INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

Twenty years ago on November 20, 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This year, 1979, has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of the Child to encourage all nations to review their programs for the promotion of the well-being of young people and to encourage all people to think about children in both a global and personal context.

The idea is to recognize and appreciate the unique qualities of being young while at the same time, not to exploit those qualities or use them as an excuse to separate children from the rest of the human family. The Preamble to the Declaration intends to reaffirm "faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person" without regard to age or size. In summary, the Declaration provides the right:

- to affection, love and understanding
- to adequate nutrition and medical care
- to free education
- to full opportunity for play and recreation
- to a name and nationality
- to special care, if physically different
- to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster
- to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities
- to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood
- to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

The National Children's Bureau in London has proposed seven additional rights which ideally should be granted to children. They are the right:

- to be a wanted child (not conceived casually)
- to have a permanent, loving home
- to be given new experience to develop creative powers
- to receive praise and recognition for effort as well as actual achievement
- to a sense of responsibility
- to be treated as an individual rather than the parents' personal belonging
- to be heard.

The right to a Palestinian nationality has been singled out by several organizations as being especially relevant to Palestinian young people in this International Year of the Child. The following taken from the book, The Palestinians: Portrait of a People in Conflict by Frank H. Epp, and from newspaper sources and personal interviews, are the words of Palestinian children telling of some of the effects of not having their own nationality:

"The sky and the land were darkened by fighter planes, tanks, bombs, and the dead. . . . I was not afraid of death but it was sad to think I would die under artillery fire."

"In a way I am a commando. When they call me to fight, I am going to fight. . . . Most teen-age Palestinian girls feel that way."

"If I could go on a tour and visit the high schools of North America, and talk to girls and boys my age, I would explain to them the real case of Palestine. They know the case through the Israelis, not through the Palestinians. . . . They don't know the other side of the story."

"We walked in the mountains and valleys all day, passing the dead and the bombs. . . . the planes were following us wherever we went. . . . It was like walking in a dream."

"It is important for us to go back because it is our country."

"We want only to have a just peace in Palestine where everyone can live as a Jew, as a Muslim, or as a Christian."
DEDICATION
Since its inception, ANERA has spent $5,648,585 on projects mainly for Pal-
stinians in the Middle East. Well over half that amount has been for projects whose primary focus is the education and/or care of young people. The photograph to the left is a group of those young people—they are part of the kindergar-
ten classes sponsored by theYWCA/East Jerusalem in Kalandia Refugee Camp on the West Bank. (ANERA photo/Sara Gentry)
This Newsletter salutes all those young people who have participated in, and thereby assured the success of, ANERA-assisted projects. It is also dedi-
cated to all the children of Palestine—whatever their age, religion, or present nationality.

FAVORITE PASTIMES
Palestinian children spend much of their time just like American children—playing games outside, riding bicycles, jumping rope, playing with toys, going to school. Television is also now available to many Palestinian children. In the Occupied Territories, young people may view programs from Israel or Jordan and, in good weather, from Egypt. Many of the programs are American—"The Bionic Man" is a favorite show and children's T-shirts with pictures of the bionic man and his name, Steve Ostin (local spelling), are for sale in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

FAVORITE STORIES
Tales from The Thousand and One Arabian Nights are very popular with Palestinian children as they are with American. Another popular group of stories which are both written and handed down by word of mouth are the Joha Stories. Joha is a philosopher/wanderer who has many adventures. Reference to him is found in Turkish, Persian, and Arab cultures and he is affectionately claimed by all as a local folk hero.
A typical Joha story relates that one day Joha borrowed a pan for cooking from his neighbor. He returned the pan the next day with a smaller pan inside it. When his neighbor inquired why there were now two pans, Joha replied that the pan the neighbor had originally given him had a baby. The neighbor thought Joha was crazy but said nothing.
A few days later, Joha borrowed another pan from the same neighbor. Several days passed without the pan being returned so the neighbor went to Joha's house asking, "What happened to the pan?" Joha replied that the pan had died. "What?" cried the neighbor. "Well," Joha responded, "If you believed the pan could give birth, you must also believe the pan could die."

EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PALESTINIANS
School is a big part of any young person's life. For Palestinian children, the value of an education is particularly emphasized. Education not only means self-improvement, a good job, and a way out of the refugee camps, it is also something one has for life—it cannot be taken away by war or military occupation.
Palestinian young people attend one or a combination of three types of schools. The first is operated jointly by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cul-
tural Organization (UNESCO). With few exceptions, children in the UNRWA/UNESCO system must be children of officially registered UNRWA refugees. Six years of primary school, 3 years of preparatory school (junior high), and, in some countries, 3 years of secondary school (senior high) are provided for Palestinian children who qualify. In 1978, a total of 306,968 young people attended UNRWA/UNESCO schools in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Occupied Territories. In addition, UNRWA provides some free vocational training and a limited number of scholarships for university study. In 1978, 4,540 (3,412 men and 1,128 women) attended UNRWA vocational training centers while 339 Palestinian refugees (299 men and 40 women) received scholarships to attend universities in the Middle East.
The second type of school is spon-
sored by the government of the country in which the child is located. These schools are most commonly in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the territories mili-
tarily occupied by Israel. Twelve years of schooling are provided, the first 9 are generally free but a small fee may be charged for secondary school. Some governments do provide post-secondary vocational training and university education for those academically qualified. Usually there is a small charge for higher education.
The third school system is private with classes and schools operated by a var-
ety of private sponsors, many of them affiliated with religious organizations or charitable institutions. Kindergarten, if provided at all for Palestinian children, is generally offered by private groups, usually free of charge. Private schools exist at all levels of the educational sys-
tem. Fees for a private education may or may not be charged, depending on the sponsoring organization and economic status of the child.

"Children's testimony at a time of war" is an exhibit of draw-
ings by Palestinian children, survivors of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, living in Baqaa refugee camp in Jordan. The exhibit consists of both traditional children's subjects and the youngster's artistic interpretations of the war of 1967. The picture above shows a refugee camp under attack. The exhibit is currently available for display by contacting Mrs. Mary Bisharat, 2110 Boyer Drive, Carmichael, California 95608 (telephone: 916-489-9544).
EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Because education is so important to Palestinians, who controls the educational system is seen as crucial. While there are disagreements over the education of Palestinians in Syria, most of the concern centers on the territories militarily occupied by Israel.

Changes have been introduced by the Israeli Government into the school system in violation of the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1942, protecting civilians living under military occupation.

One such change concerns alterations in the school curriculum. Before 1967, the government schools were under the direction of the Egyptian Government in the Gaza Strip and the Jordanian Government in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. With military occupation, the curriculum in East Jerusalem was changed, despite international protest, to the Israeli curriculum drawn up for Arabs within Israel.

Secondly, although the curriculum remained Jordanian in the West Bank and Egyptian in the Gaza Strip, there were important modifications. Reference to Palestine in the schools is not allowed by the military authorities. Arab history and culture as they relate to nationalism, patriotism, etc., may not be taught in the schools and many teachers, seeking to teach Palestinian young people these subjects, have been imprisoned or deported for "political activities."

The censorship of textbooks is another change. Many textbooks have been banned or censored because the authorities regard them as seditious towards Israel. In some cases, this may be true, in others it is not. For example, in the Gaza schools, the work of Ahmed Shawqi, a modern Arab poet, writing about the birth of the Algerian nation, is banned.

While the above subjects are censored, Palestinian teachers have received recommended lesson plans from the Israeli authorities. Secondary English teachers in Gaza, for instance, were provided with an English lesson titled "Independence Day," an essay in celebration of the independence of Israel.

NAMING CHILDREN

Palestinian babies are most commonly named for relatives. Eldest sons name their own first sons after their fathers and first daughters are generally named after their father’s mothers.

