

MERRA - History, Organ., and Policy
1942 - 43

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MIDDLE EAST RELIEF AND REFUGEE ADMINISTRATION

POLISH REFUGEE CAMPS - PERSIA (Iran)

December 30, 1943.

File: MERRA

(C) Refugees - Polish
(C) Refugees in Iran

1. Refugees receive pocket money at the following rates:-

Adults.....Rials 80 per month

Children....." 40 " "

2. Refugees who undertake paid employment do not receive pocket money. There is no obligation except proffered employment. There is no ban on refugees finding employment outside camps providing the Polish civil authorities are satisfied that such employment is bona fide.

3. Refugees living in camps are not expected to work for their keep. The reason for this lies in the impossibility of giving work to such great numbers of refugees, especially as theoretically they are only in transit.

4. Every endeavour is made to provide employment for as many as possible, either within the camps or outside.

5. Employment within the camps falls under two headings:-

- (a) Housekeeping tasks, and

- (b) General morale and Camp Projects, e.g. school teachers doctors, dentists, nursing sisters, storekeepers, guards, members of sewing guilds, members of art guilds, etc. Graded scales of pay for both forms of employment are laid down by the Polish authorities and pay is issued from Polish funds.

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6. The proportion of Poles employed in the camps and with the Polish Civil Authorities is approximately one fifth of the total number of refugees.

7. For Poles who can be employed outside the camps by American or British military or official civilian authorities, rates of pay have been laid down by the Director of Pioneers and Labour, Paiforce, American Authorities conform to these.

8. Individuals are not permitted to carry on private businesses in the camps such as cobbling, tailoring, washing, etc. Such work is performed under the auspices of and paid for by the Polish civil authorities.

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PLAIN

Cairo

Dated 12-30-43

RecId 7:30 p.m., 31st

Secretary of State,

Washington,

2399, 30th

FOR LATIMER FROM ARCHER

"Airgrammed December 28th (A-35) our preliminary information your 1945, December 14th. Now airmailing MERRA report same subject also extracts agreement between Polish authorities and East African refugee administration. See also Embassy's dispatch number 7 * Greek December 17th."

*note did arrive
M. N. Warren
called for this.*

KIRK

MRM

** this is the big report (8 copies made) of
"movement of refugees in the middle
East under MERRA auspices"*

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AIRGRAM

File memo

Dispatched: December 30, 1943

From: American Embassy near the
Government of Greece,
Cairo, Egypt

Date: December 28, 1943

Recd: January 11, 4 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington

A-35, December 28, 1943, 2:00 p.m.

To Latimer from Archer.

"MERRA has not yet replied to our queries on your 1945 pending results their inquiry East Africa and India. Meanwhile our preliminary information Near East camps follows:

✓ "At Moses Well Camp, refugees are paid in maintenance or housekeeping tasks according to the job and their fitness but do not then receive pocket money paid to others at the following rates: Fifteen Egyptian piastres, or about sixty cents, per week to single individual, twenty-five to married couples, plus five for one child, maximum thirty-five per family. Cobblers are paid to repair shoes of refugees (free of charge to them). Medical staff supplied by Greek Government. Administrative staff seconded from British forces. Comparatively small proportion of 2,000 Greek refugees is employed. Some Egyptian kitchen and other help employed. We will be able to report wage scales later. Crown Princess Fredericka's Committee employs about eighty women sewing for Greek Red Cross, at thirty-six piastres per week.

✓ "At Nuseirat Camp in Palestine operated under Administrative Officers seconded from British forces with Greek supervisors and medical staff paid by Greek Government. No wages are paid as yet for kitchen and maintenance tasks but extra rations and cigarettes are distributed for services. Wages may be paid later. This camp is principally for 5000 new Greek refugees and 3000 Italian soldiers from Samos. Situation still fluid.

"Camps

"Camps at Athlit and Aleppo in Syria receive pocket money at rate of twenty-five piastres per week plus fifteen piastres for each additional member of family by Greek Government under their decision No. 35 of June 24, 1943, which is in addition to food and lodging. These are transit camps only.

"At Souk el Gharb in Syria approximately 1000 refugees also receive Greek Government's pocket money donation.

"Living allowances are paid in Cyprus to 5,000 refugees plus 2500 newly arrived from Dodecanese, total 7500, at rate of five pounds sterling and six shillings per individual monthly, or eleven pounds per couple, thirteen for three, fourteen and ten for four, sixteen for five, plus one pound sterling per person per month for each additional member of the family, and they feed themselves.

"In Jerusalem 350 refugees receive similar allowances on which they feed themselves.

"In Abyssinia pocket money is given at the Greek Government rate equivalent to twenty-five piastres weekly plus fifteen for each additional member of the family. This rate also prevails in Tanganyika.

"In the Belgian Congo the Belgian Government is reported to give allowances at approximately 100 francs per couple, which is equivalent to sixty piastres per month, or each additional member of family."

MACVEAGH

File No.

This is in answer to No. 1945
(cable) dated December 14, 1943.

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December 14, 1943

OFRRO

US URGENT

AMERICAN LEGATION

CAIRO (EGYPT)

1945

FOR LANDIS FOR ARCHER

Kindly collect and cable immediately information on basic policies of wage and family allowance payments to refugees in camps in East Africa, at Moses Wells, and other camps in Near East and India as to which above information is procureable.

Information is desired specifically as to whether camp members are expected to do a certain amount of work in return for their keep; whether paid work is restricted to necessary housekeeping tasks of camps or is extended to include work projects aimed to improve morale of camp members.

With respect to each camp reported on, what proportion of members are employed at housekeeping jobs, in morale work projects and at what wages? Are wages paid on a flat rate to all employed in camp or on a varied scale, based on character of work and fitness? If wages are paid on a flat rate to all camp members employed, are higher rates paid to doctors, nurses, school teachers, and working foremen

selected

selected from the refugees? Are individuals like cobblers and barbers permitted to carry on business in the camps or are they employed at flat or varied rates?

Detailed information is particularly requested with respect to Polish camps in East Africa.

Forwarded by: _____
DPR:CAFLEXNER:dd

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AIRGRAM

American Embassy near
the Government of Greece
Cairo, Egypt

Dated December 28, 1943

Rec'd January 8, 1944

5 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

A-34, December 28, 1943, 1:00 p.m.

TO LATIMER FROM ARCHER

"The following report is for Parisius from Kelsey:

"The British High Command for this area has through its Civil Affairs Division created a British Military Mission for Greece, one for Yugoslavia, and a small one for Albania, to enter these countries upon eventual withdrawal of the Germans. The Mission for Greece has thirteen army men with some agricultural training or experience designated for service during necessary military phase. The attitude of the British Military is favorable to entry of the civilian agency or agencies at earliest possible date to release military.

"Major Dawson of the Greek Mission, described in our cable number 136 - Greek - of December 22, now in London pushing procurement by the army of most immediate agricultural requirements which may be considered a part of our total first season's needs, mainly to be certain a minimum of supplies are actually ready for entry. Copies of these requirements are with Landis,

and others are being mailed you. Conference today with M.E.S.C. comparing notes on requirements for Yugoslavia. Awaiting instructions UNRRA part."

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MERRA

See file: Refugees - Greek for cables of 12/21/43 and December 2, 1943, on responsibility for Dodecanesian refugees.

Same file, for cable from Cairo, Dec. 15, 1943, regarding refugees from Greek islands.

Same file, for letter from Greek War Relief Assn. on Middle East camps, 11/30/43

Despatch
no. 7-4 Cont
Sec 17, 1943

12/17/43

MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNDER MERRA
AUSPICES

Preliminary Administrative and Political Difficulties:

1. When MERRA was set up as a part of the Minister of State's Office in June, 1942, the numbers of refugees in the Middle East were already considerable. Since the summer of 1941 parties of the Greeks had made their way from Greece and especially the islands, to Cyprus and Turkey. During the winter of 1941-2 the exodus was fairly considerable. By June, 1942 there were some 4,000 refugees in Turkey and 4,000 in Cyprus. In Persia there were also 20,000 Polish refugees who left Russia during the early summer of 1942 with the Polish Forces.

The flow of refugees has now greatly diminished, partly because of increasing difficulties of movement and even more because of the improvement of the food situation as a result of food shipments to Greece and the islands.

In June, 1942, the chief problems which faced MERRA were the removal of some 12,000 Greeks and 20,000 Poles from the operational area of the Middle East where they were a political and military embarrassment to the allied war effort. This memorandum attempts to give a general outline of the problem of handling these particular refugees as illustrated by MERRA's practical experience in the Middle East and especially in Moses Wells Camp.

2. The first step in the main problem was to remove the 4,000 Greek refugees from Chesme in Turkey. Turkey had allowed considerable numbers of refugees to land on the coasts opposite the Greek islands, but Turkey itself was chronically short of food supplies and as the numbers of refugees increased her attitude hardened. Plans were laid for the removal of numbers of Greek refugees from Turkey through Syria to Quassassin Camp, by permission of the Egyptian Government and thence to overseas destinations later to be found.

The Axis advance in June, 1942 prevented these plans from being fully implemented. The threat to Egypt was such that 700 Greek refugees already in the country were evacuated to East Africa, and the military authorities unable to agree to further refugees being brought to Syria.

By this time negotiations with the East African Government had led to the agreement on the part of the Belgian Congo to take 3,500 Greek refugees. Tanganyika agreed to take an additional 500. Later negotiations led to the acceptance of 1,400 refugees by the Ethiopian Government.

Movement of Refugees in the Middle East under MERRA: 2
Preliminary Administrative and Political Difficulties

In October the removal of the threat to Egypt made it possible to resume the movement of refugees from Turkey to Syria and thence to Egypt.

3. The Middle East Governments have been from the first extremely cooperative in facilitating refugee movements. The Turkish Government provided the necessary transport. The Syrian and Lebanese Governments raised no objections to the continuance of refugee camps at Aleppo, Souk el Garb and Tripoli. The Egyptian Government agreed to the temporary domicile of refugees in Moses Wells Camp, and extended special customs and visa facilities to the refugees.

The East African Governments have contributed (omission) *to the solution of* refugee problems by agreeing to receive large numbers of refugees, far in excess of their total white population in addition to the large numbers of prisoners of war with which they have been burdened.

4. In June, 1942 the responsibility for Greek refugee camps was already divided. A camp at Souk el Garb had been set up some time previous and was under Greek control. The Greek Consul General at Beirut was largely responsible for its organization. Since the Autumn of 1942 a new Greek Ministry of Social Welfare has taken over responsibility.

The Camp at Aleppo was originally set up by the local military authorities. In turn an Australian division, a New Zealand division and Ninth Army have been responsible for its administration. In fact A.I.O. which has been responsible for the interrogation of refugees has supplied the executive staff at Aleppo Camp.

Moses Wells Camp in Egypt was first taken over from the Egyptian Quarantine authorities in May, 1942. A small staff attached to the Minister of State's Office was responsible for preparing the camp for the reception of 2,000 Greek children from Athens. In fact owing to the refusal of safe conduct by the Italian Government, no children came, and in June, 1942, MERRA became responsible for the camp which was adapted to take 2,000 refugees.

5. It would perhaps have been convenient if MERRA had had sufficient staff to take over responsibility for all refugee camps in the Middle East. But in fact MERRA had had to work with an extremely exiguous central staff, and a few officers and other ranks on loan from the Army in Moses Wells. The central staff of four administrative and executive has had not only to control Greek and Polish refugees, but also deal with the relief questions, discharges from the allied armies, Middle East evacuation policy, miscellaneous groups of exchangees and repatriates

as well as coordination of the activities of voluntary societies. The administration of Syria refugee camps therefore remained the responsibility of the army and of the Greek authorities while the camps in Cyprus have been administrated by the Greek staffs under the direction of the Government of Cyprus.

The Greek Government has been responsible for detailed arrangements with the Governments of the reception countries for the welfare of Greek refugees in the Belgian Congo, Tanganyika and Abyssinia. These countries are responsible to the Greek Government through its representatives. MERRA functions with respect to Greek refugees are:

(a) the formulation of policy as to the disposal of refugees arriving in the Middle East.

(b) the movements of refugees into, through and away from the Middle East.

(c) relations with Governments of territories in the Middle East in which refugee live and through which they pass.

(d) liaison with the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare as to general welfare policy and in dealing with individual cases.

(e) coordination of the activities of all voluntary societies assisting Greek refugees.

(f) the maintenance and welfare of refugees in Moses Wells Camp.

B. RECEPTION OF REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1. The Greek refugees from the islands usually crossed in caiques and small boats to land on the Turkish Coast. There they were taken under the care of the Greek consul, who either put them in the camp of Chesme or in the villages roundabout. They were there inoculated against typhoid and disinfected as far as possible. Conditions in Turkey could never be satisfactory since neither the supplies or the personnel were available, and the chief aim of the allied authorities was to send refugees out as soon as possible.

The refugees came from Chesme to Aleppo by railway. It was a hard journey - two days and two nights in a train and they arrived at Aleppo hungry, ill-clothed and dirty.

2. In Aleppo camp they were disinfected, inoculated if inoculation had not already been carried out, interrogated and given A.I.O. identity documents, and as far as possible reclothed.

3. Aleppo was never intended to be more than a transit camp from which the refugees would be sent on as quickly as possible to Moses Wells. In fact owing to congestion in Moses Wells Camp and difficulties about shipment to East Africa large numbers of refugees remained in Aleppo for a considerable period. It was difficult to provide amenities at Aleppo for the refugees and there was continual difficulty in keeping reasonable stocks of clothing in the camp.

C. MOVEMENT FROM ALEPPO

1. Between 4,000 and 5,000 Greek refugees have been moved from Syria to Egypt since last October. On the whole these movements have been carried out satisfactorily. The movement instructions issued by Ninth Army at appendix A show in detail the arrangements made.

2. In order to move refugees it has been first necessary to overcome their strange reluctance to move. The refugee is often content to stay where he is, so long as he is fed and clothed and to be suspicious of any proposal to move him. The present and actual is known; the future and distant is unknown, and therefore feared. Only persuasion and tact can ensure that the refugees can be got away. An appeal to common sense or to military necessity does not receive a ready response.

3. The essentials for a rail move are:

(a) the appointment of officers in charge of the train and of doctors for the journey

(b) the provision of food, water and medical supplies in the train

(c) the necessary bathing arrangements and provision of food at the bathing points

(d) special arrangements for cleaning the train

(e) special arrangements for a baggage wagon to be attached to the train and to be sealed at departure

4. Two points should be especially noted. First, unless adequate supervision is arranged and above all adequate provision of food, the refugees will exchange their equipment for food to natives during the journey. What is worse is that they do not get value in exchange. A perfectly good army blanket is often given away for a packet of cigarettes.

