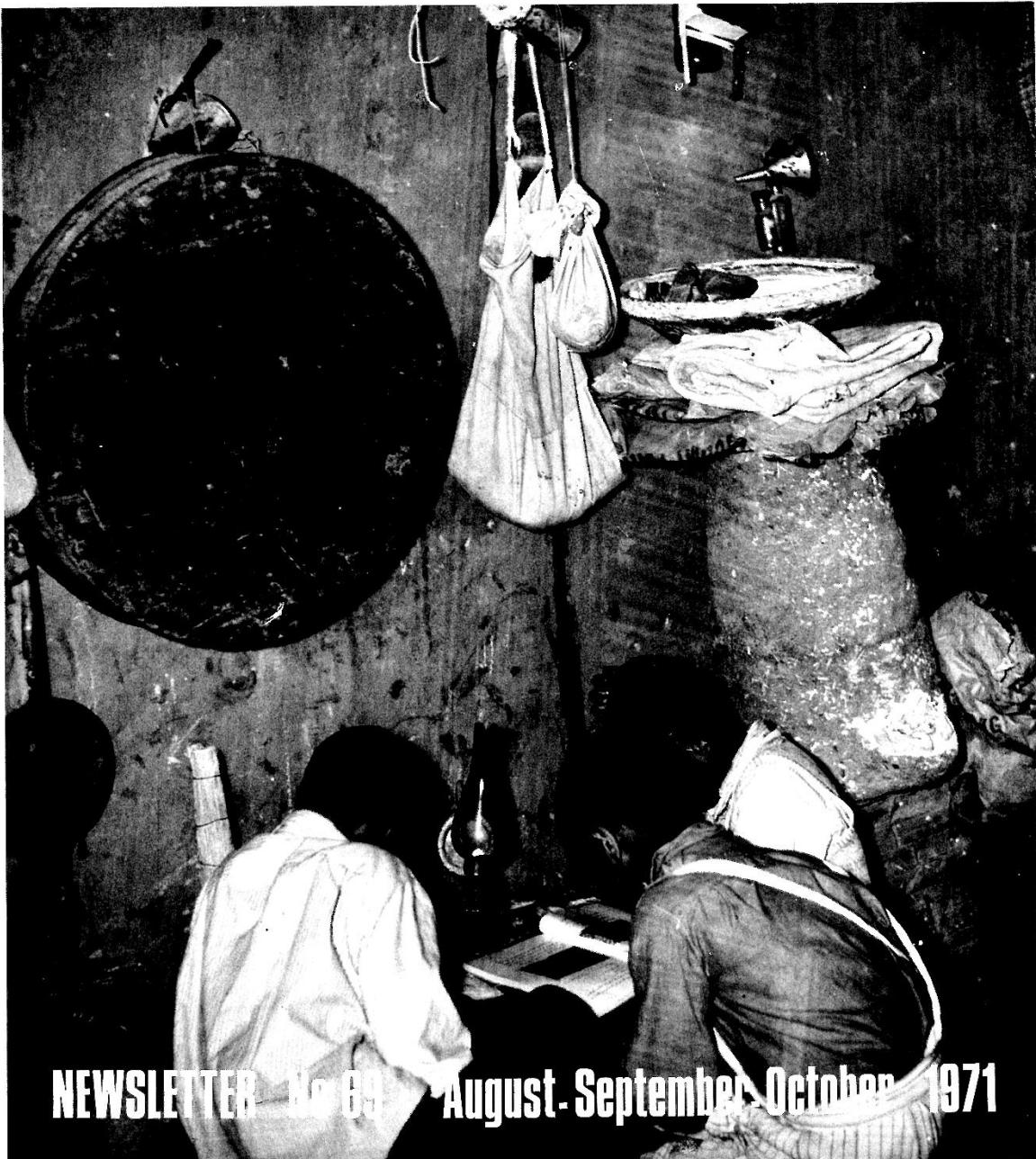


PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY



NEWSLETTER No 69 August-September-October 1971



**UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST**

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FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:

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Sir John Rennie, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, presents a copy of his Annual Report for 1970-71 to U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations (see page 4)



In the Gaza Strip a woman stands before her recently demolished shelter in one of the refugee camps (see Special Report, page 9)

Front Cover: Homework in a refugee camp

Commentary

July - UNRWA received two special contributions totalling \$10,000 from the Government of Iran, \$5,000 of which was in response to the appeal made by the Director-General of Unesco for the UNRWA/Unesco education programme for Palestine refugee children.

August - The Government of Sweden made available to UNRWA the sum of \$2,257,788 as "an expression of the concern of the Swedish people for the plight of the Palestine refugees". This further donation brings to \$2,449,865 Sweden's total contributions to UNRWA for 1971.

13 September - UNRWA received \$100,000 from the Government of Iraq, bringing Iraq's contribution to UNRWA for 1971 to \$125,000. \$25,000 of this sum is in response to the appeal made by the Director-General of Unesco.

6 October - UNRWA received a contribution for 1971 of \$20,000 from the Government of Austria.

26 October - UNRWA received \$329,000 from the Government of Denmark's Board of Technical Cooperation with Developing countries, representing the balance of a \$658,000 contribution in favour of UNRWA's education and training programme.

October/November - Five teachers employed by voluntary agencies to teach pre-school children in refugee camps are in Beirut attending a two-month training seminar for teachers of nursery and pre-school children. Funds to allow the five to attend were donated to UNRWA by the sponsor of the seminar, the Lebanese branch of the World Institute of Nursery and Kindergarten Training.

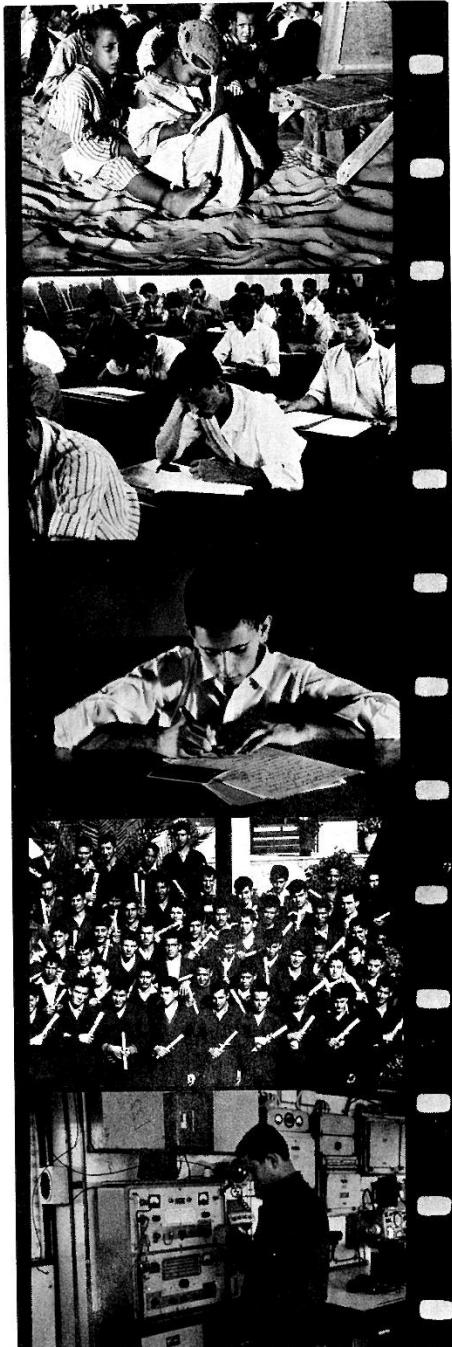
November - The story of Palestine refugee childhood and education and the struggle afterwards is the subject of a new UNRWA film available from UNRWA offices in Beirut, Geneva and New York. "Omar Maher - Palestine refugee, born 1942" tells the story of a young man who unlike many other young Palestine refugees was able to break out of the vicious unemployment/unemployability circle, thanks to training received at the UNRWA/Unesco vocational training centre at Kalandia on Jordan's West Bank.

