



PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

An UNRWA Newsletter

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WINTER COMES, AND NAWAL IS ALIVE
(page 6)

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The cover picture shows Nawal (see our article on page 6) and her mother, after Nawal's treatment at the UNRWA rehydration/nutrition center. On the

All photographs in this Newsletter, and other pictures of the work of UNRWA, may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, Museitbeh Quarter, Beirut, Lebanon.

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COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S STATEMENT TO THE
SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, made a statement to the Special Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in mid-October, introducing his annual report for consideration by the Committee.

Mr. Michelmore said that during the past two years the basic factors affecting the refugees had continued to exist. The lives of the refugees were still clouded by economic insecurity, and most families continued to live "at the margin of subsistence". They still expressed their resentment at the hardships they had endured over the last 17 years, and voiced their aspirations to return to their previous homes.

The Commissioner-General stated that UNRWA's financial difficulties had become so serious "that they will soon threaten the collapse of the services which UNRWA provides to the refugees". Some solution to this critical problem was urgently needed if UNRWA was to continue its humanitarian mission of service to the refugees, and to make its contribution to peace and stability in the Middle East, added Mr. Michelmore.

The Commissioner-General said that it was this financial problem which was emphasized in his annual report (see Newsletter No. 44). The financial problem had been building up over the last several years, resulting in an estimated deficit of \$2.5 million for 1965. "For next year the outlook is even more alarming," stated Mr. Michelmore. To carry on existing services and to cover the expected increase in school enrolment, UNRWA would need about \$4.2 million more than the expected income. Furthermore, he added, the Agency's reserves would reach a minimum point by the end of 1965.

"The Agency now appeals to the General Assembly to consider how adequate financing might be assured for the assistance of the Palestine refugees," said the Commissioner-General.

UNRWA had continued its efforts to eliminate discrepancies in the ration rolls, stated Mr. Michelmore. It had become increasingly clear that effective rectification of the ration lists could be accomplished only with the cooperation and participation of the host Governments. Following discussions with the host Governments, a set of proposals acceptable to them had emerged under which the responsibility and participation of the Governments would be increased. Subject to the direction of the General Assembly, said the Commissioner-General, the Agency would plan to work with the host Governments along these lines. However, he added, the host Governments had indicated that they would not wish to proceed with the implementation of these proposals unless funds were assured to enable the UNRWA program to continue at existing levels, and to provide for future increased costs arising from the natural growth of the refugee population.

The Commissioner-General said that he believed UNRWA had reached a stage in its history at which the guidance and advice of the General Assembly were essential to enable the Agency to carry on its task effectively. In particular, Mr. Michelmore sought the advice of the Assembly on three points. First, did it wish UNRWA to continue the present strictly limited program of assistance to the refugees at existing standards and levels? Second, were Governments prepared to provide sufficient funds to enable UNRWA to carry out this program; and third, if the Assembly believed that it might not be possible to secure enough funds, what general guide-lines would it propose to prevent "the insolvency and collapse of the Agency"?

Concluding, the Commissioner-General said that he earnestly recommended that funds be provided to enable the Agency to continue its existing services.

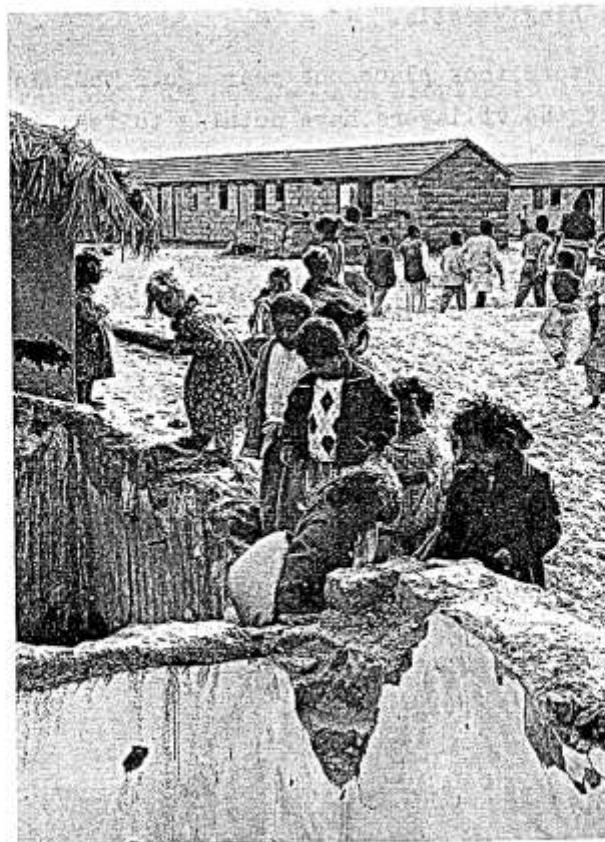
"SWEDISH" FISHING VILLAGE BUILT IN GAZA

Jamil Nahhal and his partners pulled their fishing boat further up the beach than usual in anticipation of the coming storm, then walked back along the sand to their village, a little cluster of mud-brick huts in the sand dunes on the edge of the beach, less than 50 yards from the sea.