Refugees are given a personal issue on leaving Aleppo of two army blankets, a plate and mug and knife, fork and spoon. Many refugees arrive with none. They have no sense

of social responsibility about the disposal of such a kit and they are sure that they will eventually be issued with new equipment, because they will not be left to be cold or to eat with their fingers.

Secondly, the refugees have no sense of hygiene. Unless the train is cleaned at every opportunity, all the W.C.'s and washbasins will soon be fouled and in a disgusting condition. Even with a great deal of cleaning the refugees trains often arrive in a filthy condition. It is of value to put brooms in the W.C.'s especially if these are of the Turkish type.

PART II

MOSES WELLS CAMP AS A SPECIMEN REFUGEE CAMP

Site and buildings

1. Moses Wells Refugees Camp is 27 miles east of Suez on the Gulf of Suez. It comprises some 103 acres of desert. The climate is of Mediterranean type. Summer temperatures are generally over 70° and sometimes as much as 100°. The winter is mild and the temperature rarely falls below 40° in the coldest month. The annual rainfall is 30 inches. The site presents the advantages of a coastal area and the prevalent winds are cool in summer. The sandy soil prevents the accumulation of stagnant water and allows good surface draining.

2. The site is free from the danger of bilharzia and other such diseases endemic in Egypt, since there are no irrigation canals as in the delta. There is no danger of contagion from natives, since the camp is isolated and far from the nearest native-inhabited locality.

Despite the desert environment the proximity of the camp to the sea and the view of the hills of Ataka across the bay give some scenic attraction to the camp. Moreover, the existence of a deep water jetty makes sea transport easy and compensates for the difficult road approach.

3. The camp consists of some 9 permanent buildings, E.P.I.P. tents and 4 Iris huts. The buildings are used as follows:-

- (a) Greek doctors quarters and mess.
- (b) Administrative building and officers quarters
- (c) Clothing store
- (d) (omitted on copy)
- (e) ration store

- (f) two hospital buildings
- (g) three isolation units
- (h) two cookhouses

The Iris huts are used as follows:

- (a) Two double huts as dining halls, capacity 800 each
- (b) One single hut as a store
- (c) One single hut as a recreation room

The tents are capable of holding up to 20 refugees per double tent.

The camp is so arranged (see plan) as to leave a large assembly space in the center of the camp.

The camp has no perimeter wire since it is isolated in the desert. Two subsidiary camps are at either end of the main camp, one for the Greek guard and one for the native labour.

4. The two hospitals consist each of a self-contained building with its own water supply and lighting. A kitchen is attached to each. There are 4 large wards and three small wards in each building. In addition there are three double E.P.I.P. tents for isolation cases.

5. Attached to one of the hospitals is a dispensary in charge of a qualified chemist. There is also a fully equipped dentists theatre in one of the hospital buildings.

6. The kitchens consist each of a three roomed stone building with a corrugated iron annex. One room of each building is used as a store for dry rations. One room is fitted with sinks and is used as a scullery and the third for preparation of cooking of food. Each kitchen has a 20 foot iron range, each annex has 14 soyer stores.

ORGANIZATION OF STAFF

1. MERRA is responsible for the administration of the camp. In charge is a British Officer, responsible to MERRA alone except in so far as in respect of his military position he has certain responsibilities to local army authorities. All other personnel in the camp, both civilian and military are responsible to the camp administration.

2. The Greek officer of the guard is immediately responsible for the discipline and good order of the Greek military guard. The head Greek doctor is responsible for

the health of the refugees and food hygiene in the camp.

3. The Camp Administrator is empowered to issue instructions for and on behalf of MERRA. His signature on receipts and issued, in no way makes him personally responsible for goods or money, but it is his duty to act as responsible bailee for the property of which he and his staff are custodians.

4. The present staff in Moses Wells is shown in appendix B. The principal on which the staff has been appointed is that British officers must be the executive officers in the administration of the camp, because of MERRA responsibility as guarantors of the refugees to the Egyptian Government, for security and movements to the British military authorities and as custodians of stores both to the British supply authorities and to voluntary societies. In no circumstances can MERRA and its representatives (omission) or abrogate these responsibilities.

5. The key British personnel are the Camp Administrator, the Camp adjutant, the Liaison Officer, the C.S.M. in charge of the office, the C.S.M. in charge of stores and the Sergeant in charge of labour.

6. Only the duties of the liaison officer need explanation at this stage. The refugees are allowed to seek interviews with the Camp Administrator daily between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. If they require assistance with personnel problems. These personal problems are dealt with, however, by the Greek speaking Liaison Officer. The cases brought to his notice are many and varied. The problem of communication is perhaps the biggest welfare problem. The refugees are of course not allowed to leave the camp except for exceptional reasons, such as special medical treatment. The great majority of the refugees have relations in Egypt, U.S.A. and in other refugee camps in the Middle East. Many of the refugees cannot write. All who need assistance to get in touch with their friends and relations are helped by the liaison officer. There are continual problems about the receipt of drafts of money, especially from the U.S.A....quite large aggregate amounts of money are received by the refugees..and the Liaison Officer has the job of seeing that the money reaches the refugees for whom it is intended. The Liaison Officer also deals with complaints on the part of the refugees.

7. The following are the most common problems put before the Liaison Officer:-

- (a) Negligence on the part of the soldier husband
- (b) Loss of trace of children and other (omission)

(c) Claims of pension and compensation for husband or children killed in Greece or at sea

(d) Tracing relatives in the U.S.A. and in other foreign countries

(e) Sending Red Cross messages to relatives in Greece.

THE REFUGEES

1. Nearly all the refugees are from the Greek islands, and are farmers, vineyard cultivators or fishermen. In peacetime they are neither well off nor desperately poor. On the whole their standard of life is low and their diet simple. There is no doubt whatever that the vast majority of the refugees are housed and clothed on a higher standard at Moses Wells camp than they ever were at home.

2. The educational standard of the refugees is very low. Moreover they have very little conception of social responsibility, and appeals to them on grounds of common welfare have no effect whatsoever. Hygiene is non-existent, although there are some refugees who have a pride of house. The refugees throw up no leaders from among themselves and despite the desire on the part of MERRA to reduce the British staff to a minimum and to give the refugees a chance to do responsible jobs, it has been found impossible to do so.

3. The refugees have a definite refugee mentality. Whatever is done for them they always find ground for complaint. The food at Moses Wells for instance is ample and well cooked. The Army catering arrival took a personal interest in the messing arrangements in the camp, and attached 4 first class cooks to it. The ration scale is not far short of that of a fighting soldier and due account is taken of the rational tastes of the refugees. The standard of feeding is probably higher than that obtaining in England at the moment and certainly higher than that of the refugees in peacetime. Yet there are continual complaints against the food.

An occasional check on letters shows that the wildest statements circulate in the camps and are passed on to relatives outside who presumably believe them. Possibly the refugees retail these stories in order to persuade relatives to send them money. Perhaps they are the result of the commonly observed irresponsibility of refugees. The following statements are typical: "The food is terrible. I have not tasted vegetables since I left Chios". At least send me money so that I may buy an orange for our son who is in hospital". "The climate is terrible. At least four children die every day". Of gratitude there is little..but that is a phenomenon known to refugee workers.

4. The greatest vigilance is needed on the part of the camp staff to prevent the stealing, accumulation and disposal of camp stores. Although the refugees are not only fed, clothed and maintained in Moses Wells Camp, but also receive pocket money at the rate of 15 piastres a week as well as free cinema shows and other amenities, many of them go to the greatest trouble to steal, wangle or destroy camp property. Some of the destruction is senseless and useless, such as the destruction of tent walls to make cleaning rags or other cutting up of blankets, sheets, to make clothes, even when there are plenty of clothes available in the camp store.

5. Although there is no desire on the part of MERRA to over-emphasize these traits and still less to criticize the Greeks as a people, it is necessary to point out these problems clearly, since it is contended that difficulties of this sort will be met continually by anyone who has to deal with large scale refugee movements. Our difficulties are small compared with the size of the problems of this sort which will arise in dealing with the vast mass of refugees in Europe in the period after the war.

MAINTENANCE OF FAMILY LIFE:

1. The family instinct amongst the Greeks is very strong, and every attempt is made to keep them in their family groups in the camp. Each family is allotted half a double E.P.I.P. tent which may be screened with blankets as the occupants wish. Single men and single women are accommodated separately in double tents in special areas, with 16 beds fitted up in dormitory style. It may be of interest to note that when Moses Wells Camp was first set up it was proposed to separate the older children according to sex, but in fact the family instinct was too strong for the regulations and the refugees simply moved back into family groups.

2. Every attempt is made to keep the family unit intact. No refugee is sent from Moses Wells Camp to camps in East Africa unless all the other members of the family go too. Where one member of the family has become separated from the rest and is in a different refugee camp, every effort is made to reunite the family. It might be added that the necessary arrangements for the movements of individual refugees take a considerable amount of administrative time and lay a heavy burden on MERRA staff.

3. Visitors are allowed in the camp, and soldiers on leave often spend several days with their families. Soldiers discharged from the army as unfit are allowed to join their families in the camp.

4. The head of the family is made as far as possible responsible for the conduct of members of the family. The family instinct thus is made use of in maintaining discipline in the camp.

RECEPTION OF REFUGEES IN MOSES WELLS CAMP

1. Parties of refugees usually arrive during the night by train at El Shatt some 5 miles from Moses Wells. They are met by officers of the Moses Wells Camp Staff, who leave them to sleep in the train until dawn, when they are given tea and buns. They are then embarked on barges and brought to Moses Wells jetty. There they are given breakfast before being allotted to their tents and registered.

2. The system of registration is very simple. A long roll is kept showing:-

1. Refugee's number
2. Name
3. Age
4. Sex
5. Married or single
6. Profession
7. Passport number and other details to prove identity
8. Remarks
9. Date of arrival
10. Date of departure
11. Number of identity card issued

The remarks column is used to denote ultimate destination, etc.

An Alphabetical Index Book shows name, surname and christian, number identity card, date of arrival, date of departure.

3. Refugees on arrival are in possession of A.I.O. Interrogation Forms. They are instructed to form themselves into their respective family groups. They then file past tables where brief particulars are taken and they hand in their interrogation form. In return they are given camp identity cards which they retain during their stay in the camp. The camp identity card is a temporary document for use in the camp and such things as issues of stores are recorded on it.

4.- MERRA identity cards, which were planned as suitable for international use, are then prepared by the camp staff from the A.I.O. interrogation forms and from particulars given by the refugees themselves on arrival. Photographs are taken and fastened to the identity cards.

5. When a draft leaves Moses Wells Camp for another destination, the camp identity card is exchanged for a MERRA identity card which bears the same number. Throughout the time during which a refugee is in the camp he or she has a personal number. The system has proved most successful in practice. The confusion between similar and strange names is reduced to a minimum. Reference to number rather than names saves time and trouble.

6. After registration the refugees go to their tents. In Moses Wells Camp disinfection on arrival is not normally

necessary, since the refugees are disinfested with their baggage in Syria. The conditions in Moses Wells are not such as to encourage bug or louse breeding. Compulsory baths are however taken every week. These have to be taken before pocket money is drawn. They are superintended by nurses who have some difficulty in persuading refugees to get themselves wet. Innoculation in Moses Wells Camp is also unnecessary since all refugees have been inoculated before arrival. No refugee leaves Syria unless he is fit - in theory. In practice the doctors who are in attendance at the registration, pick any obviously sick refugees for attention.

FOOD

1. A revised scale of rations and a typical week's menu are attached as appendices to this memorandum.
2. Rations are drawn in the same way as army rations for the D.I.D. Fresh rations are drawn daily and hard rations per week. Fresh rations are cooked and eaten on the day of issue. Each cookhouse keeps its own week's supply of hard. There is a large icebox in each cookhouse for fresh rations. In addition to army rations, there are supplies of relief foodstuffs supplied at various times by charitable organizations. The most important of these foodstuffs are flour, beans, dried milk, and certain canned goods. They are not necessary for the health of the refugees but provide some dietary variety.
3. The staff of the two cookhouses consists of 2 Corporal Cooks, 14 native cooks, 11 kitchen boys, 34 suffragis and 16 refugee women cleaners. The large native staff is necessary partly because of the difficulty of using refugees and natives together and partly because, while Moses Wells Camp is still used as a transit camp, it is difficult to find a suitable permanent staff from among the refugees.
4. The food is prepared by the cooks and taken to the dining halls in serving pans. The refugees file past the suffragis who issue plates to them and serve the food. They then go the tables where cutlery is laid for them. After finishing their meals, they leave plates and cutlery on the tables, from where they are collected by the suffragis for clothing (!) (cleaning is the word obviously meant).
5. In principle it would be preferable for the refugees to keep their own plates and cutlery and to do their own washing up. In practice for hygiene reasons - that is to ensure the plates and cutlery are washed up and not left to collect flies in the tents - the work is done by natives.
6. The food is more than adequate, and well cooked. The complaints about food really come mainly from the disproportionate part which food plays in a refugee's life. If a refugee has not to work to earn his living, and is unoccupied most of the day, he appears to become (omission) critical about the conditions in which he lives. The best method of reducing

dissatisfaction would be to give the refugees a full time occupation.

CLOTHING

1. Refugees arrive in Syria with little baggage. Perhaps they have the clothes they wear, some jewelry, photographs, correspondence, small articles of sentimental value, and a little spare clothing. In Syria they receive the minimum of essential clothing and they are issued with two blankets, knives, forks and spoons.

2. There are mixed stocks of clothing in Moses Wells Camp, donated from charitable sources. Of this clothing, 80% was provided by the American Red Cross, 10% by the Canadian Red Cross, 5% by the Greek Red Cross and 5% by the British Red Cross. On the whole the clothing is not suitable for refugees. There appear to be three main classes of relief clothing supplied:

- (a) first class clothing such as knitted pullovers, woolen shirts, overall suits mostly of children's sizes made by Red Cross chapters.
- (b) second hand clothing of useful size and type
- (c) useless new and second hand clothing, such as thousands of pairs of single shoes, dancing pumps, thin evening dresses, and a few fur coats.

