

Programs with Respect to Relief
and Rescue of Refugees: Permanent
Resettlement

Egypt

C
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WAR REFUGEES

There are several war refugees camps in Egypt operated by the Middle East Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, a British organization soon to become a part of UNHRA. The attitude of the Egyptian Government toward refugees is that all refugees are here on a temporary basis only and considered as being in transit. Before entering the country, refugees must be sponsored by some governmental agency, such as MARRA, which guarantees to take care of them and to transport them out of the country when the war is over.

The Legation has sent an ~~aide-memoire~~ to the Egyptian Government, asking for its cooperation as a member of the United Nations in the work of helping persecuted minorities. As an Arab state, Egypt will probably not agree to the permanent settlement of Jews in Egypt until the whole Arab-Jewish question in Palestine has been resolved. There will probably be no difficulty in obtaining permission for the entry of Jews into Egypt for duration residence in camps. Mr. Archer, the chief American UNHRA representative here, told me that if Jews or other refugees can be gotten out of occupied Europe UNHRA will find a way to take care of them. Refugees in considerable numbers are coming over from Yugoslavia now via the Italian mainland through the cooperation of the Partisans. There is a camp for them at El Shntt (near Suez) which now contains about 12,000 refugees, and it is expected that it will have 25,000 by the end of March. Large numbers of Greeks are escaping by the Aegean and Dodecanese Islands. I have enclosed a table showing the number of Greek refugees in various camps. I have also enclosed two reports on Polish refugees which may be of interest. I intend to get more information on the war refugee situation in the near future.

GREEK REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS AS
OF DECEMBER 31st AS REPORTED BY M.E.R.E.A.

<u>ALBPEO & ANHAK</u>	Constant movement of refugees in transit	
<u>SOUK EL GHAR</u>	.....	858
<u>NUBERAT</u>	.....	5,000 approx.
<u>JERUSALEM</u>	.....	350 "
<u>MOSES WELLS</u>	.....	2,000 "
<u>CYPRUS</u>	.....	5,000 "
	(normal refugees)	
	(ex Dodecanese) recently arrived . . .	2,451 "
<u>ARIESINIA</u>	Dire Dawa) .	
	Addis Ababa	750
<u>TANZANIA</u>	(Kigoma).	513
<u>BELGIAN CONGO</u>	Total of	2,432
		<hr/>
		19,311

<u>STANLEYVILLE</u>	Bania & Irama	641
	Djadju	82
	Muhaji	130
<u>COSTERMANSVILLE</u>	Boni	175
	Lubero	166
	Ovira	138
<u>RUANDA URUNDI</u>	Kitega	237
	Nyansa	138
<u>ELIZABETHVILLE</u>	Munshi	487
	Mituru	251

Translation of the Polish Minister Delegate's Report

on

Polish Refugees

In answer to your request for information on December 31st I wish to report that Polish Refugees evacuated to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia are cared for in two different ways:

1. Refugees (1800 people) evacuated to Palestine, most of them via the Balkans originally, receive monetary assistance as follows:

LP 12.00.0	monthly	per	person
LP 23.00.0	for	a	family of two
LP 33.00.0	"	"	" " three
LP 40.00.0	"	"	" " four
LP 47.00.0	"	"	" " five or more

With this allowance, they meet all their subsistence expenses.

However, in addition, the Government furnishes them periodically with clothing, medical and dental care. Restaurants serve meals at low prices. They also benefit from cultural and educational instruction in schools and libraries, such as educational courses, lectures discussion groups, etc.

2. On the other hand, refugees evacuated beginning in the spring of 1941 from Russia to Iran, and from there to British East Africa, Rhodesia, and India, received Government subsistence. They are gathered in refugee camps and receive living quarters, food, and to a certain extent clothing. Furthermore, the refugees living in camps receive a certain amount of pocket money. In the camps in Iran, this amounts to 180 rials monthly per person for those persons over 16

years of age who are not regularly employed. Children under 16 years of age receive 90 rials a month. Pocket money increased since our last report, due to increased cost of living according to Polish Government. In India, this monthly allowance amounts to ten rupees per month for persons not employed, who are over 16 years of age, and 5 rupees per month for children from twelve to sixteen years of age.