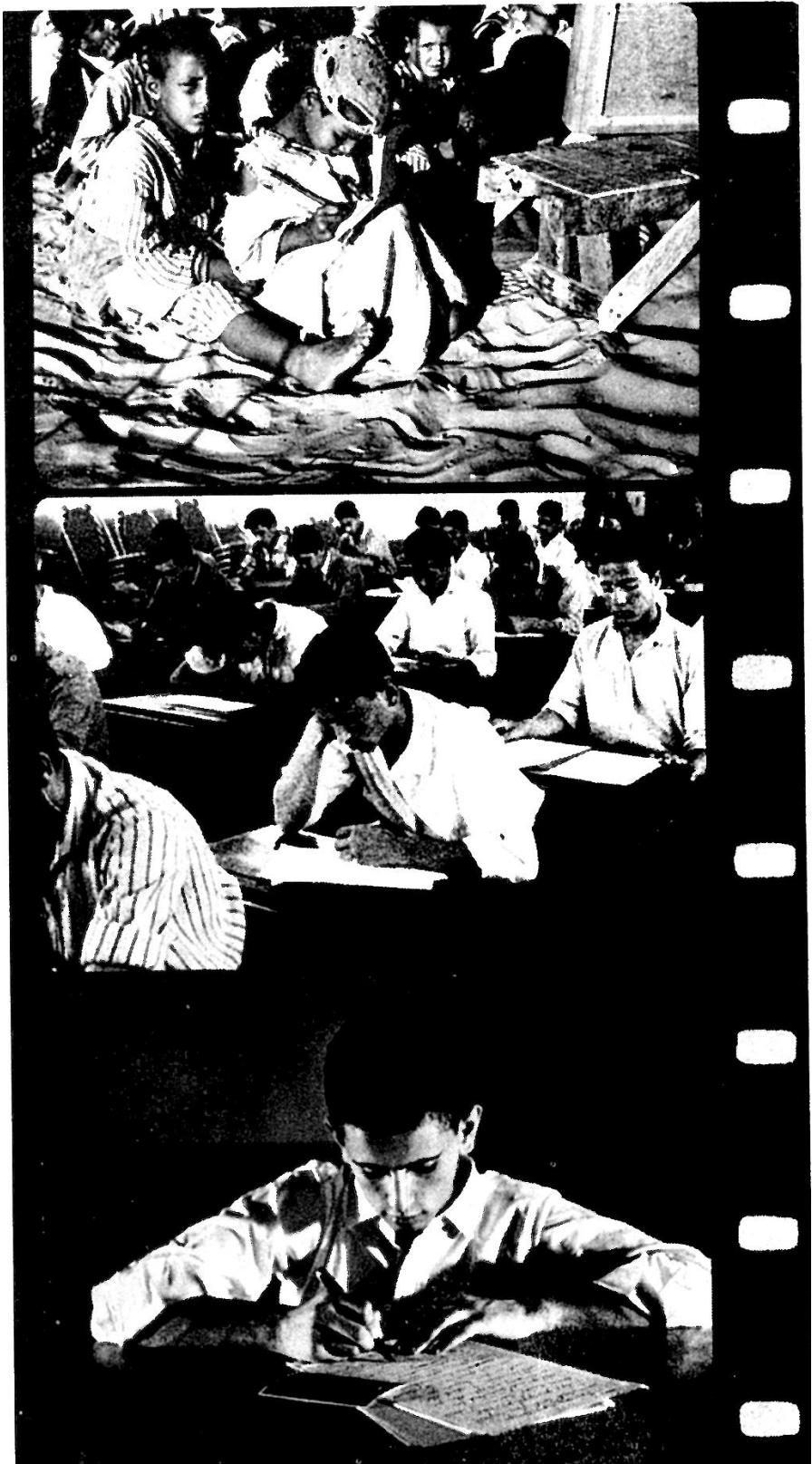
Maher's career is now the subject of a full-colour film which brings up-to-date a 1962 UNRWA film entitled "Your Friend, Omar" on his training at Kalandia. The new sequel shows Maher now in his late twenties, at work in Doha, Qatar, an oil state on the Arabian Peninsula.

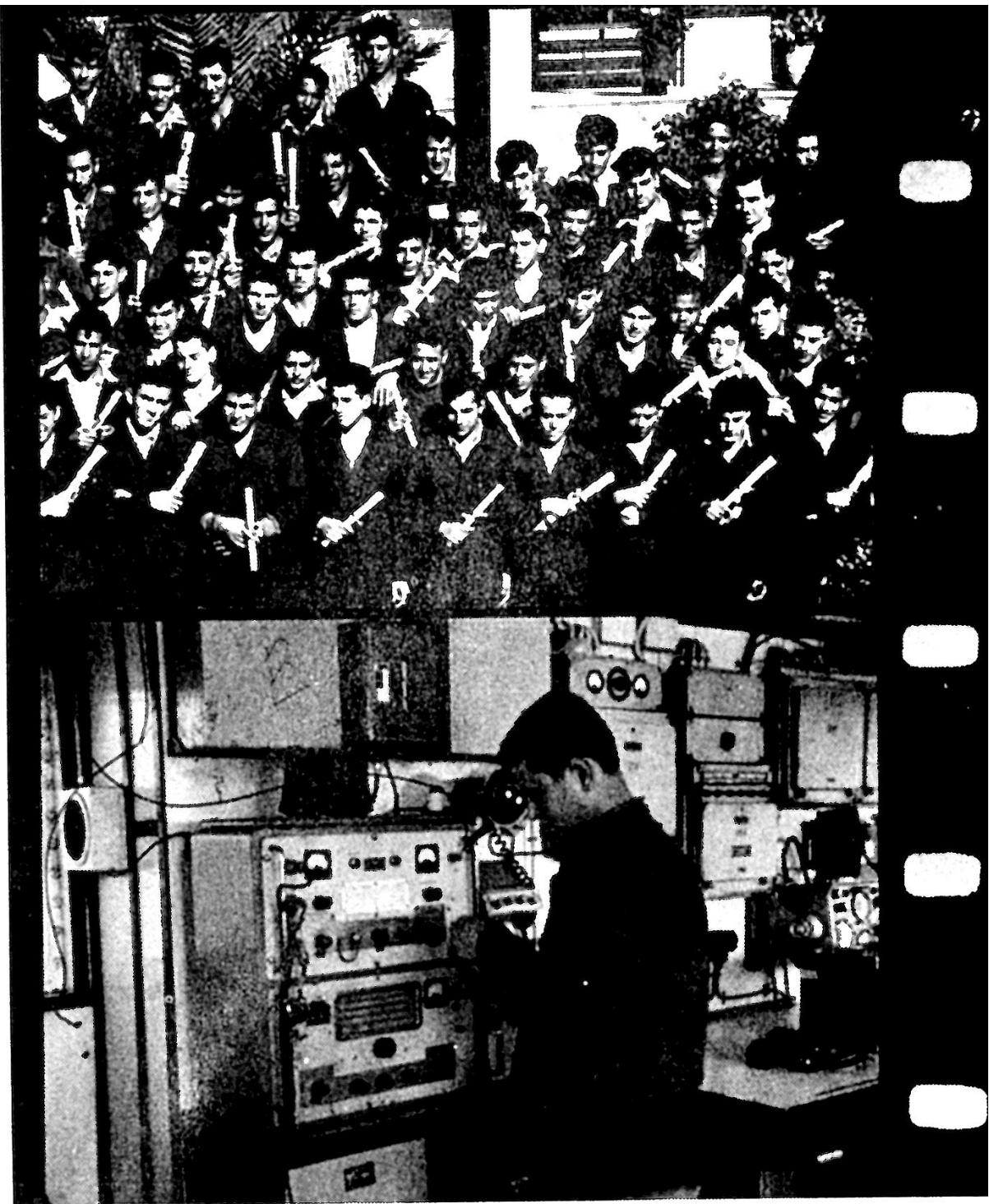
French and Spanish versions of the film are being co-produced by UNRWA and Unesco in support of Unesco's fundraising drive for the education of Palestine refugees. "Omar" is already scheduled to be telecast in Spain and several Latin American countries.

The United Nations Office of Public Information will shortly release through its International Zone series an American version of the film on coast-to-coast prime time over National Educational Television.

German, Japanese and Norwegian versions of "Omar" are also to be produced by UNRWA.









Commissioner-General's Annual Report

Forecasts Reductions in Services in 1972

unless Adequate Income Assured

Despite a significant improvement in the Agency's income for 1971 as a result of extraordinary efforts to raise funds, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will have another deficit in 1971, says UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Sir John Rennie, in his annual report issued today,* and the further deficit expected in 1972 will far exceed the remaining working reserve.

