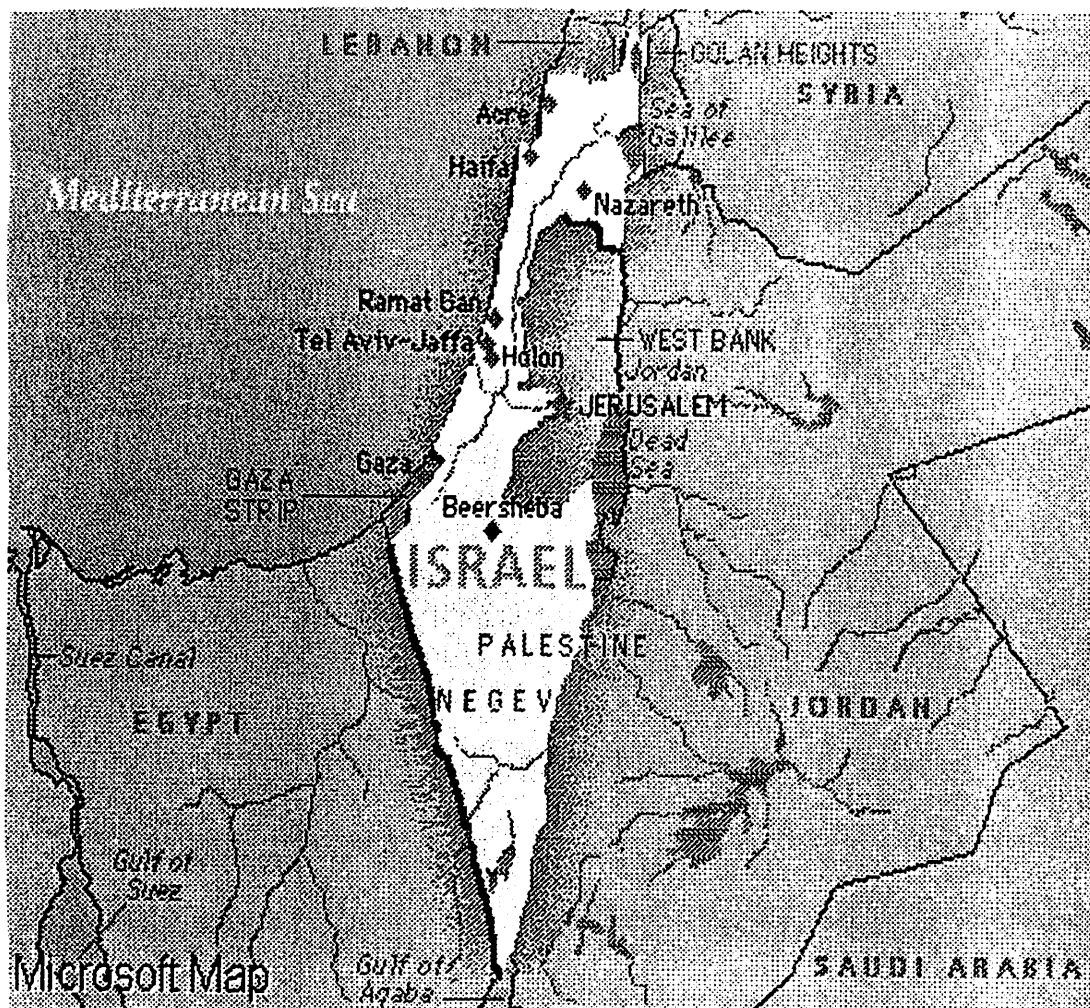




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PREPARATORY STUDY VISIT TO PALESTINE & ISRAEL

MARCH 10 - 21 1995



**WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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Additional Israeli and Palestinian participants took part at different stages of the programme. We do not list them here since they were not present for the whole time of the study visit.



PREPARATORY STUDY VISIT TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE PROGRAMME

March 10 - 21 - 1995

Friday, March 10

a.m. Arrivals and transfer to the hotel in Jerusalem.

p.m. Arrivals and transfer to the hotel in Jerusalem.

Visit to the Birzeit University.

20.00 Dinner.
Participants and hosts' introduction.

23.30 Overnight at the Strand Hotel, Jerusalem.

Saturday, March 11

08.00 Breakfast.

09.00 Introduction to the final programme.
Aims and expectations of participants.
Task division.

10.00 Visit to the Orient House.
Meeting with (MW) Dr. Sari Nussaibeh, President Al -Quds University
Mr. Rami Tahoob, Orient House Protocol Officer
Mr. Afif Safieh, PLO Ambassador to the United Kingdom
On the Middle East socio - economic perspectives, the situation - status of Jerusalem
and the Orient House role.

11.30 Tour of the Old City.

13.30 Lunch in the Old City.

14.00 Bus tour to the historical areas and introduction to the settlements problematique.

19.00 Basic data on the Middle East situation:

The Israeli perspective

by Offer Dekel, Secretary General of the Young Labour Leadership and Leor Chorev, Vice Chairman.

