



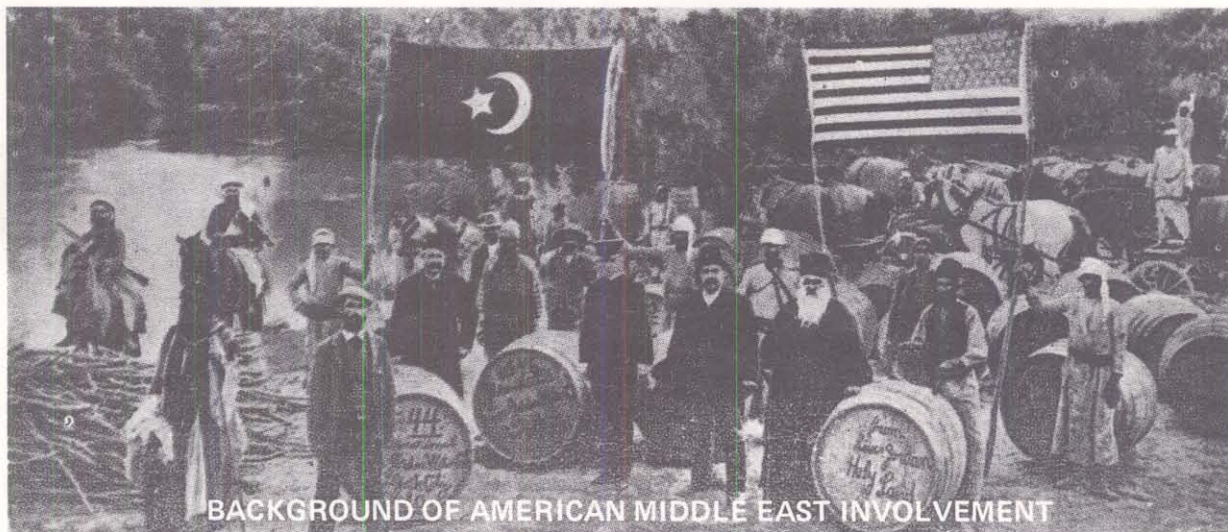
THE LINK

PUBLISHED BY AMERICANS FOR MIDDLE EAST UNDERSTANDING

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BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST INVOLVEMENT

Ever since Rev. Levi Parsons and Rev. Pliny Fisk arrived in the Middle East in 1819 as America's first missionaries to the Ottoman Empire, the United States has maintained a tradition of philanthropic concern in the area. The first generation of missionaries, teachers, and doctors--undeterred by their failure to attract converts to Christianity--moved ahead to more practical projects: establishing schools and hospitals. While mission boards back home may have grumbled about disappointing statistics for new Christians, the American men and women at work in the Middle East were laying the foundation of a tradition that would become America's longest and historically most significant interest in the Middle East. These philanthropic activities made America, by the Second World War, the most trusted foreign nation known to peoples of the Middle East. American schools, foremost among them American University of Beirut and Robert College (Istanbul), not only imparted knowledge to their students; they also imparted American-style resourceful attitudes. These qualities have made their graduates a unique elite in the Middle East. The outpouring of American concern for civilian victims of war and famine during World War I, focused in Near East Relief (later Near East Foundation), gained added stature for the United States.

America's reputation in the Middle East for fairness and integrity was shaken by its partisanship in support of Israel after 1948; nevertheless, American voluntary agencies, religious and secular, responded strongly to the plight of the Palestine refugees. Over 750,000 became homeless after 1948, blocked from return and without means to support themselves where they were.

Little did anyone realize at the time that temporary programs intended to tide the refugees over until return to their homes in Palestine would stretch out the following twenty-five years while the world waited in vain for implementation of repeated United Nations resolutions calling for the right of the refugees to return and be compensated by Israel for their losses. In the face of massive despair, the voluntary agencies persisted in their humanitarian work.

