

ANERA *Newsletter*

American Near East Refugee Aid

Number 96 Winter 1992

BEYOND THE RHETORIC

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROJECTS

This has been an extraordinary year in the Middle East. It began with a full-scale war, and ended with an international peace conference. In between the war and peace came the days of rhetoric: political jargon, diplomatic terminology and acronyms abounded. Especially in the case of the 1991-92 peace talks, rhetoric has obscured actions. What, then, is really happening on the ground? What are the Palestinians hoping to gain from the talks? In this issue, we will try to cut through the political rhetoric to show you what remains -- real people and real projects.

In 1991, the primary parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict sat down to begin to negotiate the terms of peace, after years of frustration and numerous failed attempts. At the heart of the negotiations is the issue of Palestinian self-government and the fate of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, currently under military occupation. To reach their goal, the Palestinian delegation has proposed a specific plan -- to establish a Palestinian interim self-governing authority (PISGA). Such a body would assume the responsibilities currently in the hands of the Israeli military and civilian authorities during a transitional period from occupation to autonomy.

The road to a self-governing authority has suffered from blockages and stalling on all sides. In 1979, the historic Camp David Accords presented an outline of definite steps to transfer authority from the Israeli military and civilian administration to a Palestinian government. However, these steps have not yet been taken.

Interestingly, the language of the current PISGA proposal closely mirrors the terms of the Camp David Accord, when the Egyptian and Israeli delegations agreed that "In order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants, under these arrangements the Israeli military government and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of these areas to replace the existing military government."

The following years have been marked by frustration and the failure of several peace plans (notably the Reagan Plan and the

Baker Plan), which would have reintroduced the issue of Palestinian self-government. Finally, nearly thirteen years later, the peace talks of 1991-92 have brought the issue of local Palestinian empowerment back to the bargaining table.

What areas of their lives do the Palestinians seek to control? What are the issues with which an interim government must deal? The PISGA model states that "The purpose of the interim self-government arrangements is to ensure the peaceful and orderly transfer of authority from Israel to PISGA, and to create the proper conditions

for sustainable negotiations on the final status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory." First, the plan provides for free and democratic elections in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians would elect a 180 member Legislative Assembly, a 20 person Executive Council and a judiciary. As a result of this process, the Palestinians would assume legislative, executive and judicial control over the territories and their lives.

Under the proposed new interim government, the Palestinians would also take control over issues such as the environment, agriculture, and urban infrastructure. They would support and promote their own industry and commerce, both locally and internationally. In addition, the Palestinians would assume responsibility for education, social programs, health programs, and internal security and regulation.

ANERA donors can help pave the road to self-rule. ANERA projects, by encouraging local empowerment and economic development, give the Palestinians the tools to take responsibility for

their own needs and welfare. In this issue of the newsletter, we will show you some recent ANERA projects that foster self-government. But what do the terms "self-government" and "economic development" really mean? We hope these pictures, taken during a staff visit to the West Bank and Gaza, will help visually illustrate their meaning. Through these photos, you will see how your contributions to ANERA foster economic development and ultimately, Palestinian self-sufficiency.

What area of their lives do the Palestinians seek to control?

What are the issues with which an interim government must deal?

SELF-GOVERNMENT MEANS CONTROL OVER:

AGRICULTURE

A Palestinian interim government will seek to encourage agricultural production and marketing. Government investment in Palestinian cooperatives would be a logical step for generating revenue. These local-level organizations bring together the resources of numerous individuals to serve the community as a whole. The agricultural cooperatives produce and process the goods and then market the product locally and, on occasion, internationally. Palestinian control over agricultural production, marketing and export means increased financial self-sufficiency.

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

The self-governing authority must develop an infrastructure to provide services and help communities function smoothly. An infrastructure includes all facilities that serve the population which help modern societies function (such as markets, public works, transport facilities, etc.). To survive in the global community, a society must continually upgrade and modernize its public facilities.

