

451.1-1460

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

Cairo, Egypt  
April 4, 1944

TO : George Xanthaky  
FROM : R. J. Youdin  
SUBJECT: Information requested by Division Displaced Persons

There is submitted herewith the reply furnished by MERRA to memorandum dated March 6, 1944 from C. M. Pierce to Miss Caroline A. Flexner (attached). It is regretted that only one copy is available for you to take back with you. However, in view of the time element it is not feasible to have additional copies struck off here. It is hoped that this can be done at Washington without too great inconvenience.

ROM

copy  
sent

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER RESIDENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MIDDLE EAST RELIEF & REFUGEE ADMINISTRATION  
3, SH. AHMED PASHA, GARDEN CITY,  
CAIRO.

Tel. No. 45301.

Ref. No.....

3rd April, 1944.

Information on Displaced Persons in Camp

Herewith replies to questionnaire on the  
above subject.

It will be appreciated that MERRA has no active interest in the camps not directly under their administration in the Middle East. The information given for these other camps happens, incidentally, to be available in this office but is not necessarily entirely accurate nor always has it been possible to supply the detail required.

Am.

Answer to be returned to: Refugee Camp Section  
Bureau of Areas  
UNRRA - 305 Dupont Circle Building  
Washington, D. C.

March 6, 1944

TO: MISS CAROLIN A. FLEXNER

FROM: C. M. Pierce *cmf*

SUBJECT: Information requested by Division on  
Displaced Persons

In response to your verbal request, I attach herewith a statement of the subjects about which the Division on Displaced Persons would like to be informed if it is possible for Governor Lehman to have the information obtained.

It is probable that all the information requested is not available in Cairo. Any which can be provided will be helpful. Also, information is requested for subjects about which we have already been informed. However, previous information usually came from such a variety of sources that a confirmation would tend to establish its validity.

You will note that the subjects presented are inclusive in scope and many may not now be the concern of UNRRA. As you are aware, this Division is called upon, from time to time, to give specific advice on Displaced Persons throughout the world. It seems essential then that this general information be collected and correlated so as to be available for use when needed in Hearings, Council discussions, planning or operations.

In general, the subjects in the attached memoranda fall into two main groups:

1. Information needed on general displacement of populations.
2. Information on Displaced Persons cared for in camps.

The material presented herewith has been read and approved by Mr. George L. Warren.

- d. Copies of rolls or registers used as permanent camp records.

Notes: Our present information indicates that refugees transported from receiving transit camps, such as Moses Wells, have in

Attachments

their



March 6, 1944

INFORMATION ON GENERAL DISPLACEMENT  
OF POPULATIONS AND OTHER MATERIAL  
NEEDED

1. What is the current estimate of the total number of Yugoslavs to be evacuated to Egypt?
- a. How many have arrived?  
How many are enroute?  
Are they being cared for in Moses Wells, or in new camps?  
Names and locations of such new camps, and number in each.
  - b. Are any other nationals to be included?  
Which? How many? When?
2. Any figures available on the number of displaced persons (other than Italians) in the zone of allied occupation in Southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica. (We already have specific information on the Ferramonti camp at Tarsia. This question refers to any other information available).
- a. Number of each nationality
  - b. Approximate locations, if concentrated.
3. Any figures available on the displacement of Italian nationals in Southern Italy. (These figures would give a clue to the intra-country displacement to be expected from difficult military operations)
4. Are Greeks still escaping to Allied islands or Turkey, or has that migration ceased? Have all the Greeks in Turkey been evacuated? Are there any plans for relocation of the Greek refugees now in the Middle East to other areas? Where? When?
5. How many Poles still remain in Iran and India? What plans are being made for their relocation? Are any Poles still coming out of Russia? Is it planned that any will come within the next six months? How many? Where will they go?
6. To assist in drafting registration and temporary identity forms for use by UNRRA, it would be important to secure copies of:
- a. Camp identity cards issued in Moses Wells and other camps in the Middle East
  - b. UNRRA identity cards
  - c. AIO identity documents (Presumably issued by British Military Intelligence)
  - d. Copies of rolls or registers used as permanent camp records.

Note: Our present information indicates that refugees transported from receiving camps to transit camps, such as Moses Wells, have in

their



## INFORMATION ON MERRA -2- PERSONS IN CAMP

Information needed for camps in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, and Southern Rhodesia. At their possession AIO cards issued by British Military Intelligence. At Moses Wells they are registered, entered on the camp rolls, and are issued a camp identity card for identification and rations. This is cross reference to the camp roll. When they leave Moses Wells, they are issued a MERRA identity card which, MERRA authorities hope, will be recognized by other camp authorities.

2. Nationality in each camp.
3. Camp population as to men, women, children and age distribution.
4. Who administers each camp.
5. Who furnishes basic maintenance of camp refugees.
6. Who ultimately is charged for expenses of maintenance of camp refugees.
7. With respect to each camp:
  - a. Are camp members expected to do a certain amount of work in return for their keep?
  - b. Is paid work restricted to necessary housekeeping tasks of camps or is it extended to include work projects aimed to improve morale of camp members? What are rates of pay for such work? Is pay in addition to basic maintenance provided?
  - c. Are camp members allowed to work outside the camp for private or governmental employers? How many are so employed? What are their wages? Do they live outside the camp or return at night? For those who return, is maintenance provided in camp? Is any charge made for this? How much?
  - d. What is the policy with respect to camp members employed as doctors, nurses, school teachers and other professional or skilled positions? Do they receive a full salary? What salaries are paid? Is full maintenance provided in addition? Is any charge made for this?
  - e. Are small businesses such as shoe repair and barbering permitted? Are these run by refugees? Are they paid at flat or varied rates? Do they charge for their productions? What is done about payment for their maintenance in camp?

## INFORMATION ON DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAMP

Information needed for camps in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Dominion of South Africa, Abyssinia, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Iran, India, Southern Italy: (exclusive of Moses Wells, Aleppo, and Seuk El Charb)

1. Names of camps and their locations. (If not in a settled place, give distance to nearest settled place)
2. Nationality in each camp.
3. Camp population as to men, women, children and age distribution.
4. Who administers each camp.
5. Who furnishes basic maintenance of camp refugees.
6. Who ultimately is charged for expenses of maintenance of camp refugees.
7. With respect to each camp:
  - a. Are camp members expected to do a certain amount of work in return for their keep?
  - b. Is paid work restricted to necessary housekeeping tasks of camps or is it extended to include work projects aimed to improve morale of camp members? What are rates of pay for such work? Is pay in addition to basic maintenance provided?
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  - e. Are small businesses such as shoe repair and barbering permitted? Are these run by refugees? Are they paid at flat or varied rates? Do they charge for their productions? What is done about payment for their maintenance in camp?

f.



to be returned to: Refugee Camp Section  
Bureau of Areas  
UNRRA - 305 Dupont Circle Building  
Washington, D. C.

-2-

- f. What is policy on living allowances, grants to needy, vocational training?
  - g. How are consumer enterprises operated? By refugees? As cooperatives? Supervised by the administration? Are wages in consumer enterprises same as for other camp work? Are the wages paid by the administration or the enterprises?
  - h. What are internal security arrangements? Are refugees on police force, etc?
  - i. Is community government established by the refugees? What matters are decided by the community council? Who are its members?
  - j. Are there any special provisions for un-attached children? How many of these are there, by age distribution of pre-school, 6-12, 12-16, and over 16?
8. Figures on refugees outside of camps but related to the camps, distributed by sex, age and nationalities.
9. Who arranges for admission of refugees and their general supervision?

You will note that the subjects presented are inclusive in scope and may not now be the concern of UNRRA. As you are aware, this Division is called upon, from time to time, to give specific advice on Displaced Persons throughout the world. It seems essential then that this general information be collected and correlated so as to be available for use when needed in Hearings, Council discussions, planning or operations.

In general, the subjects in the attached memoranda fall into two main groups:

1. Information needed on general displacement of populations.
2. Information on Displaced Persons cared for in camps.

The material presented herewith has been read and approved by Mr. George L. Warren.

Attachments



SCALE OF POCKET MONEY AND WAGES PAYABLE TO GREEK  
REFUGEES THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST

A). POCKET MONEY

1. Family Groups with Children up to 18 years

(i)	Married Couple	PT	25	per week
(ii)	" " and 1 child	"	30	" "
(iii)	" " and 2 children	"	35	" "
(iv)	" " and family (maximum)	"	35	" "

NOTE: Where there is no man and wife, and head of family group is father or mother, an elder child or close relative or guardian, then the scale to be paid is as follows:-

1. Family Group with Children up to 18 Years

(i)	Head of Group	PT	15	per week
(ii)	" " " and 1 child	"	20	" "
(iii)	" " " and 2 children	"	25	" "
(iv)	" " " and family (maximum)	"	25	" "

Children over 18 years will be considered as adults and treated as separate individuals under 2.

2. Single Persons, not within a Family Group

(i)	Children up to 14 years	PT	5	per week
(ii)	" 14 to 18 "	"	10	" "
(iii)	" 18 upwards (adults)	"	15	" "

Payment of Pocket Money, as above, to come into effect as from 1st February, 1944.

B). WAGES

The payment of wages will be made under two broad classifications, viz., MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.) and PROFESSIONAL. The remuneration of doctors will be treated as an entirely separate question, each appointment to be considered individually and remuneration fixed according to the particular circumstances applying:-

MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.)

Labourers, foremen, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, painters, etc., etc. To be added to as cases arise:-

PT x to PT 40 (maximum unskilled rate) - up to  
a maximum of PT 70 per week for skilled labour.

NOTE: The commencing rate "x" to be left to the discretion of the Camp Commandants.

PROFESSIONAL

School-teachers, Nurses, Welfare-workers, Anaesthetists, Liaison Interpreters, Clerical, Heads of Handicraft Sections, etc. To be added to as cases arise.

Rate of pay to be up to a maximum of £5 per month.

Payment as above to come into effect as from 1st. January, 1944, in respect of such refugees as are eligible by virtue of duties carried out.

Answers to Question 7, 8 and 9.

7. (a) Any work other than personal tasks receives wages except in case of Yugoslavs.
- (b) Extends to work projects.  
Pay in addition to basic maintenance rates for Greeks attached - slight variation between countries.
- (c) With permission of local government.
- (d) Salary estimated in relation to maintenance they receive (see attached for Greeks).  
If employed in camp, live in camps.
- (e) Yes in Polish camps of East Africa. Otherwise work is done for wages plus maintenance.
- (f) Living allowances only paid in Cyprus. Training for nurses, craftsmen and potential relief workers.
- (g) This question is not fully understood. Consumer production, i.e. clothing production, etc. - is carried out by refugees for themselves.
- (h) Refugees usually have own guard - in military areas - Greek Army guard.
- (i) A refugee committee in each camp cooperates with administration.
- (j) Polish orphan camp in India and South Africa.
8. Only applies in Cyprus (Greeks) and Palestine (Poles).  
Details not easily available.
9. ~~Refugees are usually interrogated~~ Refugees are usually interrogated when they first reach Allied zone, before allocation to refugee camp.
- 10



Subject:- Information on General Displacement of Populations and other material needed.

Requested by Division on Displaced Persons.

Refugee Camp Section,  
Bureau of Areas,  
UNRRA,  
305, Dupont Circle Building,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Herewith replies to your questionnaire of  
6th March, 1944.

- Your 1 1(a) The current estimate of the total number of Yugoslavs to be evacuated to Egypt is twenty-five thousand (25,000).
- Your 1a (b) Arrived: Eleven thousand (11,000)
- (c) En route Five thousand (5,000)
- (d) Yugoslavs are not accommodated in the Greek camps at Moses Wells.
- (e) New camps have been set up at El Shatt, Suez (10 miles from Moses Wells) and at El Khatatba (30 miles from Cairo and adjacent to the Alexandria road).
- |                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Capacity of El Shatt | 16,000 |
| " " El Khatatba      | 10,000 |
- (f) All arrivals to date are accommodated in El Shatt. The second camp at El Khatatba is now prepared and ready for reception of refugees as soon as El Shatt is full.
- Your 1b (g) Other nationals are not to be included.
- Your 2. 2(a) On his return from Italy, MERRA liaison officer stated that 5,000-6,000 non-Italian Jewish people are in the country, including those at Ferramonti, some of whom claim to possess immigration certificates for Palestine.
- (b) Full information on this question should be obtained from Allied Control Commission, Displaced Persons Sub-Commission Eastern Italy.
- Your 3 MERRA does not cover the Italian theatre of operations. Application for the desired information should be made as in para. 2(b) above.
- Your 4 3(a) Greeks are still escaping into Turkey and numbers are increasing. At present the flow has reached one thousand (1,000) per month. This is largely due to German action in forcibly evacuating Greek Dodecanese islanders to Turkey.
- (b) Greek refugees are invariably evacuated from Turkey as soon as possible: the length of stay depends on availability of rolling stock and camp accommodation in Egypt and Palestine.



3(c) Saturation point has been reached in all the reception territories outside M.E.

It has, therefore, been impossible to plan further reallocation of Greeks, except by inter camp changes in the Middle East.

Your 5 4(a) Poles remaining in Iran 9,000  
Poles settled in India. 4,300

(b) Some 4,500 in Iran are in process of shipment to East Africa.

(c) No further Poles are expected from Russia.

Your 6(a) Copies attached.  
(b)(c)(d)

Your information in this connection is correct.

