

CYPRUS

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM



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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|----------------|------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Unemployment | 5 |
| Infrastructure | 6 |
| Housing | 6 |
| Education | 10 |
| Health | 12 |
| Expenditure | 13 |
| Enclaved | 15 |
| Conclusion | 17 |

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 FEB 2012
SOCIALIST TRUTH IN CYPRUS

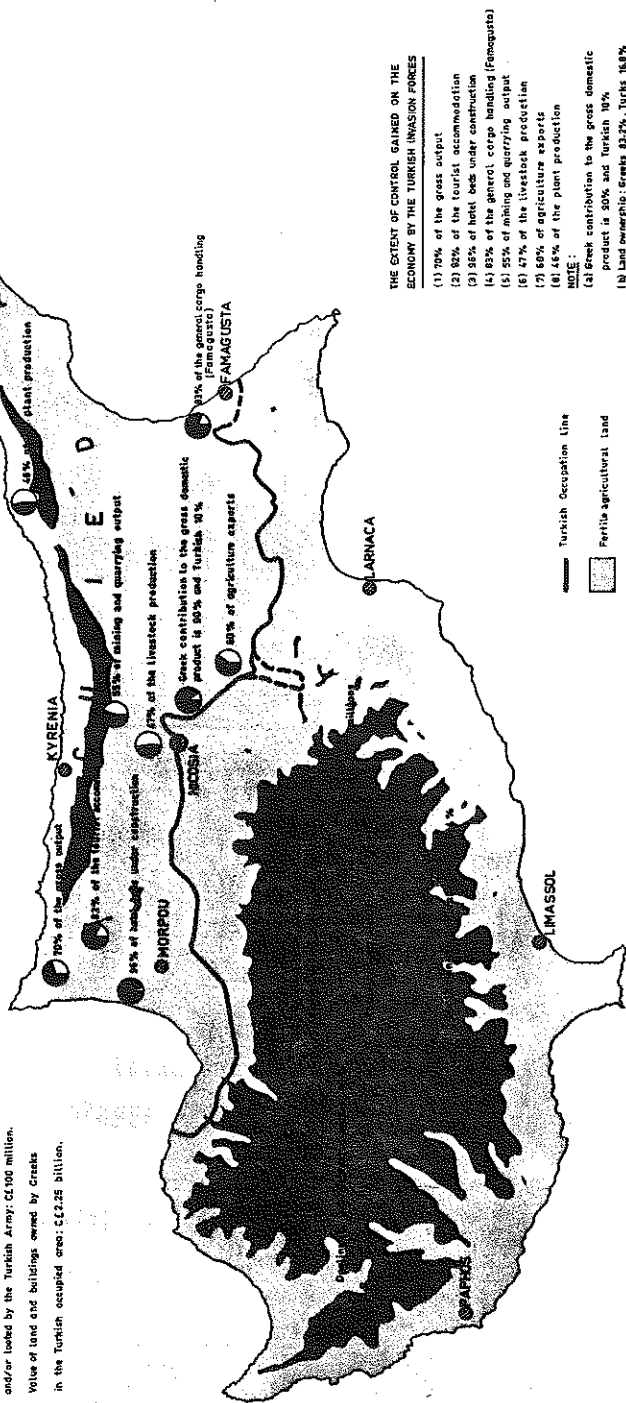
CYPRUS AND THE TURKISH INVASION

Greeks 82% of the total population
 Turks 18% of the total population

Scattered all over the island

Miles 10 5 0 5 10 20

- (a) Daily loss of production valued at £2 million.
 (b) Value of household movable property seized and/or looted by the Turkish Army: £100 million.
 (c) Value of land and buildings owned by Greeks in the Turkish occupied area: £2.25 billion.



THE EXTENT OF CONTROL GAINED ON THE ECONOMY BY THE TURKISH INVASION FORCES

- (1) 70% of the gross output
- (2) 80% of the tourist accommodation
- (3) 85% of hotel beds under construction
- (4) 85% of the general cargo handling (Famagusta)
- (5) 85% of mining and quarrying output
- (6) 67% of the livestock production
- (7) 66% of agriculture exports
- (8) 66% of the plant production

NOTE:

- (a) Greek contribution to the gross domestic product is 50% and Turkish 10%
- (b) Land ownership: Greeks 83.2%, Turks 16.8%
- (c) (Distributed on the total area of Cyprus and including the non-privately owned land)
- (d) 20% of the main state forest has been burnt out

Turkish Occupation line
 Fertile agricultural land
 Mostly uncultivable and forest land
 Clusters of up to 1000 people
 Agricultural land taken by the Turkish forces refer to the whole occupied area

Statistical data provided by the Planning Bureau, Planning Commission Nicosia.
 Prepared by the Department of Lands and Surveys, Cyprus, 1974.
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THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Introduction

The plight of the refugees is one of the most pressing problems facing the Cyprus Government. Two hundred thousand people, making up one third of the total population, were displaced as a result of the Turkish invasion of July—August, 1974 and the subsequent occupation of 40 per cent of the island.