This issue of *Link* highlights the work of American voluntary organizations involved in relief and rehabilitation for Palestinian refugees and other needy individuals in the Middle East. Many programs help non-refugees, and most organizations work in coordination with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), which provides core support services to dependent refugees. American agency programs increasingly stress enhancement of human dignity through employability and general rehabilitation.

A survey of this length cannot be exhaustive or all-inclusive of organizations. A major study of the past quarter-century of American charitable and philanthropic work among Palestinian refugees needs to be written. As editor of this issue, I hope that its contents--or omissions--may serve as a spur to such a project.

John P. Richardson
Executive Vice President
American Near East Refugee Aid



ARAB-AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

All too little appreciation has been given to efforts by Americans of Arab background on behalf of the well-being of Palestinian refugees since 1948. The work of Arab-American groups is the more significant for being undertaken predominantly by volunteers.

U.S. OMEN (United States Organization for Medical and Educational Needs), founded in 1961 by Arab-Americans in California, has generated assistance in cash and kind to Palestinian refugees and victims of disasters in the Middle East. OMEN has dispensed cash grants of \$200,000 and pharmaceuticals and medical equipment worth more than \$1 million to the Middle East during its ten-year history. It has established refugee scholarship loans at several Middle Eastern universities, donated two complete dental units for refugees, and assisted orphanages and schools helping refugee children.

AMARA (American Arabic Association) started in 1960, and the Boston chapter has been one of its most active in humanitarian activities. It conducts an annual fund-raising campaign in support of the Musa Alami project in Jericho, which houses and trains homeless refugee orphan boys. AMARA has also taken a leading role in finding sponsors of Palestinian children for *Project Ryaiat*; more than 65 *Ryaiat* children are now being helped through AMARA.

The 1967 war and the new flood of refugees triggered a nationwide response by Arab-American groups, most formed at the time of the crisis. Their collective response was substantial, and several still remain active.

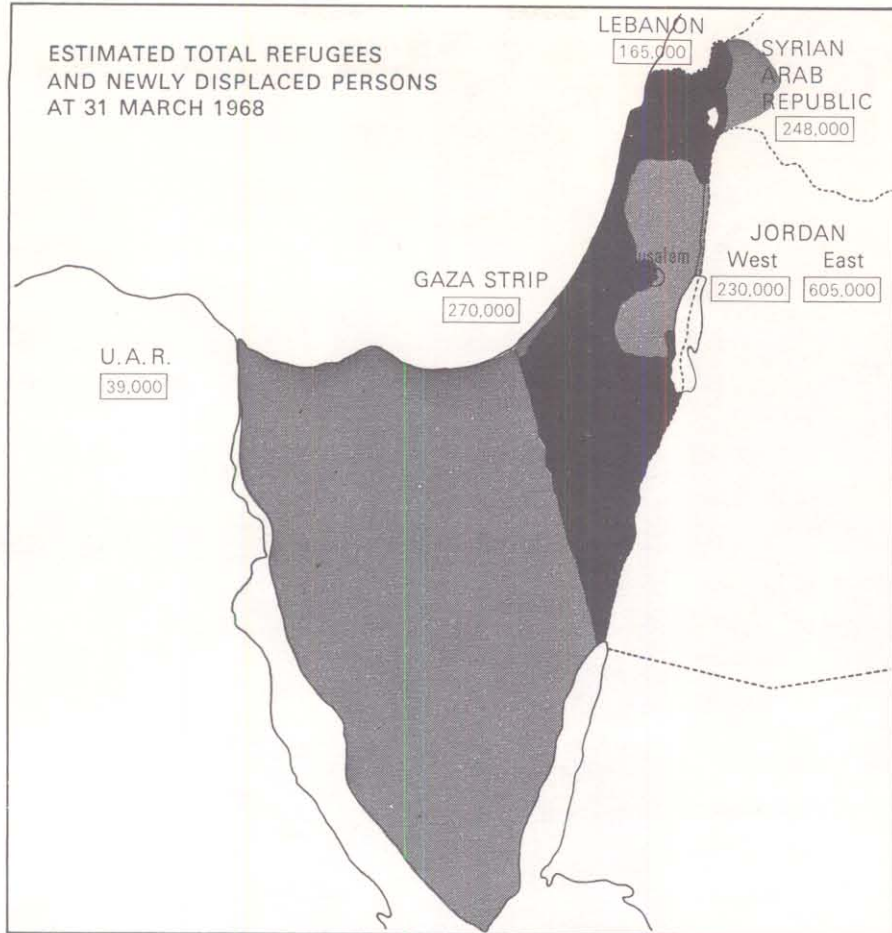
Pal-Aid International, based in Chicago, is one of the latter. Since 1967 Pal-Aid has sent some \$400,000 in cash, medical supplies, food, and clothing to the Palestinian refugees. It donated an ambulance to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and is now concentrating on providing vocational-training scholarships for refugees.