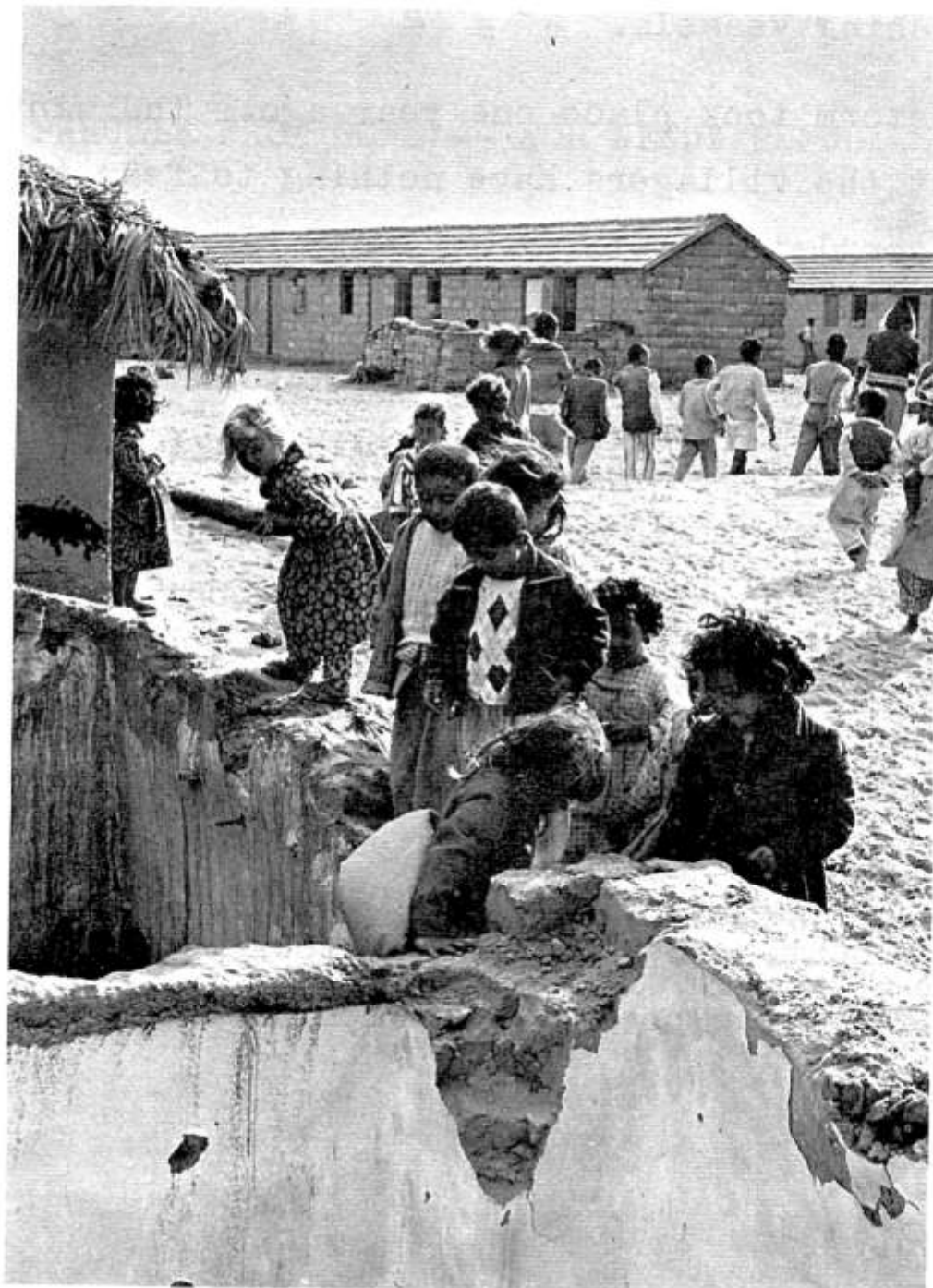
The storm, in November 1964, was one of the worst that had hit the eastern Mediterranean coast in recent years. In the Gaza Strip, high seas battered the 25-mile shoreline, wrecking many fishing boats and demolishing or damaging many buildings near the sea. Among the hardest hit was Jamil Nahhal's village at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip.