*Mr.*

Camp	2 Nationality	3 Numbers in Camp			Total	4 Camp administered by	5 Basic maintenance furnished by	6 Maintenance expenses ultimately charged to
		Men	Women	Children				
	Poles	691	2552	804	4047	MERRA	Foreign Office	Polish Government
	"	90	606	1699	2395	"	through MERRA	"
	"	7	15	44	66	"	"	"
	"	353	1558	920	2831	"	"	"
	Poles				799	Government of	Polish Government	Polish Government
	"				3050	India	"	"
	"				420	"	"	"
	"				70	"	"	"
	Greeks				513	EARA with Greek assistance	Greek Government	Greek Government
	Poles	271	1388	1538	3197	EARA with Polish assistance	Polish Government	Polish Government
	"	218	697	596	1511		"	"
	"	289	1414	1234	2937	"	"	"
	"	27	205	173	405	"	"	"
	"	47	454	322	823	"	"	"
	"	36	383	363	782	"	"	"
RHODESIA								
bwa	"	68	237	182	487	"	"	"
	"	87	538	314	939	"	"	"

1	2	3				4	5	
Name of Camp	Nationality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp administered by	Basic maintenance furnished by	Main expenses charged
<u>IRAN</u>								
Teheran	Poles	691	2552	804	4047	MERRA	Foreign Office	Polish
Isfahan	"	90	606	1699	2395	"	through MERRA	
Meshed	"	7	15	44	66	"	"	
Awaz	"	353	1558	920	2831	"	"	
<u>INDIA</u>								
Karachi	Poles				799	Government of	Polish Government	Polish
Kholapur	"				3050	India	"	
Jamnagar	"				420	"	"	
Panj Gani	"				70	"	"	
<u>TANGANYIKA</u>								
Kigoma	Greeks				513	EARA with Greek assistance	Greek Government	Greek
<u>UGANDA</u>								
Nasindi	Poles	271	1388	1538	3197	EARA with Polish assistance	Polish Government	Polish
Koja	"	218	697	596	1511		"	
<u>TANGANYIKA</u>								
Tenjem	"	289	1414	1234	2937	"	"	
Kondoa	"	27	205	173	405	"	"	
Ifunda	"	47	454	322	823	"	"	
Kidujala	"	36	383	363	782	"	"	
<u>NORTHERN RHODESIA</u>								
Bwana Mkubwa	"	68	237	182	487	"	"	
Lusaba	"	87	538	314	939	"	"	



6

Maintenance  
expenses ultimately  
charged to

Polish Government

"

"

"

Polish Government

"

"

"

Greek Government

Polish Government

"

"

"

"

"

"

"

1	2			3		4	5	6
Name of Camp	Nationality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp administered by	Basic maintenance furnished by	Maint expen charg
<u>SOUTHERN RHODESIA</u>								
Rusaji	Poles	29	236	236	501	EARA with Polish assistance	Polish Government	Polish
<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>	Poles (orphans)				500	Union Government	"	
<u>PALESTINE</u>								
Nuserat Nr:Gaza	Greeks	1311	2623	3657	7591	MERRA	Foreign Office through MERRA	Greek
Athlit; Nr. Haifa	"	51	67	128	246	"	"	
Jerusalem	"				350	Greek Government	Greek Government	
<u>EGYPT</u>								
Tolumbat(Nr.Amirya)	Greeks;Italians Yugoslavs)	92	69	37	198	MERRA	F.O. through MERRA	Govern con
E l Shatt (Suez)	Yugoslavs	2750	4073	4097	10920	"	"	Yugosl (not)
<u>CYPRUS</u>	Greeks				5766	Cyprus Government	"	Greek
<u>ABYSSINIA</u>								
Nr:Addis Ababa	Greeks				1047	Local Greek Administration	Greek Government	Greek
Dire Dawa								
<u>BELGIAN CONGO</u>	Greeks				2432	Local Greek Admn. in co-operation with Belgian Congo authorities.	Greek Government	Greek
(For particulars see overleaf)								

6

Maintenance  
expenses ultimately  
charged to

Polish Government

"

Greek Government

"

"

Governments

concerned

Yugoslav Government

*(not yet decided)*

Greek Government

Greek Government

Greek Government



BELGIAN CONGO (contd.)

<u>Name of Town</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>STANLEYVILLE</u>	
Bundia & Irumu	641
Djudju	92
Mahaji	130
<u>COSTERMANSVILLE</u>	
Beni	175
Lubero	166
Uvira	138
<u>RUANDA URUNDI</u>	
Kitega	237
Nyanza	135
<u>ELIZABETHVILLE</u>	
Ruashi	487
Shituru	231

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ Christian names \_\_\_\_\_ Refugee No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of registration \_\_\_\_\_  
 Domicile \_\_\_\_\_ Identity Card No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last address \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_

Members of Family	Name	Refugee No.	Age	Remarks
Husband/Wife				
Father				
Mother				
Children OR 1.				
Brothers and 2.				
Sisters 3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Surname .....

Christian Names .....

Father's Name .....

Mother's Name .....

Nationality ..... Religion .....

Date of Birth .....

Place of Birth .....

Pre-war Address .....

Occupation .....

Married or Single .....

**Details of Identity Cards held by other members of the Family**

Number	Relationship	Address
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Photograph

Holder's Signature .....

**Remarks**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....



Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration

**IDENTITY CARD No.** .....

To be presented on request of the Police, Military  
Authorities or any authorised person

**Holder's Address** .....

(N.B. - Changes of above Address must be reported)

Medical History

STAMP  
OF ISSUING  
OFFICE

3572/GHQP/12-43

M.E.R.R.A. D

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

April 20, 1944

TO: Mr. C. M. Pierce  
FROM: Carolin A, Flexner

C.A.F.

The enclosed report was included in the material turned over by Mr. Xanthacky to Mr. Menshikov, and by him transmitted to this Division.

It is the only thing coming back directed specifically to Division of Displaced Persons that has been received so far. There is a great deal of material which is of general interest, and which we are breaking down now into form suitable for general distribution. This will be done as soon as possible.

*The figures on the camps are disappointing.  
They include old quotes of RC figures of  
June '43 (plus). The Greek figures are  
a little more accurate.*

*E.F.*

451.1 - MEO

4 July 1944

TO: Miss Carolin A. Flexner  
FROM: Thomas M. Cooley, II  
SUBJECT: Programs for Camps (WELRA)

Attached please find a re-write of my memorandum to you of 27 June altered following your memorandum of 1 July and our conference of 4 July.

Attachment



4 July 1944

TO: Miss Carolin A. Flexner  
FROM: Thomas M. Cooley, II  
SUBJECT: Programs for Camps

I refer to your memorandum of 21 June enquiring as to any programs this Division wishes to have put into effect in the MERRA camps.

I believe that no specific programs can be requested on the basis of present information, but you are advised that the following items comprise the substance of the duties which Displaced Persons personnel under direction of Mr. Pierce are instructed to perform at those camps. It should be kept in mind, of course, that the situation there presented is largely qui generis and that these duties provide no criterion for those to be carried out in other areas by this Division.

The duties imposed are:

- a) to proceed to Cairo which will be regarded as the station from which duties are to be carried on until further notice;
- b) to represent the Displaced Persons Division and make determinations of policy on all matters affecting displaced persons in the Near East, Africa, Iran and India except insofar as it may be believed necessary to refer them back to this Division;
- c) to coordinate the work of the Displaced Persons Sections of the Balkan Mission and maintain and transfer as authorized by the Mission Chief the needed personnel within and outside of the Balkan area;
- d) to negotiate with representatives of governments concerned with the displaced persons affected on all matters relating to them, and to issue the necessary directives within the authority granted by the Mission Chief to UNRRA administrative officials, private agencies, and other agencies or administrative units as may prove necessary to put the results of such negotiations into effect;

- e) to request from the Transportation Division facilities for transportation of and to assume control of the movement of all displaced persons affected including admission to camps, transfer between camps and repatriation, return or other disposition of displaced persons from and within the above-named regions;
- f) to inspect UNHRA-operated camps for the purpose of registering and identifying the affected persons and to determine whether care, maintenance and general welfare are satisfactorily handled;
- g) to travel as required by duties;
- h) to employ whatever temporary or permanent staff may be authorized by the Mission Chief;
- i) to submit periodic reports to this office;
- j) to undertake such other responsibilities or take such other steps as may be necessary successfully to perform the duties involved in the handling of Displaced Persons.

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

1 July 1944

TO: T. M. Cooley, II  
FROM: Carolin A. Flexner - *Calz*  
SUBJECT: Programs for Camps

Thank you for your memorandum of June 27 concerning Displaced Persons program in camps. You will note from the attached that in items (c), (d), (e), (f), and (h) the Camps Division has made certain changes, which I should like to discuss with you.



UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

27 June 1944

TO: Miss Carolin Flexner  
FROM: Thomas M. Cooley, II  
SUBJECT: Programs for Camps

I refer to your memorandum of 21 June enquiring as to any programs this Division wishes to have put into effect in the MERRA camps.

I believe that no specific programs can be requested on the basis of present information, but you are advised that the following items comprise the substance of the duties which Displaced Persons personnel under direction of Mr. Pierce are instructed to perform at those camps. It should be kept in mind, of course, that the situation there presented is largely sui generis and that these duties provide no criterion for those to be carried out in other areas by this Division.

The duties imposed are:

- (a) to proceed to Cairo which will be regarded as the station from which duties are to be carried on until further notice;
- (b) to represent the Displaced Persons Division and make determinations of policy on all matters affecting displaced persons in the Near East, Africa, Iran and India except insofar as it may be believed necessary to refer them back to this Division;
- (c) to coordinate the work of the Displaced Persons Sections of the Balkan Mission and maintain and transfer as authorized by the Mission Chief the needed personnel within and outside of the Balkan area;
- (d) to negotiate with representatives of governments concerned with the displaced persons affected on all matters relating to them, and to issue the necessary directives, within the authority granted by the Mission Chief, to UNRRA administrative officials, private agencies, and other agencies or administrative units as may prove necessary to put the results of such negotiations into effect;
- (e) in cooperation with Transportation Division to arrange for the movement of all displaced persons; to repatriate displaced persons from camps or make other disposition of such persons from and within the above named regions;

To: C. A. Flexner

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- (f) to conduct the registration of all residents in camps for the purpose of repatriation and for making arrangements with the Intergovernmental Committee for the care of such persons not to be repatriated;
- (g) to travel as required by duties;
- (h) to employ whatever temporary or permanent staff may be authorized by the Mission Chief;
- (i) to submit periodic reports to this office;
- (j) to undertake such other responsibilities or take such other steps as may be necessary successfully to perform the duties involved in the handling of Displaced Persons.



*Belgian - Brown*

to assume control of the movement of all displaced persons affected including admission to camps, transfer between camps and repatriation, return of displaced persons from and within the above-named regions;

27 June 1944

TO: Miss Carolin Flexner  
FROM: Thomas M. Cooley, II  
SUBJECT: Programs for Camps by duties;

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b) to represent the Displaced Persons Division and make determinations of policy on all matters affecting displaced persons in the Near East, Africa, Iran and India except insofar as it may be believed necessary to refer them back to this Division;

c) to coordinate the work of the Displaced Persons Sections of the Balkan Mission and maintain and transfer as required the needed personnel within and outside of the Balkan area;

d) to negotiate with representatives of governments concerned with the displaced persons affected on all matters relating to them, and to issue the necessary directives to UNRRA administrative officials, private agencies, and other agencies or administrative units as may prove necessary to put the results of such negotiations into effect;

*Authorized by The Mission Chief*

*Written under authority granted by The Mission Chief*



- request from*  
*To transportation division for transportation facilities and*
- e) to assume control of the movement of all displaced persons affected including admission to camps, transfer between camps and repatriation, return or other disposition of displaced persons from and within the above-named regions;
  - f) to inspect UNRRA-operated camps for the purpose of registering and identifying the affected persons and to determine whether care, maintenance and general welfare are satisfactorily handled;
  - g) to travel as required by duties;
  - h) to employ whatever temporary or permanent staff may be authorized by the *Mission Chief* Division;
  - i) to submit periodic reports to this office;
  - j) to undertake such other responsibilities or take such other steps as may be necessary successfully to perform the duties involved in the handling of Displaced Persons.

TMCooley/em  
27 June 44

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

March 6, 1944

TO: MISS CAROLIN A. FLEXNER  
FROM: C. M. Pierce  
SUBJECT: Information requested by Division on  
Displaced Persons

In response to your verbal request, I attach herewith a statement of the subjects about which the Division on Displaced Persons would like to be informed if it is possible for Governor Lehman to have the information obtained.

It is probable that all the information requested is not available in Cairo. Any which can be provided will be helpful. Also, information is requested for subjects about which we have already been informed. However, previous information usually came from such a variety of sources that a confirmation would tend to establish its validity.

You will note that the subjects presented are inclusive in scope and many may not now be the concern of UNRRA. As you are aware, this Division is called upon, from time to time, to give specific advice on Displaced Persons throughout the world. It seems essential then that this general information be collected and correlated so as to be available for use when needed in Hearings, Council discussions, planning or operations.

In general, the subjects in the attached memoranda fall into two main groups:

1. Information needed on general displacement of populations.
2. Information on Displaced Persons cared for in camps.

The material presented herewith has been read and approved by Mr. George L. Warren.



March 6, 1944

-2-  
INFORMATION ON GENERAL DISPLACEMENT  
OF POPULATIONS AND OTHER MATERIAL  
NEEDED

their possession AIO cards issued by British Military Intelligence. At 1. What is the current estimate of the total number of Yugoslavs to be evacuated to Egypt? Card for identification and rations. This is cross reference to the camp roll. When they leave Moses Wells, they are issued a. How many have arrived? oh, MENRA authorities hope, will be recognized by How many are enroute? Are they being cared for in Moses Wells, or in new camps? Names and locations of such new camps, and number in each.

- b. Are any other nationals to be included?  
Which? How many? When?

2. Any figures available on the number of displaced persons (other than Italians) in the zone of allied occupation in Southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica. (We already have specific information on the Ferramonti camp at Tarsia. This question refers to any other information available).

- a. Number of each nationality  
b. Approximate locations, if concentrated.

3. Any figures available on the displacement of Italian nationals in Southern Italy. (These figures would give a clue to the intra-country displacement to be expected from difficult military operations)

4. Are Greeks still escaping to Allied islands or Turkey, or has that migration ceased? Have all the Greeks in Turkey been evacuated? Are there any plans for relocation of the Greek refugees now in the Middle East to other areas? Where? When?

5. How many Poles still remain in Iran and India? What plans are being made for their relocation? Are any Poles still coming out of Russia? Is it planned that any will come within the next six months? How many? Where will they go?

6. To assist in drafting registration and temporary identity forms for use by UNRRA, it would be important to secure copies of:

- a. Camp identity cards issued in Moses Wells and other camps in the Middle East  
b. MENRA identity cards

CMPI:cc:es. AIO identity documents (Presumably issued by British Military Intelligence)  
6 mar 44

- d. Copies of rolls or registers used as permanent camp records.

