

Mideast War Refugees Still Out in Cold

(The author of the following article is president of the papal relief agency for Palestine refugees, and executive head of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.)

By MSGR. JOHN G. NOLAN (NC News Service)

Baqqa's Jordan — This is one of the refugee tent cities festering in the desert on the edges of the unending Arab-Israeli wars.

To 10,000 men, women and children huddled here in the winter mud, this is Nowhere.

Baqqa is the name somebody gave to a huge bowl of mud 30 miles north of Amman, and as barren as a crater on the moon.

From the approach hills, the camp looks like the contents of a wastebasket emptied on a windy day.

Coming closer, I recognized the distinctive features that some satanic architect has drafted into the design of refugee camps everywhere: faded, threadbare tents, ditches filled with stagnant water, ample ventilation by sharp bursts of wind that press each day's rain through the old, defeated canvas.

I am here to open a new school. It seems that these 5,000 youngsters may not be going back to their homes and schools in Jericho, Jenin and Tulkarim right away.

So the Pontifical Mission for

Palestine is replacing the tent schools with sufficient shelter to keep away the flies and the heat and the rain and the stench while they concentrate on the hopes for man.

These eager, young faces will seem to hope for man, though their education has been reduced to the thing animals know instinctively: survival.

They have learned how to make half a meal last for all of a day, how to forage the desert.

But they refuse to be animals; they are the children of a highly civilized people; their parents have been merchants, professionals, community leaders, business managers, teach-

ers, civil servants, land owners, produce farmers.

So we built them 60 classrooms out of the pre-fab material that can be moved wherever the next war takes them.

All that classroom space and all that encouragement was purchased for only \$75,000. Such a gift from Americans and Europeans is enthusiastically received around here. As I toured the camp, a swarm of officials, newsmen, and the children buzzed around me.

Mud everywhere. Up to the knees of the children. Splattered over clothes. Carpeting tent floors and crawling up the legs of chairs and tables.

The ubiquity of the mud and

the rolling greyness of the threatening winter sky together symbolized what is perhaps the worst penalty of refugee life: the bleak sameness to which even so diverse a people can be reduced by existing merely to exist.

Most of us think about the Middle East in cycles of crisis. We feel a little relieved each time a new crisis ebbs without having upset the global balance of complacency.

But at Baqqa, the crisis of survival is something that climbs over the horizon every blessed day. And haunts every shivering night.

Rabbis Urge End Attacks on Pope

New York — (RNS) — Fearing "a Christian backlash" that would alienate supporters of Israel, the Rabbinical Alliance of America has urged Jewish leaders to stop criticizing Pope Paul for his implied condemnation of the Israeli attack on the Beirut airport.

Rabbi Bernard Weinberger, president of the Orthodox group, said that while Jews were justifiably indignant at the Pope's reaction to Mideast tensions, repeated criticism of the pontiff would only divert attention from the real problems of the Jews and strain their relations with Christians.

"Umbrella organizations," such as the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, has spoken out on the Pope's statement and further comments by constituent associations of such organizations. He said, would only create the impression of over-reaction.

Rabbi Weinberger noted that his group and most Orthodox Jews are not represented by these "umbrella" organizations.

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Fear Permeates Arab-Israeli Crisis

New York — (RNS) — Two Christian scholars from Israel pleaded here for a balanced view of the issues and of the actions taken by Israel in its latest crisis with the Arabs.

In a press conference at the national headquarters of the American Jewish Committee here, Dr. G. Douglas Young, president of the Institute of Holy Land Studies, said that

he found it "disturbing" to see "the uneven-handed policies" underlying American editorials and statements on the attacks and reprisals in the Middle East.

Father Bruno Hussar, O.P., director of Israh House, a Dominican house of studies in Jerusalem, said that he has talked to many Americans who are victims of "one-sided information" on the conflicts in the Middle East.

Israeli actions are widely publicized, he said, but the Arab terrorist killings to which Israel is responding receive very little attention.

Both speakers are in the United States on lecture tours. Mr. Young is an American citizen. Father Hussar, born in Egypt of Jewish parents is a citizen of Israel. Both have lived in Israel for more than 10 years.