Project Ryaiat is perhaps the most unique of the Arab-American activities following the 1967 war. *Project Ryaiat* ("Loving Care") was initiated by a Palestinian professor at the University of Indiana, Professor Reja-e Busailah. Through individual gifts of \$10 per month from American sponsors, *Ryaiat* assists Palestinian children in the occupied Territories. The project now has sponsors for some 300 children; part of its appeal lies in the fact that donors are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with the children through exchange of correspondence.

UHLF (United Holy Land Fund)-has remained one of the strongest Arab-American efforts stemming from the 1967 war. UHLF has served as a major national rallying point for contributions from the Arab-American community for Palestinian relief and rehabilitation. Cash disbursements in the past three years total more than \$360,000, and shipments of medical and surgical supplies have been far greater. A major recipient of UHLF assistance has been the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

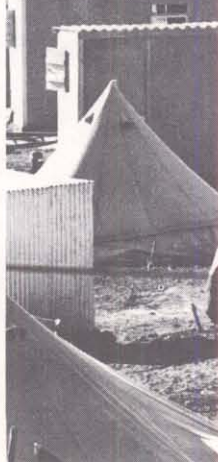
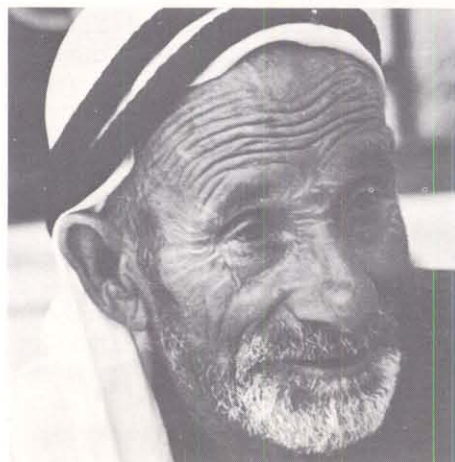
The Department of Near East and Arab Refugee Affairs of the Antiochian (formerly Syrian) Orthodox Church serves as a catalyst for church member involvement in refugee relief. The church provides scholarships to Palestinian refugees through the Archbishop's Foundation in Beirut and generates support for *Project Ryaiat*. Dr. Frank Maria, the Church's representative on the General Board of the National Council of Churches, has helped focus attention on the Palestine problem within that body.

ESTIMATED TOTAL REFUGEES
AND NEWLY DISPLACED PERSONS
AT 31 MARCH 1968



ANERA American
Near East
Refugee Aid

American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) was created after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war by representatives of many committees and organizations which had responded to the new Palestinian refugee crisis of that summer. The new organization was charged with the mandate of increasing total American assistance to refugees and of informing the public about the refugee problem. Dr. John H. Davis, former Commissioner-General of UNRWA, became President of ANERA. With offices in Washington, ANERA also seeks ways in which greater official concern can be directed toward its solution. ANERA provides assistance in cash and kind to institutions and agencies in the Middle East providing services to Palestinian refugees and other needy individuals. Most of its cash grants are made to the Occupied Territories, and most of its assistance in kind (primarily pharmaceuticals collected through its AMER Division in New York) goes toward meeting UNRWA's annual requirements for medical supplies.