Note: Our present information indicates that refugees transported from receiving camps to transit camps, such as Moses Wells, have in

their



March 6, 1944

-2-  
INFORMATION ON GENERAL DISPLACEMENT  
OF POPULATIONS AND OTHER MATERIAL  
NEEDED

their possession AIO cards issued by British Military Intelligence. At Moses Wells they are registered, entered on the camp rolls, and are issued a camp identity card for identification and rations. This is cross reference to the camp roll. When they leave Moses Wells, they are issued a MERRA identity card which, MERRA authorities hope, will be recognized by other camp authorities.

Are they being cared for in Moses Wells, or in new camps?  
Name and locations of such new camps, and number in each.

b. Are any other nationals to be included?  
Which? How many? When?

2. Any figures available on the number of displaced persons (other than Italians) in the zone of allied occupation in Southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica. (We already have specific information on the Ferventini camp at Farsia. This question refers to any other information available).

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b. MERRA identity cards

CM: Pierce: em c. AIO identity documents (Presumably issued by British Military Intelligence)  
6 mar 44

d. Copies of rolls or registers used as permanent camp records.

Note: Our present information indicates that refugees transported from receiving camps to transit camps, such as Moses Wells, have in

their

## INFORMATION ON DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAMP

Information needed for camps in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Dominion of South Africa, Abyssinia, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Iran, India, Southern Italy: (exclusive of Moses Wells, Aleppo, and Souk El Gharb)

1. Names of camps and their locations. (If not in a settled place, give distance to nearest settled place)
2. Nationality in each camp.
3. Camp population as to men, women, children and age distribution.
4. Who administers each camp.
5. Who furnishes basic maintenance of camp refugees.
6. Who ultimately is charged for expenses of maintenance of camp refugees.
7. With respect to each camp:
  - a. Are camp members expected to do a certain amount of work in return for their keep?
  - b. Is paid work restricted to necessary housekeeping tasks of camps or is it extended to include work projects aimed to improve morale of camp members? What are rates of pay for such work? Is pay in addition to basic maintenance provided?
  - c. Are camp members allowed to work outside the camp for private or governmental employers? How many are so employed? What are their wages? Do they live outside the camp or return at night? For those who return, is maintenance provided in camp? Is any charge made for this? How much?
  - d. What is the policy with respect to camp members employed as doctors, nurses, school teachers and other professional or skilled positions? Do they receive a full salary? What salaries are paid? Is full maintenance provided in addition? Is any charge made for this?
  - e. Are small businesses such as shoe repair and barbering permitted? Are these run by refugees? Are they paid at flat or varied rates? Do they charge for their productions? What is done about payment for their maintenance in camp?

UNPierce:cm  
6 March 44



-2-  
INFORMATION ON PLACED PERSONS IN CAMP

Information f. What is policy on living allowances, grants to needy, vocational training?  
Rhodesia, South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Abyssinia, Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Iran, India, Southern Italy (exclusive)

- g. How are consumer enterprises operated? By refugees? As cooperatives? Supervised by the administration? Are wages in consumer enterprises same as for other camp work?
1. Names of place, Are the wages paid by the administration or the enterprises?
  2. Nationalities
  3. Camp population as to men, women, children and are distributed
  - h. What are internal security arrangements? Are refugees on police force, etc?
  4. Who administers each camp.
  - i. Is community government established by the refugees? What matters are decided by the community council? Who are its members?
  5. Who carries out the work?
  6. Who ultimately is charged for expenses of maintenance of camp?
  - j. Are there any special provisions for unattached children? How many of these are there, by age distribution of pre-school, 6-12, 12-16, and over 16?
  7. With respect to

8. Figures on refugees outside of camps but related to the camps, distributed by sex, age and nationalities.

b. Is paid work restricted to necessary housekeeping projects aimed to improve morale of camp members? What are rates of pay for such work? Is pay in addition to basic maintenance provided?

9. Who arranges for admission of refugees and their general supervision?

c. Are camp members allowed to work outside the camp for private or governmental employers? How many are so employed? What are their wages? Do they live outside the camp or return at night? For those who return, is maintenance provided in camp? Is any charge made for this? How much?

d. What is the policy with respect to camp members employed as doctors, nurses, school teachers and other professional or skilled positions? Do they receive a full salary? What salaries are paid? Is full maintenance provided in addition? Is any charge made for this?

e. Are small businesses such as shoe repair and barbering permitted? Are these run by refugees? Are they paid at flat or varied rates? Do they charge for their productions? What is done about payment for their maintenance in camp?

f.

CM  
Pierce:em  
6 march 44



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER RESIDENT  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Relief & Refugee Administration  
3, SH. Ahmed Pasha, Garden City,  
Cairo

3rd April, 1944.

Information on Displaced Persons in Camp

Herewith replies to questionnaire on the above subject.

It will be appreciated that MERRA has no active interest in the camps not directly under their administration in the Middle East. The information given for these other camps happens, incidentally, to be available in this office but is not necessarily entirely accurate nor always has it been possible to supply the detail required.

SCALE OF POCKET MONEY AND WAGES PAYABLE TO GREEK REFUGEES  
THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST

A). POCKET MONEY

1. Family Groups with Children up to 18 years

(i)	Married Couple	PT	25	per	week
(ii)	" " and 1 child	"	30	"	"
(iii)	" " and 2 children	"	35	"	"
(iv)	" " and family (maximum)	"	35	"	"

NOTE: Where there is no man and wife, and head of family group is father or mother, an elder child or close relative or guardian, then the scale to be paid is as follows:-

1. Family Group with Children up to 18 Years

(i)	Head of Group	PT	15	per	week
(ii)	" " " and 1 child	"	20	per	week
(iii)	" " " and 2 children	"	25	"	"
(iv)	" " " and family (maximum)	"	25	"	"

Children over 18 years will be considered as adults and treated as separate individuals under 2.

2. Single Persons, not within a Family Group

(i)	Children up to 14 years	PT	5	per	week
(ii)	" 14 to 18 "	"	10	"	"
(iii)	" 18 upwards (adults)	"	15	"	"

Payment of Pocket Money, as above, to come into effect as from 1st February, 1944.

B). WAGES

The payment of wages will be made under two broad classifications, viz., MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.) and PROFESSIONAL. The remuneration of doctors will be treated as an entirely separate question, each appointment to be considered individually and remuneration fixed according to the particular circumstances applying:-

MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.)

Labourers, foremen, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, painters, etc., etc. To be added to as cases arise:-

PT x to PT 40 (maximum unskilled rate) - up to a maximum of PT 70 per week for skilled labour.

NOTE: The commencing rate "x" to be left to the discretion of the Camp Commandants.

PROFESSIONAL

School-teachers, Nurses, Welfare-workers, Anaesthetists, Liaison Interpreters, Clerical, Heads of Handicraft Sections, etc. To be added to as cases arise.

Rate of pay to be up to a maximum of £5 per month.

Payment as above to come into effect as from 1st January, 1944, in respect of such refugees as are eligible by virtue of duties carried out.

Cairo 1.2.44  
SGG/MT



Answers to Questions 7, 8, and 9.

7. (a) Any work other than personal tasks receives wages except in case of Yugoslavs.
- (b) Extends to work projects.  
Pay in addition to basic maintenance rates for Greeks attached - slight variation between countries.
- (c) With permission of local government.
- (d) Salary estimated in relation to maintenance they receive (see attached for Greeks).  
If employed in camp, live in camps.
- (e) Yes in Polish camps of East Africa. Otherwise work is done for wages plus maintenance.
- (f) Living allowances only paid in Cyprus. Training for nurses, craftsmen and potential relief workers.
- (g) This question is not fully understood. Consumer production, i.e. clothing production, etc. - is carried out by refugees for themselves.
- (h) Refugees usually have own guard - in military areas - Greek Army guard.
- (i) A refugee committee in each camp cooperates with administration.
- (j) Polish orphan camp in India and South Africa.
8. Only applies in Cyprus (Greeks) and Palestine (Poles).  
Details not easily available.
9. Refugees are usually interrogated when they first reach Allied zone, before allocation to refugee camp.

-4-

Subject:- Information on General Displacement of Populations and other material needed.

Requested by Division on Displaced Persons.

To Refugee Camp Section,  
Bureau of Areas,  
UNRRA,  
305, Dupont Circle Building,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Herewith replies to your questionnaire of  
6th March, 1944.

Your 1      1 (a) The current estimate of the total number of Yugoslavs to be evacuated to Egypt is twenty-five thousand (25,000).

Your 1a      (b) Arrived: Eleven thousand (11,000)  
(c) En route: Five thousand (5,000)  
(d) Yugoslavs are not accommodated in the Greek camps at Moses Wells.  
(e) New camps have been set up at El Shatt, Suez (10 miles from Moses Wells) and at El Khatatba (30 miles from Cairo and adjacent to the Alexandria road.

Capacity of El Shatt	16,000
"      "      El Khatatba	10,000

(f) All arrivals to date are accommodated in El Shatt. The second camp at El Khatatba is now prepared and ready for reception of refugees as soon as El Shatt is full.

Your 1b      (g) Other nationals are not to be included.

Your 2.      2 (a) On his return from Italy, MERRA liaison officer stated that 5,000-6,000 non-Italian Jewish people are in the country, including those at Ferramonti, some of whom claim to possess immigration certificates from Palestine.

(b) Full information on this question should be obtained from Allied Control Commission, Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, Eastern Italy.

Your 3

MERRA does not cover the Italian theatre of operations. Application for the desired information should be made as in para. 2(b) above.

Your 4

3 (a)

Greeks are still escaping into Turkey and numbers are increasing. At present the flow has reached one thousand (1,000) per month. This is largely due to German action in forcibly evacuating Greek Dodecanese islanders to Turkey.

(b) Greek refugees are invariably evacuated from Turkey as soon as possible: the length of stay depends on availability of rolling stock and camp accommodation in Egypt and Palestine.



1	2	3				4	5	6	
Name of Camp	Nationality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp Administered by	Basic maintenance furnished by	Maintenance expenses ultimately charged to	
<u>IRAN</u>									
Teheran	Poles	691	2552	804	4047	MERRA	Foreign Office	Polish Government	
Isfahan	"	90	606	1699	2395	"	through MERRA	"	"
Meshed	"	7	15	44	66	"	"	"	"
Awaz	"	353	1558	920	2831	"	"	"	"
<u>INDIA</u>									
Karachi	Poles				799	Government	Polish	Polish Government	
Kholapur	"				3050	of India	Government	"	"
Jamnagar	"				420	"	"	"	"
Panj Gani	"				70	"	"	"	"
<u>TANGANYIKA</u>									
Kigoma	Greeks				513	EARA with Greek assistance	Greek Government	Greek Government	
<u>UGANDA</u>									
Nasindi	Poles	271	1388	1538	3197	EARA with	Polish Government	Polish Government	
Koja	"	218	697	596	1511	Polish assistance	ment	"	"
<u>TANGANYIKA</u>									
Tenjem	"	289	1414	1234	2937	"	"	"	"
Kondoa	"	27	205	173	405	"	"	"	"
Ifunda	"	47	454	322	823	"	"	"	"
Kidujala	"	36	383	363	782	"	"	"	"



BELGIAN CONGO (contd.)

<u>Name of Town</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>STANLEYVILLE</u>	
Bundia & Irumu	641
Djudju	92
Mahaji	130
<u>COSTERMANSVILLE</u>	
Beni	175
Lubero	166
Uvira	138
<u>RUANDA URUNDI</u>	
Kitega	237
Nyanza	135
<u>ELIZABETHVILLE</u>	
Ruashi	487
Shituru	231



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER RESIDENT  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Relief & Refugee Administration  
3, SH. Ahmed Pasha, Garden City,  
Cairo

3rd April, 1944.

Information on Displaced Persons in Camp

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SCALE OF POCKET MONEY AND WAGES PAYABLE TO GREEK REFUGEES  
THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST

A). POCKET MONEY

1. Family Groups with Children up to 18 years

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(iv)	" " and family (maximum)	"	35	" "

**NOTE:** Where there is no man and wife, and head of family group is father or mother, an elder child or close relative or guardian, then the scale to be paid is as follows:-

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Children over 18 years will be considered as adults and treated as separate individuals under 2.

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Rate of pay to be up to a maximum of £5 per month.

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Cairo 1.2.44  
SGG/NT



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8. Only applies in Cyprus (Greeks) and Palestine (Poles).  
Details not easily available.
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✈

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(b) Full information on this question should be obtained from Allied Control Commission, Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, Eastern Italy.

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- 3 (a) Greeks are still escaping into Turkey and numbers are increasing. At present the flow has reached one thousand (1,000) per month. This is largely due to German action in forcibly evacuating Greek Dodecanese islanders to Turkey.
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Meehed	"	7	15	44	66	"	"	"
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Rholapur	"				3050	Government of India	Polish Government	"
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Pan J Cant	"				70	"	"	"
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1	2	3			4	5	6
Name of Camp	Nation- ality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp Admin- istered by	Maintenance ex- penses ultimately charged to
<u>NORTHERN RHODESIA</u>	Poles						
Bwana Mubwa	Poles	68	237	182	487	RAMA with Polish as- sistance	Polish Govern- ment
Lusaba	"	87	538	314	939		"
<u>SOVEREIGN RHODESIA</u>							
Rusajji	"	29	236	236	501	"	"
<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>	"						
(orphans)					500	Under Govern- ment	"
<u>PALESTINE</u>							
Musarat Mr: Cassa	Greeks	1311	2623	3657	7591	NERBA	Greek Government
Athliti; Mr. Halca	"	51	67	128	246	"	"
Jerusalem	"				350	Greek Govern- ment	"
<u>EGYPT</u>							
Telumbat (Mr. Anlrya)	Greeks; Italians	92	69	37	198	NERBA	Governments concerned
El Shatt (Suez)	Yugoslavs	2750	4073	4097	10920	"	Yugoslav Govern- ment (not yet decided)
<u>CYPRUS</u>	Greeks				5766	Cyprus Government	Greek Government
<u>ABYSSINIA</u>							
Mr: Addis Ababa	Greeks				1047	Local Greek Adminis.	Greek Govern- ment
Dire Dawa							
<u>BELGIAN CONGO</u>	Greeks				2432	Local Greek Admin. in co- operation with Belgian Congo authori- ties.	Greek Govern- ment

(For particulars  
see overleaf)

BELGIAN CONGO (contd.)