3. At first a system of individual issue in cases of proved necessity was introduced. It was unsuccessful. These people who were the most inveterate hoarders and scroungers managed to "prove" necessity, and to acquire most clothing. The fulfillment of any individual demand is based upon stock, and as, obviously, the larger the stock the more generous the issue, so it becomes apparent that the article which is held in sufficient stock to meet the demand of the total strength of the camp will eventually be issued to that strength, since as the availability of an article becomes apparent to the refugees, so the demand goes up. Moreover the first come first served principle means that those who are in most need rarely get clothing. Those who are turned away complain of favoritism.

4. This system has now been superseded by a general camp issue of clothing when available. In fact, there has been no general issue and no need for one. Certain standard articles of clothing such as overalls for men and women and tunics and shorts for children are now being produced in the camp, and it is proposed to issue them shortly.

5. Experience has shown that the only practicable system of clothing issue in a camp such as Moses Wells is a general issue of standard clothing. With a small staff and few leaders among the refugees, it is next to impossible to check in detail the clothing which refugees have brought from Greece or acquired

in the Middle East. Some refugees have acquired large hoards of clothing. Camp inspections cannot bring them to light, and even, if they are found it is almost impossible to impound them.

6. The main clothing requirements for refugees are as follows:

<u>Essential items</u>		
<u>Men and boys</u>	<u>Women & Children</u>	<u>Infants</u>
Overalls (summer)	Dress	Layette
Trousers (winter)	Shoes	Diapers
Long sleeved pullover	Pullover (winter)	Bonnets
(winter)	Stockings	Bootees
Boots	Vest	Carrying blankets
Shirts	Handtowel	
Socks	Sanitary towels	
Pants		
Singlet		
Handtowel		

Secondary items

Topees, boot laces, braces, belts, corsets (for medical recommended issues), night wear (for hospitals), gloves/mittens.

7. Seamstresses work in the camp store repairing and altering any worn or torn garments. Cases and bales are emptied as soon as possible after receipt and the garments are dusted with Naphtalene powder, folded and stacked on covered shelves. All folds are altered over periods of not longer than eight weeks when the clothing is shaken, briefly aired, re-dusted and re-stacked.

8. The large majority of female refugees are efficient needle-women and can and do repair and alter their own garments. Most refugees hoard all new or serviceable clothing received and wear only their oldest garments, partly in order to have wearing apparel for their return home, and partly in an effort to obtain more clothing.

9. There are cobblers in the camp who repair shoes. Most of the poorer refugees have no appreciation of the value or care of their shoes and boots. They often ruin them immediately they are received in order to obtain greater comfort - for example, both toe caps and heel uppers are often removed.

10. There is a weekly issue of 4 ozs. of soap per head, so that clothing may be washed. In most cases the women thoroughly wash their family clothing.

SANITATION AND HYGIENE

1. Water from cookhouses and washing places runs through grease traps into large soakage pits dug in the sand filled with old petrol tins and covered over. This method is not

particularly satisfactory since the site is only 3 feet above sea level, and the level in the soakage pits rises and falls with the tide. A better method might have been to create an artificial fall for the waste water from the cookhouses and wash places and to run the water in open culverts to the sea.

2. The latrines in use are batteries of Turkish type squatting latrines. They consist of large pits with concrete cover in which holes are cut. The salt water level in the pits is within 6 feet of the cover, and water acts as a natural disinfectant.

3. These latrines have not proved satisfactory. Firstly, the pits have been filled with excreta at a rate faster than new pits can be constructed. Secondly, the pits have become breeding grounds for flies. Thirdly, the refugees make them filthy and the native sanitary squad find difficulty in keeping them clean. Fourthly, there is some danger of fouling the sub-soil of the camp.

4. It is now proposed to construct bucket type latrines with wooden seats and lids, and to dispose of the excreta in Helwan incinerators.

5. Washing is done at army type ablution benches covered with corrugated iron, with drainage through grease traps to soakage pits.

6. Despite the difficulties of sanitation there has been no evidence of epidemics arising from this cause. Every effort is being made to improve the sanitary arrangements by new construction. One of the main difficulties is, however, the impossibility of providing the necessary supervision to enforce hygienic standard, owing to the small staff available.

DISCIPLINE

1. The refugees at Moses Wells Camp are allowed to pass through Egypt providing that they remain inside a refugee camp. In law they are under the jurisdiction of the civil authorities in Egypt. The Camp Administrator can restrain any person breaking the law and hand him over to the civil police. He can, also, withhold privileges from delinquent refugees, but he has no right of imprisonment, fining or inflicting corporal punishment. He has of course the normal rights of discipline of his military rank in respect of Greek or British soldiers in the camp.

2. There is a guard of 42 Greek soldiers in Moses Wells Camp. Their duties are to prevent unauthorized entry and exit, to guard stores and valuables, and to exercise general supervision over and prevent misdemeanors on the part of the refugees.

3. The guard is responsible to the Greek Officer who in turn is responsible to the Camp Administrator.

4. The problem of maintaining discipline among the refugees is considerable. Persuasion and appeals to reason have little

success. Moreover, the refugees are well aware that the Administration of the camp has few sanctions which it can apply. Therefore, direct orders are often flouted, and tact rather than toughness is required.

5. In the last resort it is extremely difficult to enforce an order on a recalcitrant and sometimes militant mob of women and children. One occasion a fracas developed in Moses Wells. It serves perhaps as an illustration of the disciplinary difficulty. Some twenty Greek soldiers were staying on leave in Moses Wells Camp, when it became necessary to clear the camp for security reasons since a draft was about to leave two days later. Some soldiers left, others refused. The Greek Guard failed to eject the visitors and the officer of the Greek Guard suggested to the Camp Administrator that British Military Policemen might have more authority over the soldiers. Four military policemen were called in, and one of the visiting soldiers was placed under arrest. Immediately the military policemen were assaulted by a mob of some dozens of women and their prisoner was released. Since bloodshed appeared likely the military police withdrew, and the refugees gained a moral victory. Next day the visiting soldiers had become a little nervous, and a high ranking Greek officer was brought into the camp with a bodyguard to remove them. By then common sense had prevailed among the refugees and there was no further trouble.

6. Individual punishments which have some effect are the withholding of pocket money and the exclusion of visitors. The former is not always effective, since many refugees possess large sums of money sent in from outside, and they are not dependent on provision by the camp. Collective punishments, which are generally objectionable, include deprivation of pocket money, closure of the canteen, exclusion of visitors and the stopping of cinema shows.

7. The chief delinquencies which are difficult to check are such things as taking food from the dining halls, eating and cooking in tents, and avoiding medical inspection. Such delinquencies can be best checked by rigorous inspection, but in fact the shortage of staff makes this impossible.

SOCIAL LIFE

1. A playground for children, with swings, slides and see-saws has been set up in the camp. There is also a football pitch. In fact, the refugees have little interest in organized games, and prefer to amuse themselves on the seashore. The children join together in Greek dances.

2. A canteen has been set up in the camp. Its success has created a new problem. Since many of the refugees have large amounts sent into them the consumption of food in the canteen is absurdly high. It is proposed therefore to convert the canteen into a coffee bar, and to attach to it a reading and games room.

3. Religious services are held weekly by the local priest, who also performs christenings and burials. Important saints days are also observed.
4. A mobile cinema visits the camp once a week. Local troops and Red Cross concert parties have given entertainment. Twice a week a tea car of Canal Area Welfare Unit visits the camp to distribute fresh tea and play music.

MEDICAL CARE

1. Every refugee is inspected on arrival in the camp. One doctor and two nurses inspect the refugees in their lines every day. In fact, medical inspection is difficult, since the refugees are most unwilling to let their children go to hospital. Mothers with sick children attempt to evade inspection by moving from tent to tent, and the mortality rate among children is increased by this evasion.
2. There are five Greek doctors in the camp, one dentist and one dispensary chemist. The nursing staff is under a matron. It consists of two professional nurses and twenty assistant nurses. There is a training scheme in operation in the camp to train batches of young refugees as nurses. Sixty-one girls have "qualified" as assistant nurses in Moses Wells camp during the last seven months.
3. There is hospital accommodation for 100 patients in the two camp hospitals and the subsidiary hospital tents. This provision is adequate, and thanks to supplies received from the Greek and American Red Crosses the hospitals are well equipped. Current medical supplies are indented for in the Army.
4. Appendices give an analysis of hospital admissions, medical inspection room outpatients and births and deaths. It will be seen from this analysis that a great deal of attention has been given to the medical care of the refugees. On the whole there appear to be no significant deductions which can be drawn as to the effects of malnutrition which they suffered in Greece. After a year in the Middle East there is little if any sign of their past sufferings. It is true that in most cases refugees have already been out of Greece for some six months before arrival in Moses Wells Camp, and that medical statistics for Chesme and Syria have not yet been analysed. Yet it seems fair to deduce that the effects of malnutrition have been largely overcome by the provision of adequate food, shelter and clothing. Only one case of avitaminosis has been reported and the use of artificial vitamins has not been necessary.
5. The constant arrival of new parties of refugees, and the visits of relatives from outside the camp tend to increase the morbidity rate. The high death rate of young children from measles complicated by broncho-pneumonia is attributed to two main factors. Firstly, a fresh party of refugees, who had had a cold and uncomfortable journey from Syria, arrived in the camp at the height of a measles epidemic and complicated the

epidemic by the spread of influenza and bronchial diseases in the camp. Secondly, in many cases mothers avoided medical inspection when their children were ill and many were not admitted to hospital until they were in a late stage of illness.

6. Of the 38 deaths recorded, 25 were of the measles-pneumonia group. Of the remaining 13, 9 were chronic diseases with a fatal prognosis. The age distribution of deaths is as follows:

0 - 2 years:	21 (all of the measles-pneumonia group)
2 - 10 years:	11
10 - 15 years:	2
50 - 70 years:	4

The specific death rate for measles and the pneumonia group in the camp, however, was only 2.6 per 1000 per month. The figure for the same diseases in Greece (1938) was 2.19 per thousand per month. The death rate is thus surprisingly low, both absolutely and comparatively.

WORK

1. It is a fundamental principle of a refugee camp that the refugees should be kept as fully occupied as possible. In Moses Wells Camp there have been great difficulties militating against full employment of the refugees. In its early stages it was purely a transit camp, and it was impossible to begin training schemes or to use refugees for camp staff jobs. Secondly, the shortage of staff and the lack of leaders among the refugees has made organization difficult. Thirdly, equipment and tools have been hard to obtain.

2. Some 100 refugees are working in the camp either as cleaners, kitchen assistants, needlewomen or labourers. They are paid approximately 50 piastres a week, instead of the usual pocket money issue of 15 piastres. Although it is arguable that refugees should be expected to work in the camp without pay, it has been decided that wages should be paid partly as an incentive to work, partly to raise the status in the camp of those who work, and partly so that the more thrifty can accumulate some small capital against their return to the homes, where they have in many cases lost everything or sold up all their possessions to pay for a caique passage from the islands to Turkey.

3. The following work schemes are now being put into operations:

(a) needlework and sewing for the repair, alteration and making of clothing. It is hoped to employ 100 women in due course. Thirty are employed at the moment.

(b) embroidery. The more expert needlewomen are being encouraged to do artistic work under the guidance of two instructors.

(c) handwork. It is proposed to get up a workshop for the instruction of boys in woodwork and metal work, and for

the making of useful camp furniture. Already some 12 refugees are working in a small workshop, but difficulty is being experienced in obtaining sufficient tools and in erecting a suitable workshop.

(d) cobbling: Two or three cobblers are at work repairing shoes and boots.

(e) construction: Refugee labour is being used under R.E. direction in the extension of the camp.

EDUCATION

1. A school has been set up in the camp, and nearly 400 children are in attendance. Seven teachers have been found from among the refugees, one of whom is qualified. Books and equipment have been donated by Cairo schools and from other sources.

2. An elementary course related to the official program in Greek elementary schools is followed as closely as possible. Every effort is being made to obtain the services of Greek teachers from Cairo during the period of their summer holidays.

3. School hours are from 10 a.m. - 12:15 and from 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. They are restricted by the available accommodation, but special school tents are now being erected and it should soon be possible to extend the instruction.

4. The refugees are eager for their children to attend school - not least because they are thereby relieved of the trouble of looking after them - and there are few absentees.

GENERAL

1. On the whole Moses Wells Camp runs smoothly and efficiently. Shortage of British staff is perhaps the chief difficulty, but that is inevitable when British manpower is strained as it is today. Much of the success of the camp is due to the keenness and enthusiasm of the British military staff. The versatility and adaptability of the ordinary British private is always surprising, and the influence which they have over the refugees is considerable.

2. The value of the camp is not only that it provides a home for refugees, who have fled from Axis oppression. It is also a most interesting subject for study, and provides experience of difficulties which will be met with on a far greater scale in post-war Europe. The experience gained in Moses Wells will be useful for personnel who will have to grapple with similar problems. Arrangements are now in hand for training personnel in Moses Wells for the part they will be called upon to play after the war, and it is hoped to be able to give members of voluntary societies too first hand experience.

wbs/cwc Dowering letter, dated 12/17/43, Cairo #7, signed by
Lincoln MacVeagh: Subject: Greek Relief-Responsibilities
and Operations of MERRA

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Near the Government of Greece

Cairo, Dec. 17, 1943

No. 7

Subject: Greek Relief - Responsibilities and Operations
of MERRA (Middle East Refugee and Relief
Administration)

The Honorable
The Secretary of State
Washington

Sir:

For the Department's information, and as of possible value in defining the precise responsibilities and activities of the British organization known as MERRA, (Middle East Refugee and Relief Administration), now very much to the fore in connection with the whole relief problem in this area, I have the honor to enclose herewith a memorandum which has recently been drawn up by that organization, entitled "Movement of Refugees in the Middle East under MERRA auspices."

The Department will observe that this memorandum, in addition to describing the organization as part of the office of the British Minister of State, defines its responsibilities as (1) formulation of policy regarding the disposal of refugees in the Middle East, (2) control of refugee movements in this area, (3) supervision of relations with local governments, (4) liaison with the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare both as to general and particular problems, (5) coordination of the activities of voluntary societies assisting Greek refugees, and finally (6) the maintenance of refugees in the Moses Wells camp. It makes very clear that the Moses camp is the only camp "maintained" by this administration.

In this connection, I would refer to the Department's telegram No. 1859 of November 30, 1943, communicating certain plans formulated by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) to absorb MERRA as an operating agency, and call attention to the fact that actually MERRA has a very small operating staff, to be found almost wholly at the Moses Wells Camp. For operating purposes, it is counting heavily on private assistance, American as well as British. All persons wishing employment with MERRA for relief in the Balkans are informed that they should apply to one of the voluntary societies. These societies participate in a council, known as the Cairo Council for Balkan Relief, of whose organization and functions I am told the Department is already informed. At present Mr. W. T. Matthews, Director-General of MERRA, is the Chairman of this council.