By the following morning, many of the mud huts in the village were in

The picture below shows children playing in the ruins of an old mud hut, with the new shelters behind.



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ruins. Torrential rain and gale-force winds had destroyed many of the houses and severely damaged others. In the middle of the night, the roof of Jamil's three-room shelter collapsed. His wife and eight children, including a four-month-old baby, scrambled to take shelter in a neighbor's hut, while Jamil tried to salvage some of their few belongings from the mud and the water.

The plight of the villagers was desperate. All 55 families who made up the population of the village were Palestine refugees, many of whom had fled south to the Gaza Strip in 1948 in their own small fishing boats. They had built their huts and their boats with their own hands, and, with assistance from UNRWA, which provides medical care, education for their children, and basic food rations to some of the families, the villagers were doing their best to stand on their own feet again.

But the storm that November night had left half of the residents homeless, many of them sheltering under tents improvised from the sails of the fishing vessels.

That storm took place one year ago. The winter gales have begun again, but the villagers have nothing to fear this year, for now they live in a completely rebuilt village. Instead of a cluster of mud huts, their village is composed of rows of neat buildings, built solidly of concrete blocks, with tiled roofs.

Soon after last winter's storm, the plight of the villagers came to the attention of members of the Swedish Battalion of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) — the United Nations peace-keeping force with headquarters in Gaza. The officers and men of the Swedish Battalion decided to help the villagers, raising funds through lotteries and other events, and seeking contributions from other Swedish soldiers who had served in Gaza before them.

An influential newspaper undertook to head the fund-raising campaign in Sweden. The previous Swedish Battalion and members of the

WINTER COMES — AND NAWAL IS ALIVE

Nawal Deeb Mohammad's first summer was almost her last.

Now a robust, healthy 10-month-old baby, she plays happily in the yard of her family's mud-brick hut in Aqabat Jaber refugee camp in the Jordan Valley, near the ancient city of Jericho.

A few months ago, Nawal was little more than a skeleton — wasted, shrunken and fast approaching death. She was a victim of gastro-enteritis, the number-one baby-killer among the refugee population.

Diarrhoeal diseases, of which gastro-enteritis is the most common, accounted for 44 per cent of the deaths of refugee infants under one year of age last year. Gastro-enteritis causes vomiting, and diarrhoea, resulting in dehydration, or loss of body fluids, which is fatal in severe cases.

Gastro-enteritis is a danger throughout the year, but particularly during the long, dry, dusty summers, when problems of sanitation and hygiene in the refugee camps becomes more serious. And nowhere in the four "host" countries is the summer longer or hotter than in Aqabat Jaber and the other refugee camps clustered around Jericho in the Jordan Valley, the lowest spot on the surface of the earth (1,200 feet below sea level).

Nawal's life was saved in a small whitewashed building in the middle of the camp -- the UNRWA rehydration/nutrition center which gives emergency treatment to infants who have severe gastro-enteritis.

She was referred to the rehydration/nutrition center by the doctor in the camp clinic, who found her dehydrated, unable to retain any food or fluids and seriously underweight. At almost eight months of age, she weighed only 10 lbs., less than she had at two months.

For the first two mornings at the center, she was given intra-nasal drip treatment, in which fluids and nutrients are passed drip by drip directly into the stomach through a tube inserted through

public in Sweden donated funds sufficient to purchase 140 tons of cement for the project, which was shipped to the Middle East free of charge by a Swedish shipping line, then transported to Gaza free by the United Arab Republic Government.

Eager to help those who were helping them, the refugees began in September to tear down their old homes, living in tents while the new houses were being built. By mid-December, the new village was complete. The new shelters are simple structures fulfilling only the minimum needs for accommodation (up to five family members in each room), but they are solid and weatherproof.

The first storms of winter have already struck the Gaza Strip, and worse will follow. But in the "Swedish village", the refugees are confident.

In their two-room home, Jamil Nahhal and his family, like the rest of the village, have nothing to fear this year.