Traditionally, Palestinian children have "official" names as well as the names they are more familiarly known by. The "official" names are quite long and actually indicate who the child is in relation to other generations of his family, traced on the father’s side. (In this way, many families are able to trace their ancestry back literally hundreds of years.)

For example, a boy whose first name is Ali and whose family name is Shaheen, may also have 3 middle names which are the names of his father (Ahmed), his grandfather (Khalil), and his great-grandfather (Abdul-Magid). His family name of Shaheen may also be followed by the name of the larger group or tribe (Al-Tamimi) to which he is related.

Therefore, Ali Shaheen’s official name would be: Ali Ahmed Khalil Abdul-Magid Shaheen Al-Tamimi. Girls are named similarly; Ali’s sister, Aisha, would have as her official name: Aisha Ahmed Khalil Abdul-Magid Shaheen Al-Tamimi.

ADOPTING ORPHANED CHILDREN

Because orphanages have consistently been the recipients of ANERA assistance, each year a number of requests are received from Americans who would like to adopt a Palestinian child.

The custom of adoption is not widely known in the Middle East for two major reasons. First, the birth of children out of wedlock is still uncommon and few young people are abandoned by their birth parents.

Second, a child whose mother and father are both deceased, has the extended family system—grandparents, aunts, uncles—who consider the child to be a member of their family even though they may be financially unable to care for her on a daily basis. It is not uncommon for a poor, orphaned young person to be cared for during the week by an orphanage and to return "home" to her relatives on the weekend.

The very few cases known to ANERA of Palestinian children being adopted by parents of other nationalities, met the following criteria: the child in fact was abandoned or the extended family gave permission for adoption; the adoptive parents were personally known to and approved by the orphanage; one or both parents were able to speak Arabic and were familiar with the Arab culture; and, finally, one or both adoptive parents were of the same religion (if known) as the child’s birth parents.
According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Israel, in 1977, there were 367,609 students at all educational levels in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. The students attended a total of 1270 schools with 867 of these being military government schools, 223 operated by UNRWA/UNESCO, and 180 privately sponsored. The young women on the left are shown on their graduation day from the Friends Girls’ School, a private high school in Ramallah.

**BULLETIN**

Information is difficult to get out of the West Bank these days but it's thought that schools in nearly every major town have been closed as have all three universities (Birzeit, Bethlehem, and Najah) at some time or another during the past few months. Even as we are getting ready to press, there are serious violations of human rights taking place against young people for protesting military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As reported in The Washington Post, May 20, 1979, these violations are taking place right now:

Two U.N. refugee camps in the West Bank have been shut by 24-hour curfews in the past 2 weeks. The Jalazun camp near Ramallah... was reopened... after 12 days during which refugees were ordered to remain inside their houses except for 2 hours daily. The 2,000 residents of the Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem have been under house detention for 10 days. In both cases, the curfew was imposed after youths stoned passing cars and Army vehicles and attempted to set up road blocks in protest against the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the upcoming autonomy talks... The Jalazun residents complained of dangerous sanitary conditions and shortages of fresh food and milk during the curfew—prompting the International Red Cross to express its concern... the West Bank Council for Higher Education... said the arrest of students and the closing of schools have resulted in a serious disruption of the education process at all levels in the West Bank... The Council noted these other actions by the Army: The May 2 closure of Bir Zeit University, after an Arab student was shot in the chest by a civilian Israeli settler... University officials say they do not expect to be allowed to reopen this year, if ever. The closing of Bethlehem Boys School and the continued closing of the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Ramallah... The closing of schools in Hahlul..."

**HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN**

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC), established in 1977, believes "The Palestinian people are the victims of the most serious violations of human rights in countries of the Middle East." The aims of the PHRC are to: "promote the investigation, publication and understanding of these incidents of human rights violations; lend support to the victims and their attorneys; and to secure the enforcement of existing internationally recognized norms of human rights and fundamental freedoms for the Palestinian people." Among their several projects, the PHRC is working for the release of young people currently being held in Israeli prisons. For further information about how you can help the children and the PHRC, write to: Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 1322 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSED**

Reading the data on the worldwide abuse of young people's human rights is a sobering experience. Nearly every country's army has committed deplorable acts against young people at some point in its history. The Israeli forces' abuse of Palestinian children in the Occupied Territories is no exception.

In this International Year of the Child, it would be an injustice to Palestinian young people to gloss over or omit entirely these human rights violations in their young lives. The abuses are not widely known in the United States; perhaps this is because of our desire to think accounts of such violations are exaggerations or our reluctance to believe Israeli forces would use such tactics against young people. But the evidence is overwhelming, comes from a variety of sources, and is in such detail it cannot be ignored.

In particular, evidence on human rights violations comes from general and specific reports by Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the U.N. Human Rights Commission, the Report of the National Lawyers Guild 1977 Middle East Delegation, the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, and from reports in the American and British press. Evidence has been taken from statements made by the children themselves, the statements of their Palestinian and Israeli lawyers, and, in several cases, from eyewitness accounts by uninvolved third parties. Due to limitations of space, only a small portion of the information is presented here.

With regard to young people in the Occupied Territories, the following 2 pages tell of two specific concerns of human rights advocates: the unnecessarily harsh reaction of Israeli soldiers to demonstrations by Palestinian young people and the physical abuse of children when they are arrested for protesting:
REACTIONS TO DEMONSTRATIONS

Palestinian resentment against military occupation is widespread, deep, and explosive. Because few families have escaped the effects of occupation, the youth are no exception to this atmosphere of resentment.

Young people's demonstrations against military occupation have become part of life's regular routine in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In most cases, the young people are in junior and senior high school (about ages 12-18). Sometimes college students are involved and sometimes young people in elementary school participate. The demonstrations may be organized around a specific incident or they may arise spontaneously.

A demonstration typically begins on the way home from school when the young people come upon an Israeli military vehicle or Israeli soldiers. The resentment builds and the children begin throwing rocks at the soldiers. (In more organized demonstrations, tires are burned or stone barricades set up to block roads.)

The soldiers react with a variety of methods — many of which were seen on nationwide American television in late March and early April, 1979 — ranging from the use of riot batons and tear gas to firearms and live ammunition to random arrest and collective punishment:

"Up and down the West Bank of the Jordan River, there have been scenes like this for 3 days. Schoolboys swarm into village streets, set up stone barricades and chant slogans. . . . This morning teen-agers hurled stones at soldiers and police in East Jerusalem . . . Since the outbreaks began on Saturday, Israeli authorities say there has been one death . . . and about 25 Arab youths have been treated in hospitals." (The Washington Post, November 19, 1974)

"An 11-year-old Arab boy who was shot last Wednesday as Israeli soldiers sought to disperse demonstrators in the occupied West Bank, died today in a Jerusalem hospital. . . ." (The New York Times, March 23, 1976)

"In Ramallah . . . dozens of students were arrested and several hospitalized over the weekend after stick-wielding soldiers broke into a walled courtyard of a girls' high school here . . . One American, a volunteer teacher at the Friends' School . . . was taken by Israeli military policemen when he tried to stop soldiers who said he was beating the high school students with riot batons." (The New York Times, November 11, 1975)

"In the town of Beit Jalla, next to Bethlehem, Israeli soldiers mounted to the second floor outdoor balcony of a government elementary school, shouted inside for the students to close the windows, and tossed tear gas canisters (CS gas made in Pennsylvania) inside. Several of the students panicked and jumped out of windows on the opposite side of the building, an 18-foot drop. Ten children wound up in the hospital with bone fractures . . . I interviewed 3 youngsters . . . who described the lessons they were studying at the time of the incident and insisted that there were no disturbances at their school. Mrs. Wadia Mansour— who lives just opposite the school and whose son suffered a leg fracture— said she was hanging wash on her line and the area was quiet at the time the soldiers arrived— Israeli border patrolmen, searching for stonethrowers who had scattered, burst into a comfortable home in El Bireh and seized 16-year-old Munther Jaouni who, his parents said, was studying at the time. . . . I saw the broken front windows of this home and a front stoop covered with blood. . . ." (The Christian Science Monitor, March 26, 1976)