It appears to constitute the nearest thing to an operating agency that is as yet connected with MERRA. At the time it was set up, the Chairman stated that "besides its main functions of coordination and cooperation, the Council will serve as a channel through which the various authorities may be able to draw upon the resources of the constituent organizations," and minutes of the personnel sub-committee of the council show that its constituent voluntary societies will probably be called upon to supply as many as 1500 operatives, of which number American voluntary societies are expected to furnish at least half. At present I understand that before American agencies can participate in this fashion under the over-all direction of MERRA, they must receive clearance from our FEA (Foreign Economic Administration).

Respectfully yours,

(signed) Lincoln MacVeagh

Enclosure
Memorandum

Sent in ozalid to Department
File No. 848
LMacV/ad

~~Attachments~~ lacking

1. Plan of Moses Wells.
2. Appendix B: present staff of Moses Wells.
- 3 & 4 Revised scale of rations and a typical well's menu "are attached as appendices to this memorandum.
- 5 +. "Appendices give an analysis of hospital admissions, medical inspection outpatients, and births and deaths."

1, 2, 3
these came back to
Cairo - Mr. Xanthakos

(31)

MERRA

Paraphrase of Incoming Telegram

FROM: CAIRO? FROM HILL AND WHITE.
TO: SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON, FOR GREEK WAR RELIEF
DATE: DECEMBER 15, 7 p.m.
NUMBER: 132 GREEK SERIES

CONFIDENTIAL

Total refugees now amount to 20,000; this includes recent arrivals of approximately 7500 from Greek Island, Izmir not included. Payments to Government of Greece are for expenses incurred by Greek Government and for transmission to Merra to other governments. (?) Accurate figures should be given at this time since auditors have completed only analysis figures of Merra to June 30 and Greek Government covering Syria camps, Egypt, and Palestine camps. From April 1 to December 31 refugee expenses are roughly estimated at sterling 540,000 or approximately ^{2,200,000} ~~\$21,200,000~~. Additional \$100,000 should be added for further necessary expenditure camps and refugees. Almost indefinite number of personnel can be used as listed in cable B for 21 present camps especially in nine Middle East camps. Executives are also needed. It is felt by Hill that we should have at least forty at earliest date; Near East is included. Although Dr. Myller most acceptable, understand State Department gives visas to American citizens only. In care of American Legation is cable address. More cabled shortly.

MACVEAGH

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file: m ara

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. Reese-man 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 Fryer, Chief of Mission, OFRMO
From: Messrs. Harakas, Patterson, Reekie, Shvetsoff,
Truax and Youdin.
Subject: Report on HERRA 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. G. Shvetsoff
D. G. Shvetsoff

(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 OPRRO 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 OPRRO 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. Reekie 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 4,000 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 these 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, OETA, 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 MERRA'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 \$1.50 to \$2.50, 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 200 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 arthritis; 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 OPRRO 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 NERRA 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 NERRA 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.

PRIVATE

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NOTES ON REFUGEE CAMPS
IN THE
MIDDLE EAST

from
Michael Barratt-Brown
(F.A.U. Cairo)

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FRIENDS' AMBULANCE UNIT

4, Gordon Square, W.C.1.

August, 1943.

MOSES WELLS CAMP AS A SPECIMEN REFUGEE CAMP

Site and buildings.

1. Moses Wells Refugee Camp is 27 miles east of Suez on the Gulf of Suez. It comprises some 103 acres of desert. The climate is of Mediterranean type. Summer temperatures are generally over 70° and sometimes as much as 100°. The winter is mild and the temperature rarely falls below 40° in the coldest month. The annual rainfall is 30 inches. The site presents the advantages of a coastal area and the prevalent winds are cool in summer. The sandy soil prevents the accumulation of stagnant water and allows good surface draining.

2. The site is free from the danger of bilharzia and other such diseases endemic in Egypt, since there are no irrigation canals as in the delta. There is no danger of contagion from natives. The camp is isolated and far from the nearest native-inhabited locality.

Despite the desert environment the proximity of the camp to the sea and the view of the hills of Ataka across the bay give some scenic attraction to the camp. Moreover the existence of a deep water jetty makes sea transport easy and compensates for a somewhat difficult road approach.

3. The camp consists of some permanent buildings, about 300 E.P.I.P. tents and 4 Iris huts. The buildings are used as follows :-

- a) Greek doctors quarters and mess
- b) Administrative building and officers quarters
- c) Clothing store
- d) Pump house
- e) Ration store
- f) Medical inspection room
- g) Three isolation units
- h) Two hospital buildings
- i) Two cookhouses.

The Iris huts are used as follows :-

- a) Two double huts as dining-halls, capacity 800 each
- b) One single hut as store
- c) One single hut as recreation room.

The tents are capable of holding up to 20 refugees per double tent.

The camp is so arranged (see plan) as to leave a large assembly space in the centre of the camp.

Two subsidiary camps are at either end of the main camp, one for the Greek guard and one for the native labour.

4. Two hospitals consist each of a self-contained building with its

own water supply and lighting. A kitchen is attached to each. There are 4 large wards and two small wards in each building. In addition there are three double E.P.I.P. tents for isolation cases.

5. There is a separate medical inspection room with a dispensary in charge of a qualified chemist attached. Also a fully-equipped dentist's theatre in one of the hospital buildings.

6. The kitchens consist each of a three-roomed stone building with a corrugated iron annexe. One room of each building is used as a store for dry rations. One room is fitted with sinks and is used as a scullery, the third for preparation and cooking of food. Each kitchen has a 20-ft. iron range, each annexe has 14 soyer stoves.

Organization of Staff.

1. MERRA is responsible for the administration of the camp. In charge is a British officer called Camp Administrator who is responsible to MERRA alone. All other personnel in the camp, both civilian and military, are responsible to the camp administrator.

2. The Greek officer of the guard is immediately responsible for the discipline and good order of the Greek military guard. The head Greek doctor is responsible for the health of the refugees and for hygiene in the camp.

3. The camp administrator is empowered to issue instructions for and on behalf of MERRA. His signature on receipts and issues in no way makes him personally responsible for goods or money, but it is his duty to act as responsible bailee for the property of which he and his staff are custodians.

4. The present staff in Moses Wells is shown separately. The principle on which the staff has been appointed is that British officers must be executive officers in the administration of the camp, because of MERRA's responsibility as guarantors of the refugees to the Egyptian Government, for security and movements to the British military authorities, and as Custodians of stores both to the British supply authorities and to voluntary societies. In no circumstances can MERRA and its representative officers in the camp delegate or abrogate these responsibilities.

5. The key British personnel are thus :- the Camp Administrator, the Camp Adjutant, the Liaison officer, the C.S.M. in charge of the office, the C.S.M. in charge of stores and the Sergeant in charge of labour.

6. Only the duties of the Liaison Officer need explanation at this stage. The refugees are allowed to seek interviews with the Camp Administrator daily between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. if they require assistance with personal problems. Most of the less difficult problems are referred however to the Greek speaking Liaison Officer. The cases brought to his office are many and varied. The difficulty of communication is perhaps the biggest welfare problem. The refugees are of course not allowed to leave the camp except for exceptional reasons such as special medical

treatment. The great majority of the refugees, many of whom cannot write, have relations in Egypt, U.S.A., and in other refugee camps in the Middle East and wish to get in touch with them. All who need assistance to do so are helped by the Liaison Officer. There are continual problems about the receipts of drafts of money, especially from the U.S.A., quite large sums are received by the refugees, and the Liaison Officer has the job of seeing that the money reaches the refugees for whom it is intended. The Liaison Officer also deals with complaints on the part of the refugees.

7. The following are the most common problems put before the Liaison Officer :-

- a) Negligence on the part of a soldier husband.
- b) Loss of trace of children and other relatives.
- c) Claims of pension and compensation for husband or children killed in Greece or at sea.
- d) Tracing relatives in the U.S.A. and in other foreign countries.
- e) Sending Red Cross messages to relatives in Greece.

The Refugees.

1. Nearly all the refugees are from the Greek islands and are the families of farmers, vineyard cultivators or fishermen. In peacetime they are neither well off nor desperately poor. On the whole their standard of life is low and their diet simple. The vast majority of the refugees are in general housed and clothed on a higher standard in Moses Wells camp than at home.

2. The educational standard of the refugees is very low. Moreover, they have very little conception of collective social responsibility. Appeals to them on grounds of common welfare have little effect. Little attention is paid to personal hygiene although there are many refugees who appear to have a pride of house. The refugees throw up no leaders from among themselves. Despite the desire on the part of MERRA to reduce the British staff to a minimum and to give the refugees a chance to do responsible jobs, it has been found impossible to do so to any appreciable extent.

3. In the nature of the case, refugees, in view of previous hardships and their exile, exhibit definite tendencies to complaint. The food at Moses Wells for instance is ample and well cooked. The army catering adviser took a personal interest in the messing arrangements in the camp, and attached four first class cooks to it. The ration scale is not far short of that of a fighting soldier and due account is taken of the national tastes of the refugees. The standard of feeding is probably higher than that obtaining in many countries not at war and certainly higher than that of the refugees in peacetime. Yet individual complaints against the food are still made.

An occasional check on letters shows that the wildest rumours circulate in the camps and are passed on to relatives outside who probably believe them. Possibly refugees retail these stories in order to persuade relatives to send them money. Perhaps they are the result

of commonly observed irresponsibility.

4. The greatest vigilance is needed on the part of the camp staff to prevent the hoarding and disposal of camp stores. Although refugees are not only fed, clothed and maintained in Moses Wells Camp, but also receive pocket money at the rate of 15 piastres a week as well as free cinema shows and other amenities, many of them continue to display these tendencies. There is also a certain amount of senseless and useless destructions such as the destruction of tent walls to make cleaning rags or the cutting up of blankets, and sheets to make clothes, even when there are plenty of clothes available in the camp stores.

5. Although there is no desire on the part of MERRA to over-emphasize these traits, and still less to criticize the Greeks as a people, it is necessary to point out these aspects of refugee administration clearly, since it is contended that difficulties of this sort will be met continually by anyone who has to deal with large scale refugee movements. On the other hand there is little doubt that these tendencies are somewhat superficial. Deep down there is a spirit of thankfulness for escape and gratitude for those who help them in their extremity.

Maintenance of Family Life.

1. The family instinct amongst the Greeks is very strong. Every attempt is made therefore to keep them in their family groups in the camp. Each family is allotted half a double E.P.I.P. tent which may be screened as the occupants wish. Single men and single women are accommodated separately in double tents in special areas, with beds fitted up in dormitory style. It may be of interest to note that when Moses Wells Camp was first set up, it was proposed to separate older children according to sex, but in fact the family instinct was too strong for the regulations and the refugees simply moved back into family groups of their own accord and the fait accompli was accepted.

2. Every effort is made to keep the family unit intact. No refugee is sent from Moses Wells Camp to camps in East Africa unless all the other members of the family also go. Where one member of the family has become separated from the rest and is in another refugee camp, the family is reunited. It might be added that the necessary arrangements for the movements of individual refugees take a considerable amount of administration time and constitute a heavy burden for MERRA staff.

3. Visitors are allowed in the camp. Soldiers on leave often spend several days with their families. Soldiers discharged from the army as unfit are allowed to join their families.

4. As far as possible the head of the family is made responsible for the conduct of members of the family. The family instinct is thus utilised in maintaining discipline in the camp.

Reception of Refugees in Moses Wells Camp.

1. Parties of refugees usually arrive during the night at El Shatt by train some 5 miles from Moses Wells. They are met by officers of the

Moses Wells Camp staff, who leave them to sleep in the train until dawn, when they are given refreshment. They are then embarked on barges and brought to Moses Wells jetty. There they are given breakfast before being registered and allotted to their tents.

2. The system of registering is very simple. A long roll is kept showing :-

1. Refugees number
2. Name - surname and christian
3. Age
4. Sex
5. Married or single
6. Profession
7. Passport number and other details to prove identity
8. Remarks
9. Date of arrival
10. Date of departure
11. Number of identity card issued.

The remarks column is used to denote ultimate destination, etc.

An alphabetical Index Book shows surname and christian name, number of identity card, date of arrival, date of departure.

3. Refugees on arrival are instructed to form themselves into their respective family groups. They then file past tables where particulars are taken for registration. They are issued with camp identity cards which they retain during their stay in the camp. The camp identity card is a temporary document for use in the camp and such matters as issues of clothing recorded on it.

4. MERRA identity cards, which were planned as suitable for international use, are then prepared by the camp staff from particulars given on arrival. Photographs are taken and fastened to the identity cards.

5. When a draft leaves Moses Wells Camp for another destination, the camp identity card is exchanged for a MERRA identity card which bears the same number. Throughout the time during which a refugee is in camp, he or she has a personal number for administrative purposes only. The system has proved most successful in practice. The confusion between similar and strange names is reduced to a minimum and reference in the office to numbers rather than names saves time and trouble.

6. After registration and medical examination the refugees go to their tents. In Moses Wells camp disinfection on arrival is not normally necessary, since the refugees are disinfested with their baggage in Syria. The conditions in Moses Wells are not such as to encourage bug or louse breeding. Refugees have the advantage of sea bathing when they wish or facilities for shower baths. Compulsory baths are however taken each week. These have to be taken before pocket money is drawn. They are superintended by nurses who sometimes experience difficulty in persuading refugees to get themselves wet. Inoculation in Moses Wells Camp is also unnecessary since all

refugees have been inoculated before arrival. No refugee leaves Syria unless he is fit; in addition the doctors who are in attendance at the registration carry out a close medical examination.

FOOD.