The Palestinian perspective

By Ibrahim Khraishi, Vice President of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) and Rula Maayeh, member of the International Committee of GUPS.

20.00 Dinner and Palestinian Night
Welcome to Palestine at the Jerusalem Hotel.

23.30 Overnight at the Strand Hotel, Jerusalem.

Sunday, March 12

07.00 Breakfast.

08.00 Departure to Nazareth.

10.00 Visit to the Church of the Beatitudes.

11.00 Boat trip on the Tiberias lake.

12.00 Lunch at Ledo Kinereth.

13.00 Departure to Sakhnein, Galilee.

13.45 MW Mr. Abou Saleh, former mayor of Arabeh and Mr. Hanna R. Abou El Assal.
Lay wreath and plant tree at the Monument of the Land Memorial.

14.15 Departure to Akko.

15.00 Visit to the Old city of Akko.

16.00 Visit to Akko Community Center and meeting with Ms. Maryam Miri, coordinator for youth and women projects in the Akko area.

19.30 Arrival in Nazareth and dinner.

20.00 MW Nazareth personalities and panel discussion on youth policies in Israel with Mr. Emeel Habibi, Poet and Mr. Hanna R. Abou El Assal, Headmaster of Christ Church School.

23.30 Overnight at St. Margaret Hostel.

Monday, March 13

- 08.00 Breakfast.
- 08.30 Optional visit to the Basilica of the Annunciation.
- 09.00 Departure to Giva 'at Haviva
MW Mr. David Korin, Project Director
Mr. Barad Zedahd, Organizational Director
Mr. Abed Hamza, Chairperson of the Arab Youth Movement
- 11.00 MW Mr. Yochanan Eschar, Co - Director of the Jewish - Arab Center for Peace.
- 12.00 Departure to Um El Fahm
MW Mr. Shafek Gbereh, Secretary General of the local Labour Party.
- 13.30 Departure to Tira
MW Mr. Naeem Mansor, Secretary General of the local Labour Party and lunch.
- 14.30 Departure to Jaffa.
Tour of Old Jaffa organized by the local Scouts groups and visit to the Jaffa Community Center.

Visit to the Arab - Jewish Community Center.
MW Mr. Arnon Dunetz of Young MAPAM and Director of the Community Center.
- 18.00 Visit to the Terra Sancta Catholic Church School.
MW Mr. Abdu Masir on the Santa Catholic Church School.
Mr. Kisra Kabah on the problems of Arab students in Israel.
Mr. Ali Raffa on the "absentees" problems.

Lecture and discussion with Mr. Habd Kabub, member of the Municipal Council of Tel Aviv on the situation of Jaffa before and after 1948.
- 21.00 Dinner and free evening in Tel Aviv.
Overnight at the Sun Hotel.

Tuesday, March 14

- a.m. Free in Tel Aviv.
- 11.30 Lunch.
- 12.00 Departure to Kufr Kassem.
- 13.00 Lay wreath at the Massacre Memorial at Kufr Kassem.
- 14.00 Departure to Jerusalem.
- 15.00 Free in Jerusalem.
- 20.00 Dinner and overnight at the Strand Hotel.

Wednesday, March 15

- 08.00 Breakfast.
- 09.00 Departure to Tulkarem.
- 11.00 Welcome and introduction by Mr. Helmi Hanon, Mayor of Tulkarem.
Visit to the refugee camp.
MW Mr. Abnan Blaidy, Director of the Youth and Community Center in the camp.
Mr. Aref Owfaeh, Manager of the Center.
Mr. Abdel Karim Odeh, President of the Palestinian Youth Union in Tulkarem.
- 13.00 Lunch.
- 14.00 Departure to Anbata
MW Dr. Muner Abdu, Director of the Youth and Sports Center of Anbata.
Mr. Ihau Sabubeh, Secretary General of the Center.
- 15.00 Departure to Nablus.
- 15.30 MW and lunch at the Al Najah University's Student Council.
Mr. Mosdak El Masry, Administrative Director.
Mr. Abdel Karim Khrder, President of the Student Council.
Mr. Hisham Direkat, International Secretary.
- 17.30 MW Mr. Basem Al Wallweel, Head of the Agricultural Cooperative Union.
- 20.00 Welcome dinner with Mr.A. Tsolakakis and Ms. K. Tsavdaridou of the E.C. Youth Unit.
- 21.00 Mid - Week Evaluation.
- 23.00 Overnight at the Strand Hotel.

Thursday, March 16

Free day in Jerusalem.

Optional visit to Hebron and Bethlehem.