"Tension has mounted another notch . . . with the killing Sunday of a Palestinian teen-age girl in Nablus by Israeli security forces . . ." (The Christian Science Monitor, May 17, 1976)

"Israeli security forces opened fire on Arab demonstrators, killing two and wounding another . . . the victims in today's confrontation were a 21-year-old laborer . . . and a 17-year-old girl student . . . Another student, 16, was wounded in the leg . . . ." (The Washington Post, March 16, 1979)
PHYSICAL ABUSE

(The following information may shock some Newsletter readers so we want to warn you before reading on.)

Once the children are apprehended for protesting, the military authorities seem to take one of two options: either they just want to intimidate the youngsters and their families or they want signed confessions from the children. When confessions are wanted, the most serious physical abuses take place. Basically, the young people are beaten and threatened by interrogators until a confession is obtained:

“A U.S. consular officer attending a trial in Ramallah...overheard a conversation between an Israeli military prosecutor and defense attorney that he felt amounted to a virtual acknowledgement by the prosecutor that confessions often are extracted through threats and beatings. The United States took an interest in the case because it involved 2 brothers who happened to be American citizens...age 16...and age 15...The 2 American boys had been arrested in March last year along with 2 Palestinian boys following an incident in which rocks were thrown at an Israeli military bus. According to statements by all 4 boys and by 4 witnesses, the boys were beaten and threatened by the police until they signed statements in which they confessed to throwing rocks. Despite a formal American request, the Israeli military authorities made no real effort to investigate the charges of mistreatment...”
(The Christian Science Monitor, April 4, 1979)

“Charges of brutality by the Israeli occupation forces have been made before, but this case is unusual in that it has been supported by witnesses who are neither Israelis nor Arabs...Two British professors said they watched a student enter a military headquarters for questioning a week ago and saw him emerge several hours later badly beaten and hardly able to walk...An American professor who joined a vigil by the professors outside the building, also said that the student had left badly injured—protested to the Israeli military governor....The general denied....the students had been beaten. He said they had left 'healthy and whole' after interrogation, reportedly about a demonstration.”

The following account, given in a personal interview in April, 1979, is from a student who attended Hussein Ibn Ali High School in Hebron on the West Bank:

“It happened in November, 1967, when I was 14 years old...On the way home from school, several of my friends and I saw an Israeli tank and soldiers. We began throwing rocks at them. The soldiers caught 5 of us and took us to the police station. They made us take off all of our clothes and they beat us with sticks; then they alternately shoved us under hot and cold water. It was painful and we were very frightened. I cried at first but then tried to be strong. Every day it was the same: the soldiers interrogated us about our activities and beat us. For the first week we were in solitary confinement in the cells; then they transferred us to a large room. I was not allowed to see my mother or father the whole time I was there. Finally, I signed a confession saying I threw rocks at the soldiers...I spent 3 weeks in that jail and 3 months recovering from the beatings. In that time, I grew much older than 14 years.”

In March-April, 1978, after the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, mass demonstrations took place in the West Bank. As reported by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (“Action Alert,” December, 1978), 13 children from Kalandia refugee camp were arrested. The following are accounts of their treatment given by two of the children as recorded by their lawyers.