1. A revised scale of rations and a typical week's menu are shown separately.
2. Rations are drawn in the same way as army rations. Fresh rations are drawn daily and hard rations once per week. Fresh rations are cooked and eaten on the day of issue. Each cookhouse keeps its own week's supply of hard rations. There is a large ice box in each cookhouse for fresh rations. In addition to army rations, there are supplies of relief food-stuffs supplied at various times by charitable sources. The most important of these foodstuffs are flour, beans, dried milk, and certain canned goods. They are not basically necessary for the health of refugees but provide useful dietary variety.
3. The staff of the two cookhouses consists of 2 Corporal cooks, 14 native cooks, 11 kitchen boys, 34 suffragis and 16 refugee women cleaners. The large native staff is needed partly because of the difficulty of using refugees and natives together and partly because, while Moses Wells camp is still used as a transit camp, it is difficult to find a suitable permanent staff from among the refugees.
4. The food is prepared by the cooks and taken to the dining-halls in serving pans. The refugees file past the suffragis who issue plates to them and serve the food.
5. 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 hygiene reasons - that is to ensure the plates and cutlery are washed up and not left to collect flies in the tents - the work is done by natives.
6. The food is more than adequate, and well cooked. Paradoxically enough complaints about food really derive from the disproportionate part which food plays in the refugee's life. If a refugee has not to work to earn his living, and is unemployed most of the day, he appears to become increasingly critical about the conditions in which he lives. The best method of reducing dissatisfaction is to give refugees full time occupation.

CLOTHING.

1. Refugees arrive in Syria with little luggage. Perhaps they have the clothes they wear, some jewellery, photographs, correspondence, small articles of sentimental value, and a little spare clothing. In Syria they receive the minimum of essential clothing and they are issued with two blankets, knives, forks and spoons.
2. There are mixed stocks of clothing in Moses Wells Camp, donated

from charitable sources. Of this clothing 80% was provided by the American Red Cross, 10% by the Canadian Red Cross, 5% by the Greek Red Cross and 5% by the British Red Cross.

The clothing is entirely suitable for issue to refugees. There appear to be three main classes of relief clothing supplied:-

- a) First class clothing such as knitted pullovers, woollen shirts, overall suits, mostly of children's sizes made by Red Cross chapters.
- b) Second hand clothing of useful size and type.
- c) Useless new and second hand clothing, such as thousands of pairs of single shoes, dancing pumps, thin evening dresses and fur coats.

3. At first a system of individual issue in cases of proved necessity was introduced. It was unsuccessful. Those people who were the most inveterate hoarders and scroungers managed to "prove" necessity, and to acquire most clothing. Moreover, the fulfilment of any individual demand is based upon stock, and as, obviously, the larger the stock the more generous the issue, so it becomes apparent that the article which is held in sufficient stock to meet the demand of the total strength of the camp will eventually be issued to that strength, since as the availability of an article becomes apparent to the refugees, so the demand goes up. The first come first served principle means that those who are in most need rarely get clothing. Those who are turned away complain of favouritism.

4. This system has now been superseded by a general camp issue of clothing when available. Certain standard articles of clothing such as overalls for men and women and tunics and shorts for children are now being produced in the camps.

5. Experience has shown that the best practicable system in a camp such as Moses Wells is a general issue of standard clothing. With a small staff and a few leaders among the refugees, it is almost impossible to check in detail the clothing which refugees have brought from Greece or acquired in the Middle East. Some refugees have acquired unreasonable quantities of clothing. Camp inspections are only partly effective in bringing them to light, and even if they are found it is almost impossible to impound them.

6. The main clothing requirements for refugees are as follows :-

Essential Items

<u>Men and boys</u>	<u>Women and children</u>	<u>Infants</u>
Overalls (summer)	Dresses	Layettees
Trousers (winter)	Shoes	Diapers
Longsleeved pullovers (winter)	Pullovers (winter)	Bonnets
Boots	Stockings	Bootsies
Shirts	Vests	Carrying blankets
Socks	Handtowels	
Pants	Sanitary towels	
Singlets		
Handtowels		

Secondary items

Topcoes, Bootlaces, Braces, Belts, Corsets, (for medical recommended issues), Night wear (for hospitals), Gloves/Mittons.

7. Seamstresses work in the camp store repairing and altering any torn or worn garments. Cases and balos are emptied as soon as possible after receipt and the garments are dusted with naphthaline powder, folded and stacked on covered shelves. All folds are altered over periods of not longer than eight weeks when the clothing is shaken, briefly aired, re-dusted and re-stacked.

8. The large majority of female refugees are efficient needlewomen and repair and alter their own garments. Refugees show a tendency to hoard all new or serviceable clothing received and wear only rags. Psychologically this may be attributed partly to desire to accumulate decent apparel for their return home, and partly to an effort to obtain more clothing.

9. There are cobblers in the camp who repair shoes. Many of the poorer refugees have little appreciation of the value or care of their footwear. Often they ruin them immediately on receipt in order to obtain greater comfort; for example, both toe caps and heel uppers are removed.

10. There is a weekly issue of 4 ozs. of soap per head, for washing clothing.

Sanitation and Hygiene.

1. Water from cookhouses and washing places runs through grease traps into large soakage pits dug in the sand filled with old petrol tins and covered over. This method is not particularly satisfactory where the site is only a foot above sea level, since the level of the soakage pits rises and falls with the tide. A better method might be to create an artificial fall for the waste water from the cookhouses and the wash places, then to run the water in open culverts to the sea. *engineers*

2. The latrines in use are batteries of Turkish type squatting latrines. They consist of large pits with concrete cover in which holes are cut. The salt water level in the pits is within 6 ft. of the cover, and the water acts as a natural disinfectant.

3. These latrines have not proved quite satisfactory. Firstly, the pits are frequently filled with excreta at a rate faster than new pits can be constructed in which event pits become breeding grounds for flies.

4. It is now proposed to construct bucket type latrines with wooden seats and lids, and to dispose of the excreta in Helwan incinerators.

5. Washing is done at army type ablution benches covered with corrugated iron, with drainage through grease traps to soakage pits.

6. Despite the difficulties of sanitation there has been no

evidence of epidemics arising from this cause. Every effort is being made to find improved sanitary arrangements. One main problem is, however, the difficulty of providing adequate supervision to enforce hygienic standards.

Discipline.

1. Refugee facilities are allowed by the Egyptian Government providing that refugees are accommodated specially in refugee camps. In law they are under the jurisdiction of the civil authorities in Egypt. The camp administrator can restrain any person breaking the law and hand him over to the civil police. He can also withhold privileges from delinquent refugees, but he has no right of imprisonment, fining, or inflicting corporal punishment. He has the normal rights of discipline over Greek or British soldiers in the camp.
2. The problem of maintaining discipline among the refugees has complex facets. Persuasion and appeals to reason have only partial success. Moreover, the refugees are well aware that the Administration of the camp has few sanctions which it can really apply. Therefore direct orders are often flouted, and tact rather than toughness is required.
3. In the last resort it is extremely difficult to enforce an order on recalcitrant and sometimes militant refugee groups composed as they mostly are of women and children.
4. Individual sanctions which have some effect are the withholding of pocket money and the withdrawal of the right to receive visitors. The former is not always effective since many refugees possess sums of money sent from outside, and are not dependant on provision by the camp. Collective punishments which are generally objectionable include privation of pocket money, closure of the canteen, exclusion of visitors and the stopping of cinema shows.
5. The chief delinquencies which are difficult to check are such things as abstracting food from the dining halls, eating and cooking in tents, and avoiding medical inspection. Such delinquencies can best be checked by vigorous inspection, but in fact the exigencies of medical provision make this difficult.

Social life.

1. A playground for children, with swings, slides and see-saws has been set up on the camp. There is also a football pitch. Refugees have little interest, however, in organised games, and prefer to amuse themselves on the sea shore. The children join together in Greek dances.
2. A canteen has been set up in the camp.
3. Religious services are held weekly by the local priest, who also performs christenings and burials. Important Greek Saints' days are also observed. One problem was the necessity for the consecration by the Greek

priests of a special burial ground, the existing cemeteries being moslem.

4. A mobile cinema visits the camp once a week. Local troops and Red Cross concert parties have given entertainment. Twice a week a tea car of Canal Area Welfare Unit visits the camp to distribute free tea and to play music. Refugees pay for the entrance to the cinema from their pocket money.

Medical care.

1. Every refugee is inspected on arrival at the camp. One doctor and two nurses inspect the refugees in their lines every day. As stated, medical inspection is difficult, since the refugees attempt to avoid the discovery of sickness which will lead to removal to the camp hospitals. Mothers with sick children attempt to avoid inspection by moving from tent to tent.

Refugee
2. There are five Greek doctors in the camp, one dentist and one dispensary chemist. The nursing staff is supervised by a matron. It consists of two professional nurses and twenty assistant nurses. There is a training scheme in operation in the camp to train batches of young refugees as nurses. 61 girls have "qualified" as assistant nurses in Moses Wells during the last seven months.

3. There is hospital accommodation for 100 patients in the two camp hospitals and the subsidiary hospital tents. This provision is adequate. Thanks to supplies received from the Greek and American Red Crosses the hospitals are well equipped. Current medical supplies are indented from the Army.

4. An analysis of hospital admissions, medical inspection room, outpatients and births and deaths is attached to this paper. It will be seen from this analysis that a great deal of attention has been given to the medical care of the refugees. On the whole, there appear to be no significant deductions which can be drawn as to the effects of malnutrition which they suffered in Greece. After a year in the Middle East there is little, if any, sign of their past sufferings. It is true that in most cases refugees have already been out of Greece for medical statistics for Chosmo and Syria have not yet been analysed. Yet it seems fair to deduce that the effect of malnutrition have been largely overcome by the provision of adequate food, shelter and clothing. Only one case of avitaminosis has been reported and the use of artificial vitamins has not been medically necessary except in this case.

5. The constant arrival of new parties of refugees and the visits of relatives from outside the camp tend to increase the sickness rate. The relatively high death rate of young children from measles complicated by broncho-pneumonia is attributed partly to the fact that a fresh party of refugees, who had a cold and uncomfortable journey from Syria, arrived at the camp at the height of a measles epidemic and complicated influenza and bronchial diseases in the camp.

6. Of the 38 deaths recorded, 25 were of the measles pneumonia group, of the remaining 13, 9 were chronic diseases with a fatal

prognosis. The age distribution of deaths is as follows :-

0 - 2	years	.. 21	(all of the measles pneumonia group)
2 - 10	"	.. 11	
10 - 15	"	.. 2	
50 - 70	"	.. 4	

The specific death rate for measles and the pneumonia group in the camp, however, was only 2.6 per 1,000 per month. The figure for the same diseases in Greece (1938) was 2.19 per 1,000 per month. The death rate was surprisingly low..

Work .

1. It is important that refugees should be kept as fully occupied as possible. In Moses Wells Refugee Camp there have been factors militating against full employment. In its early stages the camp was purely a transit camp, and it was not possible to formulate long term occupational schemes. Secondly, the lack of leaders among the refugees themselves has made occupational or handicraft organization difficult. Thirdly equipment and tools have been scarce.

2. Some 100 refugees are working in the camp either as cleaners, kitchen assistants, needlewomen or labourers. They are paid approximately 50 piastres a week instead of the usual pocket money of 15 piastres. Although it is arguable that refugees should be expected to work in the camp without pay, it has been decided that wages should be paid partly as an incentive to work, partly to raise the status in the camp of those who work, and partly so that the more thrifty can accumulate some small capital against their return to their homes, where they have in many cases lost everything. Many sold up their homes and possessions in return for a caique passage from the islands to Turkey.

3. The following handicraft and work schemes are being put into operation :-

a) Needlework and sewing for the repair, alteration and making of clothing. It is hoped to employ 100 women in due course. 30 are employed at the moment.

b) Embroidery. The more expert needlewomen are being engaged and encouraged to do artistic work under guidance of two instructors.

c) Handwork. A workshop for the instruction of boys in woodwork and metal work and for the making of camp furniture has been established. Already some 12 refugees are working in a small workshop.

d) Cobbling. Cobblers are at work repairing shoes and boots.

e) Construction. Refugee labour is being used under R.E. direction in the extension of the Camp.

Education.

1. A school has been formed in the camp, nearly 400 children are in attendance. 7 teachers have been found from among the refugees, one of whom is qualified. Books and equipment have been donated by Cairo schools and from other sources.

2. An elementary course related to the official programme in Greek elementary schools is followed as closely as possible. The services of Greek teachers from Cairo are being obtained during the period of school summer holidays.

3. School hours are from 10 a.m. - 12.15 and from 4 p.m. - 5.30. They are restricted by the available accommodation, but special school tents are now being erected and it should soon be possible to extend the instruction courses.

4. The refugees are eager for their children to attend schools - and there are few absentees.

General.

1. On the whole Moses Wells Camp runs smoothly and efficiently. Shortage of suitable staff is perhaps the chief difficulty, but that is inevitable when manpower is as strained as it is to-day. Much of the success of the camp is due to the keenness and enthusiasm of the existing staff. The influence which they have over the refugees is considerable.

2. Experience in Moses Wells Camp illustrates the various problems which will certainly be met albeit on a far greater scale in post-war Europe. Arrangements are now in hand for training personnel in the Camp, for the part which they will be called on to play in European reconstruction. It is hoped to give members of Voluntary Societies similar facilities. Experience thus gained first hand in the field will be valuable.

GREEK REFUGEE CAMP AT SUK-EL-GAB, ALEY, nr. BEIRUTH

PURPOSE AND HISTORY

Map
This camp was originally established soon after the fall of Greece to accommodate refugees who had come out with the British Forces in their retreat and has been carried on since then to house temporarily those awaiting shipment to Central and East Africa after they have escaped from the Aegean islands through Turkey to Aleppo, where they have been sorted out - the men to the Army and the others to the camps. Nevertheless, many families at Aley have been there for over a year and all hope not to go on to Africa, but to return straight to Greece. The camp has had a bad reputation from the point of view of administration and cleanliness, but this has been much improved of recent months. There is a proposal that in the near future the present refugees should be moved on to Moses Wells and the camp used as a convalescent home, or at least part of it so used, for those refugees in all camps who could benefit from the wonderful climate and conditions.

POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION

At the beginning of August, 1943, there were about 950 refugees in Aley area; 250 in 7 hotels and large houses in one village and the rest in Suk-el-Gab in 16 more hotels and houses. The population includes about 150 men and 350 children. Most of the men are too old for the army, but some are discharged for other reasons. All the houses and hotels lie on the upper side of a road running round the mountain at about 3,000 feet above sea level with a quite magnificent view over Beirut and the Mediterranean. The place was a health resort in peace time and most of the houses belonged to wealthy Syrians and are built on the principle of a garage and store house on the ground floor and a large centre hall above with lavatories and kitchens on the east side backing into the mountain, rooms leading off on the north and south sides and a balcony to the west overlooking the sea. In addition to the houses and hotels there is a small store room behind one of the hotels, there is a house occupied by the Commandant with his office, there is a building occupied by the Greek guards and there is a small hospital with dispensary and MI room; also a shower and bathroom.