Driven from their homes and stripped of all their possessions, the refugees streamed into the Government controlled area, seeking refuge in fields, derelict houses, schools or unfinished buildings.

This is how U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Sub-Committee of Refugees, described the situation soon after the invasion :

“Desolation and destruction mark many areas. Whole villages and towns and cities are empty of people, who fled their homes in fear of advancing Turkish forces.....”

Government-controlled areas of the island have been inundated with refugees from the north.... And, with the onslaught of the rainy season and the winter cold, the condition of the people will inevitably deteriorate — unless adequate relief measures are taken now, or a political settlement is accomplished, which will permit refugees to return to their homes...”.

The social upheaval was indeed enormous. In American population terms the number of displaced persons would be equivalent to 83 million people. The corresponding figure in the U.S.S.R. would be 98 million, in Britain 22 million, and in France 20 million.

The Government's primary concern in the aftermath of the invasion was to ensure the survival of the refugees by catering for their urgent needs. Refugee camps were set up and, thanks partly to international relief aid, foodstuffs, medicines and blankets were distributed to each homeless family.

The displacement of such a large number of people and seizure of their property and the country's assets inevitably shattered the economy. The towns of Famagusta, Morphou and Kyrenia and 197 villages — all making a vital contribution to the economy — were captured by brute force.

Moreover, the area under occupation was the most productive and developed part of Cyprus, accounting for about 70 per cent of the economic potential.

This area — by far the most fertile — produced the bulk of the country's citrus fruits, vegetables, carobs and olives before the invasion. In contrast, a large part of the Government-controlled area is mountainous and does not present the same possibilities for agricultural development as the area occupied by the Turkish forces.



The towns of Kyrenia (above) and Famagusta (below) in the occupied area were main tourist centres, with millions of pounds in tourist establishments.



The Turkish-held region is also rich in mineral and quarrying materials. Investments in fixed assets and the value of land belonging to Greek Cypriots and others (excluding Turkish Cypriots) in the occupied areas is estimated, at 1974 prices, to be over C£2.5 billion.* The tourist industry was heavily concentrated in this area with more than 65 per cent of tourist accommodation capacity and 87 per cent of the new capacity under construction, while a considerable part of industrial output originated in the occupied areas. The loss of Famagusta port which handled 83 per cent of general cargo and the closure of Nicosia International Airport in the buffer zone were additional blows. Furthermore, the lack of natural resources and the scarcity of water in the Government-controlled areas hampered economic recovery.

The Gross Domestic Product dropped sharply as a result of the economic dislocation. Compared to 1973, the decrease in the Gross Domestic Product by 1975 was 30 per cent despite the partial reactivation which took place in the meantime.

Unemployment

One of the most serious problems created by the invasion was unemployment. Following a decade of continuous full employment conditions the estimated number of unemployed (registered and unregistered) immediately after the invasion reached 86,000 or nearly 39 per cent of the economically active population. All these people were suddenly out of work and had to depend on the state for their means of subsistence. In contrast to the above figures, the 1973 yearly average number of registered unemployed persons was 3,300 or 1.2 per cent of the economically active population.

At first stop-gap measures were taken to meet emergency relief needs. As there was no early political settlement the Government initiated an Emergency Economic Action Plan in order to get to grips with the massive social and economic problems that had been created. The Plan chiefly aimed at meeting the immediate needs of displaced persons, reducing unemployment by launching labour intensive projects, and providing incentives to stimulate economic activity.

In view of the severe losses and reduction in the country's productive capacity this was a formidable task. But in spite of the odds, the employment situation gradually improved. Thus, while the number of unemployed (registered and unregistered) at the end of 1974 stood at 51,600 (representing 24.5 per cent of the economically active population), the yearly average number of unemployed (registered and unregistered) was reduced to 33,500 (or 16.1 per cent) in 1975. By 1978, with no unregistered unemployment, the yearly average number of registered unemployed was down to 4,000 (or 2% of the economically active population). It is estimated that in 1979 it dropped to 3,700 or 1.8% of the economically active population.

* The current rate of exchange is C£1 : U.S.\$ 2.90.