If in its current session, the General Assembly, which has to decide whether to extend UNRWA's mandate, believed that UNRWA should continue with its present programmes -- because the future of the Palestine refugees had not been resolved and because the disappearance of the Agency would "cause unacceptable hardship and remove an essential element of stability" -- assurances of adequate finance over the period of the mandate were required, the Commissioner-General states.

The Report (document A/8413), which is Sir John Rennie's first since he succeeded former Commissioner-General Laurence Michelmore last May after two years as Deputy Commissioner-General, covers the period 1 July 1970 to 30 June 1971.

The UNRWA, which has been in existence since 1950, provides relief, health and

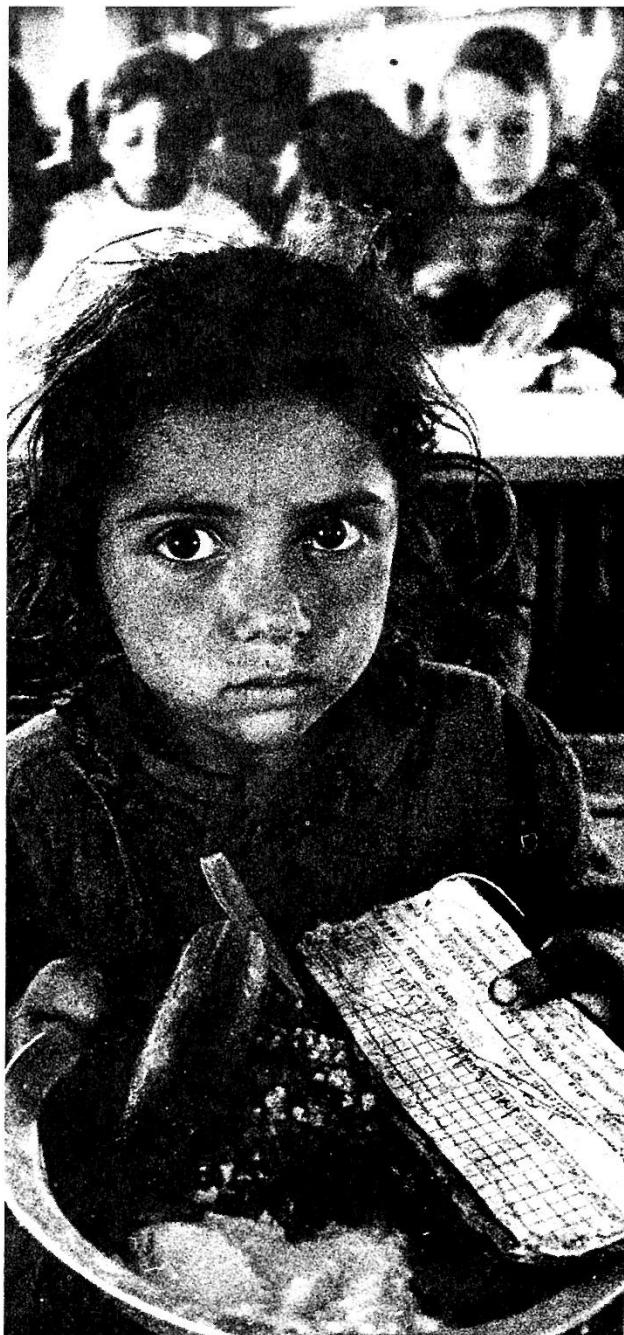
A dehydrated baby, victim of gastro-enteritis, in east Jordan - a reminder of the continuing need for UNRWA's preventive and curative health services

*12 October 1971

education services to refugees from the part of Palestine which became Israel in 1948 who are in need and who live in Jordan (both the West Bank and east Jordan), Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Gaza Strip. Since 1967, UNRWA has also provided limited assistance to other displaced persons in serious need, in accordance with the wider mandate given to it by the General Assembly in July 1967 and reaffirmed most recently in resolution 2672 (XXV).

During the last year, the Report notes, there had been more frequent public acknowledgement of the need to take account of the Palestine refugees in any political settlement in the Middle East, and the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2672 (XXV) recognizing "full respect" for their rights as "an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East" and also affirming the entitlement of the people of Palestine to "equal rights and self-determination in accordance with the charter of the United Nations".

But, by the end of the year, there had been little to lessen the refugees' frustrations. The General Assembly had called again on Israel to take immediate steps for the return to the West Bank of Jordan and to Gaza of those displaced as a result of the June 1967 hostilities, but there had been no significant change as regards return for residence. Implementation still seemed as distant as ever of the General Assembly's resolution 194 (III) of December 1948, stating that



Born a refugee, this little girl receives what may be her only hot meal of the day, thanks to UNRWA's supplementary feeding programmes for the young, the ill and those in special need.

Palestine refugees should be offered a choice between return or compensation.

REFUGEES' CONTINUED NEEDS

The need for UNRWA's regular programmes of assistance continued to be felt by the refugees and acknowledged by the authorities in all areas of the Agency's operations. In the present circumstances, when no tangible progress had been made towards a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, it seemed inconceivable, the Commissioner-General says, that refugee children could be turned away from UNRWA/Unesco schools or denied protective feeding and other health care.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT "CAMPS" AND AGENCY'S ROLE

In the Report, the Commissioner-General deals with some "misconceptions" about UNRWA's work. The "refugee camps" he explains are not extra-territorial areas under United Nations jurisdiction: the responsibility for law and order rested with the governments. Camps were placed where UNRWA "provides services", not areas UNRWA "administers" and only 40 per cent of the registered refugees lived in these camps.

The Commissioner-General says that emphasis on "relief" in discussions of the Agency's work had sometime been taken to imply that the Palestine refugees had been maintained in idleness for over 20 years. This was a misconception which should have been dispelled by the Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly for 1967-1968. (In that Report, the Secretary-General referred to a "gradual but hopeful process of economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees" which had taken place up to the renewed hostilities of 1967).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This emphasis had also tended to obscure the importance and the scale of the Agency's constructive

programmes of education and training, now threatened by the financial crisis. These programmes, which UNRWA operated in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), had maintained their pattern of steady growth: there were a quarter-million young refugees enrolled in the various sectors of the programmes, the number of teachers had passed the 7,000 mark and the number of schools and centres exceeded 500. They not only formed "the foundation for individual rehabilitation", but they also contributed to "economic and social development" the report continues.

HEALTH

The health programme which UNRWA operated with the technical collaboration of the World Health Organization (WHO), aimed at providing preventive and curative medical services (and environmental sanitation for refugees in camps) at levels comparable with the provision made by the Governments of the Arab host countries for their own populations. An outbreak of cholera in the Middle East in the latter half of 1970 had a relatively low incidence among the refugees - an effective demonstration of the need for, and capabilities of, the health programme, the Commissioner-General points out.

SOME OPERATING PROBLEMS

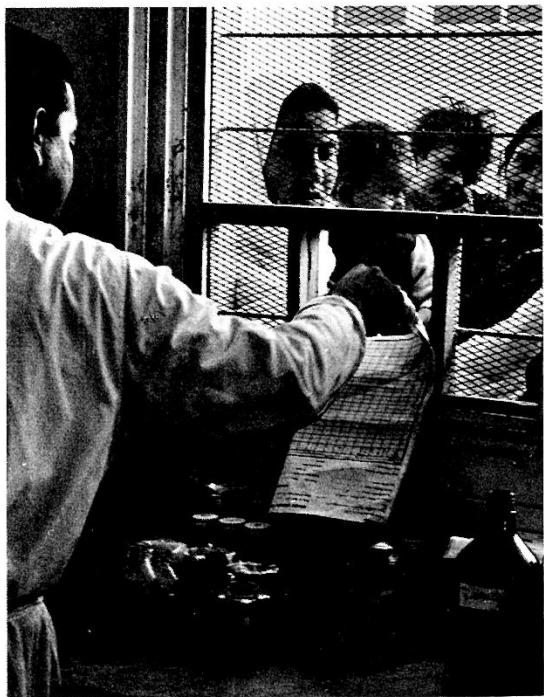
The Agency's operations had been disrupted by violence on several occasions during the year, the Commissioner-General says.