Both speakers insisted that outside interests, not Jewish-Arab tensions within Israel, are responsible for the crisis. They insisted that discussions between Israeli leaders and those of Arab nations must be held to solve the crisis.

Father Hussar noted, however, that Arab leaders and even ordinary Arab citizens are afraid to talk of peace because of possible reprisals by extremists.

In Israel, he said, the crisis has now led to a climate of fear. "Jews and Arabs are estranged, cut apart, there is fear between Jews and Arabs and also between Arabs and Arabs. If you can talk with one Arab alone, you will often be told that he wants peace. But if there are two Arabs together, neither will speak of this because he is not sure that the other Arab will not give his name to the terrorists."

The priest and the Protestant scholar both said that a major obstacle to peace is the determination of Arab countries not to recognize Israel or to negotiate. Israel is ready to begin peace talks, they insisted.

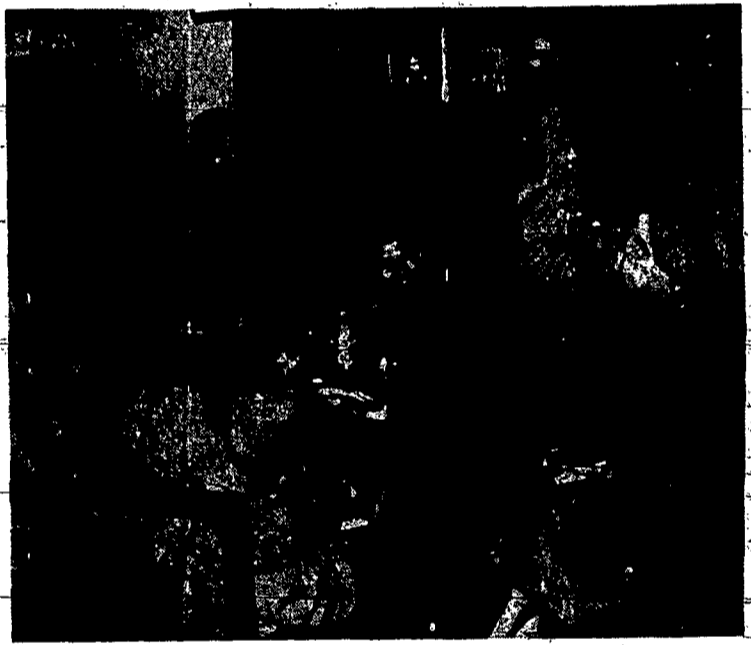
On the question of why Israel does not withdraw its forces from occupied territory or announce publicly all the points for which it would negotiate, Father Hussar explained that this "is a question of bargaining."

"If you have ever bought a rug in an Oriental market," he said, "you know what I mean. A merchant will ask for ten times more than it is worth and you must reply by offering ten times less than it is worth. If you begin by telling how much you are willing to pay, he will take that as a point of departure and begin raising the price from there."

"The Jews and the Arabs both know that they are playing a game and can come to terms. Foreigners in the Middle East, identified with either side, are apt to be much more extreme. They don't realize how things are done in the Middle East."

Dr. Young said that in the present situation efforts to internationalize Jerusalem are "insulting" to Israel. He stressed that under Jordanian rule Jews were not allowed access to their holy places in the Jordan sector and these places were desecrated. Israel has passed strict laws against desecration of any holy place or hurting "the sensibility of a worshipper" and has guaranteed Moslems free access to their shrines, he said.

He and Father Hussar both insisted that the problem of the Arab refugees must be solved in cooperation between Israel and the Arab countries.



Medical Aid For Buddhist Monks

Sister Mary Michael Keeney of Brooklyn, in treating Buddhist monks in Thare, Thailand (top photo), was able to circumvent a tradition that the monks may not touch or be touched by women. The abbot of the monastery explained that it did not apply when "one is sick" in asking the Maryknoll nun for medical treatment. Her companion, Sister Therese Grondin of Westbrook, Me., also acceded to the abbot's request to explain Christianity to the monks (bottom photo). (RNS)

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TOTAL ASSETS	\$67,540,908.25		

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