A series of measures introduced by the Government helped reduce unemployment. These measures included the policy of encouraging labour intensive industry, keeping all civil servants on Government payroll, enacting legislation, with the consent of trade unions, to reduce wages in line with the fall in other incomes, as well as in order to control massive redundancies. But apart from deliberate Government measures, the impressive achievements as far as employment is concerned must also be attributed to the high rate of growth of GDP which was in turn the outcome of many favourable exogenous factors such as high export prices, extremely good weather conditions, the Lebanese crisis, large amounts of foreign aid, the booming economic conditions of the Middle East region etc.

But what would at first sight appear to be a creditable and remarkable achievement conceals the fact that the reduction in unemployment was not merely the outcome of the reactivation process. Unemployment was slowly eliminated because of widespread emigration, mostly of people of working age, and also by the temporary employment of Cypriots abroad who at the end of 1978 totalled about 13,000. Also the appearance of full employment hides the incidence of underemployment. Furthermore, the labour market has experienced imbalances in the supply and demand of certain skilled workers since skills needed for the pre-invasion economy did not match the new pattern of demand.

Unemployment covered the whole spectrum of professions, occupations and skills, and some categories continue to present problems. Thus, to enable displaced persons to become economically productive, vocational training centres were set up in refugee settlements with funds provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. These centres also offer job retraining courses to overcome labour shortages in certain sectors. In addition existing training institutions were used to provide more training courses in skills which were in great demand.

Infrastructure

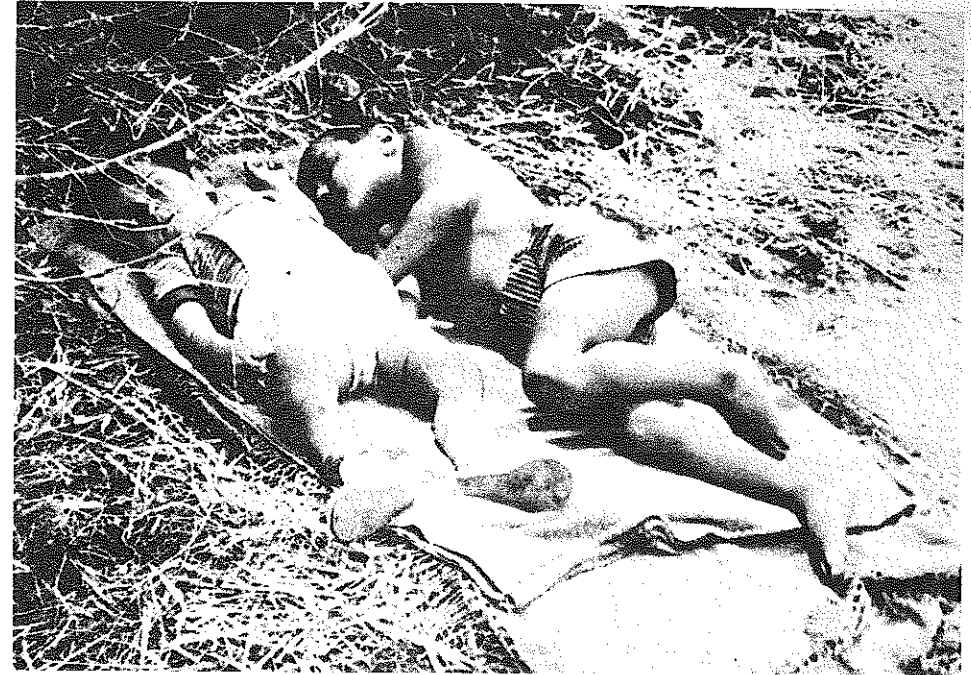
As part of the Government's policy to give an impetus to the economy and create new employment opportunities, the infrastructure wrecked by the invasion was partly replaced.

A new airport was constructed in Larnaca and the ports of Limassol and Larnaca are being expanded to handle heavy cargo. Telecommunications and important road arteries were also restored or replaced.

The Government has financed the total cost of infrastructural works (ports, airports, roads) (C£12.9 million) during the period 1975—78. The cost of future (for the period 1979—81) infrastructural works of this nature is expected to be in the region of C£20 million.

Housing

The eviction of 40% of the Greek Cypriot population from their homes created a serious housing problem. Among the Government's immediate measures



People forcibly uprooted from their homes found refuge first under trees in the free area and then in temporary tented camps.



was the setting up of 23 tented camps to give temporary shelter to those who had no roof over their heads. Others lived in requisitioned homes, public buildings, uncompleted buildings, shacks, shared accommodation and overcrowded rented accommodation.

