% of the 1972-73 graduates are now employed.

FINANCING UNRWA

UNRWA is financed independently of the regular United Nations budget; a special "pledging day" is held when UN-member governments announce their contributions to UNRWA for the coming year.

Currently, UNRWA's budget is estimated to be \$115 million. Income for

1975 is estimated at \$69.7 million, leaving a projected deficit of \$45 million.

There are three main reasons for the budgetary deficit: inflation in the countries of the agency's area of operations, ranging from 11% in Syria to 47% in the Gaza Strip; increase in the prices of supplies, particularly flour; and devaluations of the U.S. dollar and other currencies of major importance in the Agency's income.

The U.S. contribution to UNRWA was \$28.4 million in calendar year 1974 and is projected to be \$39 million in 1975. Although frequently done, it is basically inaccurate to compare U.S. and Arab financial support for the Palestinian refugees by contrasting their respective contributions to UNRWA. The U.S. presently gives nearly all of its financial assistance to the Palestinians via UNRWA. The Arab countries contribute most of their funds for the Palestinians via other channels. For example, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait pledged \$14 million directly to the Government of Lebanon for reconstruction necessitated by the Israeli bombing raids of May and June, 1974. (The above article is based on the Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for 1973-74. Copies may be obtained from the UNRWA Liaison Office, United Nations, New York 10017.)

ANERA AND UNRWA

According to figures for 1973 and the first six months of 1974, ANERA is the largest private American contributor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Over the past six years, ANERA has given UNRWA \$113,655.00—making it ANERA's No. 1 recipient in the Middle East. In 1973-74, ANERA's AMER Division donated

***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 Arab World; 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.**

medical supplies and equipment worth an additional \$37,297 on the U.S. market.

Over the past few years, ANERA has developed a special program with UNRWA in which American donors sponsor scholarships for Palestinian children. Each donor receives a picture and information about the Palestinian child designated as his/her scholarship recipient. The scholarships are inexpensive by American standards—just \$60 provides a child with a year of elementary education while \$800 provides one year of vocational training. (Note: Donations by Americans directly to UNRWA are not tax-deductible.)

During the school year 1973-74, 101 ANERA donors contributed 134 scholarships for elementary school students. Thirteen ANERA donors sponsored 18 vocational training scholarships.

ANERA also supports the UNRWA-sponsored "West Bank Summer Camp Program". The program allows refugee children to spend two creative weeks away from the refugee camps each summer. The experience provides the children with recreation and fellowship opportunities which they would otherwise not normally have.

PALESTINIANS AS REFUGEES

UNRWA defines a Palestinian refugee as a person whose normal residence was Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 and who, as a result of this conflict, lost both his home and means of livelihood and took refuge, in 1948, in one of the countries where UNRWA provides relief (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the Occupied Territories). Refugees within this definition and the children or grandchildren of such refugees are eligible for UNRWA assistance if they are a) registered with

UNRWA, b) living in the area of UNRWA's operations, and c) in need. After the war of 1967, UNRWA was given a broader mandate to assist Palestinians who did not already fall under the definition of a Palestinian refugee but who were homeless as a result of the war of 1967.

There are approximately 3 million Palestinian refugees. Of this number only a little over half—1.58 million—qualify for UNRWA assistance.

GLOBAL CONCERN FOR REFUGEES

During the past 27 years that the Palestinians have been refugees, numerous international organizations have gathered in conference and passed various resolutions of action and/or of belief. Most of these organizations have considered the plight of the Palestinian refugees and consequent conflict in the Middle East as part of their global concerns.

The United Nations is the most well-known of these international groups. Other concerned organizations include the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the World Federalists, the World Council of Churches/National Council of Churches, to name a few. Among the various resolutions passed on the subject, nearly all have reaffirmed the following:

- The Palestinians have the inalienable right to return to their homes and property from which they have been uprooted.
- The recognition of Palestinian rights is essential in the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East.
- With respect to the territories under military occupation, Israel should desist from practices which are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Examples of the specific language typical of the majority of the resolutions, follows:

Security Council Resolution 298 of September 25, 1971: "...Confirms in the clearest possible terms that all legislative and administrative actions taken by Israel to change the status of the city of Jerusalem, including expropriation of land and properties, transfer of populations, and legislation aimed at the incorporation of the occupied are totally invalid and cannot change that status..."

International Committee of the Red Cross, 22nd International Conference, November 10, 1973: "... (Is) deeply concerned by the immense sufferings of the civilian population of the Occupied Territories in the Middle East, resulting from the non-application of the Fourth Geneva Convention..."

General Assembly Resolution 2851 of December 20, 1971: "...Strongly calls upon Israel to rescind forthwith all measures and to desist from all policies and practices such as:

- (a) The annexation of any part of the occupied Arab territories;
- (b) The establishment of Israeli settlements on those territories and the transfer of its (Israeli) civilian population into the occupied territory;
- (c) The destruction and demolition of villages, quarters and houses and the confiscation and expropriation of property;
- (d) The evacuation, transfer, deportation and expulsion of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories;
- (e) The denial of the right of the refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes;
- (f) The ill-treatment and torture of prisoners and detainees;
- (g) Collective punishment..."