Some of the hotels have a second storcy with a gallery round the central hall. Most of these are furnished, but the houses have only beds and soap-boxes for furniture. The families who have been in the camp longest have the furnished rooms. There is some jealousy about this.

Among the houses and hotels there are one or two shops and cafes run by local Arabs in which the men can sit and talk. There are big rooms in two of the hotels which are used as schoolrooms for the children and for very occasional gatherings of the whole camp.

ADMINISTRATION

A Greek Captain, who is responsible to the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare, is the Camp Commandant. He is assisted by a few Greek OR's and an interpreter. There is in addition a Greek guard of about 12 men with an officer.

Reck A Greek corporal looks after the store room and issues the rations. A Greek doctor with a chemist and two orderlies and a nurse live in the hospital and provide its staff.

Relations between the camp and MERRA are limited to decisions about the movements of refugees which are organised through the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare. No voluntary societies appear to have taken an interest in the camp ever. The 9th Army sub area has a very limited responsibility for the camp, mainly exercised through the hygiene squad corporal who makes a daily inspection. This was instituted after it was discovered that the camp was in a very unclean and insanitary condition. The Allied Forces (Greek) Liaison Officer takes an interest in the camp.

CATERING AND FEEDING.

Rations are provided by the 9th Army, roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ army rations with variations to meet diet of Greeks. Soft rations are issued daily to one member of each family, hard rations weekly, charcoal for braziers monthly from supplies bought by commandant with money from Greek Ministry. The queue is orderly and only a few family representatives come at a time; they have other things to do. The Greek corporal does the issuing over a counter, having already weighed out units for different sizes of family. Each family has a card issued for the day which is given up for the rations and for the next day's card. There seemed to be little pilfering and no abuses.

Families cook for themselves on their little braziers either in the kitchen of the house or in the central hall. Washing up facilities are provided. Each family is issued with its own utensils and some have designed ovens, etc. and cook for each other. The mess is carefully cleared away and kitchens and halls kept spotlessly clean. Soap and scrubbing brushes are issued regularly. Rooms though used for eating as well as sleeping and living are beautifully clean and not at all smelly.

No pocket money is issued, but rations are supplemented by small purchases from the shops and cafes from savings and earnings of soldier husbands and by things brought home by soldiers on leave.

The children look well fed and full of energy. The doctor has a little milk and grapefruit juice for invalids. No complaints were made though asked for.

STORES.

No stores are kept. Rations are issued as soon as they come in. The commandant has a tiny reserve of clothing for absolute necessity. The refugees have the clothes they were issued with at Aleppo and one or two families have sewing machines and buy small quantities of cloth in the town. Some children go about without shoes, as they would at home. Everyone looked adequately dressed.

There are no gifts from voluntary societies, etc.

WELFARE.

Pring All refugees have their papers but there appeared to be no system of camp registration.

Refugees can go into the village or down to the town with permission. They use the local post office for all letters, etc.

The 350 children are divided into two age groups for classes

and are taught by two Greek teachers with some assistance.

There are no concerts, cinema shows or communal activities except an occasional visit by a Greek Minister. Most families are fairly busy looking after their children, cooking, mending clothes, cleaning rooms and taking it in turns to clean the central halls and kitchens and lavatories. The refugees seemed to be room-proud and kept their things tidy and very clean. Nevertheless a general desire was expressed for entertainments and anyone who could provide the necessary articles and start occupations - sewing, carpentry, etc. - would obviously be a godsend. The two big schoolrooms could be used for activities like dancing, singing etc.

SANITATION.

Water is rationed by only being turned on at certain times. Houses and hotels have water closets and sinks for washing up and laundry. The drains are on the municipality's sewer.

There is a communal bath and shower room and refugees have to have one bath per week at pain of having their rations cut. All looked clean.

Refuse is deposited in bins, which are collected daily by two Greek guards on a mule cart and taken off by the municipality.

An army hygiene squad corporal does a daily tour of inspection of the entire camp with the interpreter. They see that messes are cleared up and dirty families are reported to the commandant who cuts rations for continued offences. The result of this seems to be a considerable success. Apart from a few unused rooms, which were breeding flies, the camp was staggeringly clean... tiled floors scrubbed, lavatory basins flushed, sinks cleaned and all rubbish in bins.

MEDICAL.

Rahus
The small hospital has two small wards with about 6 beds each, a dispensary and an MI room. The doctor is from Chios and reputed to be good. The dispenser is a chemist with an interest in sulphonamides. There were only three cases - very minor complaints - in the hospital. Major cases go down to the hospital in the town. There has been very little disease or illness, probably mainly due to the climate. The hospital is beautifully clean and the staff seemed keen. The refugees certainly looked flourishing.

MORALE.

Morale seemed to be high. Refugees are looking forward to returning to their islands and feel that Beirut looks in the right direction. Many refugees have been there for some time and no-one seemed to expect to be moving south. The other main reason for high morale was obviously that most families are fairly well occupied just carrying on life. The Commandant appeared to be popular and respected and had some authority. The sanction of a cut in rations does not often have to be enforced, but the Commandant seemed to be capable of enforcing it, if necessary. Some occupations for the girls and old men would be a help. A dear old priest lives in one hotel, but apart from attending at the bedside of ill children, appeared to take no part in the camp. The refugees, judging by the pictures and rosaries on the

walls, seemed markedly religious. Church is apparently well attended.
The site of the camp gives absolutely no ground for complaint -
healthy, beautiful, pretty comfortable and near to a village and a town.
In short I was astonished.

Michael Barratt Brown
4.8.43.

GREEK REFUGEE CAMP AT ST. LUKE'S, HAIFA

PURPOSE AND HISTORY..

This camp was taken over to accommodate the stream of Greek refugees coming out from the islands off the Turkish coast in the middle of 1942. Many families have been sent on to Moses Wells and drafted on to Central Africa. It is expected that the present population will be drafted to Ethiopia. With this in mind those who were unfit to travel, about 65, were sorted out and sent to a hostel in a monastery outside Jerusalem.

POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION.

At the beginning of August 1943 there were 374 refugees in the St. Luke's Camp, about 130 of these being children. The camp is made up of about ten brick huts with Nissan rooves and about 50 tents, EPIP and 180-lb. It is situated next door to the military camp just above the coast road running from Haifa to Tel-Aviv, 2 miles from Haifa, just below the hills and about 400 yards from the sea. I should expect the whole camp to be washed away after a heavy rainstorm. The tents are pitched on sand to the south of the buildings with a goodly crop of thistles growing amongst them. The buildings include an administrative block, quarters for the Yugoslav Guard, two schoolrooms, dining room for the children, wash-house, two kitchens, storeroom with penthouse, carpentry shop and several dormitories for a number of the families and for the boys. During the wet weather all the families had to squeeze into the buildings. The boys have a dormitory of their own. There is no furniture besides wooden beds and soap boxes, except for a small number of iron bedsteads for the old people. Except during the rains most families prefer the tents.

ADMINISTRATION.

Staff
Capt. Vredenburg of the Ninth Army is the commandant of the camp. His staff consists of two WO's and three or four OR's. The Greek staff consists of an interpreter from Cyprus, two Greek officers and the MC, a Corporal cook and one or two other OR's. The guard consists of ten Yugoslavs. In addition there is a carpenter from amongst the refugees, who also provide the sanitary squad. Relations between the camp and MERRA are limited to the movement of refugees with the agreement of the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare. Capt. Vredenburg is responsible to Allied Forces (Reception) 9th Army. No voluntary societies appear to have taken any interest in the camp except Mc. and Mrs. Lock of the Society of Friends who have arranged to provide funds for the distribution of a pint of milk per day to all the children.

CATERING AND FEEDING.

Staff
Rations are provided by the 9th Army and sorted out by the QMSM. A British corporal looks after the actual store. The rations are divided up into those for the staff messes, those for the children and those for others. Apart from the messes all cooking is done under the

direction of a Greek corporal, who with the help of a rota of refugees produces all the food in one kitchen for the children and in another for the others. The children, boys and girls of school age, eat communally - a new institution which is very successful and popular - and the families take their food from the kitchen to their tents. They are allowed to brew up outside their tents and there have not yet been any fires. The system seems to work well and to be popular, largely because of the efficiency of the Greek cook. The tents, though used for eating seemed tidy and clean. One or two families had paved the floors of their tents with shells from the shore. The school children file through their kitchen to get their portions and take them to their hut, where the tables have been laid by a rota of refugees. The schoolmasters keep order and one of the kitchen helpers serves seconds. Families have their own utensils for which they are responsible after issue. Pocket money is now issued by the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare and a canteen has been opened where small supplements to rations can be bought. A pint of milk per day is issued to all the children. This is bought from local producers and paid for by the Friends. The children look well on it, but were apparently at one time rather below standard. The communal dining has in the opinion of the QMSM given them a better share.

STORES.

A very small store of blankets and camp equipment is kept by the QMSM with an OR to help him. The commandant keeps a very small store of clothing for very hard cases. All the refugees looked adequately dressed with the clothes they had from Aleppo and small supplementation from shops since.

There are no gifts from voluntary societies.

WELFARE.

There appeared to be no special system of camp registration.

Refugees can go into the town with permission.

The children are divided into two groups for lessons which are given by two Greek schoolmasters.

There did not appear to be any entertainments, but the refugees have their canteen room. There are one or two sewing machines. There is washing, helping in the kitchen and keeping rooms and tents clean and tidy to keep the women occupied. The girls were sweeping out the schoolrooms when I was there. More activities could be encouraged and assisted to good effect.

SANITATION.

The two long lavatory sheds in the camp have been superseded by the erection of a number of single lats to ensure that the refugees use them. These are placed all along the lines. There are two ablution benches with grease traps and soak-aways in addition to the wash room. The lats have all got elsans, which are emptied by the municipality daily. A sanitary squad of the refugees sees that all the lats

and wash rooms are kept clean. Its conscientiousness has improved recently.

Refugees have to have a bath once a week and the children once a day after their games period. Water is rationed and only on for a certain period every day or the boys would be constantly having showers. They have taken a liking to them.

The refuse is cleared daily by the municipality.

The commandant makes regular visits, so does the OMSM and so also does the Greek doctor. On the whole the camp was clean and tidy and many of the rooms and tents were beautifully kept.

MEDICAL.

The small hospital caters only for minor illness and has only about a dozen beds. The doctor and his small staff seemed competent and obviously popular with the people. There has been little illness until just recently when there has been a case of typhoid, one of diphtheria and one of mumps. The 65 who were unfit and left the camp developed trachoma when they got to Jerusalem, but there was no sign of it in the camp. It is hoped that the sudden outbreak of disease will be isolated.

MORALE.

Morale seemed to be very high and both the OMSM and Mr. and Mrs. Loch who had talked to Capt. Vredenburg about this attributed it to the recent election of a house committee by the refugees on the suggestion of the Commandant. The committee is apparently able to get a high degree of service out of the sanitary squad and to get great cooperation over the kitchen duties. Families have something to do - with those orderly duties, with their washing, with mending and sewing, but there is scope for more occupations. The men provide the sanitary and tent squads. The carpenter has a lot of work and employs several boys. One or two discharged sailors look after the canteen. The success of the House Committee may depend on the fact that a number of the refugees come from Thrace and are of a rather superior type to the usual fisherman peasant islander. Those Thracians provide all the members of the House Committee, which is composed of two men and three women and the Commandant. It was not clear whether the refugees realise that they might be going to Africa. If they do, then morale is really remarkably high. It is possible that this is due to the quite recent issue of pocket money, but I don't think entirely.

GREEK REFUGEE CAMP AT ALEPPO

PURPOSE AND HISTORY:

The two camps at Aleppo were designed for the reception, interrogation, disinfection, medical examination and sorting after a quarantine period of all the refugees coming through Turkey from the islands off the Turkish coast, from Bulgaria, Thrace, Yugoslavia, etc. The camps were the responsibility of AIO, but are now technically under the 9th Army. There are two officers responsible for interrogation. The staff has changed recently. The camps had a bad reputation some time ago, but are now quite improved. Refugees are sorted out on arrival into :-

(a) Men of military age. Their camp is purely a quarantine transit camp. Refugees are kept for 14 days and then posted to the Greek Army in Palestine. Civilians are questioned as to their preferences and then posted south for recruitment likewise.

(b) Women, children and men of non-military age. These refugees must pass through the disinfection and medical examination centre at the men's camp and then after a preliminary interrogation they are sent up to their camp, the Turkish Barracks. Here they are kept until they are ready to travel further and until camps in Syria or Palestine are ready to take them.

POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION:

The refugees are mainly Greeks from the islands off the Turkish coast, but there have been some from Thrace and the mainland, some Yugoslavs, Bulgarian Jews, etc. The camps are on the hills above Aleppo and two or three miles out of the town.

(a) The men's camp can accommodate 400, but had only about 100 in the middle of July. It has the disinfection and examination centre attached to it. The camp itself is made up of stone-walled huts with corrugated iron roofing, cool in summer but probably very cold in winter. So far they have only one stove for each barrack room. Officers, sergeants and OR's live in separate barrack rooms. The camp is closely guarded by East Africans and men are only allowed into the town during the quarantine period for special reasons. All rooms are kept very clean and tidy.

(b) The camp for women, children and men over military age occupies about a quarter of the old Turkish barracks, the rest being occupied by FF troops, mostly colonial. The barrack-rooms are divided up as follows:-

- 4 large rooms for the women and children of both sexes, cool but rather gloomy.
- 1 large room for families where there are husbands.
- 1 large room used for the school
- 1 MI room with a small hospital ward
- 1 large dining hall, a store and a canteen built like a Greek Taverna
- 1 room for showers with a laundry attached.

In addition there is a garden opposite the barracks, where refugees can sit, but in summer it is too arid and shadeless to give much comfort. All belongings are kept by bails except money which is deposited with the administration.

ADMINISTRATION/.....

ADMINISTRATION.

There are two AIO officers - Capt. Burn and Lt. Schapiro.

(a) The men's camp has an OC - Lt. Briton, a regular soldier who recently escaped from Greece and runs the camp on pleasant but efficient military lines and is very popular with the whole camp. In addition to the OC there are a number of British and Greek OR's. The administrative staff seemed quite adequate.

(b) The other camp has an OC - Capt. Harrison of the Northumberland Fusiliers. Under him he has a Staff Sergeant QM, two other sergeants and a few OR's. In addition there are a Greek doctor, two British VAD's and some refugees training to be nurses. A Lt. medical officer - Lt. Koenig - makes a daily visit. The camp seemed slightly short handed. MERRA's responsibility is limited to the movement of the non-military refugees in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare. The AIO is responsible for the interrogation, the 9th Army for the administration of the camps. There is generally a liaison officer from the Greek Army.