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PARCELS FROM HOME — FOR NEEDY REFUGEES

Troops stationed abroad always look forward to receiving parcels from home. Parcels received by many of the Swedish soldiers of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Gaza Strip are doubly welcome, for they contain used clothing for needy refugees. More than 100 parcels of clothing have already been received by officers and men of the Swedish Battalion under a novel scheme initiated by the soldiers themselves. Each member of the Battalion is issued regularly with special postage stamps which he sends to his family and friends in Sweden enabling them to send mail to him free of charge. The soldiers suggested that spare stamps should be used to send parcels of used clothing, and soon the parcels were coming from Sweden regularly. The clothing is distributed through UNRWA to needy families.

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Right: Her mother
beside her, Nawal
is given the intra-
nasal drip treat-
ment on her first
day at the rehydra-
tion/nutrition
center





the nose. Then for three weeks, her mother brought her every day to the center to receive a special post-diarrhoea menu, consisting mainly of mashed bananas and yoghurt.

The presence of Nawal's mother at the center provided an opportunity for the staff to teach her to prevent recurrence of gastroenteritis, and to halt dehydration at an early stage.

After discharge from the rehydration/nutrition center, Nawal was kept under observation for a further period of one month, during which her mother took her every day to the UNRWA supplementary feeding center in the camp to continue the post-diarrhoea menu.

The treatment at the rehydration/nutrition centers has been found so effective that UNRWA is presently expanding this program. The Agency has 15 centers in operation, and another two are planned.



The pictures show Nawal on admission to the rehydration center (above), and one month later, on discharge from the center (below).

These centers are for treatment of the more serious cases only. Mild cases are treated at the maternal and child health clinics, where the mother is given a "repair solution" containing medicines and nutrients and taught how to administer it at home. Very severe cases are sent to hospital, where they receive fluids intravenously.

UNRWA's rehydration centers will continue their life-saving work throughout the year, but the peak period for gastro-enteritis has drawn to a close for another year.

Winter has come in the Jordan Valley.

And little Nawal Mohammad is alive.

Many of UNRWA's rehydration/nutrition centers have been established with special donations from voluntary agencies, individuals and other sources.

A contribution from Bread for the World (Federal Republic of Germany), channeled through the Lutheran World Federation, has paid for the construction and the first year's operating costs of three centers in Jordan. Two other centers opened this summer in Jordan have been built and will be run for one year through a donation from OXFAM (United Kingdom).

Three centers in the Gaza Strip have been financed by donations from the Scandinavian countries. One forms part of the new health center financed by the Swedish International Development Authority, another has been established through the efforts of Norwegian pop singer Wenche Myhre, who raised funds for it through her fan club, and the third is being built at Nuseirat camp with a donation from the Norwegian Refugee Council. The Canadian Save the Children Fund has financed the construction of one center, and a new center will be built in Jabalia Camp with money raised in Belgium through the sale of a special issue of postage

stamps, thanks to the Belgian Ministry of Post, Telegraphs & Telephones and to l'Entr'aide Socialiste Belge.

The center in Rashidieh Camp in Lebanon, constructed with a donation from the Swedish Save the Children Fund, is nearing completion.

As not all these contributions include funds for the continued operation of the centers, and as there are other centers in operation, UNRWA is seeking further contributions to finance the operation of rehydration/nutrition centers. The cost varies from country to country, but average expenses are as follows :

- to operate a 5-bed center for one year \$1,300
- to operate a 10-bed center for one year \$4,400
- to operate a 20-bed center for one year \$5,700

Five-bed centers form an integral part of existing health units and use the unit's staff. Ten and 20-bed centers, established in areas where there is need for a greater capacity, require additional staff, and are thus seemingly more expensive to operate.

Further information, or details of specific projects, can be obtained from the addresses on the last page of this Newsletter.

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IN BRIEF

Visitors



Senator Joseph D. Tydings of Massachusetts (United States), a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, visited UNRWA's Kalandia camp near Jerusalem, Jordan, in mid-November. The picture shows Senator Tydings sitting in on a class in an UNRWA school in the camp. He also visited the UNRWA clinic, and toured the nearby Kalandia Vocational Training Center.

Congressman Otto Passman of Louisiana (United States), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the House Committee on Appropriations, and Congressman Garner Shriver of Kansas, discussed the work of UNRWA with the Acting Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. John Reddaway, during a brief visit to Beirut.

Mr. Jean Luyten, President, and Mr. Adrian Geets, Secretary-General of L'Entr'aide Socialiste Belge, a Belgian voluntary organization, discussed plans for the establishment of a new health center in the Gaza Strip with funds raised in Belgium through the sale of a special issue of postage stamps.

Professor Marcel van Bierbeek of Belgium, a European stamp expert, was appointed Honorary Consultant on philatelic matters to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during his visit to the Agency's Headquarters in Beirut in October.