Society
of
Friends

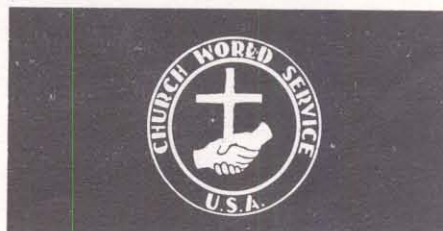
The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) began its work with Palestinian refugees in 1948 when it was requested by the United Nations to set up and administer on behalf of the United Nations an emergency relief program for refugees in the Gaza Strip. This program continued until May 1950, when UNRWA took over. The Committee, which recently produced the outstanding book, *Search for Peace in the Middle East*, operates fifteen pre-school centers in Gaza which handle almost 2,000 daily. The 63 teachers at the centers are all Palestinian refugees. The main purpose of the centers is to provide children with an opportunity to learn through informal play and to become more expressive.

The Friends United Meeting (Indiana) sponsors the two well-known Friends Schools in Ramallah (West Bank) one for boys and the other for girls. 600 students are enrolled, and the schools' graduates compete favorably with those of any other secondary schools in the Middle East.



**Pontifical Mission
for
Palestine**

Catholic Near East Welfare Association



**Church
World
Service**

The Pontifical Mission for Palestine and Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) are closely linked in the person of their chief operating officer, Msgr. John Nolan. CNEWA is an American organization which collects funds for support of missions under the jurisdiction of the Vatican's congregation for Eastern-rite churches; it trains priests and sisters abroad and supports mission activities in eighteen countries. The Pontifical Mission, while headed by an American and supported primarily by American Catholics, is an international mission working in the name of the Pope.

The Pontifical Mission ministers directly to the Palestinian refugees, and it maintains programs in Lebanon, East Jordan, and the Occupied West Bank. The Beirut office has responsibility for Syria and the UAR as well as Lebanon. In Lebanon the Mission runs two schools with more than 900 students in refugee camps and makes cash grants which assist in the construction and repair of schools and villages. Last year it distributed 50 tons of donated clothing for refugees. In East Jordan the Mission has provided classrooms valued at \$200,000 in UNRWA camps and established two socio-medical teams which tour villages dispensing aid and advice.

The Mission office in East Jerusalem supervises programs for Palestinian Arabs under Israeli occupation. It is involved in a wide range of activities, from a school for the blind in Gaza, to child sponsorship by American donors, to libraries in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In 1972 the Mission opened a library in Nazareth and a center for Arab students at Hebrew University (Jerusalem). This latter work is particularly important in light of the lack of official encouragement given to Arabs in pre-1967 Israel. Miss Helen Breen and Miss Carol Hunnybun are the veteran Pontifical Mission representatives in Jerusalem.

The participation of Church World Service (CWS) and its member denominations in relief and rehabilitation for Palestine refugees dates from mid-1948. Christian Arab leaders and Western missionaries in Palestine and surrounding countries appealed for assistance as the number of Palestinians becoming refugees increased throughout 1948. From the United States the *Congregational Christian Service Committee*, the *United Presbyterian Church*, the *Five Years Meeting of Friends*, and the *Protestant Episcopal Church* were chief among those active.