18.00 Dinner.

19.30 Purim party.

24.00 Overnight at the Strand Hotel.

Friday, March 17

08.00 Breakfast.

09.00 Departure to Yad Vashim.
Visit to the Holocaust Memorial.
Lay wreath at the Memorial site.

13.00 MW Mr. Uri Bar - Ner, Deputy Director General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

18.00 MW Kibbutz representatives on the history and current development of the Kibbutz movement.

20.00 Dinner.

21.00 Intercultural games with the Kibbutz members.

22.30 Departure to Jerusalem and overnight at the Strand Hotel.

Saturday, March 18

08.30 Breakfast.

09.30 Departure to Massadah.
Visit of the Massadah archeological sites.

11.30 Departure to the Dead Sea.

12.00 Swimming in the Dead sea and lunch.

13.00 Departure to Jericho and visit.

20.00 Dinner.

23.00 Overnight at the Strand Hotel.

Sunday, March 19

08.00 Breakfast.

09.00 Departure to Gaza.

11.00 Visit to Beit Lahia
MW members of the local Fatah Youth Movement and their local youth center.

Visit to the Jabalia refugee camp.
MW families living in the refugee camp.

12.30 Departure to Khan Yunis.

13.00 MW representatives of the Tahonit Sitti Center.: working with refugee children.

14.30 Lunch.

15.00 Visit to Khan Yunis Youth and Sports Center.

18.00 Check in at the Adam Hotel.

19.00 MW the Fatah Youth Movement Preparatory Committee in Gaza.

20.30 Dinner.

23.30 Overnight at the Adam Hotel.

Monday, March 20

08.00 Breakfast.

09.00 MW the Right to Live Society.

11.30 Lunch.

12.30 MW Palestine Avenir Foundation
Ms. Yolla Haddadine, Director.

14.30 MW the Palestinian Trade Unions Federation
Mr. Basem Al Bayary, Secretary General.

16.30 Final Evaluation and brainstorming on future cooperation possibilities.

18.30 MW President Yasser Arafat.

19.30 Departure to Jerusalem.

21.30 Dinner and farewell party.

Tuesday, March 21

08.00 Breakfast.

Departures of participants.



DAILY REPORT SATURDAY 11.03.'95

Visit to the Orient House.

We met: Mr. Sari NOSIBY, Orient House Chairperson and Al Quds University President
Mr. Rami TAHOOB, Orient House Protocol Officer
Mr. Afif SAFIEH, PLO Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

At the Orient House we were received by Mr. Sari Nosiby and Mr. Rami Tahoob. First they gave us a brief history of the Orient House (OH).

The OH has been an important meeting place, and still is. Different delegations have had meetings here and for example held discussions about the peace process and the status of Jerusalem.

The OH takes no direct part in the political decision making. The Israeli authorities have tried to close down the OH, something that, if it were to be fulfilled, would harm the peace process, according to Mr. Rami.

The discussion that followed was focused on some of the problems in the ongoing peace process and the role of the OH.

The following points were stressed by Mr. Rami:

- to many Palestinians it seems as if the Israelis are trying a de facto solution in Jerusalem (settlement policy);
- there is a big difference in the economic conditions between West and East Jerusalem, and the problems in the Eastern part are neglected by the Israeli authorities;
- one of the main problems is the ongoing settlement policy. New Jewish settlements are encircling Palestinian parts of the city. This divides the Palestinian people geographically and makes contacts, meeting and decision - making more difficult.

Mr. Nosiby talked about the importance of continuous political activity in East Jerusalem, and hopefully the OH can hold its position in such matters. He pointed out that both Israelis and Palestinians have strong ties to the city.

The Israeli participants Leor Chorev and Arnon Dunetz, called for more optimism about the results of the peace process. There are strong psychological barriers to be broken on both sides. They emphasized the importance of keeping Jerusalem united.

Evening meeting with Labour Youth and The General Union of Palestine Students.

Labour Youth:

Leor CHOREV, vice - chairman, followed up the discussion that started in the Orient House earlier in the day. Leor mentioned in his speech that there are different opinions about the peace process within the Labour Party. He responded on the challenge from the Palestinians about the slow pace in the peace process. He meant that the Palestinians have to implement their part of the peace agreement before things move faster. There is a strong fear among the common Israelis of Palestinian self - determination because:

- they fear that newly gained power can be turned against the Israelis;
- there are still no peace agreements with all the neighboring countries;
- fear that the Palestinians authorities will be unable to control terrorism.

It is also necessary to stop the negative rhetoric from both sides about each other. He also called for optimism in spite of all the problems that still exist.

General Union of Palestine Students - G.U.P.S.:

In his speech, Ibrahim KHRAISHI - GUPS vice - president, concentrated on the history and the role of GUPS and how the organization is structured. 58% of the Palestinians are under 30, the membership basis is in other words quite large.

Commenting on the Israeli fear and the security claims he said that Israel today is the safest country in the world for the Jews, and further noted that strong measures on terrorism are obviously still necessary.