In all camps refugees are required to perform all house-keeping duties. In India, the minimum hours per week for such work is twelve, while in Africa, the minimum is three hours per day.

Refugees working in East Africa on farms receive wages from one to one and a half shillings per day, in addition to their board and lodging in the camp. Specialists receive in addition to this basic subsistence, remuneration for work done, as follows:

Fireman in Bombay receive thirty rupees monthly
Chauffeurs receive from 75 to 150 rupees monthly

Specialists receive better pay. For instance, personnel on the transport which left in September last year from India to Mexico, received in addition to their food as follows:

Doctors - 220 rupees per month
Nurses - 100 rupees per month
Female teachers - 100 rupees per month
Nursery school aides - 65 rupees per month.

Unskilled workers on the same transport were paid a wage of 35 rupees per month.

In Iran, unskilled workers engaged by the Polish Legation

receive from 400 to 500 rials monthly. In addition, the Government furnishes food, clothing, lodging, medical and dental care. The skilled worker or specialist is paid better. The monthly wage of a nurse, public school teacher, and nursery school aid amounts to 800 or 900 rials. Head nurses and assistant doctors earn from 1200 to 1300 rials per month, and a doctor earns 2800 per month.

Translation of Memorandum from Polish Minister
of State dated February 10, 1944

As a rule, all expenses for the upkeep of the refugees and the construction of shelter for them is paid by the Polish Government. An exception to this is a group of 400 refugees in North Rhodesia known as the "Cyprus Group" which is financed by the British Government, and a group of 500 children in India, supported by Maharajah Nawagaru.

All Polish administrative medical, hospital and educational personnel, are being paid by the Polish Government.

The cost of transporting refugees to their destination, as well as the expenses connected with the upkeep of transient camps is assumed by the British Government.

British personnel are engaged in the administration of the Polish Refugee camps; and the commandants of the camps and other administrative personnel are paid by the British Government.

In territories where Polish refugees are located the financial arrangements are as follows:

1. Palatins, Syria, Lebanon -- about 5000 refugees. All funds needed for the upkeep of the refugees are supplied by the Polish Government which remits for this purpose monthly allowances. At present, the amount remitted for this purpose is about 70,000 pounds monthly. This amount may be increased because of increases in the number of refugees due to demobilization of some of the Polish soldiers from active duty, such as invalids.

2. Iran -- About 10,000 refugees. The cost of upkeep of Polish refugees in Iran at present amounts to 120,000 pounds monthly. This amount is advanced by the British Government which is then reimbursed by the Polish Government in London.

The British Government covers expenses connected with the transportation of refugees to Iran as well as to the transient camp at Ahwas and Karachi.

3. India -- About 4,000 refugees. The Government of India advances the cost of upkeep in refugee camps, settling these amounts later with the Polish Government in London. The average cost of the upkeep of refugees per month in India is about 34,000 pounds.

4. East-Africa -- About 16,000 refugees. Detailed information about the cost is not in our possession. The Governments of various colonies advance the needed supplies for the upkeep of our refugees submitting at a later date, an itemized statement. At this time, we estimate the expenses for this territory and about 100,000 pounds monthly.

Aside from the above mentioned amounts necessary for feed and lodging for the Polish refugees, the Polish Government has expended a large amount for the purchase of clothing, as well as special foodstuffs (for children) and medical supplies.

Moreover, for certain definite purposes, i.e. educational help, and clothing for children, the Polish National Council in the U.S. contributes certain funds.

5. South Africa -- A camp for about 500 orphan children situated in Oudtshoorn near Capetown is being supported by the Polish Government. Local philanthropic organizations contribute certain assistance to this camp.