In east Jordan, UNRWA's services had been completely suspended for 10 days in September 1970 during the fighting between Jordan Government forces and Palestine fedayeen, and staff had been cut from headquarters and from each other. After the fighting ended and movement became possible, the Agency quickly restored its services, starting with the distribution of food and the



Teaching future teachers at the Temporary Women's Teacher Training Centre, Amman. Scheduled to open in early 1972, a new centre in Amman will combine vocational training for women with teacher training for both men and women.

medical and other health services on which a large part of east Jordan's population -- almost half, and the needier half, of the population of Amman -- were in varying degrees dependent. The emergency had clearly shown the importance to the whole community of the Agency's logistical



*A pharmacy in one of UNRWA's
89 clinics*

services, he says. In all, 13 Agency employees had been killed, and between June and September losses and damage affecting Agency property in east Jordan amounted to about \$600,000.

A significant development had been the return of many refugees from the uplands of east Jordan to the east Bank of the Jordan River Valley, from which they had moved in 1968 because of military conflict there. The Agency's financial circumstances limited the extent to which it could re-establish services in the Valley, but it was co-operating with the Government of Jordan by transferring services as substantial movements in the refugee population occurred.

In the Gaza Strip, the Agency's operations had been affected by the impact of security measures of unusual severity taken by the Israeli authorities in January 1971 after a deterioration in the security situation.

A welcome development for the Agency in the occupied territories during the year had been delivery of approximately half a million copies of Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks which UNRWA/Unesco schools had lacked since 1967. The Director-General of Unesco, who had persistently worked to break the deadlock in the dispute over textbooks banned by the Government of Israel, had said these deliveries represented "85 per cent success".

NATURE OF FINANCIAL PROBLEM AND THREAT
TO SERVICES

The UNRWA had started 1971 with an estimated deficit of \$5.5 million. Thanks to the response by governments and others to appeals by the Working Group on UNRWA Financing established by the United Nations General Assembly, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by the Director-General of Unesco, and by the Commissioner-General, the 1971 deficit was now estimated at \$2.4 million, the report says.

This would nevertheless reduce the working capital reserve to little over \$3 million on 31 December, but the estimated deficit for 1972 would be in excess of \$6 million on an expenditure budget of just over \$51 million (\$20 million for relief, \$6.7 million for health and \$24.4 million for education and training).

The basic problem was a "growing school population and rising unit costs set against an income which had been increasing less rapidly and a declining working capital reserve".

If income could not be increased, cuts in services would be inevitable and would have to include most of those referred to in the Commissioner-General's statement to the Special Political Committee on 1 December last year, and specifically some education services. (The list included cuts in supplementary feeding for vulnerable groups as well as in education).

"To meet deficits from the working balance is no longer possible", concludes the Commissioner-General.

The Effects on Refugees of Recent Operations in the Gaza Strip .

A Special Report *

The Secretary-General has received from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East a special report on the effect on Palestine refugees of recent operations carried out by the Israeli military authorities in the Gaza Strip. This special report is transmitted herewith to the members of the General Assembly.

As indicated in the special report, the Commissioner-General is greatly concerned about the effect on Palestine refugees of these operations, in which shelters in refugee camps were demolished and about 15,000 persons displaced, some of them to places outside the Gaza Strip. The Secretary-General shares the concern of the Commissioner-General. On 18 August 1971, he urgently requested the Government of Israel to undertake promptly all measures necessary to ensure the immediate cessation of the destruction of refugee homes in the Gaza Strip and halt the removal of the refugee occupants to places outside the Strip. He also requested the Government of Israel to proceed urgently with the provision of adequate housing within the Gaza Strip for all those displaced as a result of the measures already taken by the Israel authorities.

Special report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on the effect on Palestine refugees of recent operations carried out by the Israeli military authorities in the Gaza Strip.

The Commissioner-General submits the following special report on the effect on Palestine refugees of recent operations carried out by the Israeli military authorities in the Gaza Strip, in which shelters in refugee camps were demolished and about 15,000 persons displaced, some of them to places outside the Gaza Strip. This report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution 302 (IV).

On 8 July 1971, while the Minister of Defence of the Government of Israel was in Gaza, he asked to see the Agency's Field Director for the Gaza Strip and told him that in view of the ineffectiveness of other measures in dealing with violence in Jabalia refugee camp, the Israeli authorities intended in the near future to move numbers of the inhabitants from the camp so that roads could be built or widened for security purposes. The Minister said it was not intended that the refugees should be left without shelter, but, because of the urgency of the measure, new housing outside Jabalia could not be provided in advance of demolition. Displaced persons would have to be accommodated in other camps or in Gaza town or El Arish outside the Gaza Strip. The Minister also expressed the hope that the Agency would continue to

*A/8383 17 September 1971
Twenty-sixth session - Item 41 (a) of
the provisional agenda



provide services in these new locations to refugees who were moved.

United Nations Headquarters were informed by the Agency of this and other developments. There was no question of the Agency's being asked to agree to this measure, which was taken on the sole initiative and responsibility of the Occupying Power. Without further reference to the Agency, the demolition of shelters began on 20 July in Jabalia camp.

At a meeting in Gaza, on 28 July, at which the Commissioner-General expressed his concern and sought more information, the Military Governor of the Gaza Strip said that the operations were limited to Jabalia camp, that the numbers involved would not be out of proportion to the numbers involved in earlier road-widening in other camps (where housing had been provided in advance in the same camp); that there were plans for new housing in the Strip, but action was urgent in view of the killing of 80 persons in a period of five months; that El Arish was being used only because alternative housing was not available in the Gaza Strip; and, further, that refugees who have moved to El Arish would be able to return when the new housing was available. On the basis of this information, it appeared that about 600 to 800 families, and in Jabalia

only, would be affected by the operations. Without notification to the Agency, however, the operations were extended to Shati (Beach) camp on 2 August and to Rafah camp on or about 15 August.

On 6 August, the Commissioner-General drew the attention of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the extreme hardship being inflicted on the refugees by the sudden demolition of their homes and their forcible removal at short notice.

In a note verbale of 8 August, the Agency formally protested at the action being taken by the Israeli authorities, which appeared to be contrary to General Assembly resolution 2675 (XXV), which affirmed a number of basic principles for the protection of civilian populations in armed conflicts, and also to the provisions of articles 49 and 53 of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

On 14 August, the Commissioner-General pointed out to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs that demolition appeared to be much in excess of the alternative accommodation available. He asked that a halt be called to the operations and action urgently taken to provide adequate shelter within the Gaza Strip for those who had lost their homes.

On 19 August, at a meeting in the Israeli Ministry of Defence, the Commissioner-General was informed that the operations had been completed in Jabalia and would be completed that day in Shati (Beach) camp, but that they were still in progress in Rafah and would continue as long as alternative accommodation in the Gaza Strip or in El Arish or, also, in the West Bank of Jordan was available. The Commissioner-General was informed that at that stage the homes of 1,515 families, comprising over 10,000 persons, had been demolished. He again called for a halt to the operations, but was told that they must go on. He was also informed that a second phase would take place after up to 800 new houses had been built in four separate areas in the Strip: Khan Younis,

Rafah, Deir el-Balah and the area between Deir el-Balah and Gaza town.

The operations continued in Rafah camp until 26 August. According to the best information at present available to the Agency, about 2,900 families, comprising some 15,000 persons, have been displaced from the three camps in these operations, of whom about 350 families have gone to El Arish, about 30 families to the West Bank, and the rest remain elsewhere in the Gaza Strip. For precise information checks must be made at all Agency distribution centres and this will take some time.

Despite assurances given by the Israeli military authorities in the course of the operations, by 14 August about 70 Agency staff members had had their shelters demolished, and some had been obliged to move to El Arish owing to the absence of readily available alternative accommodation in the vicinity.

The Agency was asked by the Israeli military authorities to continue to provide services to refugees who were moved. Refugees who are still resident in the Strip are eligible for the medical and educational services provided there and can ask to have their rations transferred to a nearer distribution centre in accordance with normal practice. This applies also to those who have had to move to the West Bank of Jordan. As regards El Arish, which is outside the area in which the Agency operates programmes, the Agency has been unable to agree to the request by the Israeli authorities that it should provide services there. A refugee family at El Arish may, however, still pick up its monthly rations at its former distribution centre or, if it so requests the Agency, have them temporarily transferred to a more convenient centre within the Strip. The Agency will also give whatever assistance it can to enable displaced refugees to re-establish themselves within the Gaza Strip.