A discrimination against Palestinians does exist, but there is no use in "who suffers more" comparisons.

Ibrahim also said that it is urgent that the very poor living conditions in the Westbank and the Gaza Strip are improved. He stressed the need that Israel should have a active role in the Middle East, engaging more in the regional politics and opening the borders towards mainly the Palestinian territories.

In the following debate, it was said that the fear among Israelis affect the daily life of the Palestinians, for example denying the permission to visit families living far away or creating great difficulties in getting a job matching their education.

As an answer to a question on the role of the European youth in the peace process, Ibrahim said that he had felt a stronger support from Scandinavian countries than from the Mediterranean ones.

Offer DEKEL, Secretary General of the Labour Youth, responded that European youth could help Palestinians and Israelis to work together and create a new atmosphere. In this sense he expressed the hope that future Euro - Arab dialogue meetings, organized by the E.C. Youth Forum, be open also to Israeli participation. General speaking, it is of major importance to get more Israelis to believe in the peace process, concluded Mr. Dekel.

Technical report

Labour Youth:

Address: Young Leadership of the Labour Party of Israel.
110, Hayarkon Street
Tel Aviv

Persons met: Mr. Offer Dekel, Secretary General
Mr. Leor Chorev, vice - Chairman
Mr. Gil Charnozy, Executive Committee Member

Structures:

The Young Leadership members are between 17 and 35 years of age and belong to the Labour Party. There are several regional committees and among them representatives are elected to the Executive Committee, which consists of 35 - 40 members (the number is decided every year depending from the total number of members). The Executive Committee meets about once a month to discuss and decide on policies and actions. There is a Young Leadership national code to be followed. Through their members in the Executive Committee policies of the Labour Party can be influenced.

Aims and activities:

To influence the politics of the Labour Party and Israeli politics in general. This is achieved through discussions, demonstrations and social activities.

International affiliations and contacts:

Contacts with international socialist movements in Europe.

Member of:

The International Student Body, the International Jewish Student Body, the International Jewish Assembly, the International Zionist Movement, international socialist organizations in Europe and the democratic Society in the United States of America.

The General Union of Palestine Students

Address: The General Union of Palestine Students
Abu Khadva
P.O. Box 4048
Al Rimal
Gaza, Palestine

Tel. : 972 - 7. 821. 578
Fax. : 972 - 7. 823. 417
Mobile tel. : 972 - 50. 310.308

Persons met: Mr. Ibrahim Khraishi, Vice - President and International Secretary
Mr. Basem Al Baz, International Committee Member
Ms. Rula Maayah, International Committee Member

Structures:

They have an Executive Committee of 11 members, elected by the 33 members in the Administrative Council, which is elected by the GUPS Congress (around 300 representatives). GUPS consists of 46 branches worldwide. The total number of members outside Palestine is around 170.000 and inside there are 80.000 members.

To become a member one has to be a Palestinian student. GUPS has 13 members in the Palestinian National Congress, and also members in the Palestinian Central Congress.

Aims and activities:

GUPS has historically played the role of a youth council. The organization has tried to take part in the liberation of Palestine and to build a separate state. Another aim has been to represent Palestinian students at all levels, regional and national. To lobby and speak on behalf of the students in the universities and in the educational departments. A major project has been to raise funds for grants and scholarships. They helped and supported the students welfare during periods of catastrophe, for example the intifada. When the universities were closed, GUPS sought for alternative educational structures. GUPS has recently moved their headquarters from Tunis to Palestine. The main task now is to reorganize the student bodies in Palestine, look at their structures and rewrite the constitution of their organization. A main event will be to hold their institutional conference for the first time in Palestine.

They also have to reorganize their aims and priorities in order to focus more on clear student issues. To create a Palestinian youth council will be another task.

International contacts:

Member of: International Union of Students
The World Federation of Democratic Youth
General Union of Arab Students
Asian Students Association

Observer status in: International Union of Socialist Youth.

Anna Björklund - Vanja Stenslie

DAILY REPORT SUNDAY 12.03.'95

Boat trip on the Tiberias Lake
Visit to the Church of the Beatitudes.

Lunch at Lido Kinereth.

The Land Memorial in Sakhnein.

The former mayor of the city of Arabeh, Abou SALEH, and Hanna R ABOU EL-ASSAL, Headmaster of Christ Church School in Nazareth received us at the memorial in Sakhnein. At this site, six young Palestinians were killed on March, 30 1976, when a strike against the Israeli land confiscations of took place.

We laid a wreath and planted an olive tree at the Memorial. We were interviewed by a journalist, and an article on our visit appeared in the local Palestinian newspaper the day after.

Nazareth: Panel discussion on youth policies in Israel.

Panel:

Mr. Emeel HABIBI, Poet.

Mr. Hanna ABOU EL-ASSAL, Headmaster of Christ Church School in Nazareth.