Summarizing: Polish refugees in all areas number 36,400 of whom all but 900 are financed by the Polish Government at about 330,000 pounds sterling monthly. The 900 are in Rhodesia and India and are financed by the British government.

GREECE - PRISONS (Food)

USAFINE intercept dated Feb. 15, 1944

Source : A refugee

Here are listed some of the chief food prices on the basis of 3,000,000 drachmas to one gold pound as of January 7, 1944.

Olive oil	450,000 drachmas per eke			
Bread	60-70,000	"	"	"
Vegetables	25-30,000	"	"	"
Dry Beans	120-130,000	"	"	"
Sugar	250-300,000	"	"	"
Meat	400,000	"	"	"
Small Fry (maridhes)	200,000	"	"	"
Fish	350,000	"	"	"
Corn	60,000	"	"	"
Wheat	70,000	"	"	"

The sub-source has had information since the beginning of January that the value of one gold pound has increased to 4,000,000 drachmas, and food prices have gone up in proportion. Ordinary people cannot afford to pay these extremely high prices, but the Red Cross "Popular Soup Kitchens" (laika eisitia) are improving every day, and now one can hardly say that people are dying of starvation.

SECRET

Dispatched: June 9, 1944. *Cairo*

From: American Embassy near
Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

CONTROL COPY

Received: June 14, 8 AM

The Secretary of State
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JUN 14 1944

A-21, June 7, 1 p.m., 1944.

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

With reference to the Department's telegram no. 1283 of May 27, 1944, 10 p.m., for Murphy from the War Refugee Board, I have obtained the following report from Mr. Matthews, Chief of the Balkan Mission of UNRRA, regarding the acceptance of further Yugoslav refugees in Egypt.

"On the first of January 1944 UNRRA was asked to accept responsibility for 20,000 Yugoslav refugees in the Middle East. The Egyptian Government agreed to accommodation in Egypt, and staff, supplies and services were made available by the British Army. Later the total ceiling of refugees was increased to 25,500. Up to the 1st of June some 26,000 refugees had actually arrived in Egypt. Camp space has provided no difficulty and sufficient stores are being made available to equip the camps. The British Army has been able to supply administrative personnel, but there has been great difficulty in providing sufficient transportation and it has been impossible to find adequate medical staff.

In the middle of May a request was received by UNRRA to take responsibility for further numbers of refugees, bringing the total ceiling up to 40,000. In view of the proposed take over of UNRRA by UNRRA as of May 1st, it was necessary to get UNRRA's Washington approval. This approval was forthcoming on condition that the Army would make available the necessary administrative and medical staff, supplies and other army services. This the Army agreed to do, but the actual shortage of doctors was such that sufficient staff could not be made available

from

Cairo

A-21, June 7, 1944. From: American Embassy near
Government of Yugoslavia.

from army sources to enable refugees to be received. Until more doctors and nurses can be made available either from civilian or military sources in practice the limit of reception must stand at 40,000.

It may be assumed that no objection is likely to arise from the Egyptian Government to increases in the number of Yugoslav refugees accommodated in Egypt. The limit to reception of refugees is likely to be set primarily by the availability of staff, especially of medical staff and also increasingly by the shortage of supplies. The British Army is no longer to make available E.P.I.P. tents for the expected arrivals and at an early date other supply shortages will make themselves apparent. With the increase of the number of refugees the transport position is also likely to cause considerable difficulty."

The Medical Division of UNRRA has also orally emphasized to this Embassy that the problems of obtaining sufficient medical, sanitation and nursing personnel, medical and sanitation supplies (especially the latter) as well as transportation and tents, at present preclude the acceptance by UNRRA of more than the 40,000 refugees specified by Mr. Matthews. It is further reported that the refugees now in Egypt, both adults and children, and the American and British workers among them have already, due to the lack of proper sanitation supplies, been exposed to unhealthful conditions, and that many refugees, especially children, are today suffering from various diseases brought about by these conditions.