General Assembly Resolution 3092-B of December 7, 1973: "...Expresses its grave concern at the violation by Israel of the Geneva Convention...and in particular the following violations:

- (g) The pillaging of archaeological and cultural property in the occupied territories;
- (h) The interference with religious freedom, religious practices and family rights and customs;..."

The volume of resolutions condemning the plight of the Palestinian refugees is overwhelming; during the period of June, 1967, to March, 1970, alone, thirty-one resolutions such as the above were passed by various bodies of the United Nations including the Security Council, General Assembly, World Health Organization, UNESCO, and the Human Rights Commission.

From these resolutions, it is evident that the nations of the world have in common certain standards of human and governmental conduct. The current status of the Palestinian refugees is clearly in violation of these standards.



Sir John Rennie (left) of Great Britain, present Commissioner-General of UNRWA, receives a check from Dr. John H. Davis, Commissioner-General of UNRWA from 1959-1964, and currently ANERA's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Other former United Nations officials on ANERA's Board of Directors include: Hugh Auchincloss, Jr., Member of the U.S. Delegation to the 16th U.N. General Assembly; Dr. Howard Cottam, North American Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization, 1969-1974; Dr. Harry Howard, Acting U.S. Representative to the UNRWA Advisory Commission, 1956-1962; Colonel F.M. Johnson, Jr. (USMC Ret.), Deputy Chief of Staff, UNTSO Palestine, 1966-1968; Dr. Laurence Michelmore, UNRWA Commissioner-General 1964-1971.



Roy E. Brakeman, Jr.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Roy E. Brakeman, Jr. was born in Cleveland Ohio and lived in Alabama as a youth. Mr. Brakeman received his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Auburn University, (Alabama), and his Master of Science in Business and Engineering Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mr. Brakeman is an advisor on the Foreign Operations Staff of the Standard Oil Company of California (SOCAL). He began working for SOCAL in 1948 and has served in the Producing, Comptroller's, and Economics Departments.

Mr. Brakeman is married and has two sons and a daughter. He lives in San Francisco, California.

WORLD FOOD CRISIS

The months of March and April 1975,—before the winter crops are harvested—may be the worst months of the current world food crisis.

For 1975, UNRWA requires a total of 129,200 tons of flour, rice, cooking oil, and sugar for its rations to the refugees. 38,075 tons of supplies have been

pledged by various countries, leaving 91,105 tons unaccounted for.

UNRWA donors and commodities include:

sugar—European Economic Community, 6,000 tons

rice—Japan and Thailand, 3,735 tons



BAQA'A REFUGEE CAMP, JORDAN—This Palestinian woman comes once a month to collect the UNRWA rations for her family. The monthly basic dry ration is normally composed of roughly 4.5 pounds of flour, 21 ounces of pulses (or equivalent in flour or rice), 21 ounces of sugar, 18 ounces of rice, and 13 ounces of cooking oil. This ration provides approximately 1,500 calories per day throughout seven months. In winter, November through March, a supplement of flour is normally issued to increase its value to about 1,600 calories per day. Other supplies distributed by UNRWA include roughly 1 to 1.5 quarts of kerosene in the winter and one piece of soap (about 5.3 ounces). (UNRWA photo by George Nehmeh)

Enclosed is my contribution to help defray the cost of food for the refugees:
 \$15 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$1,000 _____ Other \$ _____

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Please send the above with your tax-deductible contribution to ANERA, 733 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Checks should be made payable to ANERA. Thank you for your help.

cooking oil—European Economic Community, 4,000 tons

flour—Belgium, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, European Economic Community, 26,340 tons

Flour is the most problematic of the ration supplies—87,360 tons of flour are still needed for 1975 rations. The situation is complicated by an increase in the cost of flour. In 1971, UNRWA paid approximately \$70 per ton for flour; the 1975 price is estimated at \$260 per ton.

In the absence of additional contributions of commodities, UNRWA purchases of food may mean that other programs, such as education, will be reduced. In purchasing food, the Agency contracts with firms able to meet UNRWA's specifications at the most competitive purchase price and freight charge. The usual sources of supply, therefore, are countries with ports on the Mediterranean, English Channel, or North Sea. In past years, the United States has donated roughly \$9 million in wheat and in the cost of its transportation to UNRWA ports. This year, the U.S. will make its donation all in cash, which should prove more helpful to UNRWA.

For Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, the price of food bought locally will be especially high. In the West Bank the 1974 rate of inflation was 40%; in Gaza, it reached 47%. There was no comparable increase in wages. Administrators at ANERA assisted projects in the Occupied Territories report that the high cost of food is a significant contributor to institutional debts incurred by the programs.



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