Emeel Habibi described his views on the Israeli-Palestinian issue and his hopes for the peace process. He compared the situation in the country with the story of "1001 Nights". He said that the Palestinians had been through many ups and downs and just like in the "1001 nights" they were still waiting for the story to end and for a balance to reach.

Hanna Abou El-Assal said that he saw a tendency among the youth of Israel to become more and more individualistic. The young people tend to be more and more concerned with getting good education and professional careers. Because of that, El-Assal thought that young people would be less likely to get radical or extremist views on the situation in the country and thus more in favor of the peace process.

Dorte Moeller Hansen

DAILY REPORT MONDAY 13.03.'95

The day started with an optional visit to the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

9.00 to 12.00 Givat Haviva Institute.

David KORIN as Director of the Institute started explaining what Givat Haviva is. It is not a kibbutz or a university. It is an Israeli organization working to advance Jewish-Arab understanding, cultural and religious pluralism, democratic values and peace in the Middle East.

It was founded in 1949, and is named in memory of Haviva Reik, a Slovak Jewish activist woman during World War II.

Students from all over the world take part in Givat Haviva's activities, such as seminars, courses and workshops of different duration to discuss issues related to peace research in Middle East. There is also an information center and a library about Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, a training and art center and a research institute.

One of the ways to get peace is to overcome the psychological barrier for Jewish people to learn Arabic, trying to get from the Israeli government the recognition of Arabic as the language of its neighbors and not the language of its enemies. The challenge is the attempt to break the idea that Islam equals no peace.

Meeting with the Arab Youth Movement.

Mr. Badrab ZEDAHD, Organizational Director
Mr. Abed HAMZA, Chairperson.

The movement was founded 4 years ago with the aims of encouraging peace, promoting social democracy and giving youth a chance to serve the community. The active involvement of girls and women is encouraged. Activities include leadership seminars for youth leaders to work with children in Arab villages and towns and to organize activities for the 14 to 18 year - olds. They also organize seminars, courses and discussions on peace issues, as well as meetings, seminars and trips with Jewish youth organizations. There are 35 local Arab Youth Movement groups, with members between 18 and 25 years. Their first congress was held 4 months ago, with 1030 participants - we were shown a video of it. The Arab Youth Movement is member of the IF, International Falcon Movement, and participated in their summer peace camp in Sweden in 1991. The movement is supported by MAPAM, one of the present coalition government parties.

Meeting with the Jewish Arab Center for Peace
Mr. Yochanan ESCHAR, Organizational Co - Director.

The Jewish Arab Center for Peace is the biggest and oldest center of its kind in Israel. They started in 1963 and have the following departments:

- Education: dealing with human rights, peace, democracy, history, religion and people coexistence. In Israel schools are usually separate for both communities: few Arabs go to Jewish schools and no Jewish go to Arab schools. The Jewish Arab Center for Peace works for both communities. They have school exchange programmes twinning Jewish and Arab classes.

- Arabic teaching: to learn from others, the best is to learn their language, the language of their neighbors. They also have follow up training courses for teachers, learning about Islam's culture and language.

- Peace and research: where they organize seminars and courses, and produce publications about Middle East issues.

The Center runs programmes together with schools in Tel Aviv.

12.00 Meeting with the local Labour Party Secretary, formerly member of Labour Youth, Mr. Shafek GBEREH, at Um-el-Fahm.

There are 460 members of the Labour Party at Um-el-Fahm, an Arab town in Israel. The discussion centered around the issue of Palestinian Arabs within the Labour Party of Israel. Mr. Gberek hopes for better conditions in the town (housing, schools, infrastructure) through existing political parties and considers his membership an effective way of struggling for full rights for Palestinians within Israel. There are seven Arab members of the Knesset (for Labour, Democratic Arab Party, Meretz and the Progressive List/Communist Party): this is unrepresentative in terms of the population. The Arab minority vote is important.

14.00 Meeting and lunch at Tira.

Mr. Naeem MANSOR, Secretary of local Labour Party.

Mr. Mansor gave us an historical summary of the conditions of the Arab minority in Israel since 1948: there have been profound changes in their society following land confiscations and mechanization, which have led to much migration to towns and the break-up of traditional family units. The Israeli State distrusts their Palestinian citizens and although nothing in written law is discriminatory (except the so called "Law of Return"), in practice there is discrimination for example through the emergency laws like the one used to confiscate lands. He described the triple identity crisis of Palestinian Arabs within Israel :

- 1) they feel Arab, yet differ from Arabs in other Arab countries;
- 2) they are Palestinian, yet in a different situation to Palestinians in the Westbank and Gaza, thus with a slightly different identity;
- 3) they are citizens of Israel, yet don't feel completely attached to the State of Israel.