According to reports received by the Agency from the refugees and from its staff, the Israeli military authorities carried out these security operations, in general, in the following way. Israeli

soldiers arrived in the camp (on some occasions, at least, at night), marked shelters for demolition and gave the inhabitants notice ranging from two to forty-eight hours to leave with all their belongings. The identity cards of the heads of the families affected were taken away by the soldiers in exchange for receipts. The refugees were told that there was good accommodation for them in El Arish, but that, if they preferred, they could go to the West Bank of Jordan, or remain in Gaza if they could find unoccupied accommodation there outside their camp and produce the owner's written agreement for its use. They were also told that free transport would be provided for those agreeing to go to El Arish or the West Bank of Jordan, that accommodation there would be rent-free for a period and employment was available, and that compensation would be paid for demolished additions they had made to Agency shelters and for privately-built shelters. The Agency understands that compensation was also paid for other private property belonging to refugees and affected by demolition, that food for several days was given to those who had moved to El Arish, and that medical attention is available there.

The Agency has not yet had full information on the effects of the operations described above. It believes that about 4,360 rooms built by the Agency, or with its assistance, have been demolished, and the Government of Israel has been notified of a claim for compensation in respect of them. In addition, it is estimated that over 2,000 privately-built rooms have been demolished. There has been some dislocation of services, but the extent cannot yet be assessed. From such information as is available on the whereabouts of refugees displaced by the demolition of their shelters, about 2,500 families must have remained in the Strip, occupying such other empty housing or other permanent shelter as they could find, doubling-up with friends or relatives, or improvising make-shift shelter on vacant land. It is evident that for many their present living conditions must be worse than before and that the health hazard must be greater.

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has received* from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA a supplement to his special report on the effect on Palestine refugees of operations carried out in July and August 1971 by the Israeli military authorities in the Gaza Strip (A/8383). This supplement is transmitted herewith to the members of the General Assembly.

Supplement to the special report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on the effect on the Palestine refugees of operations carried out in July and August 1971 by the Israeli military authorities in the Gaza Strip.

1. On the basis of the information now available to him the Commissioner-General confirms that the figures given in the special report for the number of persons affected and the number of rooms constructed by the Agency or with its assistance are approximately correct: the figures he now has are 14,704 persons (against "about 15,000") and 4,428 rooms (against 4,360). He confirms that, in addition, between 2,000 and 3,000 privately built rooms were demolished. The number of families involved is lower: 2,410 against the figure of "about 2,900" given in the special report. The number of staff members involved is higher: 165 against the figure of "about 70" in the special report.

2. The breakdown by camp is as follows:

	Persons	Families	Agency-built or assisted rooms
Jabalia	6,349	1,050	2,179
Beach (Shati)	4,680	789	1,205
Rafah	3,675	571	1,044

3. The present whereabouts of the displaced refugees is believed to be as follows: about 270 families are in El Arish, about 130 having returned from there to the Gaza Strip; about 30 are in the West Bank of Jordan; about 830 are in the same camps; and the remainder, about 1,280, are elsewhere in the Gaza Strip. Those at El Arish have been provided with accommodation by the Israeli authorities and those in the West Bank who had no other accommodation have been admitted to vacant UNRWA shelters. Some families remaining in the same camp have found vacant shelters but the majority have been taken in by relations and friends. Families who left their camp but did not go to El Arish or to the West Bank have found accommodation by renting vacant buildings or constructing temporary shelter or lodging with relations or friends, many of them having received compensation from the Israeli authorities for their property which was destroyed. The Commissioner-General has no information from official sources about the plans of the Israeli authorities for further payment of compensation to refugees whose property was destroyed or for assistance with the construction of housing for them.

4. The Agency has submitted a claim for compensation to the Israeli authorities amounting to about \$400,000 in respect of Agency-built or Agency-assisted shelters and about \$36,500 in respect of public and private latrines, garbage platforms and bins, and water points and drains demolished in the course of the security operations with which the special report dealt.

5. Refugees whose dwellings were demolished and who have remained in the Gaza Strip continue to receive all Agency services, as do those who moved to the West Bank of Jordan. Those who remain at El Arish are collecting their rations monthly at distribution centres in the Strip.

Jordan Valley: Still a Valley of Doubt

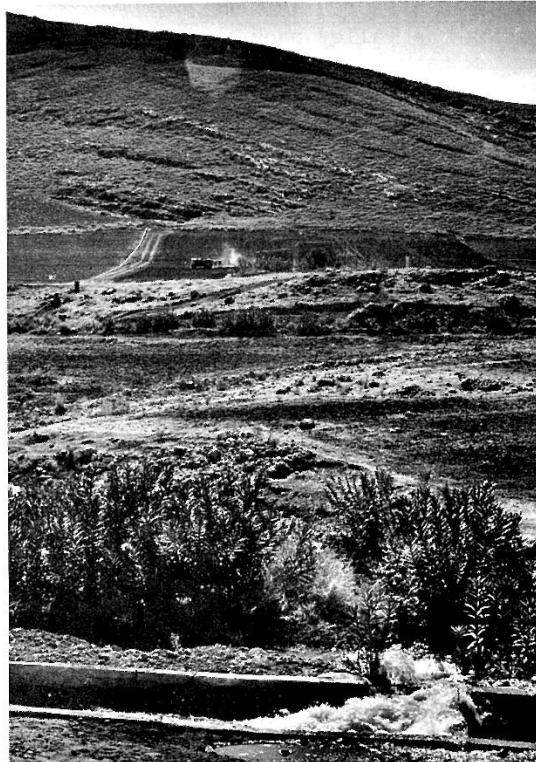
Resettlement has gained substantial ground in many areas on the east bank of the divided Jordan river valley, after four year's abandonment due to fighting along the June 1967 ceasefire line. But even now success is far from assured.

In the northern sector of the 50-mile valley, hamlets and villages strung along the East Ghor Canal are mostly repopulated; some 15,000 Palestine refugees are back, out of the estimated 20,000 who left the north when the valley floor was evacuated in 1968. The Jordan Government has repaired the bombarded canal and got roads and telephones back in working order. Voluntary organizations like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have helped villagers rebuild their homes, farms and shops. For returning refugees who still qualify for assistance UNRWA is providing basic services: ration distribution, simple medical care and education. Farmers have been joined by their families. In the temporary UNRWA emergency camps in the Jordan hills, hundreds of refugee shelters have been padlocked by their inhabitants: once they are sure the valley is going to continue reviving, the displaced occupants will either give up their cramped shelters or move them. In the valley, whole villages have arisen from their dust, and the fields and citrus groves and banana plantations are flourishing again. Plans are afoot for development projects to increase farm production and improve living conditions.

By no means all of the eastern valley's previous inhabitants have returned, however. Long stretches in the south are still desolate. Karameh, the refugee

boomtown which became the valley's commercial focus, is still largely a ghost town. Despite remarkable instances of individual determination and ingenuity, larger-scale enterprise will be needed to attract back the 25,000 inhabitants. In the bleak highlands, the refugees suffer from a harsh climate and limited opportunity for work, but the upland villages and emergency camps offer safety and at least a semblance of organization.

Water flows again through repaired canals



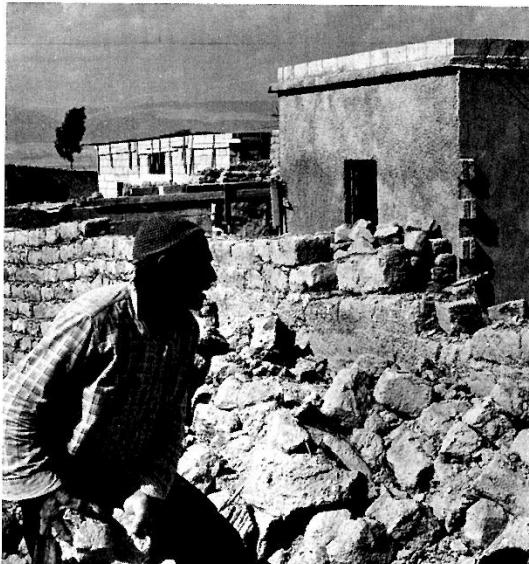
Of course, even a complete recovery in Karameh and the rest of the valley would not solve the plight of a half-million displaced Arabs in east Jordan, including over 200,000 registered refugees. They fled from Israeli-occupied territory in 1967-68 and, despite Security Council resolution 237 of June 1967, have never been allowed to return to their villages and camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

However, a return to productivity would be a boost for Jordan and for east bank farmers and many refugees. With the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the eastern side of the valley floor was the best agricultural area left, and the evacuation of the population and the destruction of farms in subsequent clashes was a cruel strain on the country. However, since a cease-fire was enforced along the Jordan in July 1970, the valley has been calm. The revival of peaceful activity began almost immediately.