No voluntary societies have taken an interest in the camps.

CATERING AND FEEDING.

Food for both camps is drawn from the 9th Army and consists of about half scale army rations and is supplemented by local purchases of macaroni, beans, olives, oil, etc. to which the refugees are accustomed. Apparently it has not been found necessary to provide a special diet for those who have not been properly fed for a long time and 14 days are found to be sufficient to rehabilitate the men at least from their low condition on arrival. It must be remembered that the refugees have already been cared for for a period while passing through Turkey.

(a) The men are fed communally, but in their respective messes as in the army.

(b) The others have the same food as the men. The cooking is done by a Greek cook who is paid and permanent and the women are roped in for scullery duties - peeling potatoes and onions, picking rice, etc. There is a macaroni manufacturing room, where the refugees make their own macaroni from flour supplied by the army. There are complaints about the monotony of the diet which are unavoidable. Refugees are fairly finicky about what they eat and will not eat anything to which they are not accustomed - e.g. swedes and turnips. Meals are taken in the dining hall at 7.30, 12.30 and 6.30. Admission is by queue and tickets of admissions, to avoid people coming round twice for more. Refugees bring their own utensils in with them.

Refugees can supplement their meals at the canteen, where the women buy fruit, tea, coffee, etc. and the men can get cigarettes and beer. £2 per month is issued as pocket money for these purchases and many refugees bring out quite large sums in the form of promissory notes as the Turkish authorities allow no Greek drachma out of the country. Sums as large as £1,000 are not unusual. These are kept by the administration.

STORES.

Rations issued from the 9th army are looked after by the Staff Sergeant QM. Clothing is issued to all those who need it after disinfection of old

clothing.

(a) The men used to be put straight into uniform, but the stocks are now used up and there were cases of selling this issue in transit to Palestine. Now the men stay in their civilian clothes in which they arrived supplemented if necessary by issues made by the OC.

(b) The women are issued with what they need either in the form of clothes or of materials and they can supplement this with purchases from the canteen. A careful check is kept of all issues. There is some complaint that the clothes and materials are designed for winter wear and not for summer. There is nothing from voluntary bodies.

WELFARE.

(a) There appears to be no problem of employing the men as they are only at the camp for so short a time. In the morning they are employed on camp duties and in the afternoon they lie down - it is too hot to do anything else. In the cool of the evening they play football and hand ball. These are very popular.

(b) All the others have considerable freedom, being allowed passes into the town any day between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. with an extension for the cinema. In the afternoon the garden is open, but most refugees prefer to sit on their beds, as it is so hot outside.

The women sew, help in the kitchen, wash clothes and keep their rooms clean and tidy and go occasionally to the canteen which is open nearly all day and has nice clean table cloths, comfortable wicker chairs and the atmosphere and design of a Greek taverna.

The old men are put onto jobs around the camp in the morning, but have to be closely supervised or they take any opportunity to dash round to the canteen for a smoke and a drink. Some of the men are fully employed and paid for their work. These stay on at the camp - e.g. a boiler man, a cobbler, the cooks and sanitary squad.

The children have school in the morning in a special room with tressle tables and forms - about 20-30 boys and girls with a Greek schoolmistress. There seemed to be a lot of other children running about the camp at the same time. There is no school in the afternoon and the small boys appear to be a bit of a trouble, although there is somebody who comes in for Youth Movements and almost every afternoon the boys are taken out into the country in an army lorry for a "ramble".

SANITATION.

All refugees are disinfected with their clothes on arrival.

(a) The OC of the men's camp sees that the camp is kept very clean and tidy and this is done conscientiously and not just for inspections.

(b) The other camp has a room for showers with a laundry attached. Women wash clothes very well and frequently, but it is exceedingly difficult to persuade them to take a shower at all. There is H and C running all the time every day. Rooms are kept very clean and tidy.

MEDICAL.

(a) The men's health is reported to be very good indeed. No man is posted south until the doctor passes him fit for duty. There is a very good little

MI room with a permanent Greek medical orderly (very highly thought of). Serious cases are sent to the French military hospital in Aleppo. Only two such cases have occurred in recent months.

(b) The others have a good MI room with a resident Greek doctor, two British VAD's and some Greek girls training to be nurses. A small hospital ward of about 10 beds copes with minor illnesses and there is an isolation ward for infectious cases. Recently there had been an outbreak of measles among the children, but there was only one family in the hospital at the time nursing a mental case. Children have been born while women are at the camp, but the mothers always go down to the hospital in the town for their accouchement. There is very little illness on the whole as the site is healthy up on a hill away from the town. Mosquito nets are issued to all and there has been no malaria.

MORALE.

(a) The men only stay for so short a time that few problems arise. The OC is noticeably liked by all.

(b) Of the others the women seem contented sewing on their beds or washing clothes or helping in the kitchen, the children to have somewhat inadequate direction and the men to be quite happy with their canteen and something to do in the mornings. It is obviously an advantage having the town nearby with a cinema, shops, etc. to which the refugees can go at any time.

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P2 10-12

MERRA REFUGEE CAMPS

Director - W. T. Mathews, and his assistant, Mr. Picard, and other British Officers. Other personnel largely military. This constantly changes as they are recalled for duty.

In Iran, September 23, 1943 there were seven camps for Polish refugees with a population of 11,800. In East Africa under East African Relief Administration (not MERRA but operates through MERRA for supplies): eleven camps, Polish and Greek, located in Tanganyika, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. The population as of June 30, 1943 in this area is between 12,000 and 12,500. Of this population 12,000 are Polish and about 500 are Greek. In the Belgian Congo there are 2,700 Greek refugees. The number of camps is not known.

From the report by Dorothy Cox early 1943.

FRYER'S REPORT OF OCTOBER 27, 1943

Name of Camp: ALEPPO - Reception camp for all refugees coming out of Turkey
Location: 30 miles from Syrian-Turkish border
Personnel: Camp Commandant, lieutenant in British Army
Number of First camp consists of 200 men
refugees: Second camp consists 800 old men, women and children

Name of Camp: SOUK-EL-GHARB - Overflow camp. Ideal for old and sick people
Location: On a hill on Lebanon, overlooking Beirut
Personnel: Greek 1st Lt., seven non-commissioned officers
25 invalid Greek soldiers
Number of Composed of several small hotels formerly
refugees: summer resorts, operated by the Greek Government. It has 817 refugees (627 children under sixteen and the balance older men and women)
Rations received from British Army.

Name of Camp: HAIFA -
Location: Two miles south of city of Haifa in Palestine
Personnel: British Army Captain
four (4) British non-commissioned officers
two (2) Greek soldiers (translators)
fifteen (15) Greek soldiers as guards
one (1) nurse
Number of 425 refugees (277 children under sixteen)
refugees:

Name of Camp: MOSES WELLS REFUGEE CAMP
Location: Situated in a barren desert on gulf of Suez
15 miles southeast of town of Suez (Merra's largest operation)
Number of Between 1200 to 1300 Greek refugees-
refugees: 15% men, 55% women and 30% children
Personnel: Key personnel mostly British-
Major in charge,
Captain, three (3) Lieutenants
five (5) Greek doctors
one (1) Greek dentist
one (1) chemist
twenty-three (23) nurses
guarded by Greek soldiers
125 to 150 native men employed in camp
4,000 Greeks have been moved from Moses Wells into Ethiopia, Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. When they leave Moses Wells they are no longer under the care of MERRA.

MOSES WELLS REFUGEES CAMP
(Continued)

Practically 75% of the supplies, clothing and blankets for use of the refugees have been supplied by the American Red Cross. The balance has been given by the Canadian, Greek and British Red Cross and by some private individuals in Cairo. These are distributed by a British Lieutenant in charge of stores.

While MERRA only runs Moses Wells it acts in a consultory capacity to all other camps.

All expenses are theoretically charged against the Greek Government and all supplies, except those mentioned above are obtained from the British Army.

C
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36
September 10, 1943

Establishment of Middle East
Relief and Refugee Administration

Mr. Ryan
Assembly Hall
Main Building

V. A. TURNER

In accordance with our telephone conversation of this morning I have reviewed the material we have in the files regarding the establishment and functions of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration. This material is not as complete as might be desired due, I believe, to the return of Ralph Bain to the United States and the sudden departure of Barber for Khartoum immediately after the formation of the Administration. It is presumable that Bain reported orally on the subject and because of his illness did not prepare a written report. I have therefore brought together the various references to the Administration that I have been able to locate and have set them down in chronological order.

The earliest reference to the possibility of the establishment of such an Administration is contained in a paraphrase of cable #999 from the American Minister at Cairo to the Department of State. This cable, which was forwarded to the Chairman by the Under Secretary of State, is dated June 15, 1942. In it Mr. Kirk made the following comment and explanation:

"The lack of foresight and the makeshift methods which have hitherto marked the efforts to deal with the problem of foreign refugees in this area have been the object of concern for some time. As the influx of refugees has been threatened or materialized various welfare agencies in the Middle East have assisted in their care, up to the present there has been no organized plan for this problem as a whole although the British authorities have in general assumed responsibility therefor. With the threatened exodus of Poles from Russia and the possibility of the removal or escape of Greeks from occupied territory the possibility that a grave situation might develop at any time here becomes apparent. I, therefore, conferred with Ralph Bain, American Red Cross representative in the Middle East whose

judgment

judgment and resourcefulness have constituted a source of strength in all relief emergencies which have confronted us here, and he prepared at my request a proposal for the coordination of all Allied refugee relief in the Middle East. On the basis of that proposal the British authorities and the Minister of State in particular decided to coordinate the work of relief organizations established in this area with special reference to Anglo-American cooperation and steps were taken to form a local relief and refugee committee under the chairmanship of the British Ambassador on which I agreed to serve as well as a Central Executive Committee under the office of the Minister of State on which Mr. Bain agreed to serve as American Red Cross liaison.

"Following meetings of those committees the Minister of State sent a telegram to the Foreign Office in London stating inter alia that the refugee problem in this area might comprise over 20,000 Poles, Greeks and Maltese requiring relief within the next few weeks, that 55,000 additional Poles might reach Iran in the near future and that unless steps were taken to prevent the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Poles might come from the Soviet Union within the next months. In view therefore of the gravity and magnitude of the problem the Minister of State recommended that the entire problem be placed before the War Cabinet in London with the proposal that efforts be made to allocate refugees to South Africa, the East African colonies, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Madagascar, the Belgian Congo, Portuguese East Africa, the United States and Canada."

In section two of the cable Mr. Kirk outlined a plan for the establishment of an Inter-allied Commission to deal with refugee problems.

As a result of the receipt of this cable, we sent the following message to Barber on June 18, 1943:

"ME 131. In view information reaching us from all sources, including your reports reference present and anticipated refugee problems Iran we prepared undertake early shipment food, clothing for women, children, and medical supplies sufficient temporary

care

care 30,000 refugees, Iran. We propose consign to AMcross for distribution in accordance present general procedure but assume British prepared maintain primary responsibility relief problems that area and will welcome such Amcross assistance. Please clear immediately British authorities and advise."

To Mr. Welles note of transmittal, the Chairman replied on June 19, 1942 in part as follows:

"I have read with interest the telegram from the American Minister in Cairo with reference to setting up a governmental organization to deal with the refugee problem in the Middle East enclosed in your note of June 17th.

"I have discussed this with Mr. Richard Allen, our Vice Chairman in Charge of Foreign Operations, and we both agree that this is primarily a governmental problem and concur in the recommendations of Alex Kirk. As the refugees are in British controlled territory, it is necessary that the British will take the lead and responsibility. I regret to say, however, that thus far the British have done an awfully poor job in all their refugee and relief undertakings. For that reason, when something along this line was first submitted to us we thought it unwise to have the American Red Cross represented on the Committee over which we really have no control and thus get the brunt of a failure to do a creditable job. With the view, however, of being of as much assistance as possible in a situation where we do not have the control, we suggested that our representative, Mr. Bain, should act as a liaison in order that we might be of as much help as possible. The supplies which we sent to the Middle East are now practically all distributed but if transportation is available we could, of course, send additional supplies....."

"The British will want us to do the job, but if they are in command, as they should be under the circumstances, we simply would be unable without a free hand to do a creditable job which the American Red Cross is accustomed to doing. Therefore, we should take a secondary place and help as much as we can under the circumstances.

In a memorandum covering a conference with Messrs. M. T. Matthews, Pickard, Barber and Bain on June 23, 1942, Mr. Bain stated:

"As a result of cable ME-131 from Washington, we

contacted

contacted the British authorities in connection with relief for Poles.

"Mr. Matthews is to be in charge of the MERRA (Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration) under the Minister of State, who has full authority and control. A special policy committee on refugee activities has been formed as part of the War Council in which the American Minister and the British Ambassador serve with the Minister of State.

"As a result of our conference with Mr. Matthews, the following information and recommendations were obtained:

"The British authorities will assume the primary responsibility for relief problems in the Middle-East. They most heartily welcome Amcross assistance. They anticipate bringing refugees from Persia and establishing a camp at Basra where they will be moved by boat to their final destination somewhere in South Africa. The whole scheme to be operated as a coordinate plan under the M.E.R.R.A..

"The Poles are to remain in Persia only during a reconditioning and transitory period. An effort is being made to cooperate with the Russian authorities to control the exodus of Polish refugees from Persia and to give proper care for those entering the Middle East.

"The British Army is to provide basic rations. The A.R.C. is requested to cooperate by supplying such needed items to overcome malnutrition and supplement Army rations....."

On June 25, 1942, Mr. Bain cabled:

"155. Your 131. All British Relief activities now being coordinated under Minister of State, known as Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration, with Matthews as Director. Conference today clarifies following. Greek children scheme held up due to recent developments. British accept primary responsibility and welcome Amcross assistance. British Army to furnish rations for refugees with result that milk, soup powders and vitamin concentrates will be urgently needed."