In parallel, the Government drew up a programme for the provision of adequate housing in order to alleviate the hardship caused by appalling living conditions. So far (end of 1979) about 23,200 houses have been provided for displaced persons under the various Government housing schemes.

With regard to the construction, on Government estates, of low-cost houses for the refugee population a total of 6,550 units have been completed out of the 12,097 units which have been planned in accordance with the five phases of the scheme announced to date by the Government. The housing estates include shopping centres, day care centres, community centres, open spaces, primary schools and playgrounds. Some also have medical centres and old people's homes. In addition, a new scheme for the construction of 500 bedsitters for elderly refugees has recently been announced by the Government.

Under the self-help housing scheme on Government land by which the Government provides grants and land and the refugees provide the necessary labour, a total of 4,667 units have been completed, 1,496 are currently under construction and a further 1,837 applications have been approved, but construction has not yet begun. The Government has also announced six phases of the scheme under which a total of 9,880 building plots will be made available.

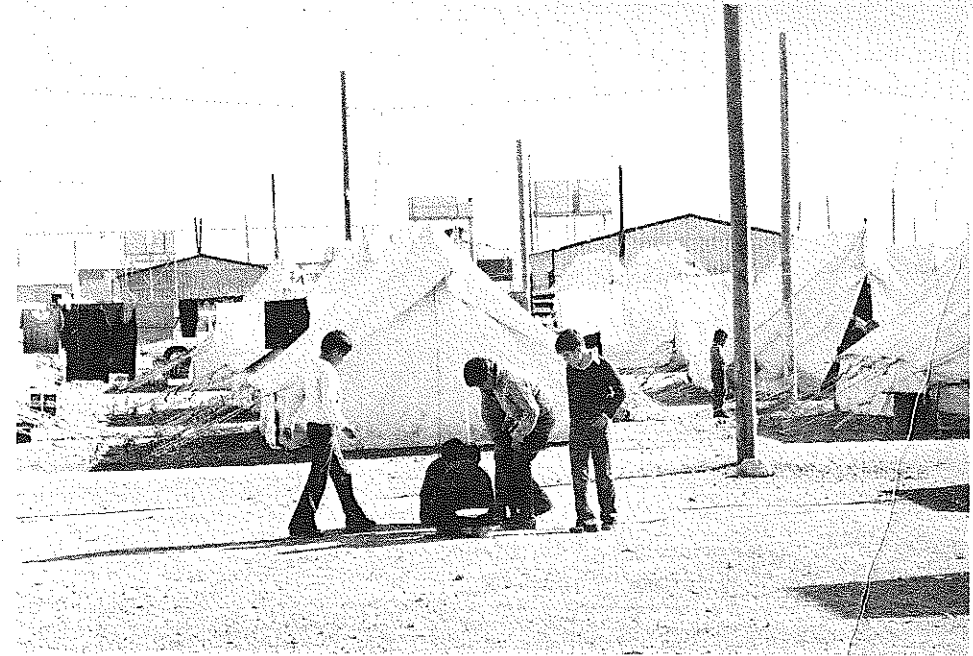
In addition 6,318 applications for Government grants and loans under the self-help housing scheme on private land have been approved so far and approximately 3,000 housing units have been completed under this scheme.

Moreover, about 9,000 refugee families are living in an equal number of abandoned Turkish Cypriot houses. These houses are under the control of specially established District Committees for the protection of Turkish Cypriot property which also hold in trust the rental value of these properties on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot owners.

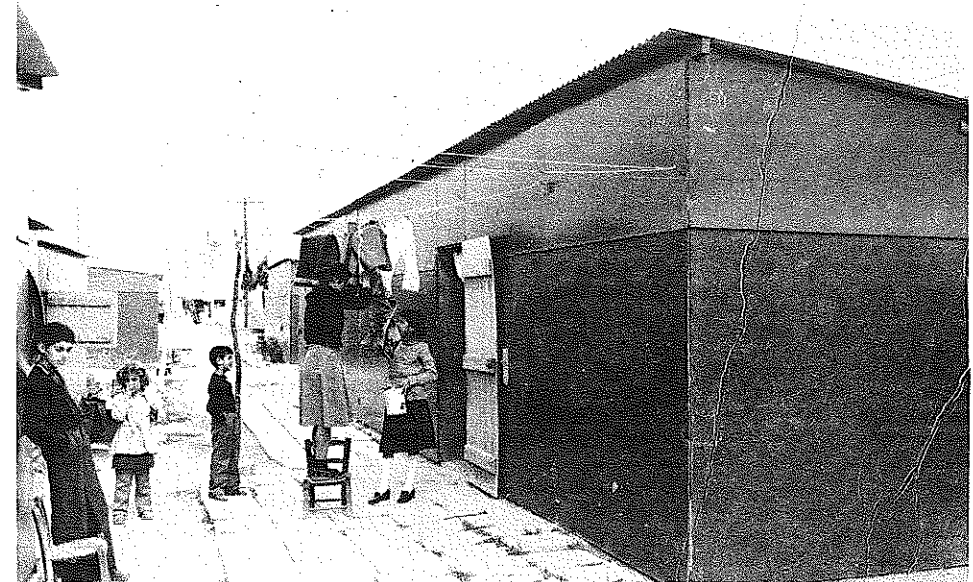
Despite the considerable progress achieved, it can be seen that less than half of the 50,000 displaced families have been provided with accommodation. It can also be seen that even when all the programmes or phases already announced by the Government have been completed there will still be a shortfall of several thousand housing units.