Greater coordination was achieved in 1951 when a consultation sponsored by the *World Council of Churches* and the *International Missionary Council* adopted a program and strategy of church response to refugee needs. The resulting operational vehicle was the *Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Work*, and it became the major channel for ecumenical response to Palestinian Arab refugee needs. CWS was among its chief contributors and has continued to provide the bulk of American funds for the Committee, now known as the *Near East Ecumenical Committee for Palestine Refugees (NEECPR)*. CWS is concerned that all programs of assistance be as constructive and forward-looking as possible. In 1972 CWS contributed \$50,000 to NEECPR, and individual denominations contributed \$88,000, for a total of \$138,000 from members of the *National Council of Churches*. NEECPR projects provide business loans for individuals, vocational-training to give needed skills, medical care, village and farm aid, social case work, home service, and education. Major contributors to CWS now include the *Presbyterian Church (South)*, the *Christian Church*, *United Methodist Church*, *United Presbyterian Church* in the USA, the *Protestant Episcopal Church*, the *Reformed Church in America*, and *United Church Board for World Ministries*.

Dr. Joe Thompson, Senior Representative to the Lutheran World Federation and Director of its programs in East Jordan and Syria, is frequently the first name mentioned by anyone describing Americans involved in philanthropic work on the East Bank. With only one brief interlude in the States, Dr. and Mrs. Thompson have lived for the past twelve years in the Middle East, divided between Jerusalem and Amman. An acknowledged spokesman for the American voluntary agencies in Jordan, Dr. Thompson helps coordinate their work with UNRWA and the Jordanian government. A project of particular interest to Dr. Thompson has been the re-building of Karameh, a town on the East Bank of the Jordan River, in which LWF has played a major role. The return of life to the town, with its vitality and forward-looking effort, symbolizes Dr. Thompson's approach. A specialist in farm cooperatives, Dr. Thompson has had long experience in assisting international economic and social development.

Dr. Joseph O. Thompson



Dr. Reja-e Busailah



Dr. Reja-e Busailah, founder of Project Ryaiah ("Loving Care"), is a very special person. His dedicated development of Project Ryaiah reflects a life of personal commitment to the welfare of other people. A native of Palestine, Dr. Busailah and his family fled Lydda when the Israelis drove the population out in 1948; his father, a teacher, found work only after a year of difficult times. Dr. Busailah has been blind since childhood. He came to the United States on a scholarship and took a Master's degree in special education, which he then put to work in Palestine by starting a school for the blind. Dr. Busailah returned to the States in 1957 to take his Ph.D. in English Literature, which he now teaches at the University of Indiana (Kokomo). After the 1967 war, Dr. Busailah led in creating Project Ryaiah, which provides assistance to and helps keep together families in Palestine that have lost one or both parents. To Dr. Busailah, the "something extra" in the form of letters between American sponsors and the children they help makes the difference between charity and personal involvement in the lives of others.

PROFILES



Msgr. John G. Nolan

Msgr. John G. Nolan, President of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine and National Secretary of its sister organization, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, symbolizes the finest spirit of dedication to the needs of Palestinian refugees. Holder of two Master's degrees and a Doctorate in History, Msgr. Nolan might have lived a full life as a university professor, but instead he elected to become involved in relief operations in an area wracked by recurrent hostilities. He lived for two years in Lebanon and travels regularly to the area. Msgr. Nolan led a Vatican relief convoy across Syria in 1967 to bring food, clothing, and medicine to the Palestinian refugees. Every Christmas he journeys alone to the Holy Land to celebrate Mass in Bethlehem and to spend Christmas Day with children in the Pontifical Mission there. Msgr. Nolan's main goal is to work himself out of a job—looking to the day when peace comes to the Middle East and the refugee problem is solved, with justice.

Mrs. Marie Schmidt is director of the Catholic Relief Services program in Jordan. In recognition of her dedicated service to needy people in Jordan, Mrs. Schmidt has been awarded the Jordan Star Medal by the government. Mrs. Schmidt has served with CRS since 1961. She has been in Jordan since 1968 and was stationed in Turkey and Greece on prior assignments.