<u>Name of Town</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>STANLEYVILLE</u>	
Bundia & Irumu	641
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SCALE OF POCKET MONEY AND WAGES PAYABLE TO GREEK REFUGEES  
THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST

A). POCKET MONEY

1. Family Groups with Children up to 18 years

(1)	Married Couple	PT	25 per week
(ii)	" " and 1 child	"	30 " "
(iii)	" " and 2 children	"	35 " "
(iv)	" " and family (maximum)	"	35 " "

NOTE: Where there is no man and wife, and head of family group is father or mother, an elder child or close relative or guardian, then the scale to be paid is as follows:-

1. Family Group with Children up to 18 Years

(1)	Head of Group	PT	15 per week
(ii)	" " " and 1 child	"	20 per week
(iii)	" " " and 2 children	"	25 " "
(iv)	" " " and family (maximum)	"	25 " "

Children over 18 years will be considered as adults and treated as separate individuals under 2.

2. Single Persons, not within a Family Group

(1)	Children up to 14 years	PT	5 per week
(ii)	" 14 to 18 "	"	10 " "
(iii)	" 18 upwards (adults)	"	15 " "

Payment of Pocket Money, as above, to come into effect as from 1st February, 1944.

B). WAGES

The payment of wages will be made under two broad classifications, viz., MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.) and PROFESSIONAL. The remuneration of doctors will be treated as an entirely separate question, each appointment to be considered individually and remuneration fixed according to the particular circumstances applying:-

MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.)

Labourers, foremen, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, painters, etc., etc. To be added to as cases arise:-

PT x to PT 40 (maximum unskilled rate) - up to a maximum of PT 70 per week for skilled labour.

NOTE: The commencing rate "x" to be left to the discretion of the Camp Commandants.

+

PROFESSIONAL

School-teachers, Nurses, Welfare-workers, Anaesthetists, Liaison Interpreters, Clerical, Heads of Handicraft Sections, etc. To be added to as cases arise.

Rate of pay to be up to a maximum of £5 per month.

Payment as above to come into effect as from 1st January, 1944, in respect of such refugees as are eligible by virtue of duties carried out.

Cairo 1.2.44  
SGG/MT



-3-

Answers to Questions 7, 8, and 9.

7. (a) Any work other than personal tasks receives wages except in case of Yugoslavs.
- (b) Extends to work projects.  
Pay in addition to basic maintenance rates for Greeks attached - slight variation between countries.
- (c) With permission of local government.
- (d) Salary estimated in relation to maintenance they receive (see attached for Greeks).  
If employed in camp, live in camps.
- (e) Yes in Polish camps of East Africa. Otherwise work is done for wages plus maintenance.
- (f) Living allowances only paid in Cyprus. Training for nurses, craftsmen and potential relief workers.
- (g) This question is not fully understood. Consumer production, i.e. clothing production, etc. - is carried out by refugees for themselves.
- (h) Refugees usually have own guard - in military areas - Greek Army guard.
- (i) A refugee committee in each camp cooperates with administration.
- (j) Polish orphan camp in India and South Africa.
8. Only applies in Cyprus (Greeks) and Palestine (Poles).  
Details not easily available.
9. Refugees are usually interrogated when they first reach Allied zone, before allocation to refugee camp.

✚

Subject:- Information on General Displacement of Populations and other material needed.

Requested by Division on Displaced Persons.

To Refugee Camp Section,  
Bureau of Areas,  
UNRRA,  
305, Dupont Circle Building,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Herewith replies to your questionnaire of  
6th March, 1944.

Your 1      1 (a) The current estimate of the total number of Yugoslavs to be evacuated to Egypt is twenty-five thousand (25,000).

Your 1a      (b) Arrived: Eleven thousand (11,000)  
(c) En route: Five thousand (5,000)  
(d) Yugoslavs are not accommodated in the Greek camps at Moses Wells.  
(e) New camps have been set up at El Shatt, Suez (10 miles from Moses Wells) and at El Khatatba (30 miles from Cairo and adjacent to the Alexandria road.

Capacity of El Shatt	16,000
" " El Khatatba	10,000

(f) All arrivals to date are accommodated in El Shatt. The second camp at El Khatatba is now prepared and ready for reception of refugees as soon as El Shatt is full.

Your 1b      (g) Other nationals are not to be included.

Your 2.      2 (a) On his return from Italy, UNRRA liaison officer stated that 5,000-6,000 non-Italian Jewish people are in the country, including those at Ferrarenti, some of whom claim to possess immigration certificates from Palestine.  
(b) Full information on this question should be obtained from Allied Control Commission, Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, Eastern Italy.

Your 3

MERRA does not cover the Italian theatre of operations. Application for the desired information should be made as in para. 2(b) above.

Your 4

3 (a)

Greeks are still escaping into Turkey and numbers are increasing. At present the flow has reached one thousand (1,000) per month. This is largely due to German action in forcibly evacuating Greek Dodecanese islanders to Turkey.

- (b) Greek refugees are invariably evacuated from Turkey as soon as possible; the length of stay depends on availability of rolling stock and camp accommodation in Egypt and Palestine.



1	2	3			4	5	6
Name of Camp	Nation- ality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp Admin- istered by	Maintenance ex- penses ultimate- ly charged to
<u>IRAN</u>							
Teheran	Poles	692	2552	804	4047	NERBA	Polish Government
Isfahan	"	90	606	1699	2395	"	"
Heshed	"	7	15	44	66	"	"
Amas	"	353	1558	920	2831	"	"
<u>INDIA</u>							
Karachi	Poles				799	Government of India	Polish Government
Rholapur	"				3050	"	"
Jamnagar	"				420	"	"
Panj Gant	"				70	"	"
<u>PANGLANYIKA</u>							
Kigoma	Greeks				513	NERBA with Greek assis- tance	Greek Govern- ment
<u>TRANSIA</u>							
Basind	Poles	272	1388	1538	3197	NERBA with Polish as- sistance	Polish Govern- ment
Koja	"	218	697	596	1511	"	"
<u>PANGLANYIKA</u>							
Tenjem	"	289	1414	1234	2937	"	"
Kendoe	"	27	205	173	405	"	"
Ifunda	"	47	454	322	823	"	"
Kidujala	"	36	383	363	782	"	"

1	2	3		4	5	6		
Name of Camp	Nation- ality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp Admin- istered by	Basic mainte- nance fur- nished by	Maintenance ex- penses ultimate- ly charged to
<u>NORTHERN INDONESIA</u>								
Buana Mukaba	Poles	68	237	182	487	BABA with Polish as- sistance	Polish Govern- ment	Polish Government
Luseba	"	87	538	314	939			
<u>SOUTHERN INDONESIA</u>								
Euseji	"	29	236	236	501	"	"	"
<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>								
"	" (orphans)				500	Under Govern- ment	"	"
<u>PALESTINE</u>								
Musarat Mr: Casa	Greeks	1311	2623	3657	7591	NERBA	Foreign Office through NERBA	Greek Government
Athlit; Mr. Haifa	"	51	67	128	246	"	"	"
Jerusalem	"				350	Greek Government	Greek Govern- ment	"
<u>EGYPT</u>								
Tolubet (Mr. Andrya)	Greeks; Italians	92	69	37	198	NERBA	P.O. through NERBA	Governments concerned
El Shatt (Suez)	Yugoslavs Yugoslavs	2750	4073	4097	10920	"	"	Yugoslav Govern- ment (not yet decided)
<u>CYPRUS</u>								
"	Greeks				5766	Cyprus Government	"	Greek Government
<u>ABYSSINIA</u>								
Mr: Addis Ababa	Greeks				1047	Local Greek Adminis.	Greek Govern- ment	Greek Government
Diare Dama								
<u>BELGIAN CONGO</u>								
"	Greeks				2432	Local Greek Admin. in co- operation with Belgian Congo authori- ties.	Greek Govern- ment	Greek Government
(For particulars see overleaf)								

(For particulars  
see overleaf)

BELOIAN CONGO (contd.)

<u>Name of Town</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>STANLEYVILLE</u>	
Bundia & Irumu	641
Djudju	92
Mahaji	130
<u>COSTERMANSVILLE</u>	
Boni	175
Lubero	166
Uvira	138
<u>RUANDA URUNDI</u>	
Kitega	237
Nyanza	135
<u>ELIZABETHVILLE</u>	
Ruashi	487
Shituru	231



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER RESIDENT  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Relief & Refugee Administration  
3, SH. Ahmed Pasha, Garden City,  
Cairo

3rd April, 1944.

Information on Displaced Persons in Camp

Herewith replies to questionnaire on the above subject.

It will be appreciated that MERRA has no active interest in the camps not directly under their administration in the Middle East. The information given for these other camps happens, incidentally, to be available in this office but is not necessarily entirely accurate nor always has it been possible to supply the detail required.

SCALE OF POCKET MONEY AND WAGES PAYABLE TO GREEK REFUGEES  
THROUGHOUT MIDDLE EAST

A). POCKET MONEY

1. Family Groups with Children up to 18 years

(i)	Married Couple	PT	25 per week
(ii)	" " and 1 child	"	30 " "
(iii)	" " and 2 children	"	35 " "
(iv)	" " and family (maximum)	"	35 " "

NOTE: Where there is no man and wife, and head of family group is father or mother, an elder child or close relative or guardian, then the scale to be paid is as follows:-

1. Family Group with Children up to 18 Years

(i)	Head of Group	PT	15 per week
(ii)	" " " and 1 child	"	20 per week
(iii)	" " " and 2 children	"	25 " "
(iv)	" " " and family (maximum)	"	25 " "

Children over 18 years will be considered as adults and treated as separate individuals under 2.

2. Single Persons, not within a Family Group

(i)	Children up to 14 years	PT	5 per week
(ii)	" 14 to 18 "	"	10 " "
(iii)	" 18 upwards (adults)	"	15 " "

Payment of Pocket Money, as above, to come into effect as from 1st February, 1944.

B). WAGES

The payment of wages will be made under two broad classifications, viz., MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.) and PROFESSIONAL. The remuneration of doctors will be treated as an entirely separate question, each appointment to be considered individually and remuneration fixed according to the particular circumstances applying:-

MANUAL LABOUR (Tradesmen, etc.)

Labourers, foremen, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, painters, etc., etc. To be added to as cases arise:-

PT x to PT 40 (maximum unskilled rate) - up to a maximum of PT 70 per week for skilled labour.

NOTE: The commencing rate "x" to be left to the discretion of the Camp Commandants.

PROFESSIONAL

School-teachers, Nurses, Welfare-workers, Anaesthetists, Liaison Interpreters, Clerical, Heads of Handicraft Sections, etc. To be added to as cases arise.

Rate of pay to be up to a maximum of 15 per month.

Payment as above to come into effect as from 1st January, 1944, in respect of such refugees as are eligible by virtue of duties carried out.

Cairo 1.2.44  
SGG/MT



✂

Answers to Questions 7, 8, and 9.

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If employed in camp, live in camps.
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- (i) A refugee committee in each camp cooperates with administration.
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(b) Full information on this question should be obtained from Allied Control Commission, Displaced Persons Sub-Commission, Eastern Italy.

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(b)

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1	2	3			4	5	6	
Name of Camp	Nation- ality	Numbers in Camp Men Women Children	Total	Camp Admin- istered by	Basic mainten- ance Furnish- ed by	Maintenance ex- penses ultimate- ly charged to		
<u>IRAN</u>								
Teheran	Poles	691	2552	804	4047	MEMBA	Foreign Office	Polish Government
Isfahan	"	90	606	1699	2395	"	through MEMBA	"
Heshed	"	7	15	44	66	"	"	"
Ames	"	353	1558	920	2831	"	"	"
<u>INDIA</u>								
Karachi	Poles							
Bhopal	"				799	Government of India	Polish Government	Polish Government
Jaunagar	"				3080	"	"	"
Panjab	"				420	"	"	"
Panjab	"				70	"	"	"
<u>PANGLANTIA</u>								
Ki-goma	Greeks				513	BARA with Greek assistance	Greek Government	Greek Government
<u>PARANTIA</u>								
Basind	Poles	271	1388	1538	3197	PARA with Polish assistance	Polish Government	Polish Government
Koja	"	218	697	596	1511			"
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1	2	3			4	5	6
Name of Camp	Nation- ality	Men	Women	Children	Total	Camp Admin- istered by	Maintenance ex- penses ultimate- ly charged to
<u>NORTHERN RHODESIA</u>	Poles						
Buena Ventura	Poles	66	237	182	485	BARA with Polish as- sistance	Polish Govern- ment
Lusaka	"	87	538	304	939		"
<u>SOUTHERN RHODESIA</u>							
Fuesaji	"	29	236	236	501	"	"
<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>	"						
(orphans)					500	Union Govern- ment	"
<u>PALESTINE</u>							
Musarat Mr. Cassa	Greeks	1311	2623	3657	7591	NEHERA	Greek Government
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Mr. Addis Ababa	Greeks				1047	Local Greek Admin.	Greek Govern- ment
Dire Dawa						Admin.	Greek Govern- ment
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Kitega	237
Nyansa	135
<u>ELIZABETHVILLE</u>	
Ruashi	487
Shituru	231



COPY

451.1-WEO

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Cairo, Egypt

February 9, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governor Lehman  
FROM: Laird Archer  
SUBJECT: M.E.R.R.A. . Report on Refugee Camps

In response to your cable number eleven, Department's 252, of February seventh, we are enclosing copies of our memorandum to Mr. Latimer, of December 31st, Mr. Matthews' letter to us of December 30th, and M.E.R.R.A.'s reports on the Greek and Polish refugee camps. The agreement between the Polish Authorities and the East African Refugee Administration is included in M.E.R.R.A.'s report on East African Polish Refugee Camps.

SJF

28304

COPY

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION

December 31, 1943

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Latimer, O.F.R.R.O., Washington  
FROM: Mr. Archer, O.F.R.R.O., Cairo  
SUBJECT: Report on Refugee Camps

(Reference: your 1945, December 14, 1943)

As reported by our cable number 2399, December 30, and supplementary to our Airgram A-35, December 28, we are transmitting herewith the report requested of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration, together with the letter commenting upon the report and the Department's original cable, from Mr. W.T. Matthews, Director General of M.E.R.R.A.