INDUSTRY & COMMERCE

The normal problems resulting from industry and commerce are much worse under occupation. Because industry is often located in crowded city centers, it poses a great health risk to the population. An interim government would need to regulate industry for both quality control and to reduce pollution. One solution is to build light industrial complexes that move industry to outlying areas, removing a major source of pollutants and contamination from population centers.

EDUCATION

A literate, educated population is a critical base for a productive society. The Palestinians, therefore, seek increased control over access to education and curricula, including both mainstream and special educational programs. In addition, they seek to improve adults' skills and abilities through technical and vocational training. Above all, the Palestinians want to secure their right to keep the schools open.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

To complement the infrastructure, the interim government would support social programs to assist the needy, disabled or otherwise disadvantaged members of society. Numerous charitable societies in the territories already work toward this end. Their programs often integrate technical training with income-generation. The result is that while an individual learns a skill, he or she also receives wages. This income in turn helps support the individual's family, creating secondary beneficiaries. By integrating the traditionally disadvantaged into the mainstream, poverty and unemployment decrease, and the society as a whole becomes more productive.

HEALTH PROGRAMS

Because of the continuing occupation, Palestinians suffer from inadequate health care and the lack of modern facilities. To eliminate this problem, the self-governing authority must promote the modernization of existing facilities with improved equipment and more efficient management. Since the number of health care clinics is insufficient, the government must support the establishment of new hospitals and clinics so that the entire Palestinian population may receive medical treatment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

As in many developing societies, a Palestinian self-governing authority would have to deal with the environmental consequences of overpopulation, unregulated industry and years of foreign occupation. In Gaza, raw sewage often flows into the streets from inadequate treatment facilities. To prevent disease, the government must contain the sewage and stop it from leaking into drinking water. In the West Bank, land is often too rocky for agriculture. But by clearing the boulders to expose fertile topsoil, the Palestinians could reclaim a good deal of land for agriculture.

INTERNAL PROBLEMS

Taking control of the multitude of internal issues in the territories will be one of the greatest challenges for a Palestinian self-governing authority. These include matters like regulating travel within and outside of the territories, internal security, taxation, and the administration of justice. At present, Palestinians must face curfews, travel restrictions and heavy taxation, all of which are currently administered by the occupation authorities. Under self-rule, Palestinians could travel freely and live without the constant stress of life under occupation.

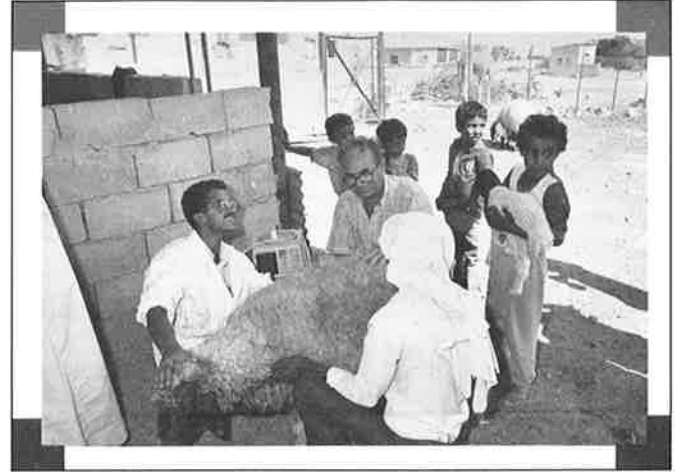
REDUCING POVERTY, CREATING EMPOWERMENT

THE ESSENCE OF DEVELOPMENT



AGRICULTURE

Workers at the Tarqumiya Agricultural Cooperative examine seedlings which the coop then sells to farmers.



Dr. Arafat, a veterinarian with a mobile vet clinic, and ANERA's Dr. Wahib Tarazi examine a Bedouin family's sheep for signs of pregnancy.



URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

At the Halhoul Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market, Palestinians purchase produce from local cooperatives.