Since the early 1970's they are accepted by the Palestinian National Council - PNC as a community which may want to stay on their land even if a Palestinian state is created elsewhere. Once the problems of their fellow Palestinians elsewhere have been solved, they hope to find a position in the national community of Israel.

16.00 Tour of old Jaffa.

Visit to the Arab-Jewish Community Center, Jaffa.

The Arab-Jewish Community Center is a free-time organization that began in 1993. Membership is now nearing 1.000, divided between Christians, Moslems and Jews.

They run five houses in Jaffa open every day, from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. . There, children can do activities as music, arts and crafts, language instruction, homework, dance and music. The Center has close cooperation with the various Israeli scout movements.

One of the focuses of the Center's activity is its emphasis of the theme of peace by bringing together Jaffa's school children of all ages.

They also organize the annual "Song for Peace Festival", a creative Arab-Jewish project to spread songs and dances from different cultural backgrounds.

18.00 Terra Sancta Catholic Church, Jaffa.

Welcome Introduction by Rev. Abdu MASIR, Parish Priest, Director of the Terra Sancta School.

It is a mixed Jewish/Muslim/Christian School, established in 1730. Activities include clubs, scouts, activities with various national communities of Jaffa. They organize discussions on peace issues with Arab and Jewish students and invited political personalities.

Mr.Kisra KABAHA - talk on the problems of Arab students in Israel.

1) REGISTRATION: many Arab school leavers apply, but relatively few are accepted in the Israeli universities. There is no Arab representative on the acceptance commissions, they don't know the rules and standards of acceptance - this arouses suspicion. Of 600 medical students at Tel Aviv University, only 3 are Arabs.

2) STUDIES: Arab Israelis represent 5% of local university students - unrepresentative in terms of their population. They have difficulties getting grants as they cannot serve in the army and often grant-giving is linked to national military service.

3) GRADUATION: highly qualified Arabs often have to take jobs at lower positions. 42% of them become unemployed, 30% work but not in what they have specialized in, at least 38% become teachers in the absence of other choices. 12 out of a total 4,500 professors at local universities are Arabs.

The climate however changed last year, with a call by the government for the integration of Arabs in academic life.

Mr. Ali RAFFA, Lawyer - on the "absentees" problems.

"We speak peace, now we must do peace". Mr. Raffa talked on the problem of "absentees" eg: the inhabitants of 30 Galilee villages (forced to depart because of some massacres) who pay taxes, but cannot return to their land. Displaced from their villages, the "absentees" call for their return, but the Palestinians do not have this right according to the "Law of Return". Without this problem, there can be no peace, Mr. Raffa argued, and compensation can not be the solution.

Talk by Mr. Habd KABUB, Attorney, first native of Jaffa to become a Tel Aviv Municipal Councillor.

In 1907 Tel Aviv was created as a suburb of Jaffa, the old Arab town. Since 1951 the municipality of Jaffa has been combined with that of Tel Aviv. Thousands of Jaffa Arabs were forced to leave in 1948 (population formerly over 100.000 became 5.000). The Arab neighborhood of Jaffa lives in very bad conditions in terms of housing, services and education. The problems of drugs and unemployment are much higher than in other areas of Tel Aviv. Info on 1948 confiscations: 11% of land in Israel was "Whakf" i.e. Muslim trust land for community use. It was all confiscated in 1948, as the Mufti had left, when the habitation census was completed in May by the Israeli government.

We stayed for the night at the Sun Hotel, Bat Yam in Tel Aviv.

TECHNICAL FILE

ARAB YOUTH MOVEMENT

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Mr.Badran ZEDHAD, Director of Organization
Mr.Emal AYOUB, Guidance Division Director.

AIMS

Promotion of peace, social democracy, active youth participation
in the community.

ACTIVITIES

Leadership seminars, local groups, peace seminars, exchanges with
Jewish organizations.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member of IFM, International Falcon Movement.

OTHER

The movement is also connected to Young MAPAM.



TECHNICAL FILE YOUNG MAPAM - UNITED WORKERS PARTY OF ISRAEL

Contact Person

Mr. Arnon Dunetz, International Secretary.

Address

Young MAPAM
4, Itmar Ben Avi
Tel Aviv 61016
Tel 972 3 697 2111, 2169, 2112 - Fax 972 3 691 0504

History

Young MAPAM is the autonomous youth organization within the political party MAPAM, which is part of Meretz. Founded in 1948, MAPAM grew out of the kibbutz movement Hashomer Hatzair. It has always recognized the principle of a homeland for two peoples, Arab Palestinian and Jewish and has worked towards compromises between the two peoples. It was opposed to the Sinai campaign and has been opposed to the settlement policies.

Aims

The reaching of a lasting peace agreement with open borders and free movement of people, goods and ideas.

Activities

Discussion on peace issues and Arab-Jewish co-existence.
Meetings with other youth organizations. Campaigning,
demonstrations and pamphleting.

