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Ceramic Industry to be Established In Jordan as Result of UNIDO-aided Studies

THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN has announced plans to set up a ceramic plant that is expected to achieve an annual foreign exchange saving of half a million Jordan dinars (approximately US\$1,400,168). The decision was taken as a result of studies undertaken by the Jordan Centre for Industrial Development with the assistance of an adviser from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The Jordan Centre for Industrial Development was set up in 1968 by the Government of Jordan in co-operation with UNIDO, to advise and participate in drawing up and implementing the country's industrial development programme, improve productivity and help to develop management skills. It is financed in part by a contribution of \$1,023,500 from the Special Fund of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the Government of Jordan contributing the local operating costs and other expenses in kind. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is also participating in the project.

As one of its first tasks, the Centre was asked to carry out a survey of local industries with a view to determining those that would be most viable, taking into account such factors as efficiency, quality, use of local raw materials and the ability to compete with foreign products.

A UNIDO ceramic adviser from Czechoslovakia and his Jordanian counterpart discovered that Jordanian clays are among the best in the Middle East, and could provide excellent raw materials for ceramic manufacture.

The first step was to analyse and evaluate this material, so laboratory and semi-industrial tests of the newly-discovered clays were carried out by the Natural Resources Authority. More extensive tests were subsequently undertaken in Turkey and Czechoslovakia. Ten tons of ceramic raw materials were extracted from various parts of Jordan and shipped to Turkey and Czechoslovakia for a series of pilot tests. The tests indicated that the clays were suitable for the production of wall tiles, sanitary ware, fireclay kiln furniture and artistic ceramics such as vases, ashtrays and candlesticks. Moreover, the quality of the items produced correspond to international standards, and there was every indication that they could be produced at prices that would make them competitive in the Middle East markets.



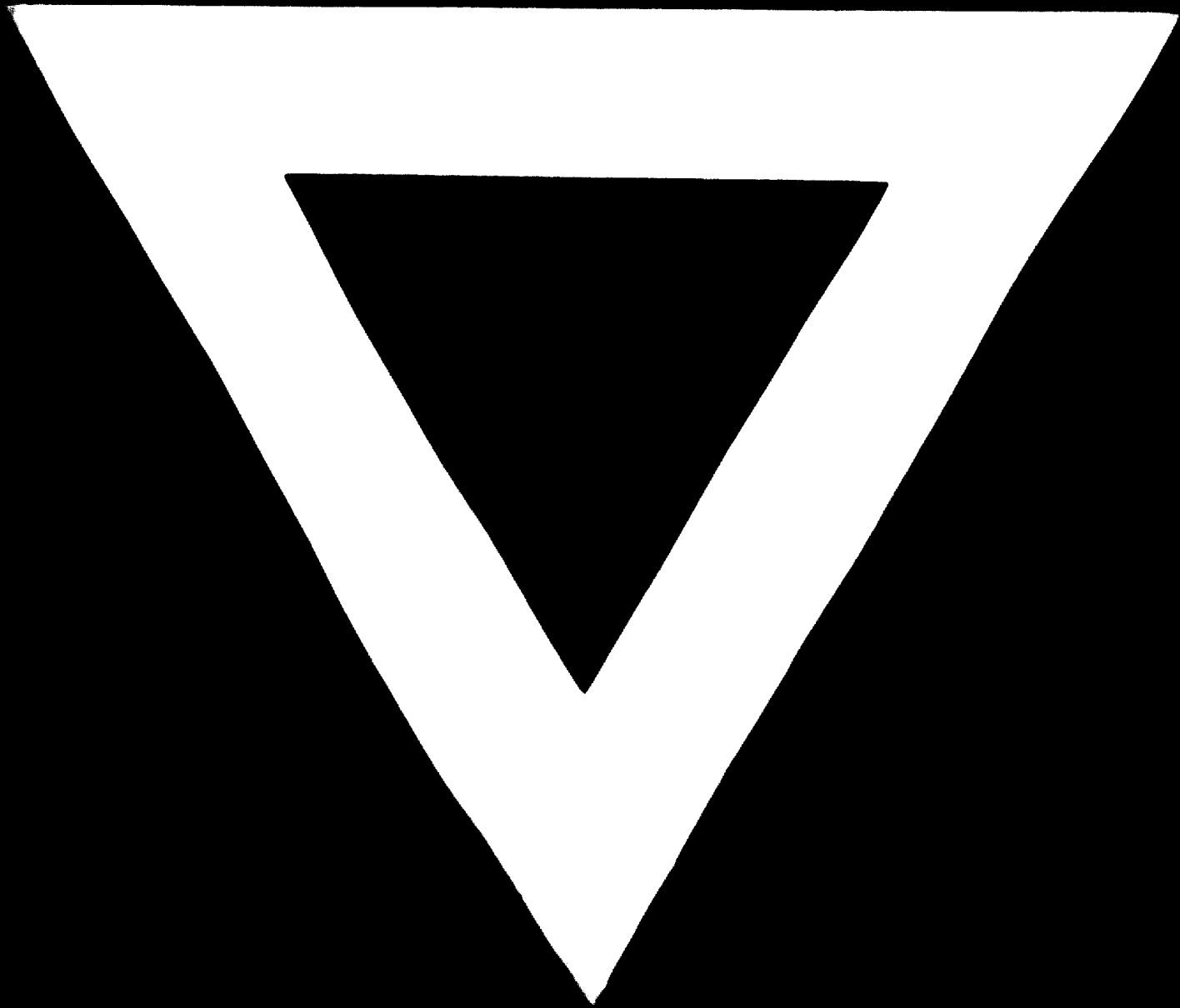
Next it was essential to investigate export possibilities since the needs of the local market alone were not enough to justify large-scale ceramic production. A preliminary survey revealed that there was a potential market in the neighbouring Arab countries for two-thirds of the wall tiles and sanitary ware that the proposed plant could produce.

As a result, the Ministry of National Economy of Jordan has announced the establishment of a ceramic plant to be financed from both public and private sources. Raw material reserves are estimated to be sufficient to meet the plant capacity for the next 50 years. It is hoped that the plant will be fully operational in 1973 with an output of 10,000 tons of sanitary ware and wall tiles, of which one third will be used locally and the rest exported to neighbouring Arab countries. At a later stage the plant may undertake the production of electro-porcelain fittings and floor tiles.

Other Activities of the Centre

The Jordan Centre for Industrial Development, with the help of experts from UNIDO and ILO, is active in a number of other fields of industry. It is investigating prospects for the paper, plywood and metal-transforming industries in Jordan, and has begun to draw up a guide for drafting electrical standards, as well as standards for food and agricultural products and for weights and measures. In addition, it is setting up a standards library and organizing courses in management training. A number of industrial enterprises in Jordan have also been assisted in development work in various management fields. Industries receiving such assistance include chemicals, tanning, transport, petroleum, food and iron and steel.

Artistic ceramics, artistic tiles and ashtrays, produced as a result of a preliminary study in connexion with the setting up of a ceramic plant in Jordan



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