Mrs. Marie Schmidt

Catholic
Relief
Services

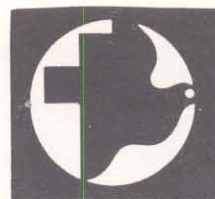


Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official overseas aid agency of the United States Catholic Conference. In the Middle East CRS maintains major distribution programs of food and clothing in Egypt and Jordan. Last year CRS programs on the West Bank provided assistance valued at more than \$500,000, assisting some 35,000 Palestinians. In recent times CRS has given greater emphasis to community development and rehabilitation for the West Bank. On the East Bank of Jordan, the CRS program last year provided assistance valued at almost \$450,000, mostly in the form of food and commodities for needy people. As on the West Bank, CRS activities in East Jordan are giving increasing emphasis to self-help projects which can increase the ability of individuals and communities to develop themselves. CRS also assists UNRWA by providing salaries for teachers in pre-school centers which UNRWA cannot support on its own budget.

Southern
Baptist
Convention

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began missionary work in Palestine in 1921. Following interruptions caused by World War II and the 1948 Palestine war, the Southern Baptists re-established their presence in Jordan and Gaza by assuming operation of existing hospitals. The 92-bed hospital in Gaza, renowned for its professional standards and concern for the welfare of patients, serves the predominantly refugee community of Gaza. A new Baptist hospital in Ajloun, Jordan, serves refugees in addition to other Jordanian patients. Its school of nursing has graduated more than 45 nurses now working in eight different countries. Baptist schools and a seminary in Beirut provide educational opportunities for refugees.

Mennonite
Central
Committee



The Mennonite Central Committee (of the Mennonite Church) began its Palestinian refugee program in 1950. At this time the Mennonites maintain projects of assistance on both banks of the Jordan River. On the West Bank they run a boys' school near Bethlehem and oversee a women's needle-work project which employs 800 women on a part-time basis. On the East Bank the Mennonites operate kindergartens and women's activity centers and make distributions of clothing and bedding in conjunction with UNRWA.



Near
East
Foundation



Near East Foundation (NEF), whose predecessor, Near East Relief, pioneered American relief work in the Middle East, has carried forward the same spirit through innovative technical assistance programs. NEF is active in East Jordan today, primarily in agricultural programs. During 1972 65,000 chicks were distributed to farmers at cost for flock development; 150,000 olive seedlings were distributed, as were large numbers of fruit tree seedlings. Continuing experimentation with livestock, particularly goats and dairy cattle, will improve the quality of these key animals in Jordan's economy. NEF has also constructed boys' clubs in Amman and Aqaba.

Lutheran
World
Relief



Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is closely linked with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in its programs of development assistance overseas. In the Middle East LWR conducts its activities through LWF, whose senior representative is Dr. Joseph Thompson, residing in Amman, Jordan. LWF is one of the most active and energetic agencies working on behalf of Palestine refugees. Last year LWR supported the work of LWF in East Jordan through provision of supplies worth \$251,000. Support worth \$573,000 went to the West Bank, and programs in Syria received \$25,000 worth of support. These supplies were primarily in the form of clothing and blankets, food, and medical items. LWF is increasingly emphasizing development programs as distinguished from charity alone. In East Jordan LWF provides loans for individuals to establish small businesses; operates five medical clinics; conducts agricultural extension courses; and assists in family care. On the West Bank LWF operates the 350-bed Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, which serves Palestinian refugees. It was badly damaged during the 1967 war but never closed. LWF is also involved in community development, vocational-training, and social welfare programs on the West Bank.

CARE

CARE was founded in 1945 to respond to needs of the civilian populations of Europe after World War II. It became involved in Palestinian refugee work in Gaza in 1954. CARE projects there have focused on community development, including public works, construction of schools and hospitals, and agriculture. CARE has also overseen a "food for work" program that distributes surplus American food to refugees in exchange for labor on projects. In East Jordan, CARE has undertaken distribution of tools and supplies for agricultural projects and schools. On the West Bank, and particularly since 1967, CARE has provided expanded vocational-training for young men in construction, metal work, carpentry, and architectural drawing.