The Medical Division further points out in this general connection that UNRRA's assumption of responsibility for these refugees was made conditional on its obtaining assistance in both personnel and supplies from the British and American Armies. The British Army has, it is said, supplied with considerable difficulty a certain number of personnel and considerable supplies. On the other hand the American Army has advised that it has no authority to furnish either personnel or supplies for this purpose.

Accordingly

70041

Cairo

A-21, June 7, 1944.

From: American Embassy near
Government of Yugoslavia.

Accordingly, it has been suggested that it would be of considerable assistance if the War Department were approached with a view to its authorizing USAFLIM to furnish sanitation and medical supplies against payment, and also any personnel that may be available, if necessary, such supplies being limited to only those not available from the British Army. If, in addition, the American Army could supply means of transportation and E.P.I.P. tents this would help the task of the UNRRA considerably. I understand that the USAFLIM has already cabled Washington regarding these UNRRA requirements but has as yet received no directives.

A further question which has arisen is that of stateless refugees, since the Egyptian Government's regulations as to guarantee of repatriation after the war now prevent such persons being received in Egypt. Yugoslav Jews are not affected by this difficulty but I am informed that Jews of Hungarian and other enemy origin are classified by the Egyptians in this category and refused admission to camps here.

Repeated to Algiers for Murphy.

MacVeagh

HAH/me

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CONTROL COPY

3 War Refugee Bd.
(Trus)

American Embassy near the
Government of Yugoslavia.

Cairo, Egypt,
March 14, 1944

No. 18

X

SUBJECT: Ambassador's visit to the Yugoslav
Refugee camp at El Shatt, in Egypt.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on February 19th I visited the new Yugoslav refugee camp at El Shatt, in the western part of the Sinai Peninsula, a few miles from Suez. I was accompanied by the head of the Middle East Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Mr. Matthews, and by my special assistant for Economic Affairs, Mr. Henry Hill.

The U.S.A. is operating this camp, which is still under construction on an immense scale, with a view to accommodating some 27,000 refugees. When completed it will measure 10 miles on a side and thus cover 100 square miles of desert. At present only a few thousand refugees are housed here, but more are coming in nearly every day, and a trainload actually arrived during our visit. All the refugees now here have been brought from the Balkan coast by the British, via Bari. They are partisan sympathizers and many of them wear the red star of Tito. I am informed that all the rest who are coming are also expected to be from Palestine, and to be partisan sympathizers. All ages and both sexes are included, and I saw numerous young men and young women who were said to have already fought in Tito's ranks and "got their man", though both Mr. Matthews and later the British ambassador assured me that the appearance of fitness presented by these warriors of both sexes is deceptive, and that in fact all the refugees of military age being accommodated in this camp have some disability, from wounds or otherwise.

When we arrived at the camp, where we talked with the British Major Commanding and visited the hospital, there was a mass meeting going on. The refugees are divided into committees or Soviets, and the Major was

about

about to address the representatives of these in an effort to quell what he called a "terroristic campaign" on foot in the camp. Rumors were being circulated that the British had brought the refugees here to starve in the desert, that they were to be surrounded by barbed wire, etc., etc. Furthermore, it had come out that a number of Chetniks had escaped from Yugoslavia undetected in the crowd of partisans, and such a danger had arisen that these might be liquidated in hot blood that the British had been forced to come to their rescue. I saw twelve such persons at the Greek camp a few miles away. They were pitiful creatures, mostly old women and children, but nevertheless the British authorities assured me that their danger had been real and acute. The British Commandant said he had the members of the supreme Soviet on his side for the maintenance of law and order, and had little doubt but that his address, to be followed by another from them, would calm the situation. I did not wait to hear the speeches, but that order was maintained appears to have been the case, since no further trouble has been reported. This incident may serve to emphasize the different problems presented by this camp from those which characterize the Greek camp at "Cses" (see my despatch No. 70 of March 1st). The Greeks have politics in their heads but the Yugoslavs have hatred in their hearts. To such an extent is this last remark true that the Yugoslav refugees have refused even to be ministered to by nurses they suspect to be sympathetic to King Peter's Government, and it is obvious that if Americans are going to be assigned to El Shatt, only genuine Americans, like Mr. Wilson Todd now working there, or Yugoslav-Americans of undoubted partisan sympathies, will have any chance of success.