Dr. M. G. Candau, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), had discussions with UNRWA's Director of Health, Dr. M. Sharif, during a brief stay in Beirut on his way back to Geneva. UNRWA's program of health care for the refugees is under the technical direction of WHO.

Monsignor Joseph T. Ryan, President of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, spent almost three weeks in the Middle East, inspecting the Mission's operations in Lebanon, Jordan and the Gaza Strip. He was accompanied by his Executive Assistant, Mr. Daniel Thomas. With Monsignor Ryan came Father Thomas Hussey, S.J. to take up his appointment as Field Director for the Pontifical Mission. Father Hussey served previously in Baghdad, where he founded the Al Hickma University.

Mrs. Helvi Sipilä, Chairman of the Center for Citizenship Education in Helsinki, Finland, paid brief visits to Lebanon and Jordan in mid-November.

Mr. Joseph Bednarek, Director for Services to Refugees and Migrants, World's Alliance of YMCAs, spent three weeks in UNRWA's area of operations reviewing the joint YMCA-UNRWA Leadership Training Program for young refugees, and visiting many of the Youth Activities Centers in the camps.

A group of 12 members of the New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women visited UNRWA's Ramallah Girls' Training Center in Jordan as part of their tour of the Middle East. They met refugee girls in the "Business and Professional Women's Class" at Ramallah, who have been sponsored by scholarships from various branches of the Business and Professional Women's organization.

Colonel Stig Waldenström of Sweden revisited the Gaza Strip in October to inspect the new UNRWA-Swedish Health Center (see Newsletter No. 44) at Beach Camp and he expressed himself as being profoundly impressed with all that he saw. He has since lectured to fellow officers in

Sweden. Colonel Waldenström was Commander of the Swedish Contingent with UNEF in the summer of 1962 when the idea of applying Swedish funds for medico/social purposes in Gaza was first mooted. From the beginning he gave most sympathetic consideration to the project and he has continued to take a deep interest in the work of UNRWA during the three years since his return to Sweden.

Donations

The Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) has donated \$10,000 for the purchase of portable science kits for use in UNRWA preparatory schools. The contribution will provide about 40 kits, enabling science teachers to demonstrate what they have been teaching.

Eight young refugees who were sponsored during their first year at UNRWA's Sibilin Vocational Training Center (Lebanon) by American Middle East Rehabilitation, Inc. (AMER) have now received scholarships to cover their second year. The scholarships were provided from savings to UNRWA resulting from donations of medical supplies from AMER under its "Pills for Skills" program. The recent shipments of supplies from AMER for use in UNRWA's health program bring to approximately \$80,000 the value of such donations since 1961.

The Canadian Junior Red Cross has donated a further Can.\$2,200 to finance the operation during 1966 of UNRWA's woodwork training center for boys at Tulkarem refugee camp in Jordan. The center, established with a previous contribution from the Canadian Junior Red Cross, gives a one-year training course in carpentry, enabling refugee boys to earn a little money by working in the neighborhood. Another donation of \$500 from the Canadian Junior Red Cross has provided a vocational training scholarship for a young refugee at one of UNRWA's training centers.

The Lebanese Government recently donated a total of 48,500 doses of Sabin Polio Vaccine, which will be used by UNRWA's health services in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland donated a further \$1,800 for three refugee girls in the clerk-typist-stenographer course at the Ramallah Girls' Training Center. This brings the total amount donated by the U.K. Federation to \$12,400.

Contributions of scholarships have also come from Dr. Hermann Abs, Chairman of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt (Federal Republic of Germany), the International Staff Association of UNRWA, the United Steel Workers of America, the British Council for Aid to Refugees, all of whom have provided two \$500 scholarships, from the Frankfurter Bank, Dr. Wilhelm Paulus (Stuttgart) and the Index-Werke (Federal Republic of Germany) who have given one scholarship.

The Irish National Committee for UNICEF has donated \$700 for UNRWA's rehydration/nutrition program (see article on page 6).

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, nonpolitical body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949.

In cooperation with the "host" governments (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Republic), it carries out its two-fold task: first, to provide food, health and welfare services and shelter for the refugees; second, to provide education and training to refugee children and young adults, including general education, vocational and teacher training and university scholarships.

UNRWA began work in May 1950; its current mandate expires on 30 June 1966.

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Further information may be obtained from

UNRWA Liaison Office
United Nations
New York

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In the United States, the United States Committee for Refugees and American Middle East Rehabilitation, Inc., are organizations cooperating with UNRWA.

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