Attached to the M.E.R.R.A. report is an extract, provided for us by M.E.R.R.A., from the agreement between the East African Refugee Administration and the Polish Authorities, concerning the Polish refugee camps in East Africa.

You will note that our cable of yesterday (2399) referred as well to the Embassy's dispatch Number 7, Greek, of December 17, which transmitted a report, prepared sometime last summer, summarizing M.E.R.R.A.'s year's activities, June 1942, to June, 1943, which was just now brought to our attention by Mr. Henry A. Hill of the Embassy.

The information requested in your cable (1945) as to the camps in India is unfortunately lacking, and we have not yet found a satisfactory source for this information. When we do so, we shall of course do all we can to collect this added material.

Supplementary to M.E.R.R.A.'s statement on Polish refugees in Persia, we have requested a report from the Tehran offices of the Lend-Lease Administration, through Mr. Byron MacDonald.

Seen;

George Levison

**COPY**

**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE**  
**Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration**

**3, Sh. Ahmad Pasha, Garden City**

**30th December, 1943**

**Dear Laird Archer,**

**Secretary of State cable No. 1945 requesting  
information on matters pertaining to refugee camps.**

**The terms of the cable are very wide indeed and  
it would take many weeks to collect and tabulate all  
the information desired. I hope, however, that the  
enclosed material will be sufficient for the purpose  
in view.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**(signed) W.T. Matthews**

**Mr. Laird Archer,  
(S) American Legation  
Cairo**



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Y

MIDDLE EAST RELIEF AND REFUGEE ADMINISTRATION

GREEK REFUGEE CAMP-MOSES WELLS

December 30, 1943

1. Refugees receive pocket money at the following rates:

Man and wife..... P.T. 25 per week  
Single person over 14..... P.T. 15 " "

This is subject to a maximum of P.T. 35 per week per family.

2. Refugees who undertake paid employment do not receive pocket money. All refugees are expected to work for their keep and if work is refused pocket money for the whole family is stopped.

3. No employment outside the camp is permitted. The Egyptian Government do not allow this and only in some cases is permission accorded for refugees to reside outside the camp.

4. Refugees fall approximately into the following divisions:-

(a) Housekeeping work.....20%  
(b) Morale projects.....30%  
(c) Schoolchildren.....25%  
(d) Infants, aged, infirm, etc.....25%

Categories (a), (c) and (d) receive pocket money. category (d) receives payment according to a graduated scale.

5. Rates of wages are as follows:-

(a) Unskilled labourers, e.g. storekeepers, cleaners, assistant cooks, seamstresses, apprentices, etc. P.T. 40 per week plus P.T. 5 for each dependant member of family except wife, who, if unemployed, receives P.T. 15 as

her normal pocket money allowance.

- (b) Skilled labourers, e.g. masons, carpenters, p  
plumbers, etc. P.T. 50 per week plus family  
benefits as above.
- (c) Exceptionally qualified persons, e.g. schol-  
masters, foremen of labour, etc., are paid up  
to P.T. 70 per week plus family benefits as a-  
bove.

6. Refugees are not permitted to carry on private  
business in the camp.

7. Doctors and qualified nursing sisters employed  
in the Camp Hospital are enlisted in the Greek Army and  
are paid. Nursing trainees are treated as refugees and paid  
pocket money until they pass their nursing examination and  
are enlisted.

450.1 - MED

Return to  
Displaced  
Persons  
Room 210

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
Civil Affairs Office  
Division of Public Welfare and Relief

October 27, 1943

NAWA 17

Subject: Transmission of Report on  
MERRA Refugee Camps

Dear Mr. Burland:

I am attaching hereto a report on MERRA and Greek refugee camps in the Middle East, prepared by Messrs. Harakas, Patterson, Reekie, Shvetzoff, Truax and Youdin. The report, I think, gives an objective picture of each of the camps. While it will be of special interest to Mr. Moses Beckelman, it will also provide valuable information for other members of the staff, especially those who may be considered for the Casablanca refugee center, should it materialize.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) E. Reeseman Fryer  
E. Reeseman Fryer  
Chief of Mission, OFRRO

Mr. E. G. Burland,  
Acting Chief, Division of Field Operations,  
Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations,  
Washington, D. C.



ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS  
Civil Affairs Office  
North African Economic Board  
Division of Public Welfare and Relief

October 25, 1943

To: E. Reesman Pryer, Chief of Mission, CERRC  
From: Messrs. Harakas, Patterson, Reekie, Shvetzoff,  
Truax and Youdin.  
Subject: Report on IERRA and Greek Refugee Camps  
in the Middle East

We submit herewith a report covering our visit to the Middle East during September, 1943, including a study of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration and the various camps for Greek refugees in Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt.

(signed) James T. Harakas  
James T. Harakas

(signed) James T. Patterson  
James T. Patterson

(signed) D. A. Reekie  
D. A. Reekie

(signed) D. C. Shvetzoff  
D. C. Shvetzoff

(signed) Chauncey S. Truax  
Chauncey S. Truax

(signed) R. J. Youdin  
Richard J. Youdin

Report on MERRA and Greek Refugee Camps  
in the Middle East

I. Introduction

Leaving Algiers on September 10, five members of the field staff of the North African Mission of OPRRC spent three weeks in the Middle East, studying the organization and operations of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration, and visiting various camps which have been established in that area for Greek refugees from the Aegean Islands. The five OPRRC men were Messrs. Harakas, Patterson, Shvetzoff, Truax, and Youdin, all of whom made the entire trip with the exception of Mr. Truax, who visited only Cairo and the MERRA camp at Moses Wells. Mr. Fryer and Dr. Reckie had preceded this group to Cairo a few days before, and both visited the Moses Wells Camp before our arrival. It seems appropriate in this composite report to outline briefly the itinerary of the trip and enumerate the camps which were visited, and in so doing the route of escape of the refugees from the islands to their final destinations will be traced. Our first stop was Cairo, where MERRA's offices are located and its small staff directs its operations. After several days in Cairo, during which we had the opportunity to learn much about MERRA's work and plans for the future by conferring with Mr. Pickard, its assistant director-general, we went to Moses Wells Camp near Suez to spend a week studying at first hand the problems which arise in the management and operation of a refugee camp for people such as the Greek islanders, which we did by working in rotation in each administrative section of the camp.

We next returned to Cairo for another conference with MERRA officials, and then travelled north by automobile to Aleppo, near the Syrian-Turkish border. At Aleppo there are two refugee camps, one for men and the other for women escaping from the islands. Neither camp is operated directly by MERRA, but they form a part of the chain of camps which channel all the refugees to the south and ultimately, in the case of many, to various resettlement projects in Africa. The Aleppo camps, therefore, enabled us to see the Middle East refugee operation at its beginning, from which we subsequently traced its course through Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine to Moses Wells, the last camp before the resettlements take place.

From Aleppo, which we had found exceedingly interesting, we returned after two days to Beirut, where we visited very briefly another camp in the mountains back of Beirut at a village called Souk-el-Charb. That this camp differs from the others in almost every respect will be shown later in this report.



Passing on from Beirut down the Mediterranean coast through the ancient Phoenician towns of Tyre and Sidon, we returned to Haifa, where we inspected another camp operated by the British Army but loosely connected with MERRA, and, like the Aleppo camps, originally designed to be a transit camp through which the majority of the refugees sent down from Aleppo were supposed to pass on their way to Moses Wells.

From Haifa we returned to Cairo on September 30 by way of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Final conferences with MERRA and a short wait for transportation delayed our return to Algiers until October 3.

## II. The Background of the Middle East Refugee Situation and the MERRA Organization

The refugee group in the Middle East is almost wholly Polish and Greek. After being shunted about the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, approximately 40,000 Poles were permitted to leave the Soviet Union for Iran. The major portion of this group is still in Iran. However, some groups have been transferred to East Africa, the Belgian Congo, India, and Mexico. In each instance the arrangements for admission have been made by the Polish Government in exile and the receiving countries. OPRRO has participated in the Mexican operation. MERRA, however, has been only on the fringe of the movement. As the only agency of the British Government specifically established to handle refugee problems, it has acted as the agent of the British Government wherever that Government has been called upon for assistance.

MERRA's responsibility with respect to the Greeks has been much greater. The Greek refugees, numbering approximately 15,000, are 99% islanders coming almost entirely from the three islands of Samos, Chios, and Mytilene. They escaped from the islands in small boats and landed on the shores of Turkey where, for the most part, they were interned at Cesme. Through the efforts of the British and Greek Governments they were moved on special trains to Aleppo, Syria. At this point the men fit for military service were segregated from the other refugees and, after a quarantine period, were inducted into the Greek armed forces. The remaining refugees were kept at a camp in Aleppo until such time as their onward movement became feasible. In as much as transportation facilities for a movement to Moses Wells and from thence to other parts of Africa were very scarce, several overflow camps had to be established. This was done at Souk-el-Gharb, in the Lebanon, and at Haifa and Jerusalem in Palestine.



Moses Wells, the only camp actually administered by MERRA, was to be a transshipment point for other parts of Africa. Unfortunately, transportation facilities were at such a premium during 1941 and most of 1942 that the population of these camps became practically stationary. Of the original 500 odd who were sent to Haifa, over 400 are still there. The situation is almost the same at the other camps. However, about 4,500 refugees have been moved onward from Moses Wells. These people have gone to Ethiopia, the Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika. Once the refugees have left the camp at Moses Wells they are no longer the responsibility of MERRA. The arrangements and conditions of acceptance have been effected by the Greek Government directly with the other governments concerned. It may be interpolated that reports indicate that the refugees in Ethiopia are relatively well off, while those in the Belgian Congo are suffering certain hardships because of geographic, climatic, and material conditions.

MERRA officials as well as others who have been in close contact with the Greek refugees give the food conditions in the islands as the principal reason for the escape movement. The improvement in these conditions, due primarily to the food shipments through the blockade, together with the recent turn of events with respect to the war has led to an almost complete cessation of the flow of refugees from those islands. This fact coupled with the movement out of Moses Wells to other parts of Africa has made possible the contemplated closing down of the camps at Haifa and Jerusalem and the transfer of the refugees presently sheltered there to Moses Wells. The camp at Souk-el-Gharb will probably continue in operation since, owing to its location in the Lebanon Mountains, its climate is ideal for the old and sick. The course the war has taken within the past month or two has diminished the desire of many of the refugees to proceed any farther away from Greece than the camp in which they now are. It is therefore problematical whether many of the refugees at Aleppo can be moved onward.

MERRA itself is organized loosely, and its powers and duties are consequently somewhat difficult to define. It is established as part of the Ministry of State, which was created in 1941 during the days when communication between the Middle East and London was extremely difficult. The British Government therefore decided to send a representative to Cairo who would have ministerial status and would, in fact, be a member of the War Cabinet. The personnel of MERRA is largely military. Even most of those who now have civilian status were in the armed forces at one time during this



war. The military staff is constantly changing, as its members are mostly on loan from the British Army and are recalled for duty with the Civil Affairs Section, CETA, or other units. MERRA's powers extend to matters concerning Greek and Polish refugees in the Middle East. As explained above, they administer only one camp. Since all the Greek camps are inextricably intertwined, MERRA does act in a sort of consultative capacity to the other camps. Inasmuch as all expenses incurred are theoretically a charge against the Greek Government, and since almost all food supplies are drawn from the British Army, MERRA acts as a channel for forwarding the accounts to London. It is believed that the looseness of the entire structure is due primarily to the fact that it was originally believed that MERRA would be only a stop gap until the establishment of UNRRA.

### III. The Aleppo Camps

Aleppo ( or Halep) is situated about 30 miles from the Syrian-Turkish border and has two refugee camps which are reception points for all refugees coming out of Turkey. These reception stations have been in operation since 1941 and at the outset received and channelled to other places refugees of all nationalities, principally Poles and Yugoslavs arriving through Turkey. The total number of nationalities which have cleared through the Aleppo station is 26. In the last 18 months, the influx has been composed almost entirely of Greeks.

The refugees arrive at the Aleppo railroad station and are brought by truck to one of the camps, where they are disinfested. This camp consists of a series of recently built stone barracks with iron roofs. The refugees enter the disinfesting unit, leaving their shoes outside. They strip, and all their clothing is wrapped into two blankets, either already owned by them or issued by the camp. While the clothes are being disinfested, the refugees are thoroughly washed under showers and receive a medical inspection, after which they dress and are questioned by members of the British Intelligence Corps, which is responsible for the detection of any enemy agents among them. A questionnaire form is filled out, and it becomes, for all practical purposes, their passport from then on. Their name is also entered on a card which is retained in a permanent file. On this card a complete history is kept until his departure from the camp. At this point all refugees, except men of military age, are sent to another camp, which is situated in the old Turkish military barracks of the city of Aleppo.



The men are retained at this first camp in quarantine for two weeks, after which they are sent to the Greek armed forces. While at the camp the men are held under military routine and discipline to accustom them to basic military habits. They receive food based on British military rations, but many of them arrive at the camp considerably undernourished and have to be built up gradually. The officers live in separate quarters and have certain minor privileges. There were altogether about 200 men in the camp at the time we were there.

This camp is run by a lieutenant of the British Army, assisted by a half dozen Greek and British soldiers. He had himself gone through this camp after escaping from Greece via Turkey. He had been captured by Axis forces during the Greek campaign in 1941, and told us parts of his very human story.

The second camp is located in the outskirts of Aleppo, in the aforementioned barracks. Only old men, women, and children are sent there. The refugees are quartered in large halls and rooms which are clean and cool, but lack homelike atmosphere. There is a dining hall where refugees eat. Children attend school. The refugees are allowed to go into town after obtaining passes. They receive the usual allowance of about 60 cents per week per person, but can pick up additional money doing odd jobs about the camp. A canteen makes available additional items of food not included in the regular ration.

There appeared to be a certain air of uncertainty about the future of these people. They came there for a temporary stay until they could be shipped farther, but many had already been there for many months.