International affiliations

IUSY member.

Structure

Bi-annual Congress elects an Executive Committee, which elects a Secretariat.

Contact person

Mr. David Korin

Address

Givat Haviva, M.P. Menashe 37850
Tel. 06-309248
Fax 06-373335

Objectives

It is an institution working to advance Jewish-Arab dialogue, cultural and religious pluralism, democratic values and peace in the Middle East.

Activities

It serves a diverse population with both formal and informal educational programmes. Over 40.000 people from Israel and around the world participate each year in Givat Haviva's seminars, courses and workshops. The subject areas in which the Institute specializes range from Jewish-Arab relations in Middle East history and politics to Zionism, Immigration Absorption Programs (IAP), language and culture, the Holocaust and the Kibbutz and Israeli labour movements. There are also research and publication programmes, a modern Arts Center and Video Production Center.

Louisa Crispe - Xavier Coines



DAILY REPORT TUESDAY 14.03.'95

After a heavy two day programme with many interesting meetings and long trips in the bus through Israel and Palestine the participants greatly appreciated the possibility of relaxing a bit in Tel Aviv. Some used the opportunity to get to know something about the Jewish part of the society we were visiting by exploring Tel Aviv, others went back to Jaffa to see some more of the old city and to try out their abilities in bargaining and some just enjoyed the calm beach in front of the hotel we were staying at.

Around noon the bus headed towards Kufr Kassem, where we were to lay a wreath at the Massacre Memorial. Unfortunately we arrived too late to meet the mayor of the village - very unpolite and thoughtless from our side. Still we had the possibility to learn about the massacre itself.

On October 29, 1956 the Israeli troops killed 49 innocent people in the village of Kufr Kassem. This incident has never been officially investigated by the Israeli government despite the regular and repeated demands by the relatives of the victims.

On that day at 16.45 the commander of the Israeli troops came to the mayor of the village to announce that there was to be a curfew starting at 17.00 and that it was his task to tell the inhabitants about this command. At 17.00 the troops took position to wait for those people returning from their work from the nearby Jewish settlements and shot them on the very spot where the memorial is standing today. 49 people were killed on that date; amongst them 17 women and 4 children under the age of 8 years.

The soldiers who carried out the massacre were jailed for some weeks, but the State President pardoned them and their punishment was altered to a fine of 1 shilling. Only four days after the massacre the relatives of the victims and the injured were invited by the Israeli commander to a dinner, those who would not accept the invitation would have been punished.

The purpose of this massacre (of course according to the Palestinian point of view, since there is no official investigation carried out) was to chase the Palestinians out of this village which was very close to the green line on the side of the occupied territories. The timing has been seen as very clever since all the public attention was on the Sinai War.

For 48 years now the Israeli government has refused to start the procedure for an official investigation. The relatives and friends of the victims (also those who got injured in the massacre, of whom some are still alive) organize every year on the day of the massacre a procession to make the incident eternal - this day should never be forgotten. The memorial wall with the 49 names on it was set up only twenty years after the massacre, before that no one dared to do anything about this issue.

Nowadays Kufr Kassem is quite a wealthy Arab village compared with others we saw during the visit through Israel. This mainly because the inhabitants of the village were lucky enough to be on their land and in their houses during the "present, but absent" - action of the government. Therefore the people still own their fertile land and they also have possibilities to work in the near by farming companies.

Gyrd from Norway proposed to send a letter to the Israeli government to ask for the beginning of an investigation on the massacre and the delegation agreed on this: a telegram would be sent to the Israeli government by the end of the study visit.

Maju Baer - Maurizio Tomassini



DAILY REPORT WEDNESDAY 15.03.'95

This was a very busy and long day for the group. We spent the time visiting various groups and projects in the West Bank where we were made to feel very welcome. Some of the written programme descriptions did not match the reality of the visits - e.g. the woodcraft and environmental youth work turned out to be a sports activity dominated youth center. Nonetheless the group found the inputs very informative, and the visits worthwhile in providing a broader picture of youth and community work, and the political situation, in the West Bank area.

The evening programme was rearranged in order to welcome Mr. Alexandros TSOLAKIS and Ms.Katerina TSAVDARIDOU, from the Directorate General 22, of the European Commission. We delayed the evening meal to 21.00 and rescheduled the evaluation meeting to precede the dinner. Due to our late return the evaluation meeting was shorter than anticipated.

During the dinner Mr.Tsolakis addressed the group and emphasizing the meaning of our study visit, the first European Commission funded delegation to the Middle East region and the huge potential of European cooperation with this area. The meal was an informal gathering, also attended by our Israeli and Palestinian partners, who had mutually beneficial discussions with Mr. Tsolakis and Ms. Tsavdaridou until the early morning.

Technical report

Name: Tulkarem Municipality.

Address: Tulkarem Town Hall
Tulkarem, Westbank
Israel

Persons present, contacts:
Mayor Helmi HANON.