PRAGMATIC APPROACH AND "SELF-HELP"

Getting the valley back on its feet is a complex task. The partial success achieved so far has only been possible because various groups have combined forces --

Families who want to rebuild their homes are helped with building materials, but must supply labour themselves.



14

first and foremost, the inhabitants themselves, assisted by the Jordan Government, by the voluntary agencies operating in east Jordan and by UNRWA.

Problems have been many and varied. In some cases, communities or individuals had reservations about moving back until they could be certain about the future: refugees who have already been uprooted three times or in some cases even four, in the last two decades hesitate to expose themselves prematurely -- an understandable reaction. Another problem has been the financial predicament of UNRWA and the limited funds of the voluntary agencies.

In such circumstances, where confidence has to be won and funds carefully husbanded, large-scale action is not possible: a step-by-step pragmatic approach is perhaps slower, but certainly surer. The voluntary agencies, for instance, increasingly base their work on a "self-help" concept. Except in cases of dire emergency, direct relief is left to the Government and to UNRWA, while the voluntary agencies concentrate on "priming the pump" for new projects and on helping people help themselves. Selected community programmes can be undertaken as pilot projects: for instance, the LWF paid for the repair and first year's operating costs of the UNRWA/Unesco schools in Kraymeh village, enabling the parents of 600 pupils to lead the way back to the valley from Huson emergency camp. CARE, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Catholic Relief Services and the Near East Council of Churches have contributed to community development elsewhere. Returning families, often penniless after four years as "internal refugees" in east Jordan, need help to make a new start; the LWF gives small loans and grants -- to repair a farmer's pump, or buy chicks or feed for poultry farmers, or a refrigerator for a butcher, or flour for a baker

UNRWA'S HELP LIMITED

The Jordan Government has sought UNRWA's help, too, in facilitating the move back to the valley. By October 1971, in the northern part of the valley, eight schools (three of them double shifting) were already in operation, with 2,700 refugee

pupils. Three health points had been established, at each of which a mobile medical team calls one day a week. But UNRWA officials have been hamstrung by the Agency's crippled finances: in general, services can only be resumed in the valley to the extent they can be transferred there from somewhere else. Unfortunately, people -- and people's needs -- are seldom as tidy as that.

In the face of innumerable little dilemmas, only improvisation has saved the day. At one point this fall, for instance, a group of refugee families wanted a school in their locality, but they were reluctant to take their children out of school elsewhere (thus freeing teachers and furniture and funds for renting buildings) until the new school was functioning. It was a deadlock -- broken when the landlord of the former UNRWA school in the village offered to let the Agency have his building for a year at only nominal rent. Money was found in UNRWA's relief-teacher budget to provide a few teachers to start the school; as more classes opened, teachers could be transferred from schools where pupils were being withdrawn. Although in normal circumstances parents in the Arab world would be very reluctant to accept mixed classes for any but the smallest children, the refugees agreed that their children could attend co-educational classes in the transitional phase. But what about furniture? Never mind, the refugees explained, mats and stools would do for the time being, and they would make them themselves, if necessary. The refugees' flexibility in this situation was typical of the constructive attitude which made it possible to get many projects off the ground.

REVIVAL OF VALLEY CRUCIAL FOR REFUGEES AND JORDAN

The eagerness to get life back to "normal" -- or at least to pre-1967 conditions -- in the war-torn valley is understandable. Before the June 1967 hostilities, the valley was the fastest-developing farm area in Jordan. When sections of the East Ghor Canal began to function in 1961, 380,000 dunums (more than 75,000 acres) were under cultivation. Jordan valley

produce -- which ripens in the deep valley (1000 feet below sea-level) six weeks earlier than in nearby countries and so commands high prices -- was a major foreign currency earner for Jordan.

The refugees shared this success because they had been instrumental in the valley's reclamation. In their eastward flight in 1948, many refugees went down to the Jordan valley, which has a climate like that of the coastal plain they had left, where generations of Palestinian farmers had grown world-renowned oranges and bananas. In the valley, they found an arid, lunar wasteland: the salt-bleached hills seemed under the Biblical curse that turned Lot's wife to a pillar of salt near the Dead Sea in the southern valley. But it offered hope of finding land to continue farming, the only job they knew; so many followed Musa El Alami, a distinguished Palestinian lawyer, in his seemingly foolhardy determination to drill for water in the parched wilderness. Water was found. Experienced hands began to coax gleaming citrus fruits and market vegetables out of the soil. By the 1960s, the valley was a modern Middle East success story.

KARAMEH THE KEY

Karameh was the symbol of this development. A refugee camp, it began as a group of tents in 1950 for families from seven villages around Ramleh. Jordan's King Abdullah named the village "Karameh" (which in Arabic means "honour") and the refugees quickly showed their farming mettle. In many families, women as well as men worked in the fields, at the packing plants and on the loading docks where fruit and vegetables were polished and crated for shipment to Lebanon or the Arab Gulf States. Karameh grew into a thriving town of 40,000 people including nearly 25,000 registered refugees. Tents gave way to family compounds built of mud brick (a practical building material in the hot, rainless valley).

When Karameh was evacuated in February 1968, most of the inhabitants went to a huge new emergency camp at Baqa'a or to

In 1969, virtually the only people left in the valley were four intrepid chicken-farmers raising broilers for Amman's countless roast-chicken stalls. In Karameh, they housed a couple of thousand chicks -- temporarily, and rather grandly -- in three UNRWA/Unesco schools, which were the largest buildings left standing after the town centre was destroyed in fighting in March 1968. The four chicken-farmers who formed a co-operative, had obtained a loan from the Lutheran World Federation for chicks and feed. Forced to leave their families in safety in the hills, the refugee farmers took the valley work in shifts. The school-buildings made admirable hen-houses, and the heat and light came from bottled gas. But a visitor coming down from the hills, where the children who used to attend classes in these solid buildings were braving the cold and damp of the highland winters in prefabricated schools, found a painful irony in the situation.



a smaller camp at Souf, between the valley and Amman; the majority are still living there today, in small prefabricated shelters. Meanwhile, at Karameh, the fields which were once green, thanks to the refugees' husbandry, are brown; the low dikes which lined the irrigation canals are gradually subsiding into the blistered fields.

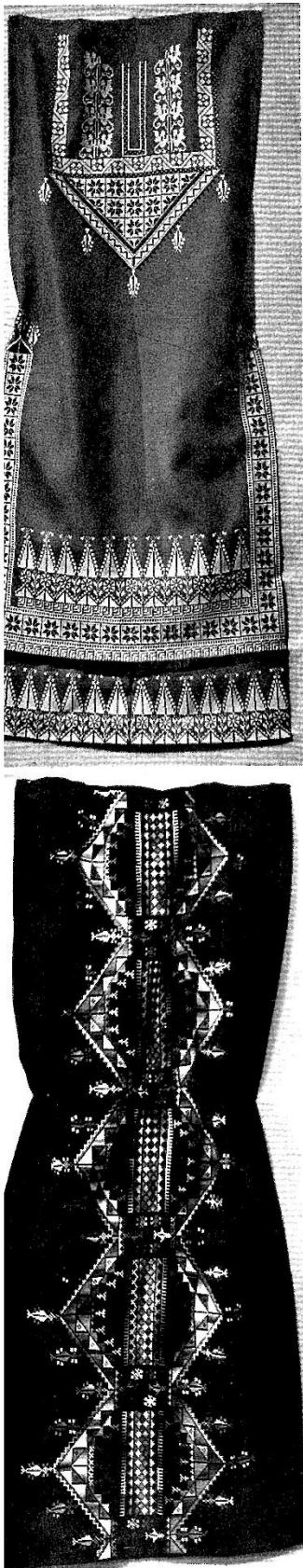
Even before 1967, Karameh had outstripped Jericho, across the river in what is today occupied territory, as the commercial focal point of the valley. Getting Karameh going again is obviously important for the resumption of agriculture and commerce in the valley on their former scale.

At least one tangible initiative is already going forward: applying its self-help formula, the LWF offered building materials to families wishing to rebuild their homes in Karameh. More than 400 refugee families agreed, and amid the rubble of Karameh, the LWF has set up concrete-block-making machines (the same

ones which enabled refugees in Wahdat camp to rebuild their dwellings after the fighting in Amman in September 1970). CARE has pledged financial assistance to repair the pipe on which Karameh depends for its main supply: without water, not even construction work can go very far, and farming and family life need it even more.