It should be emphasised that in addition to the 50,000 families displaced in 1974, new families are being created through the marriage of children of refugees and through the various social factors which affect the nature of the household. In view of the losses that these people or their parents have suffered as a result of the invasion, they also face difficult, and in many cases desperate, housing problems.

Meanwhile 8,500 people still live in wooden shacks in 11 official camps and a substantial number of refugees live in huts, garages or other unsuitable



One of the many refugee tented camps set up all over the free area. In the background common use facilities in corrugated iron sheds.



Celotex huts with corrugated iron roofs were another kind of temporary accommodation for refugees.

dwellings outside the camps. But in view of the limited capacity of the construction sector, the long planning and construction period required and the fact that the present programme does not cover all the housing needs, some time will pass before all these people can be housed.

The estimated cost to the Government of the completion of the programme announced to date is over C£130 million of which about C£67.5 million has so far been spent (see Appendix A). Foreign aid to date with respect to the above has reached C£15 million and the remainder has been covered by the Government. Over and above these sums the refugees themselves contribute to the costs of houses under the self-help schemes.

The long-term aim of the Government's housing policy is the increase in the number of units and their qualitative improvement so as to make possible a return to the housing standard which existed before 1974. This objective can be attained in the immediate future only if the refugees are allowed to return to their homes. For this reason the various housing schemes are designed to provide displaced persons with temporary accommodation as the Government's ultimate aim is the return of all the refugees to their homes.

In the event that the refugees are allowed to return to their homes, the houses constructed under the various schemes will be used for the housing of low-income families in accordance with the Government's long-term social objectives.

Education

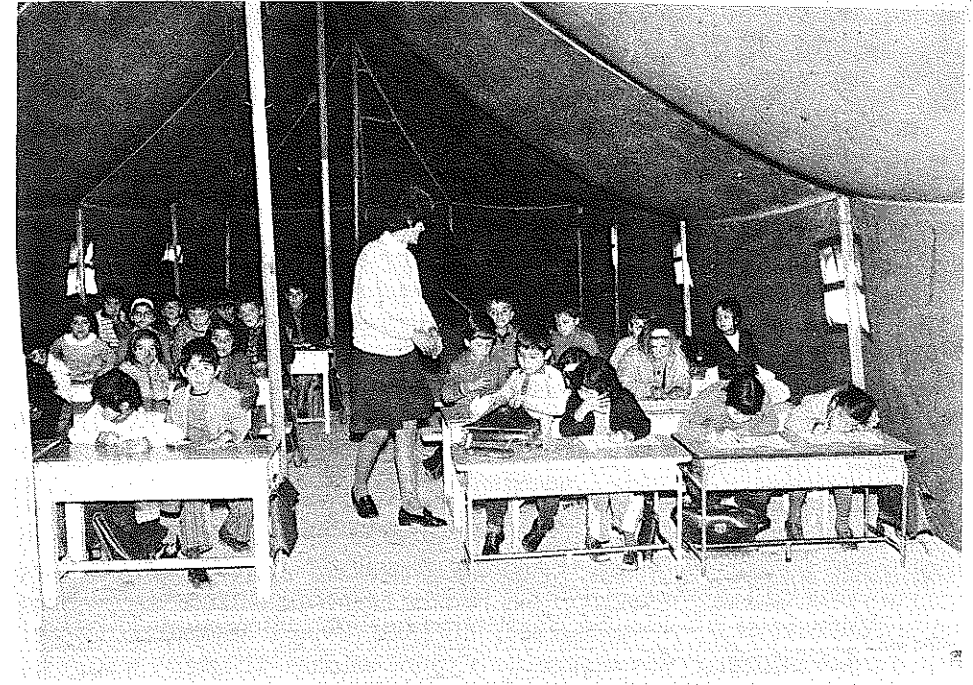
The effects of the invasion on the educational sector were equally devastating. A total of 202 (about 32%) schools and learning centres were lost to the Turks and a further 26 (4%) educational facilities situated along the confrontation line ceased to function. More than half of special schools for the handicapped were in the region under occupation and consequently became inaccessible.