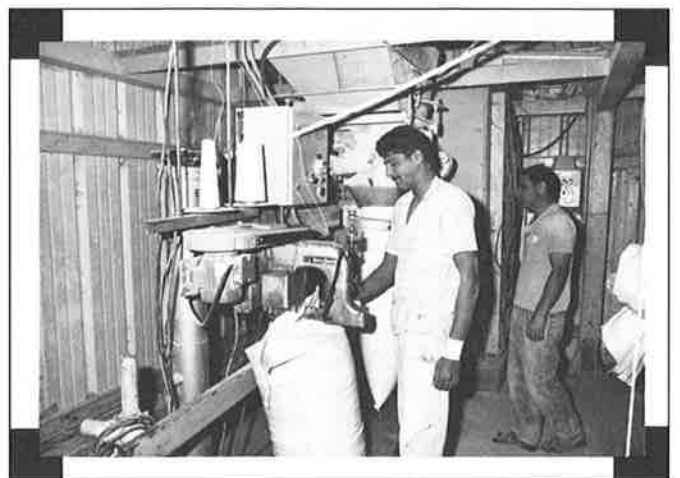


Palestinian merchants conducting business with Hasidic Jews at the Halhoul municipal market.



INDUSTRY & COMMERCE

Garage owner Elias Abd Rabo services a vehicle in the Beit Jala Industrial Zone. The creation of this light industrial complex has moved machine shops from residential areas, decreasing pollution and traffic congestion downtown.



Workers at the Ramallah Chicken feed plant, ANERA's first industrial project in the West Bank, package part of the 70 tons of chicken feed that are processed daily.



EDUCATION

Children at Dar El-Tifl in East Jerusalem, one of four schools which ANERA scholarship donors support, play during recess.



Children with special needs receive extra attention at the Society for the Care of Handicapped Children in Gaza.



SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mohammed Sbeih, a father of three from the Kadurah refugee camp, begins work on a cane chair at the Lutheran Sheltered Workshop for the Blind in East Jerusalem. The workshop offers living and working accommodations to 15 blind adults.



The Beit Jala Rehabilitation Center's marketing director, Amal Kassim, speaks with Mr. Ahmad, a watch repair instructor. Ms. Kassim locates markets and buyers, orders raw materials and helps design and implement the Center's business plans.

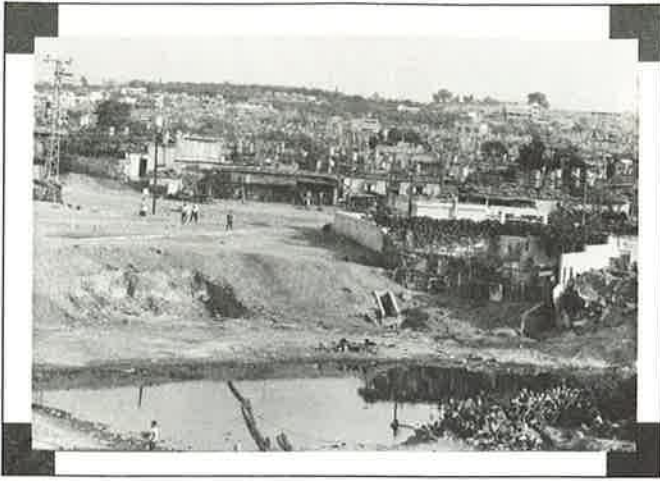


HEALTH PROGRAMS

Palestinian women sit in the recently refurbished waiting room of the Red Crescent Maternity Clinic. With ANERA's help, the Clinic added heat, lights, a water fountain and additional bathrooms.



This Bedouin family will soon benefit from the Anata Multipurpose Health Clinic now under construction. It will provide primary care to a population that in the past had to travel to Jerusalem for medical attention.



THE ENVIRONMENT

Because of the lack of sufficient sewage facilities, raw sewage often collects in downtown Gaza, posing a terrible health risk to the population.