Many organizations other than those featured in this issue relate to Palestinian refugees. Some of these are mentioned briefly below:

American Friends of the Middle East--administers on behalf of the State Department a program of graduate scholarships for Palestinian graduate students in American universities, and seeks independent scholarships for others.

The Holy Land Center--sponsors an annual Christmas party in New York, proceeds from which are forwarded to schools educating Palestinian children in Jerusalem.

YMCA/YWCA--support the work of their international divisions, which are deeply involved in refugee programs. In the Middle East the "Y's" have pioneered vocational-training and leadership programs which have been of great benefit to Palestinian refugees. These activities all stress continuing service to communities.

Ford Foundation--has assisted the work of the Arab Development Society in Jericho (West Bank), which maintains a farm and school for orphaned Palestinian refugee boys.

United Presbyterian Church in the USA--is one of the oldest American philanthropies in the Middle East and operates Beirut College for Women (700 students), several other schools, and a 135-bed hospital in Lebanon specializing in chest diseases. Many of these institutions serve Palestinian refugees.

American Colonies Charities--supports the work of the Spafford Children's Center in East Jerusalem, which specializes in preventive medicine and pre-natal care for mothers.

Organizations involved in assistance to Palestinian refugees are concerned with coordination and exchange of views about programs. While program administrators in the Middle East meet regularly, there has been no formal coordinating mechanism in the United States. In order to provide a forum for discussions on programs concerning Palestinian refugees, *American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)* has hosted meetings attended by representatives of most of the larger organizations, on an average of twice a year for the past three years.

Names and Addresses for Reference

<p>American Near East Refugee Aid 900 Woodward Building 733 15th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005</p> <p>U.S. OMEN 505 Heartwell Bldg. Long Beach, Calif. 90802</p> <p>Community Development Foundation Boston Post Road Norwalk, Conn. 06852</p> <p>CARE 660 First Ave. New York, New York 10016</p> <p>Catholic Relief Services 350 Fifth Ave. New York, New York 10001</p> <p>Near East and Refugee Committee Antiochian Orthodox Church POB 46 Warner, N. Hampshire 03278</p> <p>American Arabic Association (AMARA) POB 18217 Boston, Mass. 02118</p> <p>United Holy Land Fund (UHLF) POB 167 Clawson, Michigan 48017</p> <p>United Church Board for World Ministries 475 Riverside Dr. New York, New York 10027</p>	<p>World Presbyterian Missions 901 North Broom St. Wilmington, Delaware 19806</p> <p>Mennonite Central Committee 21 South 12th St. Akron, Penna. 17501</p> <p>The Ford Foundation 320 E. 43rd St. New York, New York 10017</p> <p>Lutheran World Relief 315 Park Ave. New York, New York 10010</p> <p>Church of the Nazarene 6401 The Paseo Kansas City, Mo. 64131</p> <p>Southern Baptist Convention 3806 Monument Ave. Richmond, Va. 23230</p> <p>American Friends Service Committee 160 North 15th St. Philadelphia, Penna. 19102</p> <p>Church World Service 475 Riverside Dr. New York, New York 10027</p> <p>Near East Foundation 54 E. 64th St. New York, New York 10021</p>	<p>Friends United Meeting 101 Quaker Hill Drive Richmond, Indiana 47374</p> <p>Project Ryaiat 1030 S. Buckeye St. Kokomo, Indiana 46901</p> <p>Pal-Aid International 6227 N. Kenmore Chicago, Ill. 60626</p> <p>Catholic Near East Welfare Association 330 Madison Ave. New York, New York</p> <p>Pontifical Mission for Palestine 330 Madison Ave. New York, New York</p> <p>American Friends of the Middle East 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036</p> <p>YMCA 291 Broadway New York, New York 10007</p> <p>YWCA 600 Lexington Ave. New York, New York 10022</p> <p>American Colonies Charities Box 602 New York, New York 10021</p>
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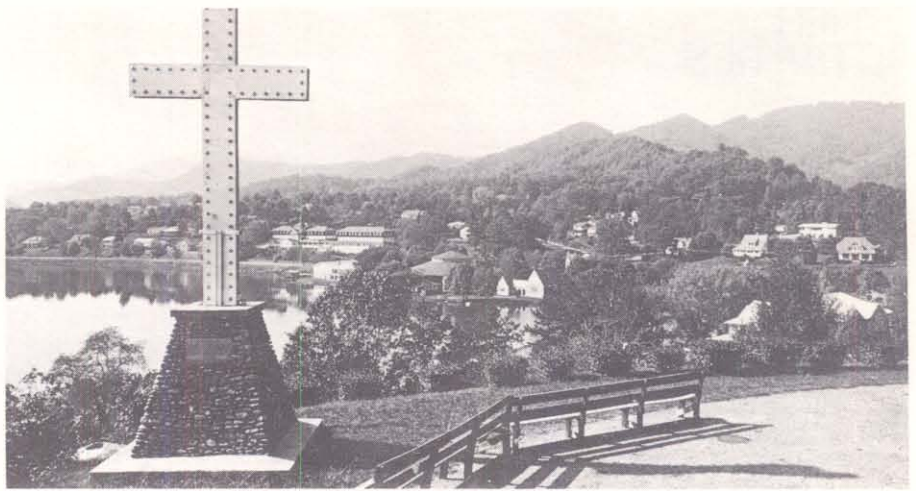
IN BRIEF