Faced with the prospect of total collapse, emergency measures were introduced to put education back on its feet. The displaced school children were accommodated in prefabricated huts and tents. To cope with the sudden influx of displaced school children, existing schools were also used on a double-shift (morning and afternoon) basis, teaching different sets of pupils.

Meanwhile, plans for the construction of new schools began to be implemented. To date 17 elementary schools and 7 secondary and technical schools have been completed. This has facilitated the abolition to a great extent of the double-shift system, but overcrowding is still prevalent.

The extension of existing school buildings and the repair of 36 abandoned Turkish Cypriot schools also helped to overcome in some measure the problem caused by the shortage of school accommodation.

Although the situation has improved compared with that immediately after the Turkish invasion there is still need for a great number of school buildings



Education suffered a severe blow. Children forcibly evicted from their schools in the Turkish occupied area had to attend lessons in tented classrooms and other makeshift accommodation.



before it can be said that the problem has eased. This means that teachers and school children will have to put up with adverse classroom conditions for some years to come.

In the meantime, the needs of special education continue to be pressing. The number of children under care in Government institutions dropped from 500 in 1973/74 to 396 in 1975/76, although every effort was made to provide them with temporary accommodation. So far a new school for the deaf has been constructed in Nicosia as well as the new Lambousa Reform School. In addition, two of the displaced special schools are operating in rented premises. There are now 9 special schools operating and they cover about the same number of children as the 12 schools which operated before the Turkish invasion. Two schools for trainable children are currently under construction. The current education programme envisages the construction of more schools in congested areas in or near refugee settlements.

Government action in the educational field was not restricted to the provision of educational facilities. The Government, at the same time, introduced schemes and programmes aimed at ensuring that all refugee and needy children continued with their education. For this purpose financial assistance was provided and continues to be given to all needy displaced Cypriot students in Greece, while foreign assistance was elicited for Cypriot students in other countries to enable them to complete their university education. Locally, various schemes have operated under which displaced pupils of primary and secondary education received assistance in meeting their transport expenses from home to school and in paying their school fees at the second cycle of secondary education.

The major part of the costs of the programme designed to meet the educational needs of the refugees has been provided by the state budget. It is estimated that more than 40% of the total state education budget is allocated for the needs of refugee pupils. Total Government expenditure on education in 1978/79 is estimated at C£18.9 million, of which C£7.7 million was the expenditure on the educational needs of the displaced students (see Appendix A). Foreign aid in the educational field amounted to about 3% of the total state budget for education.

It is estimated that millions of pounds are still required to provide adequate schooling for all the displaced students and the state budget will have to continue to bear a very heavy burden in this field. The annual construction programme for the provision of the required pre-primary, primary, secondary and technical vocational schools for the displaced population costs more than C£1.5 million.

Health

Another acute problem is the provision of adequate medical care for displaced persons. Two of the six hospitals, six rural health centres and twenty private clinics with a total capacity of 630 beds are in the occupied area. This figure is equivalent to almost one fifth of the total island-wide capacity. About 8% of the capacity of specialised hospitals was also lost or destroyed by air

raids. But the blow to the health sector was, in fact, more serious than the relative figures indicate as the hospitals in the Government-controlled area, with their limited capacity and outmoded facilities, were unable to meet even pre-invasion needs.

To cope with the immediate problem, private clinics were rented, pre-fabricated wards erected and ancillary buildings such as nurses' quarters used. Even hospital corridors were crammed with beds. The situation was particularly bad in Larnaca where a poorly equipped pre-second world war building had to almost double its capacity from 86 to 150 beds. Medical teams were also formed and dispatched to the refugee camps to provide on-the-spot service for the displaced population.

Furthermore, the scheme for the provision of free medical care was extended to include the thousands of refugees and needy persons who had lost their income in the wake of the invasion. This inevitably multiplied the annual costs and was a heavy drain on the country's insufficient resources.

Another measure for the relief of the homeless population was the establishment of special homes where elderly refugees could receive medical attention.