Of all the camps we saw, this appeared to be the least attractive and comfortable. There was a doctor in residence, and medical care for the 800 refugees living there was available. Those with infectious diseases were separated.

A British captain was Camp Commandant, and there were several British soldiers helping him. Military personnel at all these camps are usually men who have been wounded and rendered unfit for combat service.

#### IV. The Souk-el-Gharb Camp

Situated on the hills of Lebanon overlooking Beirut at the foothills of the mountain range, the camp at Souk-el-Gharb occupies several small hotels which were formerly summer resorts.



The Greek Government is directly responsible for the operation of this camp. It leased the buildings from the various owners in May 1942, and began accepting refugees from Aleppo as the camps there were filled to capacity. At the start all refugees were accepted. But as time went on and it was found that many were incapable of continuing the journey due to ill health or physical disabilities, the Greek Government in September 1942 decided to make it a permanent camp for those who were physically unfit.

The camp administrator is a Greek first lieutenant who has seven non-coms and 25 invalided Greek soldiers to help him in the administration. Two Greek Army doctors and two Greek nurses trained at Moses Wells are assigned to the camp to take care of refugees' medical needs.

There are 817 refugees, of whom 627 are children under 16 years of age. The balance are older men and women whose average age is 58. Family groups are not separated but assigned to single rooms at the various hotels.

All food is issued directly to the refugees, who do their own cooking in their rooms or in the kitchen facilities already established in the hotels. The camp receives their rations from the British Army. The rations are the same as those given at the other camps, and refugees are allotted their rations based on the number of people in the family. Most of them supplement their rations by purchases from the outside, as the families are given a dole of £1 Egyptian per month for the head of the family, plus 60 piastres for each dependent. Quite a number of the refugees receive outside assistance from relatives in the U.S., Great Britain, Egypt, and other countries.

The care, maintenance and upkeep of the buildings occupied by the refugees is their responsibility. They police, clean and take care of the grounds. The refugees are free to enter and leave the camp at all times.

Schools are conducted for children in several of the hotel halls, with the refugees themselves acting as teachers. They hold services in one of the hotels every Sunday, conducted by a Greek Army chaplain.



Conversation with several of the refugees revealed that their morale was low, and that they were dissatisfied with conditions in general, their major complaint being the inadequacy of the food. They were all anxious to return to their homes and were not desirous of going on to Moses Wells for resettlement in other colonies. We felt that the interest in the refugees of the lieutenant in charge was not very great.

#### V. The Haifa Camp

This refugee camp is two miles south of the city of Haifa. It is entirely surrounded by army cantonments, with a barbed wire fence separating the camp from the cantonments.

The camp has six permanent buildings of stone walls and cement foundations, used as an administration building, a cook-house, a school, a clinic, and a dormitory and mess hall for boys between the ages of 6 and 16. The refugees for the most part are housed in tents, each family group being given a tent for its own use wherever possible, thus allowing families the greatest amount of privacy. There are 425 refugees in this camp, of which 227 are children under 16.

The staff consists of a British Army captain, the administrator, four British non-coms, two Greek soldier translators, fifteen Greek soldiers acting as guards, and one nurse whose sole qualification is two months of training at Moses Wells.

Cooking and camp policing are done by the refugees, in contrast to the 150 natives employed at Moses Wells for the care, maintenance, operation, and other work incidental to its operation. All of the work in this camp is done by the refugees themselves, who receive a nominal wage.

The refugees arrived at this camp unexpectedly in February 1943, the captain being told that they would remain three days before they would be transferred, as no facilities existed to care for them there. The three days have been extended to six months. With all the comparative inadequacies of this camp for the housing and feeding of refugees, the captain without knowing one word of Greek and assisted by the two unreliable interpreters, by his energy, intelligence and interest in the welfare and problems of the refugees, managed to obtain their support in all his efforts to care for them. The morale of the refugees is very high, and none is willing to leave the camp although living in difficult surroundings.



The captain has instituted a few innovations which have tended to better the operation of the camp. For instance, instead of having the latrines 300 yards away from the tents, where they would not be used, he has moved them closer to the tents, contrary to all theories of sanitation. He proudly showed them to us, and their cleanliness and lack of odor were exceptional. When we inquired how they were kept so clean, he replied that strict policing by several refugees made it possible.

Another of his innovations was the separation of boys between the ages of 6 and 16 from their parents. They slept in their own dormitory and had their own mess, their food being cooked by two of the women refugees. In view of the attachment of the parents for their children and the mothers' almost hysterical desire to have them with them at all times, owing to the fact that they had undergone trying experiences together and had often lost other children while making their escape, it was amazing to see the mothers allow their boys to stay away from them over night. This was accomplished by giving the children additional food at their own mess and by occasional "bribes" of cookies or the promise of a show or outing.

The parents, knowing that their children were given better food and the best possible care, could not do enough to show their appreciation to the captain for his interest in their children's welfare. As a result, he was able to institute rules and regulations affecting the health, care and general operation of the camp which made it run smoothly and efficiently even without some of the facilities found in the other camps we visited.

The food for the refugees is cooked at a cook house, where the refugees call for it and take it to their individual quarters for consumption. The camp has no building large enough to permit the mass serving of food. The refugees have built small ovens adjacent to their tents and supplement their rations with outside purchases. Here again the refugees receive an allotment from the Greek Government of £ 1 Egyptian per month for the head of each family and 60 piastres Egyptian for each dependent.

In talking to the administrator he stressed the following: there should be attached to each camp a competent nurse and welfare expert who is able to speak the language in order to assist the women in acclimating themselves to their new surroundings, as well as to instruct them in the basic essentials



of personal hygiene. 99% of the refugees in his camp came from islands with poor living conditions, many of them were unable to read and write, and to a large extent were ignorant of the basic things one should or should not do which are necessary for one's personal health. At the time of our visit he had one inadequately trained Greek nurse doing this work. She was unsatisfactory. He pointed out that it is also necessary to assign a physician to the camp to care for the health of the refugees. No physician had been assigned to this camp for two months, and those who had been assigned had been inexperienced. For example, one had studied medicine for two years. A priest is very essential for the morale of these people, as the women and old men are deeply religious.

The school is staffed by refugees entirely, teaching the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic to 95 children. They have classes up to the seventh year, which is equivalent to the grammar school course in the United States.

Refugees are allowed to leave the camp and visit Haifa for any legitimate reason.

#### VI. The Moses Wells Refugee Camp

The Moses Wells Camp, situated in the barren desert on the Gulf of Suez about 15 miles southeast of the town of Suez, is NERRA's largest operation at the present time. The site was originally used by the Egyptian Government as a quarantine station for pilgrims returning from Mecca and therefore has on it several permanent buildings and four Iris huts. In addition, about 300 tents, each capable of holding 20 persons, have been set up, most of them with concrete floors. All of the camp's fresh water supply has to be brought in by ship from Suez to the dock and pumped into a water-tower; this has to be done every two days. To this camp dock the refugees are brought in barges and from it they have been dispatched in ships to various points of more permanent residence in Africa. At the time we visited the camp it contained between 1200 and 1300 Greek refugees, most of whom had come from the islands near Turkey through the camp at Aleppo. Of these about 15% were men, 55% women, and 30% children.

Most of the key personnel running the camp are British. There is a British major in charge; his second-in-command, a lieutenant, acts as Liaison Officer and Welfare Officer; a British captain is in charge of accounts and of the disbursement



of monies; a lieutenant is responsible for stores; and a lieutenant has charge of the two cook-houses and dining halls; a British sergeant is in command of all native labor in the camp. Several of the permanent buildings are used for the Camp Hospital, staffed by five Greek doctors, one dentist, one dispensary chemist, a matron of nurses, two professional nurses, and about 20 assistant nurses. The camp is guarded by Greek soldiers who live in separate quarters to the north of the main site. Native labor, to the extent of 125 to 150 men, is employed in the camp. These live quite separately in tents located to the south, not far from the incinerator plant. Prevailing winds there are from the north.

About a year ago MERRA commenced to operate Moses Wells as a transit camp. Most of the refugees that have arrived there since had already been thoroughly investigated and processed in the Aleppo Camp, and sent forward with quite complete identification particulars. It has always been planned to have a group of refugees arrive in the early morning. They are given breakfast before they enter, and then are instructed to form themselves into their respective family groups. They then file past tables where particulars are taken for registration; these particulars are entered in the order received in a large book against the individual's camp number. The particulars noted are: refugee's number, full name, age, sex, marital status, profession, passport number and/or other identification, remarks, date of arrival, number of identity card, date of departure. In order to get the refugees settled in their tents as quickly as possible, nothing but the essential particulars is taken at first. The Camp Identity Cards and the cards on which are recorded issues of clothing, etc., while they stay there, are given to them after they are settled. Families are quartered together, with no more than two families to a tent. Also an attempt is made to settle friends and acquaintances in the same general section of the camp. Since most of the refugees have been disinfested and medically examined in previous camps, they are not examined further at Moses Wells until they are settled. Conditions in Moses Wells are not such as to encourage bug or louse breeding. Refugees can easily take sea baths, and they are compelled to take a shower-bath at least once a week; these baths are supervised by members of the staff. All of the arrivals and departures come under the supervision of the major and his staff. He also makes himself available about two hours late in the afternoon each day for consultation. At this time he discusses with the refugees any serious problems that they may have, tries to settle their disputes one with another, and takes up cases that require some sort of discipline.



It is the Liaison Officer who handles the minor problems of the refugees; his hours for consultation are each day from 5 to 8 p.m., except Sunday. In his work he is assisted by a British soldier and by several Greek girls and men, chosen from the refugees. Inasmuch as the refugees are allowed to leave camp only in most exceptional cases, he is their link with the outside world. The majority of them have relatives in Egypt, the United States, and/or in other camps in the Middle East. People in the United States, for example, often send considerable sums of money by bank draft or by money order. The Liaison Officer has to collect this money for them and take great care to see that each refugee gets exactly what is due. Often these gifts are intended for a whole family that is not together in the camp, so part of the donation has to be forwarded further. This officer has to arrange for the money order to be drawn up, signed properly and forwarded. It is not unusual for a refugee to want to send a telegram. Telegrams are presented to the officer in Greek and he has to arrange for their translation into English and condensation before transmission. The refugee pays in advance and care is taken to see that proof is furnished that the telegram or cable has actually been sent; the refugees are often very skeptical. To handle these and other similar matters, the Liaison Officer has set up what amounts to a sub-postoffice.

In his capacity as Welfare Officer he discusses with the refugees, and tries to settle for them such problems as arise, for example, from negligence on the part of a soldier husband, loss of trace of children and/or other relatives, claims of pension and compensation for husband and/or children killed in Greece or at sea, tracing relatives in the United States and in other foreign countries, sending Red Cross messages to relatives in Greece. Also in his capacity as Welfare Officer he operates a rather extensive canteen for the benefit of the refugees. This is actually run by the Greeks under his supervision; it operates at a profit of between 8% and 9%. These profits are used to pay the salaries of the canteen employees, the overhead costs of the carpentry-shop in which the refugees work, to make special purchases for their benefit, such as a radio and loud-speaker for their Recreation Center, and the incidental expenses of all the services he operates for the refugees.

Most of the activities of the British captain who handles the accounts do not require any mention in detail here. He handles the disbursement of all sums needed to meet the expenses



of operating the camp that have to be met by cash payments. These do not amount to any great sum, for so much is received by the camp that does not have to be paid for at all or that will have to be settled for only at a much later date. An example of the former is donations of clothing and blankets; an example of the latter, food rations from the British Army. He acts as paymaster for the British personnel and for the local labor employed for the camp. He also handles such weekly payments as are made to the refugees. Each refugee is entitled to about 60 cents a week for spending money. Only about 10% of the refugees in the camp were at this time filling jobs, such as cleaners, kitchen assistants, needlewomen, carpenters, cobblers, and office workers. Each one of these received, instead of the 60 cents allowance, a weekly wage that varies from \$1.60 to \$2.80, the average being \$2.00. The captain found that the most troublesome part of his job was that of making payments to refugees.

Most of the stores of clothing, blankets, etc., are kept for the refugees in one of the Iris huts. This is in the charge of a British lieutenant, who is assisted by several soldiers and refugees. Up to the present time at least 75% of the supplies received in this store have come from the American Red Cross; the balance has been given by the Canadian, Greek and British Red Cross organizations, and by some private individuals in Cairo. Cases and bales are emptied as soon as possible after they are received, the materials are dusted with naphthaline powder, folded and stacked on covered shelves. All folds are altered over periods of not longer than eight weeks; the clothing is shaken, briefly aired, redusted and restacked. The inventory is kept on a retail basis: there is a card for each article on which is entered all receipts of such article and the amounts distributed thereof as noted from time to time. Each refugee has a ration card on which is noted everything issued to him or her. Other methods of issue to the refugees of clothing, blankets, and special equipment have now been superseded by that of a general camp issue as things come into the stocks and as needs arise among the refugees. Experience has shown that the best practicable system is a general issue of standard clothing, for it is almost impossible to ascertain accurately in advance the varying needs of the different refugees. Seamstresses, chosen from among the refugees, make cloth into garments and repair and alter clothing before issue. Cobblers, also refugees, repair shoes. Often refugees ruin new shoes right after they are issued to them in order to make them more comfortable.

There is a weekly issue of 4 oz. of soap per person for the purpose of washing clothing. Great vigilance has to be exercised by the staff in order to prevent the hoarding or disposal of supplies after they are issued. Refugees show tendencies to hoard new clothing and to wear old clothes, sometimes almost rags. This may be for the purpose of having new clothes to wear on their return to Greece; certainly many hope in this way to get more clothes issued to them.

A British sergeant has charge of the native labor employed around the camp, who were used to take care of the sanitation requirements of the camp. They collected the garbage and other refuse, carted it away in small hand-propelled railway dump-carts, and burned it in the disposal plant. They also policed the latrines. Native labor also did most of the work in the kitchens and dining-rooms. The staff claimed that it had been found necessary to employ this large number of native workers--approximately one for every ten refugees in the camp--because the refugees either would not or could not do the work that the natives did. While the staff realized the importance of keeping the refugees as fully occupied as possible, they have not been able to put many of them to work around the camp. They claim that the reasons not more than 10% of the refugees have full-time employment are threefold: there is a lack of leadership among the refugees; up to now Moses Wells has been largely a transit camp; and sometimes there are not adequate tools available.