Over 100 two-rooms dwellings have been completed, and a few farmers are working their fields. But not many families have returned yet, because no municipal services -- schools, clinics, etc -- have been restored.

UNRWA has no funds to embark on a massive building programme. The development of a town the size of Karameh is beyond the resources of the voluntary agencies. If this obstacle is to be overcome, and more refugees enabled to return, more will be required than the improvisation which in the face of stringent financial limitations, has so often saved the day.



A Showcase for Refugee Work

Ramallah, a little town 14 miles from Jerusalem, on the Jordan's West Bank, has long welcomed visitors. Families like to spend a summer week-end or a fortnight in the cool hill-country resort or take a meal in one of the restaurants where food is served under the trees. For these and other tourists - some of them from overseas - an UNRWA-sponsored shop was opened in July 1970. The display panels on the whitewashed walls on first glance look like frames of abstract pictures in glowing colours. However, these works of art are dresses, blouses, stoles and table-cloths embroidered by Palestine refugees.

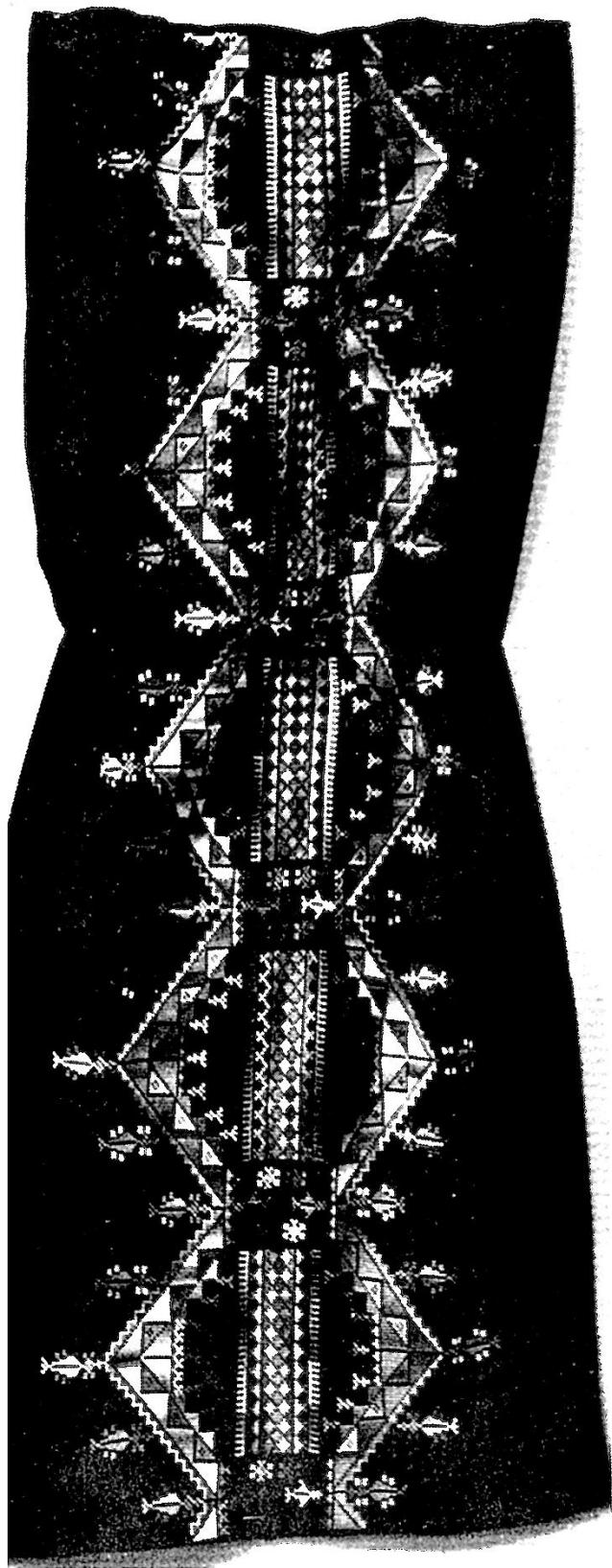
For hundred of years, Palestinian women have worn ankle-length dresses, embroidered in cross-stitch in selected vivid colours - deep red, orange, emerald green and royal blue. The designs used are ancient: some of them have been found on centuries-old mosaic floors. Articles on sale in the Ramallah showroom have the same traditional designs, but many of the colours used - pale shades of mauve, lemon and turquoise, strawberry, red, ochre, purple and black - can be found in the latest fashion reviews from Paris.

The idea for the showroom came from Palestinian and foreign friends of the Kalandia Embroidery Co-operative, to which the shop belongs. Hard work, imagination and generosity did the rest. Only the minimum construction materials were purchased: wood, nails, electrical fixtures, whitewash and paint. Labour was contributed by volunteer craftsmen after hours. Money for rent, electricity and other expenses came from the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Co-operative's reserves.

"God helps those who help themselves" could be the moto of the women of the Embroidery Co-operative who first established their shop in Kalandia refugee camp, near Jerusalem, where over 3,000 Palestine refugees from the 1948 conflict still live. Producers' co-operatives started late in Jordan: when the Kalandia co-operative was founded, on 14 September 1958, it was the first women's co-operative registered in the country. Its members undertook to work full-time, to high standards of quality, and to be paid fixed rates according to the complexity of the pattern, and to put aside reserves in order to buy more materials, thread and fashion reviews.

The history of producers' co-operatives among the Palestine refugees goes back, however, to the begining of UNRWA's





activities. From the first, the Agency wanted to help the refugees develop useful skills and market saleable products. Pre-vocational centres offering carpentry courses for men and sewing courses for women were established as early as 1950-51. In the sewing course, the girls not only improved their skills but, where necessary, also received literacy training to enable them to work from patterns and written directions.

In 1957, 25 girls who had completed the course in Kalandia requested the use of the centre in the afternoon, when there were no lessons. There the girls started producing children's shirts and aprons. These were hard years, when refugees had great trouble finding work, and in many families the girls were the only bread-winners. Later, 12 of the girls decided to form a co-operative. Their first capital had been painfully scraped together. They started with embroidery and their sales kept increasing. By 1966, the co-operative had a capital of \$4,760 and 48 members, most of them graduates of the sewing course.

The hostilities in June 1967 were a harsh set-back. Twenty-five of the co-operative's members fled to east Jordan, the centre was looted, and there were losses valued at \$2,000.

But refugee women do not give up easily. They appealed for help to the most faithful of their clients, who collected funds to replace about a third of the losses, allowing a fresh start.

The co-operative's leader, Miss Fatmeh Gebrin, decided it would indeed be a fresh start. Colours and models were improved and clients were encouraged to bring friends. The next step was to create a showroom worthy of the beautiful work being done.

The new shop has drawn fresh clients, who can buy or order the lovely dresses and table linen made by the refugee girls. There are now branches of the co-operative in Amari Camp and among the refugee families in Ramallah town. Total sales during 1970 amounted to \$9,800.

For the 202 women in Kalandia Camp (33 full-time members), the 65 in Ramallah and the 56 in Amari who work in the co-operative, meaningful work and private income - even though small - make a lot of difference to both their own self-respect and the living standard of their families.

Young members of the cooperative enjoy a creative, economic opportunity.



UNRWA 1961 - 1971

A decade ago, there were just over one million Palestine refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Thirteen years earlier they had found themselves unable to return to the homes they had fled in the territory which had become Israel.

By 1961, emergency tasks had long since become routine for UNRWA. The pattern of preventive and curative medicine was set; the shabby tents in the "camps" had been replaced by mud-brick or concrete-block shelters for those who had not found their own accommodation in towns or villages;



The exodus of June 1967: UNRWA's greatest crisis during the last decade.

the distribution of a basic monthly food ration continued; 120,000 children were attending UNRWA/Unesco schools. The annual budget averaged \$35 million a year, largely directed towards relief.