The few boulders in the background are all that remain of the stones that once made this area barren and useless. With ANERA's help, Palestinian farmers used tractors to clear and reclaim the land for agriculture.



INTERNAL PROBLEMS

Gaza residents line up to receive various permits necessary for day to day activities like travel, vehicle registration and conducting business. This one window serves the entire population of Gaza - nearly 750,000 individuals.



To travel from Hebron, residents must obtain a permit from this window, even if they only plan to visit Jerusalem some 40 kilometers away. The process can take anywhere between four days to five weeks to complete.

YOU CAN HELP

You can help the Palestinians in their quest for self-government. By supporting economic development in the territories, ANERA donors build a foundation for a self-sufficient society. This is not a political solution. The diplomats and heads of state must grapple with the details. But in the interim, ANERA will continue to assist Palestinians on the ground. Building a lasting peace is impossible without a solid base. ANERA, with your support, will help provide this base.

ANERA has received gifts:

IN HONOR OF:

ANERA staff; Amb. Lucius Battle; Mrs. William Blaker; Dr. & Mrs. Marcus Bruhn; H.H. the Dalai Lama; Clayton Davis; John & Edna Davis; Ernest & Alyce Ferris; Gandhi; M. Guido, A.W. Lawrence's caregiver; Jesus Christ; Richard D. Jones II; John J. Kelberer; Frederic H. Knapp; Brian & Lydia Mansour; Samir & Aida Mansour; Mrs. Frank Morris; J.C. Nelson; the parents of Miss Violet V. Hyder; the people of Lebanon and Palestine; Rita Rapa; the Rofkar family; Anwar Sadat; Mr. & Mrs. Charles Sawabini; Dr. & Mrs. Wadi Sawabini; Iman Sawires; Livingston V. Taylor; Gladys Thompson; Americans who care about the Muslims of the Middle East; being able to help; "bismallah" (in the name of Allah); blessings to all; food for Palestinians; Middle East understanding; a more balanced U.S. Middle East policy; Palestinian aid; Palestinians; Palestinian-Iraqi medical relief workers; rebuilding the Palestinian economy in the Gaza Strip; the suffering people of the Middle East; Zakat.

IN MEMORY OF:

Neva D. Adriance; Sibyl Totah Belmont; Jarir K. Bosch; William Brubeck; Aaron Csank; Dr. John Davis; Joseph DePinto; William A. Eddy; Murray D. Etherton; Bill Ross Garner; Nabil Ghoneim; Donald J. Hahn; Nicholas G. Halaby; Liston F. Hills; Mary Frances James; Nabiha Karoub; Mead A. Kelser; Malcolm Kerr; Margaret Bailey Kunde; A.W. Lawrence; Barbara Ann Mishriki; Frederica Helmer Parmelee; Mrs. Ruth Rast; Helen V. Seymour; Leila Sowayan; Dr. W.F. Stinespring; Edith B. Stonequist; Dolphine Drake Strong; Jamie Williams, beloved daughter of Jim & Mary Rose Williams; Gene Yatlee, beloved son; Fuad Zara; and Dallas M. Burton, beloved wife of E.H. Burton.

SPECIAL THANKS:

to all those who made donations in memory of Rev. Dr. Harry Gaylord Dorman, Jr. and Francis Olcott Allen IV.

Enclosed is a gift for ANERA's projects in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

_____ \$15 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$500 _____ \$1000

Name: _____

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- I would like to provide a 1-year scholarship for a child in Gaza. (\$100 per child)*
- I would like to provide a 1-year scholarship for a child in Beirut. (\$100 per child)*
- I would like to provide a 1-year scholarship for a child in East Jerusalem. (\$100 per child)*

Please Send Me _____ Extra Copies Of This Newsletter.

**Sponsors receive a photo of the child and a letter from the school during the year.*

Written by Catherine Sweet, ANERA Administrative Assistant, edited by Paula Stinson, ANERA Vice President. Photos by M. Nalbandian, GARO Photo, Jerusalem.

ANERA

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