Each of the two cook-houses and dining-halls is now under the supervision of a British lieutenant. In preparing the menus he follows the ration scale of the British Army, except that women are given less bread than the men (10 oz. per day instead of 14 oz.) and children are given more milk than adults. A sample day's menu was:

Breakfast:	bread, margarine, jam, milk and tea.
Lunch:	savoury beans and tomato sauce, bread, margarine, melon and cocoa.
Dinner:	roast beef or stew, chipped potatoes, marrow, bread, tea and milk.

It was claimed that the diet was entirely adequate, and certainly all the refugees that we saw gave every indication that this was true. But it is also true that the diet was most monotonous, and the staff admitted that something should be done to improve the style of cooking so as to suit more nearly the taste of the Greeks.



They said that so far they had not been able to discover among the refugees male Greek cooks. They had tried Greek women but this experiment had failed, principally because the native labor would not work under women. While we were there, the major found two Greek men who claimed to know how to cook and to do a bit of catering. Two days before we left these started to supervise the preparation of the meals and several of the refugees told us that already they had noticed some improvement in their taste. Bad as the food may taste to the Greeks and monotonous as the diet was, perhaps of necessity, the staff was probably right in maintaining that the diet was a better one than most of these refugees were accustomed to in their homes in the Greek islands. In principle it would be preferable for the refugees to keep their own plates and cutlery and do their own washing up. In practice, for hygienic reasons--that is, to insure that the plates and cutlery are properly washed and are not left unwashed in their tents to collect flies--this work is done by the native labor.

One of the dining-halls was used for about two and a half hours every weekday morning as the place in which a primary school is conducted. This school was attended by about 400 children when we were there. These were taught by teachers drawn from among the refugees. The refugees were eager for their children to attend school, and there are few absentees. There is a high percentage of illiteracy among the adults in the camp, but this school assures that very few of the children who pass through Moses Wells will be illiterate.

If one considers Moses Wells purely as a transit camp, it would seem that it has served its purpose well. But it is difficult, in view of recent military developments, to persuade the refugees to go south to places where they may live permanently. So, within the last three months, there has been a definite change in the character of the Moses Wells Camp. While the staff is aware that its population has now become for all practical purposes static, they do not seem to be doing much as yet to alter the internal arrangements for the refugees in order to meet their changing needs. If the bulk of the population of a camp remains there in transit only for four to six weeks, no extensive program is needed to keep individual refugees employed and amused. But when the population becomes a static one, quite the reverse is true. It would seem probable that with more leadership and direction



on the part of the staff, refugees could be found who would and could do most of the work now performed by native labor. In addition to the school for children that occupies their mornings, there should be a recreational program supervised by adult refugees, that would occupy part of their afternoons. Some sort of educational program could well be started for adults. Certainly by these and other means the present small number of adults gainfully employed within the camp could be multiplied several times and still leave plenty of women to take care of whatever family housekeeping has to be done.

It must be borne in mind that we visited Moses Wells just as it was becoming clear to the staff that this transition in the nature of the camp was taking place. They were in the process of improving their somewhat cumbersome system for listing information about refugees as they entered camp. New cards had been printed and were being filled out and signed by the refugees then in camp. These cards contained spaces for much fuller information about each one and for a photograph. What the staff was doing to make the food more palatable has already been mentioned. Much of the mechanics of operating this camp was functioning so smoothly that it was hard for a visitor to keep in mind all the services that were being rendered as a matter of course from day to day. In general, the staff seemed to be aware of the faults that existed, and, now that the intense heat of the summer months was passing, they were making a beginning at least of trying to correct them.

#### VII. Hygiene, Sanitation and Medical Care at Moses Wells Camp

One or more families occupy sections screened off in marquee tents. Frequently, soiled clothing soaks in open dishes in these tents. Women and children with colds, pink eye, and rashes hide away from medical attention. Nurses trained for six weeks in the camp hospital make what amount to home nursing visits and, when they observe illness, try to get such individuals to the hospital for medical attention.

Slop water is thrown out on the ground outside the tents. Animals live with the refugees.

A battery of privies, arranged to parallel the row of tents but removed some 200 feet from the outside row of tents and some 300 feet from the inside row, are well constructed and offer a

feature that warrants adoption wherever primitive people must be provided safe toilet facilities. The long walls of each structure are broken into booths by projecting chest-high partitions. To use, the person walks into the booth over a trap door hinged away from the wall and flush with the floor. This hinged cover becomes a door which closes the booth for privacy and leaves the occupant on a relatively narrow platform to defecate into a pit. Before the occupant can leave the booth he is forced to lower the hinged lid and walk over it to get out. This makes a fly-tight pit. At Moses Wells, the pits hold metal drums for the human excreta must be hauled away for disposal. The water table is within two feet of the surface of the soil. The human excrement is hauled about two miles from the camp, screened, burned, and the liquid contents run out into surface drains where it evaporates readily under the heat and sunshine conditions which prevail most of the year.

The preparation and handling of food is extremely poor. Food storage is bad. Bags of sugar, coffee, tea, and flour do not stand on platforms but are left on the floor. Moisture from the floor soaks up into the sacking and contents. Insects (ants and cockroaches) can and were observed to get at the contents. Cats were kept to catch rats and mice, so food could be contaminated thusly. Mice droppings were observed in flour.

The kitchens were not fly-tight. Arab labor prepared the food. Their garments were filthy and their hands and bodies likewise. Latrine facilities were so far removed from the kitchen that it was obvious that they were seldom used. There was no evidence that handwashing was a prerequisite at any time for entrance into the kitchen. What food we saw being prepared did not look inviting or appetizing.

The hospital buildings had beds, females in white uniforms, doctors in military uniforms, and patients largely sick from preventable diseases. There was a surgery in which emergency surgery could be performed moderately well. A gas-operated autoclave was available. A fair set of surgical instruments existed, and appendectomies and emergency operations had been performed by the Greek doctors in attendance. The nurses were recruited from among the refugees, and their training was completed in six weeks.



One patient was a complicated appendectomy with evidence of dirty surgery. The doctors hesitated to use sulfa drugs, believing them to be toxic, and had subsequently drained an abscess in pouch of Douglas. One patient was an acute streptococcal arthritic; palliative salicylates were the only treatment. There were too many cases of diarrhea and dysentery which reflected the poor hygiene of the camp.

#### VIII. Comments and Conclusions

It is difficult in a composite report of this nature to set down any conclusions which represent exactly the sentiments of each member of the group who visited the Middle East camps. It must be borne in mind, therefore, that the comments and conclusions offered here are the result of an earnest attempt to reconcile differences of opinion and to arrive at a synthesis of our individual reactions which will approximate the truth as closely as possible. On certain points we have found ourselves in complete accord; in other respects our differences are those of degree rather than substance. We present these conclusions in the hope that they may be useful guides to future OFRRO operations in the refugee field.

If a refugee camp is to succeed in rekindling the hope of people who have been driven from their homes and subjected to hardships and personal losses often beyond belief, if such a camp is to offer a haven where its occupants can be restored physically and mentally to the point where they will be useful and valuable citizens when they again return to their homelands, there are certain elements which must exist in the life of such a camp. The administrative staff of the camp must be carefully selected, be as permanent as possible, and should be composed of men and women who bring to their work an enthusiasm and human touch which will sustain them through many difficult and unpleasant moments. The staff must be adequately housed and must be provided with reasonable opportunities for its own amusement if its own morale is to remain at a high pitch over any long period of time. Its ties with the supervisory mission or district office of the organization operating the camp must be close and continuous, and its links with other camps in the same area should never be neglected. We noticed in the Middle East camps, for example, that one camp administrator knew almost nothing of the work of the others. The consequences were that the best features of each camp had not been adopted by the others, except by sheer chance, and supplies available in surplus quantities in one were totally lacking in others.



We all concluded that a camp administration and the operating organization should be freed from any pressure which might be brought to bear by the governments of the nationalities represented among a given refugee group. Optimum results are otherwise difficult to obtain, camp discipline suffers, and the refugees cannot be managed in a manner conducive to the best interests of the majority.

The quarters provided for refugees need not be elaborate. If they are clean, light, airy, and not too crowded, the essential requirements will have been fulfilled. But the people will require adequate recreational facilities for the children, a common meeting place where they can develop a community spirit, and satisfactory accommodations for eating.

It would seem desirable that at least one woman be included in the staff of any camp which accommodates women or children. A woman who can stimulate the refugee woman to activities which are useful and educational would relieve the camp commandant of many burdens which stem from idleness. The morale of refugee women separated from their husbands and other male relatives must be sustained by every possible stimulant, and it has been the experience of the administrators at each of the Middle East camps that complaints and disputes among the refugees diminish to the vanishing point when the women have something to do.

The camp administrator should be permitted some authority to use sanctions, no matter how mild, against refugees who commit infractions against camp regulations. It is not necessary that strict military discipline prevail in a camp, for large numbers of women and children cannot be controlled satisfactorily by force, nor would one want such a condition to exist. But Moses Wells afforded us an opportunity to understand the difficulties of administration without any power to enforce rules which in themselves are highly desirable. Uncleanliness, for example, is a threat to the health of every refugee in a camp, but if it cannot be punished, it is exceedingly difficult to eliminate, especially among people who have not even known the basic rules of personal hygiene.

Provision for medical care must be a paramount consideration in planning the organization of any camp. One well-trained nurse, if possible familiar with the language of the refugee group, is worth a dozen hastily and incompletely trained helpers, and a vigorous home nursing service by competent public health nurses would be invaluable. One good doctor, who gains the confidence of the refugees, is worth a dozen who are not experienced. The adoption of the newer drugs and techniques should be encouraged by visiting specialists.



Perhaps the most important single factor in the life of a camp is its food. It goes without saying that a diet must be sufficient to maintain or rebuild health. What is more vital is that a diet reflect the food habits and desires of the area from which the refugee group is drawn, so far as this may be feasible in the light of available supplies. If cooks can be found among the refugees, they should be used. The monotony of life in any camp can be alleviated or aggravated by the food which is served and the manner of its preparation. Food storage, preparation, and handling must be strictly supervised from a sanitary standpoint.

The location of a camp depends on many factors. Ideally, a camp should be near a town or city to which the refugees can go from time to time to escape from the routine and boredom of camp life. Moses Wells is ideal in many respects but is isolated. The barrenness of the desert must in time contribute heavily to the lack of initiative which was so apparent there among the refugees. At Haifa and Aleppo, large cities were close at hand, and the refugees could go to them almost at will.

It should be reiterated that the camps we visited were intended to be transit camps. It would not be fair to criticize their administrators because of any conditions which exist as a result of the belief that the camps might be closed down at any time. No commandant could have planned with assurance or enthusiasm any semi-permanent work projects or other stimulating ventures to develop a community spirit. The camps have cared for the refugees well and faithfully in a physical sense. Allowing for the lack of equipment and personnel, the MERRA organization and the British army officers affiliated with it have done their utmost to preserve among the refugees their hope in the future. The effects of the resettlement in Africa of substantial groups cannot be measured until after the war. That these camps are not ideal refugee camps the MERRA people would probably readily admit. But at Haifa we saw it demonstrated that a lot can be done with a little by an administrator who has a warm heart and the willingness to improvise and experiment. Money is not the answer, supplies only a part of it; the paramount factor in the success of a camp project is the human qualities of staff and leader working with the people to make their lives as livable as possible until the day of liberation.

Dear Fryer,

In case I do not pass your way when I leave here, I am sending a few lines to give you a broad impression of the work here.

It is mainly one of contrast, because the work here has been different from ours. The main task has been that of moving refugees. These arrived in two main streams. One - Poles from Russia - came through Iran; about 35,000 men, women, children, not counting the organized Polish troops who came in at the same time. The other stream, about 20,000 to date, consist of 12 other nationalities, with Greeks from the Aegean islands preponderating -- again, men, women and children. In both cases, all the able bodied men and most of the younger women were cut out of the refugee stream and directed into their national armies or women's auxiliary corps. This left the composition of refugees to old men, mothers and children (many of whom have been born enroute).

MERRA has established a chain of camps through Persia, Syria and Egypt, where these streams have been sorted and passed on to their final destination -- settlements in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Belgian Congo, Rhodesia, etc. The negotiation of these settlements with the governments concerned was a MERRA responsibility. Their preparation was undertaken by the local people. An idea of the task can be gathered from the fact that Uganda, which normally has a white population of 2,000, received 5,000 refugees.

The camps in Iran (now closing, but may be re-opened if more Poles come out of Russia) Syria and Egypt are staffed by Army personnel including Greek and Polish doctors who, themselves often refugees, thought some were Greek residents in Egypt, were given commissions in their respective national armies. But all these camps are administered by MERRA. Supplies come partly from Army stocks, partly from voluntary societies -- American, British and Greek Red Crosses, Greek War Relief Fund (USA) etc. The nurses who help the doctors have been recruited from the refugees themselves and trained in the camps. In the Moses Wells camp, which I visited, there are a dozen school-teachers -- all recruited and trained in the camp by the headmistress. She was the only trained teacher to start with, and has done a sterling job, when one considers that her assistants nearly all come from fisher-folk families (there are few, if any, middle class folk



among the Greek refugees) and the children from the same families had never been to school before.

These camps, and the million personal problems which crop up in them, afford a very valuable training ground for what the liberating administration will find when it lands in the Balkans. Enough is known about conditions in those countries to make it certain that there will be enormous problems of food and shelter, and the training in the camps is being directed towards having personnel -- British as well as Greek, etc. -- ready. MERRA is just about to organize a 2-3 weeks course for administrative personnel.

There are two important aspects of the planning for relief operations in the Balkans; one is that, as at present planned, the Army Civil Affairs Branch (AMGOT) will do all the work for the initial period, which for planning purposes is assumed to be six months. MERRA has only a small administrative staff -- three or four men -- who obviously cannot do field work. Of course, when UNRRA comes into being this picture may be altered.