The Government has also embarked on a hospital construction programme to alleviate the pressure on overcrowded hospitals. So far a rural hospital has been built in Paralimni with a capacity of 20—24 beds. Nicosia General Hospital and the hospitals of Limassol and Paphos will be redeveloped. Construction work on two new hospitals in Larnaca (230 beds) and Nicosia (250 beds) will begin in 1980. These projects will cost more than C£8 million.

Annual Government health expenditure rose from C£4.2 million in 1973 to an estimated C£9.1 million in 1979. In the latter year health expenditure on the needs of the displaced is estimated at C£3.4 million (see Appendix A). Foreign aid in this field has been minimal. It is estimated that it does not exceed 4% of total government health expenditure. More substantial aid has been secured through the UNHCR for the construction of the new Larnaca Hospital. The situation, however, will remain critical for many years to come and a large amount of resources will be needed to reorganize satisfactorily the health system and compensate for the losses in the health sector.

Expenditure

Initially, the number of economically dependent persons relying on Government assistance exceeded 215,000 in spite of the fact that some 22,000 people had emigrated and several thousand more had found temporary employment abroad. Since then and as a result of the implementation by the Government of a number of emergency measures as well as the gradual reactivation of the economy, the number of displaced and other needy people who continue to depend on the Government for their means of subsistence has decreased considerably. Although the direct dependence of the refugees on Government assistance in cash and kind has been reduced, there has been, on the other hand,



Low-cost housing estates in Government settlements housed a large number of refugees. Priority is given to big families, and those with special problems.



a noticeable increase in expenditure on refugee programmes such as housing, education and health. Since the refugee population is growing, the costs of these services continue to rise and new areas have to be covered. At the same time expenditure on such services as old people's homes, community welfare centres, children's homes, homes for the handicapped, geriatric institutions etc., which became necessary as a result of the invasion is also increasing.

To meet the needs of the refugees and to continue providing the expanded social services, the annual budget of the Government had to be increased substantially. Total annual expenditure on the needs of the refugees (i.e. relief assistance, housing, education, health, training, reactivation etc.) grew from about C£14.3 million in 1974 to C£42.1 million in 1978 and it is estimated to have reached C£46.3 million in 1979. (See Appendix A). It should be pointed out, however, that the above figures do not really give a complete picture of Government expenditure on the needs of the refugees. Many of the ordinary services of the state are also partly used to meet the needs of the displaced, but their cost cannot be separated or even estimated.

Clearly, domestic resources alone, reduced by 70 per cent after the invasion, were unable to cover the enormous needs of the displaced population. But generous humanitarian aid from abroad, channelled through the Special Relief Fund, to the tune of C£12 million a year for the years 1974—78 has contributed to the Government's effort to provide the refugees with a minimum acceptable standard of living.

Considerable funds are still needed, however, to meet the new challenges. Also, taking amounting costs into account, the annual level of expenditure on refugee programmes is expected to rise.

Enclaved

In the meantime, the systematic expulsion of Greek Cypriots living in the occupied areas has created approximately 18,000 additional refugees.

As part of a deliberate policy to divide the island along ethnic lines, these people were constantly subjected to harassment and physical assault. Frequently, they were prohibited from leaving the vicinity of their village to work their fields and had to depend on Government assistance to survive. Crushed by a ruthless campaign of intimidation and pressure, they were forced in the end to abandon their homes and farms.

The 50,000 Turkish settlers, who were brought from Turkey after 1974 in order to alter the demographic character of the island, are largely responsible for implementing this inhumane policy; and this is in spite of assurances on the part of the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, that enclaved persons in the north would be "free to stay" and would "be given every help to lead a normal life".*

* Press communique issued after the third round of intercommunal talks, held in Vienna under United Nations auspices, from 31 July—2 August, 1975.



Despite the various housing programmes several thousand refugee families are still living in unsuitable accommodation.

The number of persons enclaved in the occupied area has in the course of five years dwindled to a mere 1,982* and more are daily being uprooted in the same way. Their property and homes, like those of all the other refugees, are mostly distributed to settlers and they cross to the free area with nothing but a few household goods.

The forced exodus of the enclaved has piled more problems on the Government and put a great strain on its relief and welfare services. But for all the Government's efforts to make their lives more comfortable, it will be a long time before they have a decent standard of living.

Conclusion

The Turkish invasion had wrecked the lives of thousands of people. To ensure their survival, the Government's first task, apart from providing relief assistance, was to reconstruct the island's ruined economy. The various emergency measures, the people's willingness to make sacrifices and their capacity for hard work have all helped to achieve this aim.

Favourable external factors have also been instrumental in revitalizing the economy. Many Lebanese, who fled the civil war in their country, flocked to Cyprus, filled the empty hotels and invested their capital. Considerable foreign aid in cash and kind was made available. Three years of good rainfall boosted agricultural production and a bumper crop of potatoes, exported to drought-parched Europe in 1976, fetched millions of pounds.