Seminar

In response to requests for opportunities to probe more deeply into the "Religion and Culture of the Middle East", AMEU has organized a seminar/vacation conference to be held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, beginning August 20th and going through the evening of the 22nd. Under the theme, "Religion, Nationalism and the Middle East", participants will study the place and function of religion in the Middle East as it pertains to today's developing nationalism in the region. Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars will provide leadership. There will be major lectures, short presentations and panels. But much of the success of the venture will depend upon each individual's participation, inasmuch as group discussion will be featured.

Lake Junaluska was chosen for this seminar because it is a world religious center and one of the great convention sites in the United States. It is conveniently located 26 miles west of Asheville, North Carolina, on U.S. 19 and 23 and just off the Interstate 40. The Asheville Airport is just a short distance away and here you can arrive by Piedmont, United or Delta Airlines. Trailways also serves the area.

Junaluska is an ideal place for a family vacation. While one member of the family attends the conference, other members can enjoy golf, swimming, tennis, hiking—in fact, opportunities for recreation for all ages are almost unlimited. Popular prices for accommodations also make Junaluska attractive as a family vacation center.



Lake Junaluska, scene of August seminar.

It is endowed with a variety of rooming facilities—three hotels, many apartments, several lodges and a great number of cottages. Numerous eating places provide food at reasonable prices.

AMEU hopes this seminar will attract a great deal of interest among the readers of *The Link* and that a number will choose to combine a participation in the seminar with an enjoyable vacation in the Great Smoky Mountains. Write us for further information.

Tours

AMEU's final tour of its 1973 program is an October trip to Lebanon and the Holy Land. Included will be the more prominent historical, religious and archaeological sites, plus several features not usually included in such tours: visits with local people, a look at local industries, a trip to a spectacularly located, but seldom visited, castle, etc.

1974 tours will be announced in the September/October issue of *The Link*.

Will You Help?

A large supply of Jiryis' *The Arabs in Israel* has been discovered in Beirut. The message of this book needs to be widely disseminated. AMEU would like to undertake to place it free of charge in college libraries around the country and in the hands of opinion makers. The very minimum of \$2,500 will be required for this project. Your gifts at this time will enable AMEU to undertake this and/or similar projects. We are dependent upon your continuing support.

THE LINK

aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in U.S. policy toward that area.



Americans for
Middle East Understanding, Inc.
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