Respectfully yours,

Lincoln Cowleigh

sent in original and hectograph to Department.

File No. 648
L'acov/efb

CONTROL COPY

3. War Refugee Bd

American Embassy near the
Government of Greece.

Cairo, Egypt,
March 17, 1944

No. 70
X

SUBJECT: Ambassador's visit to the Greek
Refugee Camp at Oases Wells.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on Saturday,
February 19th, I took the opportunity to visit the
Greek Refugee Camp at Oases Wells in Egypt, now
operated by the Middle East Relief and Reconstruction
Administration. The trip was made by motor in
company with Mr. Matthews, the head of MERA, and we
were accompanied by Mr. Hill, my special assistant
for Economic Affairs.

Oases Wells is situated on the western shore of
the Sinai Peninsula facing the town of Suez. The
scenery, which includes a strip of blue water backed
by a long line of mountains, is strongly reminiscent
of Greece and particularly Corinth. The country is
desert, but the camp is located not far from the
small oasis where Moses is supposed to have smitten
the rock. Unfortunately the water of this oasis is
not brackish (if it was not always so) and cannot be
used for drinking purposes. Potable water is brought
by sea from Suez, but the oasis at least provides a
grateful touch of greenery. Health conditions in the
camp are excellent, and the several thousand refugees,
though living in tents - generally three families to
one large tent -, present a cheerful if somewhat
ragged appearance. Men and children predominate.
There are a number of old men, but all the young men
and boys down to the age of 15 have been evacuated
to other centers for Naval Training. The provenance
of the refugees is, at present, almost wholly re-
stricted to the Aegean Islands and Chios, with
some scattering from Samos. The director is an A-
Greek (Chiot) major named Hallit, of the well-known
banking family of that name, and the medical care of
the camp is in the hands of Greek doctors and nurses.
With few facilities much is being done. Thus, major
surgical operations have been performed successfully
and daily dentistry is in progress, though only the

bare

bare essentials of equipment are available, and these are in many cases of a decidedly make-shift variety. The camp is laid out in "company streets" which are kept carefully policed, and sanitary outhouses are numerous, solidly constructed of brick. Discipline in small matters is enforced by the refugees themselves, but serious criminal offenses are referred to the military authorities. Such offenses are rare, however, and petty pilfering from the communal stores, which are accordingly enclosed with barbed-wire, provides the most common type of infringement. Because of the lack of the main element, politics plays but little part in the life of the camp. The refugees are happy to see any sympathetic visitors, and when the King arrived here recently and walked alone among them, their chief reaction appears to have been disappointment that he would not, with characteristic aloofness, make them even the briefest speech. Particularly encouraging are the health and spirits of the children, whom we saw in large numbers both at school and at play. It appears to be WRA's policy to give special attention to the children, in view of the tremendous need for youthful health and vigour in the devastated areas to which the refugees will be repatriated, and too much praise cannot be given to its foresight in this matter. The experience gained in such camps as these by all concerned, including the refugees themselves, will also be of incalculable value in later phases of relief operations when similar camps have to be set up on Greek soil.

Respectfully yours,

Lincoln Steveson

Sent in original and hectograph to Department.

File No. 848
Lucey/efb

*Camps in Egypt
Feb 2*

MEMORANDUM

During my conversation yesterday at UNRRA with respect to the refugee camp near Casablanca, I inquired particularly with respect to British camps in Egypt. Mr. Warren repeated the story which I think he told you before - (a) that the British are currently engaged in taking to Egypt, in convoys, refugees who arrive in Italy from Yugoslavia and putting them in a camp near Cairo. (b) That 4000 of such refugees are in the camp or on the way. (c) That it is expected that this evacuation will ultimately involve 20,000 people and perhaps substantially *more*.