These, however, are short-term factors which are unlikely to go on propping up the economy much longer. Already, there are worrying signs that the economy is facing serious problems. Inflation is rising and the trade deficit has widened as a result of increased imports to replace durable consumer goods, factory installations and production units lost during the invasion.

In the meantime, the economy in the occupied area is in shambles. Prices have soared, inflation is rampant and many people who once earned a good living are now finding it hard to make ends meet.

In a statement published in "Halkin Sesi" on 12 August, 1979, the Turkish Cypriot Populist Party said that the people "can no longer afford to go shopping". It added: "Food, clothes and housing rents cost the earth. Within 30 months the cost of living has risen by 120 per cent".

Clearly the island cannot support two separate economies. In fact it was because of its highly integrated economy that it was able to prosper before the invasion.

* Figure for 31.12.1979.

Thus, a solution that would ensure the unity of the state and allow the refugees to return to their homes and former occupations holds out the only hope for Cyprus, for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

But quite apart from economic considerations, the refugee question is, above all, a humanitarian matter. New houses and social welfare benefits cannot replace the homes the refugees were born in and the businesses or farms they lost. Nor can they heal the trauma of eviction.

Furthermore, by denying the refugees their fundamental human rights, Turkey is violating both the Charter of Human Rights and the United Nations resolutions on Cyprus.

The refugees, therefore, must first be allowed to return to their homes if human suffering is to end and if justice is to be restored in Cyprus.

Expenditures (a) on the displaced from all sources (£'000)

| | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 (estimate) |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Special Relief Fund | 9,099 | 22,072 | 31,829 | 30,488 | 27,137 | 28,541 |
| 1.1 Cash Allowances (b) | 1,072 | 3,566 | 5,143 | 3,366 | 2,942 | 1,830 |
| 1.2 Allowances in kind | 7,150 | 15,573 | 13,692 | 7,855 | 3,139 | 950 |
| 1.2.1 Food | 3,530 | 10,656 | 9,384 | 5,535 | 2,336 | 850 |
| 1.2.2 Clothing & Footwear | 1,500 | 3,500 | 1,102 | 892 | 334 | — |
| 1.2.3 Household Equipment | 2,120 | 1,417 | 3,206 | 1,428 | 469 | 100 |
| 1.3 Housing | 585 | 1,582 | 10,284 | 15,211 | 17,239 | 22,590 |
| 1.3.1 Low-cost Housing Estates | — | 843 | 6,780 | 7,486 | 8,242 | 10,370 |
| 1.3.2 Self-Help Housing & Other | 585 | 739 | 3,504 | 7,725 | 8,997 | 12,220 |
| 1.4 Welfare Services | 263 | 822 | 1,569 | 1,604 | 2,173 | 1,688 |
| 1.5 Education and Health | 29 | 432 | 853 | 1,279 | 1,295 | 1,042 |
| 1.6 Reactivation and Training | — | 97 | 288 | 1,173 | 349 | 441 |
| 2. Ordinary & Development Budgets | 2,591 | 7,608 | 8,305 | 8,454 | 10,021 | 11,952 |
| 2.1 Education | 1,327 | 3,563 | 4,070 | 4,674 | 5,600 | 6,860 |
| 2.2 Health | 637 | 1,844 | 1,915 | 2,170 | 2,674 | 3,175 |
| 2.3 Social Welfare | 104 | 159 | 174 | 196 | 214 | 263 |
| 2.4 Pensions | 297 | 891 | 890 | 991 | 1,252 | 1,404 |
| 2.5 Reactivation | 226 | 1,151 | 1,256 | 423 | 281 | 250 |
| 3. Social Funds | 2,609 | 3,315 | 3,394 | 3,900 | 4,947 | 5,815 |
| 3.1 Pensions to the displaced | 908 | 2,406 | 2,411 | 2,915 | 3,628 | 4,281 |
| 3.2 Other benefits to the displaced | 1,628 | 719 | 401 | 530 | 809 | 784 |
| 3.3 Pensions to war disabled and the dependants of war dead | 73 | 190 | 582 | 455 | 510 | 750 |
| TOTAL | 14,299 | 32,995 | 43,528 | 42,842 | 42,105 | 46,308 |

Sources : Special Relief Fund, Financial Reports and Planning Bureau.

N.B. (a) These are expenditures allocated directly for the needs of the displaced or estimated to have been allocated for this purpose during the period covered.
(b) Including rent allowances.