The other point is the great emphasis placed here on the assistance to be obtained from voluntary societies. As I said above, the American Red Cross and others have supplied considerable quantities of clothing and other supplies. But even more important are the arrangements, now being worked out, for the use of their personnel on relief work. The Army (Civil Affairs Branch) have asked for a number of "teams" to run refugee camps, mobile clinics, etc. Each voluntary society will furnish one or more teams, and each team will usually be an all purpose group of half a dozen men capable of doing, between them, all the varied jobs that have to be tackled, for example, in running a camp.

All of these voluntary societies (there are 15 or 16 different ones) have come out with the American, British, or Allied Forces, and their personnel who come on to relief work will be released from their obligations to the Army to do welfare or ambulance work.

Since the administration of relief is to be an Army responsibility, it has been relatively easy to persuade the Army to use the personnel of these voluntary societies whom they know already and who are, of course, in some sort of uniform. But negotiations between the societies and the Army have all been through MERRA, which has set up a Council of Voluntary Societies for Balkan Relief. Thus, Merra is recognized by the Army as the expert advisory staff on relief -- to such an extent that

the Army has sent some of its Civil Affairs Officers to be trained under MERRA at Moses Wells Camp.

One last point. The Army has decided that it cannot undertake the detailed issue of relief food and clothing in kind; it cannot afford the necessary personnel, even with the help of the one or two hundred workers which it expects to get from the voluntary societies. So the present plan is for the Army to issue supplies in bulk to the local channels of distribution, and to give individual families relief in cash so that they can buy food etc., at the stores, (of course prices will be controlled). Here again, this may be altered if and when the Army hands over to UNRRA.

I hope I have said enough to show you that, from the point of view of practical work having a direct bearing on relief in Europe, the people here have a lot of valuable experience. I would strongly suggest that you either come or send a deputation (on which I would suggest the inclusion of Harakas) to pick the brains of people here. I would even go further and say that it would pay to ask Mathews, whose address is at the head of this letter, to let you send half a dozen of your best men to the training course which is due to start next month.

My warmest regards to you and all,

S/ Eyre Carter

C O P Y

(From Dorothy Cox, Cairo, 12/19/42 to Greek War Relief Assoc.)

MERRA furnishes the refugees with pocket money. (C. £600 per month per 1000 refugees). The object of this is:

- a. Give them self-respect.
- b. It gives the camp authorities a hold on the refugee, i.e., if they don't behave, the pocket-money is withheld.
- c. Camps can set up canteens where certain amenities, such as tooth-brushes are sold cheaply. If these were issued many would be wasted. It has been found more economical to give the money to all and sell certain articles to those that want them, than to give the articles to all. (Insert) The refugees in this camp get hot baths twice a week. If they refuse to take them, the pocket money is withheld.



SANCTUARY AND REBIRTH

UNRRA Camps in the Middle East

By Geraldine  
Cooper  
NEO 4512 Hiro Miss.

Nina Salom is 1500 miles from home today. Her homeland is the mountains; but now she lives in a tent on the flat and sandy desert. The Nazis drove Nina Salom out of her mountain home. The Nazis killed her family and relatives, 60 of them she estimates. Nina herself escaped only after 30 long months internment.

But even in the strange and unfamiliar desert, and in spite of all the heartaches that came with Hitler, Nina Salom is neither despondent nor idle in her tent. Recuperating quickly on nourishing food, in security far from the battlefront, she sought useful work. Nina has learned to be a nurse in the desert. In charge of the day shift in a hospital ward, she is helping the sick among her countrymen who came with her to the desert. And, she is looking forward to the day when she can return to her mountain home, for with the nursing skills she has learned in the desert, she will help her countrymen to rebuild their homeland.

Nina Salom is one of thousands driven out by Hitler who have found sanctuary in camps administered by UNRRA in the Middle East. Like Nina Salom, most of these refugees are preparing themselves for returning home. It is the keystone of UNRRA policy that these camps be operated in such a way as to encourage refugees to acquire new skills and valuable experiences which will be useful after repatriation. Refugees, through their own system of self-government and self-help in the camps, are fitting themselves to handle their own affairs and to solve their own problems after the war.

*not used*

Necessity dictated the establishment of the UNRRA refugee camps in the Middle East. Some haven was needed for those people - mainly Greeks & Yugoslavs - forced to flee across the Mediterranean from Axis terror and persecution. Camps for them were established in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt by Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration (MERRA), an agency of the British Government.

The camps in Syria and Palestine, and even some of those in Egypt, were scheduled for a very short existence when they were established in 1941 and 1942. It was expected that they would serve only as reception centers and transit stations, through which refugees would pass on their way to more permanent settlements in East Africa and elsewhere. Difficulties quickly arose, however, in providing the necessary transport, in arranging with other countries for admission of refugees, and particularly in persuading the refugees to move still further from their homelands. So these camps bear out what has become an axiom in this type of operation: it is easier to initiate a temporary camp than to discontinue it.

On May 1, 1944, UNRRA assumed the operation of the six MERRA camps located on the attached map, which also notes the present population and nationality of the people in each camp.

Only extreme need and the insistence of the British Military moved UNRRA to take charge of these camps. They represent an unexpectedly large drain upon UNRRA financial resources, which means less money available for operations in liberated areas. The camps also present UNRRA with an additional administrative burden at a time when all energies must be directed toward



establishing the first field missions in liberated areas.

The British Army continued to support much of the cost of camp operation. Initial equipment came from the Army. Even under UNRRA operation, food, transport vehicles, engineering and ordnance equipment, medical supplies, and miscellaneous stores are still supplied by the Army, to some extent on a reimbursable basis. Many staff services, including a large proportion of the operating personnel, are provided by the Army. Voluntary societies also supply a considerable number of people to the camp administrative staff.

After deducting these substantial contributions from other sources, the estimated cost to UNRRA for operating the camps during the last eight months of 1944 is still reckoned at \$8,000,000. In addition, at the time of ultimate disposition of the camp properties, UNRRA will have to carry out the financial obligations to the various governments which were incurred by MERRA when the camps were established.

Details of daily life within a camp make this interesting pattern:

Upon arrival at camp, the refugees are immediately served a hot meal. [There can be no better introduction to a new home after an arduous journey.] They will learn later that the food day-by-day is up to a high nutritional standard, and that it is prepared by their own countrymen and so of course conforms to their dietary habits. Food is served in a mess of approximately 400 people for there is no individual cooking. Special diets



are given to the sick and the undernourished, and extra rations to those doing heavy labor.

*continued* [ New arrivals also receive a letter of welcome. They are given a description of the layout and operation of the camp, and are told of the facilities and services available to them. Rules of conduct and administrative regulations are explained.

Then each newcomer is registered to give camp management the necessary facts to identify people, to take a camp census, to help locate missing members of families, and for use as a basis for housing within the camp and later repatriation. These facts are kept confidential in official camp files, and the reasons for registration are thoroughly explained to refugees who may well be suspicious because of previous sufferings at the hands of secret police.

Refugees are issued a standard package of minimum basic clothing upon arrival. Additional items may be obtained upon demonstration of need to the self-governing refugee committee, which passes on all requests.

Tana Morich can testify to the health services given to arrivals at the camps. This 5-year old orphan girl finally reached camp after months in a cave, hiding from the Germans. Her face was a mass of ugly sores. She was suffering from an infection of the middle ear, scabies, pneumonia, pyoderma, and ringworm of the scalp. Doctors were not sure they could save her, but they put her at once into the camp hospital and gave her emergency treatment. She is expected to live.

All the sick and malnourished are given special treatment and diet immediately upon arrival. All newcomers are inspected and deloused. The camp health program includes immunization and isolation where necessary, supervision and education in sanitation and personal hygiene, and adequate medical and nursing care in hospital and clinics. Special attention is given to treatment and classes for expectant and nursing women, and infants.

Assignments to quarters are made first on the basis of families where possible; unattached adults are grouped by sex and age; and special provisions are made for unattached children. An attempt is made to give each person or family some privacy and an adequate amount of living space. People from the same village or locality are grouped together, and many residents have named their tents after the cities or towns from which they came. Groups which travelled together are maintained together wherever possible.

Welfare officers in the camps are in charge of counselling residents on all problems, of stimulating refugee participation in rehabilitating work projects, of developing refugee leadership for recreation activities, of making special provision for the aged and handicapped, of establishing schools and child care centers, and arranging for church services and religious activities. Burial services follow national and religious customs and relatives are notified of deaths.

A well-trained choir of 100 persons is in great demand at Army posts and hospitals near the camp and has performed for overseas broadcast. Its director, Maestro Hatze, six-feet-four of lean stern intensity, drills them rigorously every morning. At



65, he is his country's best-known composer and was director of municipal theatre who has organized a very successful dramatic group, and by a well-known painter who now teaches art to his fellow-refugees. All cultural activities and sports are easily organized with experts among the refugees to lead them. Schools and churches are in operation everywhere. Only equipment and supplies are needed; even some of these are improvised by the ingenious residents.

It is UNRRA policy to encourage all types of useful work, not only to keep refugees physically occupied, but also as a contribution to emotional satisfaction and good morale. First of all, refugees are encouraged to perform all the maintenance and operating functions in camp: security patrol, sanitation squad, fire protection, kitchen duty, repair and maintenance, construction of equipment, etc. Secondly, they perform the personal services, barbering, tailoring, cobbling, carpentering, which are organized on a community basis, since private business is not permitted in the camps. And finally, refugees are making tools and supplies, learning to use tools, and planning for the revival of agriculture and handicraft industries upon their return home.

Giorgio Bojanich, far away from home in a desert camp, is nonetheless working at his trade every day. With a dozen other shoemakers, he builds shoes and sandals out of scraps. Leather comes from discarded Army shoes. Soles for espadrilles are platted from the clean hemp strands found in the center of old hawsers; the tops are made from used canvas. Useless rubber tires are cut to size for heels and toes. Skilled wood carvers



among the refugees have made the lasts. Some of the tools, too, are fashioned by the refugees; knives, for instance, out of sharpened steel taken from broken spring leaves.

Josip Medovich and Sime Andrejosevich, carpenters, are turning out wooden bed frames with rope plaid springs for use in the camp. You might think Sime was still working in his shop back home; he still has the same pipe between his teeth - except for the wooden plug which he made and built into the pipestem where it had broken. Other carpenters have made bookshelves, benches for church and schoolroom, and other furniture for the camp. Boys make brushes from salvaged boxes and cane bristles. In fact, everything comes out of the shop, from cradles for babies to crosses for graves. And here, too, they are making their own tools - carpenter's triangles by a skilled patternmaker, sandpaper by the less skilled.

Bricklayers have their work to do, now that the refugees have devised and built a brick-making machine. Butchers are hard at work in the kitchen. Metalworkers transform discarded petrol tins into waste cans, poison traps, fire buckets, fly traps, etc. Blacksmiths are casting flat irons. Both men and women among the refugees do all the cooking and kitchen work. Besides their individual tasks of sewing, women have organized a large production center for remodeling uniforms into clothes to be used after repatriation. They also work as a team on a toy-making project under the leadership of a Dutch girl, creating stuffed animals and balls for children from old clothes and

dress-making scraps. Fishermen, having learned to speak English on their fishing trips, now serve as interpreters.

More than 50 women in one camp are taking standard nurse aide training courses taught by UNRRA nurses. Steps are being taken now by one government to grant practical nurse licenses to these women when they return home.

Morale does not sag. It is apparent in the shining eyes of the 12-year old girl - bravely wearing the garrison cap of her national resistance movement - as she finally leaves the hot train, carrying an infant in her arm and leading two other younger sisters by the hand. It is apparent in the quiet smiles of the old women as they sit in the shade before their tents, hands busily knitting garments which will protect their menfolk when they can return to their native mountains.

One of the basic principles guiding UNRRA camp operation is to help the refugees keep in touch with world events so that they do not feel isolated and lost in the desert. There are trained counsellors to advise refugees on legal problems, on locating families, on documents, visas, baggage, and immigration. Newsreels and motion pictures are shown regularly in the camps. But most exciting are the papers which the refugees themselves publish to keep informed.

In one camp, a young woman of 23, whom we might call Maria Slovenka, is editress-in-chief. The Gestapo would like to know her name. Back home she worked for the Anti-Fascist Women's paper, moving typewriters and primitive Roneo wax printing equipment from shed to barn to cave, as she travelled with the resistance forces. She spent 10 months in an Italian prison. Her



father as a doctor and her mother as a nurse are still with the guerrilla bands fighting for freedom.

The camp does not lack for talent. There are poets, artists, writers, professional men and women of all types who contribute regularly. The four-page daily contains extracts from Allied radio news and from their own Free broadcasts; a copy is delivered to every tent. Saturday's paper is more ambitious, with a children's supplement alive with imaginative drawings. There is also a woman's magazine. It is unbelievable how much has been turned out with the meagre and sketchy printing equipment.

Maria has plans for helping the children edit a school paper. She is thinking of many bulletins, books, and pamphlets which her people would like to read. Her only request is for more information, for books in any language; she will see that they are translated, printed, and distributed.

Another method of keeping refugees informed is the system of self-government which they have established and UNRRA has welcomed in the camps. UNRRA officials call it a "mutual sharing of confidences", for it operates as a two-way channel of communication. Through these elected governing committees, refugees receive immediate and continuous interpretation of administrative regulations, and the administration in turn is constantly told of the desires and complaints of the refugees.

Self-government is, of course, more than a communications system. In the camps, it establishes and operates judicial machinery to deal with malfactors. It legislates most of the



ordnances on group conduct and personal behavior, on sanitation, on hours and conditions of work, on internal security, on cooperatives and other mass activities. Self-government guarantees to refugees their basic rights and provides them with a forum for discussions and making decisions. And it removes from the shoulders of the camp staff a thousand and one minor problems which crop up daily.

"The most obvious thing about the camps," writes an Allied official visitor, "is the high pitch of enthusiasm which the refugees maintain. This is reflected in their efficient self-government, in their multifarious activities, in the condition of their tents, in their exuberance. Practically the entire 24-hour day routine is regulated by day-to-day events at home. The subject of conversation, the songs, the plays, the lectures and classes, the posters - all deal with the struggle within the homeland. Thus, being in the desert in Egypt is merely a matter of pure chance and has no bearing whatever on their lives (except insofar as the heat and flies affect them). They are a piece of the homeland transplanted in the Egyptian desert until such a time as they can go back. They are developing their social and political organizations, teaching the young, and preparing for that day."