A report

A report prepared by Mr. More on September 3, 1942, with regard to the discussions at an inter-office conference, held on September 1, to discuss the problems of present and future Middle East Relief Operations, contains the following:

"Mr. Bain made the following statements: '....With the establishment of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration under the Ministry of State, the British have recognized the necessity of some central organization for the care and movement of refugee groups. This organization under the capable administration of Mr. Matthews and with the authority and financial backing of the Ministry of State would appear to be an effective group with whom the American Red Cross could cooperate in any future program of expansion.' "

In a letter to Mr. Welles dated September 10, 1942, the Chairman stated:

"I am further informed that there has been, until recently a notable lack of coordination on the part of the British authorities responsible for relief operations in the Middle East, but that largely due to the efforts of Mr. Kirk, our Minister, the situation has now been greatly improved by the establishment of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration, directed by Mr. M. Matthews, who is in turn directly responsible to Mr. Casey, the British Minister of State. The Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration is now responsible for all care of refugees, including temporary care, care during the evacuation to other reception areas, and for their eventual repatriation."

A memorandum prepared by Mr. Bain, on the arrival of Polish and Greek refugees in East Africa, dated November 7, 1942, commences: "Today I interviewed Mr. Pickard at MERRA who is assistant to Mr. Matthews, in charge of the movements of refugees." This is the only reference I have been able to discover among our records which deals with the composition of the administration and the individual assignments of its personnel.

However, in a report to Mr. Homer Davis, Acting Director of the Greek War Relief Association, dated at Cairo, December 19, 1942, Miss Dorothy H. Cox, a field representative of that association makes the following explanation of the means MERRA uses for the accomplishment of its work:

"MERRA

"MERRA is a going concern with which no other set up could hope to compete, both because of its experience and its resources. It draws freely on the British Army. Army personnel is used for management of the camps, for doctors in the hospitals, for instructors in handicrafts, etc. For supplies, they have access not only to Army stores but to British Red Cross and American Red Cross supplies. The American Red Cross is working with them in a way that our smaller agencies would do well to emulate. They have had a long familiarity with this situation of which we are just beginning to learn something."

In a later report sent from Ankara on January 2, 1943, Miss Cox adds this further explanation regarding the composition and activities of the Administration:

"The people who have been of greatest assistance to me have been the MERA pronounced as one word. It is a British set-up the Middle East Relief and Refugee Association, the head man Mr. M. T. Mathews, most extraordinarily able, delightful and kindly, and his assistant, Mr. Pickard, an ex-Oxforddon, high strung, intelligent, a driver. This organization which is responsible for both the refugees and relief in occupied countries is part of the British Mid. East G.H.Q. They run their camps with army personnel, they draw their supplies from the Army hence have access to Lend-Lease, but there is no red tape, they draw direct (through Fred Winant) without going through other channels. This being so there is nothing I could contribute to which they do not already have access. Their medical supplies they got largely (80%) from the American Red Cross. The Red Cross works in no sort of competition with them, but cooperates and works through them. The only one of their camps I have seen so far, Moses Wells opposite Suez, is a model of organization. Captain Ralli (British Army and son of the well known Ralli Brothers) is in charge, the doctors are Greek Army, the rest of the staff British Army, mostly officers with a couple of non-coms on convalescent leave. Only two, Captain Ralli and one other are permanent....."

Van Arsdale Turner
Acting Assistant Director, Civilian Relief
Insular and Foreign Operations

American Red Cross

File - Greek War Relief
37
MJB

Gen. Lehman
The
Kantovsky
Eschborn
AIRGRAM

Cairo

Dated September 10, 1943

Rec'd September 16, 12 noon

Secretary of State,

Washington

A-10, September 10, 5:10 p.m.

Department's Greek Series 21, August 26th.

For Greek War Relief Association from George White:

"Summary situation after satisfactory conferences American, Greek and MERRA officials. In general camps appear operating satisfactorily under present administrations. Believe best immediate assistance from Greek War Relief reimbursement approved expenditures retroactive to April first. At present MERRA directly responsible administration 1400 refugees two camps Syria, 700 two groups Palestine, 1300 Moses Wells. Cyprus 5000 administered local Greek Committee appointed by and under supervision Colonial Government. Belgian Congo 2400, ten localities administered Belgian Government local Greek community cooperating but small and resources limited. Abyssinia 800 two camps 500 additional going soon third camp. Present administration under local Greek Committee with limited funds likely require assistance soon. Tanganyika 500 in transit under Colonial administration, ultimate destination uncertain. Total 12,100. Few constantly filtering in. MERRA overhead expenses borne entirely by British Government, their camps largely staffed by British officers on Army pay, neither item charged to Greek Government. These camps draw British Army rations, therefore food costs low. Careful analysis MERRA expenditures April to June, deducting equipment having resale value also special contributions private organizations, total 24,000 all moneys quoted in pounds sterling. This amount covers food, transportation, local wages, pocket money, clothing, medical and miscellaneous supplies. In addition Greek Government Welfare Department has some expenses in MERRA administered camps which we are now analyzing approximately 11,400 for quarter ending June. Cyprus accounts submitted direct Colonial Office London, MERRA has no detailed knowledge. Estimate for year 1943 was about 20,000 monthly. We question policy Cyprus cash allowances but doubt advisability changing now. Belgian

Congo

-2- #A-10, September 10, 5:10 p.m., from Cairo

Congo accounts submitted direct Foreign Office London. MERRA has some statistical and narrative reports regarding Congo but no detailed financial statements. Summary refundable expenditures quarter ending June 30th: MERRA 24,000, Greek Government Welfare approximately 11,400, Cyprus 55,000, Congo rough estimate 25,000, total 115,400. Suggest we arrange certified accountant examine accounts these four administrative and disbursing agents certifying proper vouchers inspected for items Greek War Relief considers reimbursable and then Greek War Relief refund to each agency these expenditures giving to Greek Government copies of accountant's statements and duplicate receipts for cash refunded. This to be done quarterly which is fiscal period for MERRA to close its accounts for submission to London. Congo would require trip there to arrange accountant's certificate. Action on Abyssinia delayed pending further information now unavailable. For future coordination and financial control recommend organization committee under Presidency Greek Prime Minister suggested MERRA's memo July 6th and Greek Prime Minister's July 28th restricting our participation to refugees outside Greece as per your cable August 24th. Regarding your suggestion Greek War Relief take complete charge certain camps mentioning Cyprus in particular we feel due to delicate situation existing between Government and local population that it is unwise to ask for full control. We are already assisting in development special handicraft and welfare activities made possible by generous special contribution from England. Believe satisfactory arrangements for cooperation can be made with Cyprus Government. MERRA suggests Greek War Relief take full financial responsibility Congo or Abyssinia or both. No reports any sort available on Abyssinia. Greek Minister Welfare now in Abyssinia following visit to Congo. If you wish we can meet him there to investigate conditions and determine advisability of accepting full responsibility. Meanwhile request authorization search locally two women undertake occupational and welfare work Moses Wells under supervision Mrs. White. This welcomed by MERRA. Publicity must be planned diplomatically so as not to prejudice assistance also being given by other private agencies but believe this can be arranged through Greek Government and other means. Present organization title when used abroad has no suggestion American origin. Suggest for consideration Greek War Relief of America. Had already contacted Mouratiadi committee will follow up suggestions your cable September 3d."

KIRK

GW/WB/rag

(4) MERRA

Paraphrase of Outgoing Telegram

FROM: BERLE (ACTING) STATE DEPARTMENT
TO: AMERICAN LEGATION, CAIRO (EGYPT)
DATE: AUGUST 24, 1943, 11 p.m.
NUMBER: GREEK SERIES NO. 20.

CONFIDENTIAL

YOUR GREEK SERIES 27, JULY 30, 10 a.m., 31, AUGUST 3, 9 a.m.,
and 32, AUGUST 3, 10 a.m.

SEE STATE DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTIONS NO. 419, date May 5, 1943 to LEGATION
AT CAIRO.

Mr. George White, Nicosia, Cyprus, is being appointed by the
Greek War Relief Association, as its representative and asking him on
proceeding to Cairo to undertake discussions regarding the Association's
proposed participation in aid to the Greek refugees in Africa and the
Near East with MERRA and the Greek Government. Self-explanatory and
detailed instructions from the Association are being transmitted for
delivery to Mr. White by separate telegram.

Mr. White should be rendered appropriate assistance.

You should, however, emphasize to him that he should limit
himself strictly to refugee matters and should not discuss post-war
relief question in his participation in any committee. Mr. Trscouderos'
misunderstanding should be corrected by recalling to his attention of
the language of the penultimate paragraph of my letter regarding the
Greek Government's appeal for financial assistance to the Greek Ambassador,
a copy of which was enclosed in the Department's instructions noted in
reference. Plans of the Greek War Relief Association to undertake a

program of assistance for the Greek refugees in Africa and the Near East are approved by this Government, and necessary arrangements will be made for extending good offices. It should be clearly understood, however that the Association's proposals are private ones and as such must be in accordance with the laws and regulations governing relief societies administered by the President's War Relief Control Board, and that this Government is in no way responsible for them.

M E R R A

See file: Greek War Relief Association

for airgram of July 7, 1943 from Cairo, for proposed
coordination between MERRA and Greek War Relief
Association - Reply, Aug. 24 to Legation, Cairo.

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

(42) MERRA

c/o W.T.Mathews,
Middle East Relief &
Refugee Administration
c/o G.H.Q., M.E.F.

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

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 Matthews, 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

11th August, 1943

Director General,
M. E. R. R. A.

It is generally accepted that Voluntary Workers will be required in the Balkan territories to be dealt with by A.T. (B), under two headings,

- (i) Medical
- (ii) Relief

2. In order to achieve this object certain personnel and equipment will, in principle, have to be supplied by Voluntary Societies organised by you and functioning in the territories under the C.A.B.

3. I understand that in order that you may be in a position to call upon Voluntary Organisations for assistance you want a statement from C.A.B. as to what personnel and equipment will actually be required.

4. With this object in view, the following is the position:

- (a) If C.A.B. are called upon to send Administrations into any of the four countries under study (Greece, Dodecanese, Albania, and Yugoslavia), Voluntary Organisations as referred to above will definitely be required.
- (b) It is impossible to say precisely when, or where, as this depends on the international situation and the result of military operations
- (c) It is probable that the notice that we shall be able to give you in requesting such assistance to be definitely sent in will be very brief
- (d) It should be pointed out that the C.A.B. can in no way hold itself responsible for accomodating or otherwise look after any voluntary personnel in the period before going in to the territory

5. With these reservations it is considered that the following personnel and equipment on a minimum basis should be prepared.

Medical Personnel

- (i) Individual Health Welfare Workers - 120 persons
women (possibly to include teams to start recruitment to national societies and to give general health instructions)
- (ii) Mobile Medical Teams....30 270 persons
composed of: 1 MO
1 Nurse
1 Nursing Assistant

- 1 Hygiene and sanitation man
- 1 clerk interpreter
- 4 Driver orderlies

(One of the team to be the administrative leader)

- (iii) Disinfector Units ... 10 20 persons
- 1 MO Bacteriologist
 - 2 laboratory technicians
 - 2 general duty orderlies
 - 1 clerk interpreter
- (iv) Medical Stores Officers and Assistants 40 persons
(to include at least some dispensers)

Medical Equipment and Stores other than vehicles:

This is already on order through C.A.B. channels and will be handled in the field by above personnel

Refugee and Relief Personnel

- (i) Teams to deal with Refugee and Relief Problems 100 persons

It is particularly requested that the individuals selected as leaders of these teams should be competent administrators with common sense and tact, who could with advantage be given some C.A.B. training, and it is further requested with this in view that they should be made available as soon as possible.

Refugee and Relief Equipment

No equipment for Refugee camps, soup kitchens, etc., has been ordered. Thus any equipment which Voluntary Societies can provide will be valuable. It is particularly important that voluntary societies should as far as possible provide adequate equipment and transport for the team themselves.

Transport

It is particularly emphasized that transport is likely to be very short. Any transport therefore that can be made available from Voluntary sources will help very considerably in meeting the medical, relief and refugee problems.

(signed) A. Parsons
Major General
CHIEF CIVILAFFAIRS OFFICER

Letter of A. Parsons
Cory Leppner

(COPY)

ATB/26520

CIVIL AFFAIRS BRANCH,
G.H.Q., M.E.F.
Extn. M. E. 523-4

31st July, 1943.

Mr. W. T. Matthews,
Director General,
M. E. R. R. A.

Civil Affairs Branch vis-a-vis Voluntary Organisations.

General Principles

I understand you had a discussion yesterday with Lt. Col. Smith-Dorrien and Major Keswick regarding the general principles concerning the relationship between Civil Affairs Branch and the Voluntary Organisations. I write to confirm these general principles as set out below.

1. C.A.B. will only deal with Voluntary Organisations locally through MERRA. All requests, information and instructions from C.A.B. to the voluntary organisations will pass through this single channel, and MERRA will be responsible for co-ordinating the various Voluntary Organisations and for conveying to them C.A.B. decisions.
2. C.A.B. having decided what assistance it requires from Voluntary Organisations will communicate these decisions to MERRA only. C.A.B. will make no general recommendations with regard to relief--short or long term--other than specific requests.
3. C.A.B. will keep MERRA informed regarding the limits of its planning and estimated provisions to meet that planning. Any further or additional preparations beyond C.A.B. limits will be the responsibility or for the consideration of the Voluntary Organisations. C.A.B. will make no recommendations for any plans other than its own estimated demands for the emergency period.
4. C.A.B. in employing voluntary aid will undertake no legal or financial obligations except in providing transport to the occupied territories and facilitating the drawing of army food rations against payment or credit by the Voluntary personnel.
5. All Voluntary Organisations' personnel who are permitted to go to occupied territories during the emergency period of military responsibility will be under the control and discipline of C.A.B.

(A) The following is an example showing how principle 2 above will work....

C.A.B. will estimate the number of hospital nurses considered necessary during the period of military

responsibility in Greece and will request MERRA to assist by arranging for Voluntary Organisations to provide the necessary trained personnel. This in no way limits the scope of the Voluntary Organisations in making their own estimates for long term relief.

- (B) Similarly to illustrate principle 3, the procedure will be as follows....

C.A.B. will inform MERRA regarding its planning for Civil Supplies of clothing to meet estimated essential demand during the military responsibility period--i.e. the basis on which estimates are being calculated and the actual amount of clothing being prepared by C.A.B.

With this knowledge of C.A.B. limited commitments the Voluntary Organisations will be able to make their own estimates for the longer period of rehabilitation on possibly a more generous scale and to meet other phases of destitution and relief which do not come under military responsibility.

(Sgd.) A. PARSONS

Major General.
CHIEF CIVIL AFFAIRS OFFICER.

JK/GDT

MERRA

See file: Private Agencies - Cairo Council of
Voluntary Agencies: for memorandum
28 October 1942, for list of Cairo
Demands for Relief Units and Number
of Workers Sent from British Voluntary
Societies