Over the ensuing decade, the Agency was able to maintain its programmes at minimal standards, actually decreasing ration recipients by rectification of the rolls and maintenance of restrictions and additions from 870,266 in June 1961 to 831,026 in June 1971 despite an increase in registered refugees from 1,151,024 to 1,468,161. Other services had to be expanded, particularly health and education, to keep pace with a rising level of need in the refugee community. This increased need was due to normal population growth, hardship caused by strife at intervals throughout this period and higher and higher school attendance as the demand for education strengthened among the refugee population as among the national population of the Arab countries where the refugees live.

Not only did the Agency expand and improve its general education programme; vocational and teacher training facilities were also enlarged. These programmes offered the refugees a means of individual rehabilitation as distinct from relief.

The general education programme, operated by the Agency with the technical guidance of Unesco, increased enrolment in UNRWA/Unesco schools by 198% from 1951 to 1961 and continued this spectacular growth in the 1960s, with a further 80% increase. Whereas the refugee population increased

Aqabat Jaber Camp on the West Bank near Jericho, lies empty. The refugees who fled Aqabat Jaber in June 1967 have not been allowed to return. This will be their fifth winter in the harsh conditions of the emergency camps in east Jordan.



by 50% during the decade, enrolment in UNRWA/Unesco elementary and preparatory schools almost doubled, to nearly a quarter-million children.

The refugees responded enthusiastically to opportunities for education, and more and more pupils desired to continue their studies at a higher level. Most significantly, the number of girls in schools continued to rise, so that by 1971 there was virtual numerical equality between the sexes in elementary school enrolment. At the same time, UNRWA constantly sought to improve the quality of its education programme. In-service training courses raised the proportion of professionally-qualified personnel in the teaching force from 10% in 1961 to 90% in 1971.

Vocational and teacher training also expanded steadily from 300 training places to well over 3,000. With the initial impetus of extra-budgetary funds from World Refugee Year, the Agency in 1961 was able to begin providing more voca-

tional and technical facilities to equip young refugees with modern skills. On graduation, the trainees become self-supporting and can lead useful lives, contributing to the well-being of their families, to the higher education of brothers and sisters and to the development of the area. Since 1961 more than 12,000 young refugees - men and women - have qualified as skilled artisans, technicians or teachers and virtually all have found employment in the Middle East.

The renewal of Arab/Israeli hostilities in June 1967 enormously complicated the refugee problem and the work of UNRWA. Perhaps half-a-million Arabs were displaced, including 200,000 refugees who were uprooted for a second time in a generation, and UNRWA's responsibilities were increased by a General Assembly resolution authorizing it to provide "humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure", for displaced persons in need.



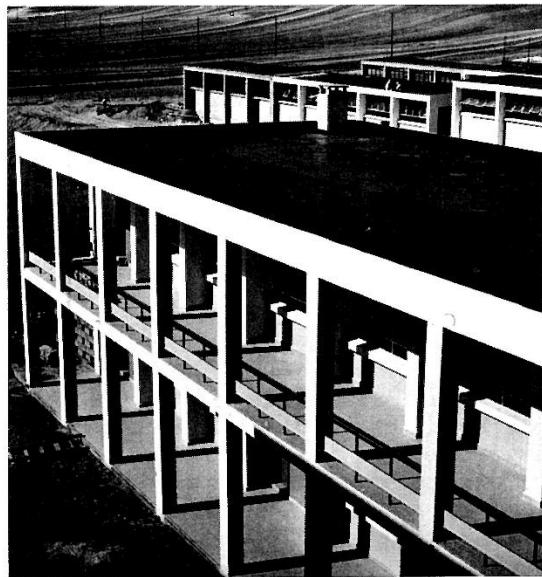
There had been only a very limited return of refugees and other persons displaced in 1967 to their former places of residence, and UNRWA has been obliged to construct new camps, clinics and school buildings in Syria and east Jordan while equivalent facilities in the occupied territories remain vacant or under-employed. Meanwhile with the agreement of the Government of Israel, UNRWA has continued its services to the half-million refugees in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip areas.

Throughout the tense post-hostilities period, the Agency has managed to continue operating and meet the constantly rising demand for education and training. The provision of relief and health services over the years has not only prevented widespread malnutrition, possibly even starvation, and epidemics, but has also given the refugees a margin of security while they are recovering their capacity to support themselves in a changed environment.

The education programme has produced a wholly-literate young generation and made it possible for the Agency to develop an increasingly sophisticated vocational training programme. The Arab host governments and Israel, too, have furnished assistance to the refugees and, in the case of the Governments of Jordan, Syria and Egypt, to the persons displaced in 1967.

But developments have placed a critical strain on UNRWA's resources. Over the decade, the Agency's annual recurrent costs rose by \$12 million, of which \$9 million were for education and training, including \$7 million to general education. The global annual budget rose towards \$50 million. But income (all of which comes from voluntary contributions) has lagged, and UNRWA has operated with a deficit every year since 1963, except in 1967, maintaining services only by the expedient of running down the working capital which was a legacy from the Agency's early years.

Exceptional efforts have been made to provide UNRWA with adequate funds.



Education services now require some 47 percent of the total UNRWA budget. Vocational and teacher training offered at eight UNRWA centres will have provided 20,000 young refugees with an economic opportunity by 1973.

Appeals by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, by the Director-General of Unesco, who sent a Special Consultant on a fund-raising mission, the efforts of the Working Group on UNRWA finances established by the General Assembly and of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA succeeded in averting a cash crisis in the first half of 1971 and cut the deficit for the year to under \$2 million. Since then, the Director-General of WHO has added his support to the appeals.

But the Agency is still desperately short of funds and faces a prospective deficit of \$6 million in 1972, while working capital will be down to about \$3 million by the end of 1971. Only increased income can prevent cuts in services to the refugees which would add to their hardships and exacerbate existing tensions in the Middle East.

What is a Camp?

When UNRWA was established in 1950, it took over from several voluntary agencies which had operated with financial support from UNRWA's predecessor, the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees, some 60 "camps" - concentrations of Palestine refugees for whom accommodation in tents and other relief assistance were being provided. These camps had been hastily improvised and services normally provided by governments or municipalities (or not provided at all in sparsely populated rural areas) became the responsibility of UNRWA, e.g. sanitation services and the construction and maintenance of roads and paths.

In the course of time, tents were replaced by shelters of mud-brick or concrete block, some of them constructed by UNRWA, others by the refugees themselves with or without UNRWA assistance in cash or in kind and in both cases frequently improved



or extended by individual or family effort. A typical refugee shelter in one of the older camps today has two rooms within a compound wall enclosing about 100 square meters; there may be a private latrine and possibly even a water tap, but there is no electricity.

After the renewal of Arab/Israeli hostilities in June 1967, and again after a

Jaramana in Syria, a 1967 emergency camp. Funds earmarked for shelter construction are now allowing tents to be replaced.



number of military incidents in the Jordan Valley in the winter of 1967/1968, new "emergency camps" were established by UNRWA in cooperation with the Government of Jordan, to accommodate refugees and other persons displaced from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In Syria, also, in cooperation with the Government of Syria, four emergency camps were established to shelter displaced Palestine refugees from the Quneitra district. In these emergency camps the tents which first accommodated the refugees have largely been replaced by shelters, but the process is not yet complete and after four years several thousand persons are still living in tents.

In both kinds of camps, UNRWA provides services for needy refugees - basic rations, supplementary feeding, medical care, education - as it does for refugees living outside the camps. In addition, however, because of the concentration of refugees on one spot, UNRWA maintains installations such as distribution centres, food centres, clinics and schools; staff for the administrative coordination of these services and for liaison with local representatives of the host governments; and, in default of any other competent authority, it provides sanitation services in the interests of public health.

These camps have been constructed on government land or private land made available (with one or two exceptions) by the host governments, which remain responsible for the maintenance of law and order and similar governmental functions as part of their normal responsibilities towards the population within their borders, i.e. the camps are not extra-territorial areas and UNRWA has no legislative or police power.

Today, there are 53 camps which were established before 1967, with a population of 502,000. In the 10 emergency camps (six in east Jordan and four in Syria) accommodating refugees and other persons displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities, the population is 118,400. The total registered camp population represents 39% of the total Palestine refugee

population registered with UNRWA.

Thus, UNRWA provides services in rather than administers "camps" (in which only a minority of registered refugees live); the camps are not extra-territorial areas under United Nations jurisdiction; the inhabitants are normally free to move in and out now as in the past; and the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order rests not with UNRWA, but with the host governments in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and with the Government of Israel, as occupying Power, in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Prefabricated shelters in Baqa'a, east Jordan



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