Mahmud Mafa’a Ahmed Salamah, age 13: “When they arrested me they covered my head and took me in a military car. On the way they sprayed gas on me. When we arrived, Sami (nickname of Israeli soldier, ed), the interrogator, was waiting for me and told me to undress. I refused because I was afraid and embarrassed. Then Sami started beating me with a stick and I had no choice but to undress. He continued to beat me when I was fully naked. They forced me to stand on my head with my legs tied to the window while blood was streaming from my mouth. After 3 days of torture, they then threatened to bring my mother and sister here and rape them in front of me. Then I admitted that I threw a fire-bottle that I had made.”

Samir Abd El Hadi, age 15: “I spent 7 days in solitary confinement. The interrogators...tied my hands behind my back and the others hit me in my stomach and also kicked me all over...In Ramallah during the Interrogation they made me eat hair. (One of the Israeli soldiers, ed.) tried lifting me by my hair. They brought somebody who was tortured to witness against me...They beat me badly and said: 'confess'. On the day of the explosion (subject of Interrogation, ed.) I was working with my father somewhere else. I had nothing to do with this act, but after the beatings and torture I admitted to something I had not done....”

in the elimination of the abuse. This is the main reason for including this section on human rights in the Newsletter.

Israel military authorities must stop. “All children are our children.”
FLOWERS AND CHILDREN

Many of the private schools assisted by ANERA in the Occupied Territories are sponsored by charitable organizations and are free of charge to young people. Several of the schools arose as part of an orphanage or as an attempt to provide more than just schooling for impoverished children.

The educational reputations of many of these schools is excellent. Especially in East Jerusalem, where many Palestinian families do not want their children attending Israeli schools, admission for children from wealthier families has been requested. Because of ever-increasing inflation, several schools are now taking a proportion of students who can afford to pay fees although the bulk of the students are still orphaned or destitute.

ANERA has begun a scholarship program with two schools in East Jerusalem: the Garden of Flowers (Rawdat El Zuhur) and the House of Children (Dar El Tifl).

Miss Elizabeth Nasir, founder of the Garden of Flowers, writes: "The grim aftermath of the war of 1948 saw countless tragedies and none more grievous than the sight and sound of unwanted and orphaned children crowding into Jerusalem, begging in the streets, taking food, sleeping in the doorways and shattered buildings... Someone, somehow, had to intervene, to gather up these 'broken blossoms crushed by the implacable heel of man's inhumanity to man.' That someone, I realized, had to be me." With the unrelenting efforts of Miss Nasir, the Garden of Flowers blossomed a few years later when 50 little girls were taken from the streets of Jerusalem to be cared for by Miss Nasir and her small staff.

Similarly, the House of Children had its start in 1948 when Miss Hind Husseini found 55 orphaned children from Deir Yassin, wandering in the streets of Jerusalem (Deir Yassin is the village just outside Jerusalem where 240 Palestinian men, women, and children were massacred by forces seeking to establish the state of Israel in April, 1948). Miss Husseini found shelter for the children in two rooms in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Today Miss Husseini's Dar El Tifl is an orphanage and school for 1,000 Palestinian young people, ranging in age from infancy to young adulthood and in schooling from pre-elementary to post-secondary.

Miss Nasir's Rawdat El Zuhur provides primary education, food, clothing, transportation, medical care and home visits for 150 children who are orphans or who come from impoverished homes. (Many of the orphaned children at Miss Nasir's Garden of Flowers sleep at Miss Husseini's House of Children which is right next door.)

To help Miss Nasir and Miss Husseini care for the children, ANERA hopes Newsletter readers will participate in a special scholarship program. $75 will help give a year of elementary education—in your name—to a young person at one of the homes. We'll send you the name and a picture of the child receiving your scholarship. And at the end of the school year, you'll receive a report on the school itself from Miss Nasir and Miss Husseini. Please send your gift now.

Enclosed is my gift for a year of elementary education for Palestinian young people at the Garden of Flowers and the House of Children:

$75 for 1 child
$150 for 2 children
$225 for 3 children
$300 for 4 children

$ As a general gift for ANERA's projects for young people

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

Contributions to ANERA are tax-deductible and should be sent with this form to the ANERA office. Thank you for your help.