He was elected in 1976 and he is one of the few elected mayors in the Westbank. Due to the occupation no elections have been held since 1976.

Structures: Tulkarem is one of the biggest cities of the West Bank with 55.000 inhabitants. All are Arabs (60% are under the age of 30). In 1947-48 a refugee camp was established there and it exists still today.

Activities:

a) the municipality tries to improve the existing, but incomplete infrastructures:

- the sewage system, which currently serves only 60% of the population;
- three wells exist, but do not guarantee the water supply for the whole population on a permanent basis (the request for a fourth well has been rejected by the Israeli government);
- the electricity provided by Israel is not enough. Prior to 1967 the town was developing its own electricity supply but this was halted by the occupation.

b) different committees exist on education and culture- e.g. a women's association which takes care of health and day-care and ten sport clubs for young people, but they are poorly equipped.

International affiliations:

The Municipality frequently receives small foreign delegations of visitors.

General notes:

Israel, including the Westbank and the Palestinian National Authority - PNA territories (Gaza Strip and Jericho), comprises 27.000 square kilometers.

The current PNA territories consist of 350 square km. The total area of Westbank and Gaza Strip is 6 300 sq. km.

The population of Gaza is 1.200.000; Westbank 1.700.000; of Israel, 3.700.000 including 800.000 Arabs/Palestinians.

Israeli citizenship totals 5.500.000 persons of whom 1.800.000 live outside the State of Israel.

There are 120.000 Jewish settlers in the Westbank. Big settlements can consist of 18.000 to 20.000 people while the smallest may only have a few hundred inhabitants. Curently seventy per cent of the Westbank land is under Israeli control.

Interest in cooperation projects:

None mentioned beyond help with the above mentioned plans to rebuild and improve the infrastructures.

VISIT TO THE TULKAREM REFUGEE CAMP CULTURAL AND YOUTH CENTER:

ADDRESS:
as above.

Name of Speaker:
Mr.Aref OWFAEH - Manager of the Center.

STRUCTURES:

This is one of the best clubs in the Westbank, being one of 180 such clubs in the area.

There are 2.000 members, each of whom pays a nominal membership or registration fee.

The Center started in 1966 and was closed in 1967 by the Israelis. It reopened one year later. During the closure parts of the center were damaged and only one hall was left.

The activities are financed through the registration fees, entry charges to sports matches and donations from local people. This does not provide sufficient funds for their plans and they have had to recently reduce the range and number of activities being run.

It is hoped that the Palestinian Ministry of Youth under the PNA - when established in the Westbank - will fund the Center's folk dance group.

ACTIVITIES:

Sports such as football, basketball and swimming.
Folk dance group.

A Boy Scouts group has recently been formed.

Boys and girls participate separately. Some special summer courses are run for young women.

In cooperation with other groups the members take part in general

'clean up' and environmental improvement campaigns in and around the camp.

FUTURE PLANS:

To provide facilities and programmes for handicapped people.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS:

Sport teams have participated in international events in Sweden, France, and South Africa (soccer and swimming teams from all over the Westbank). They established these links through membership in the Arab Youth League.

REQUESTS:

Exchange of sport and language trainers/teachers.
Supply of materials e.g. musical instruments, dance costumes, scouts uniforms.

PALESTINIAN YOUTH UNION

(addressed the group at the Tulkarem Refugee Youth Center)

ADDRESS:

see G.U.P.S.

Speaker:

Mr. Abdel Karim ODEH - President of the Palestinian Youth Union in Tulkarem.

STRUCTURE:

Established 1993. It caters for male and female. They run a youth center with opening hours until 20.00.

AIMS:

Provide activities for young people, who would otherwise spend their time on the streets where they are at risk.
To develop the individual's potentials and talents.

ACTIVITIES:

Sports, body building and soccer.

Folk dance.

Children's library (700 books).

Scout groups for boys and girls (separately).

Educational youth seminars and information sessions.

Summer camps, in cooperation with UNICEF, catering for 150 to 200 children per year.

Special interest: work with women's groups to encourage female participation in Palestinian society.

A special event was held on March 8th - international women's day - which attracted more than 500 participants. One the main demands was for increased female representation and participation in the Palestinian decision making processes.

FUTURE AIMS:

To establish play areas for children in or near the camp.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS:

Not specifically mentioned, but possibly through G.U.P.S.



Afternoon programme

Visit to the Anbata Cultural and Sports Youth Center

The group was addressed by

Dr. Muner ABDU, Director of the Center

Mr. Ihsau SABUBEH, Secretary of the Center.

TOWN:

The population of Anbata is currently 5.000 all of them Arabs. More than 25.000 have emigrated since 1967. There is a high educational level in the town, with three to four members of each family completing third level education.

AIMS AND ACTIVITIES:

This Center was started eighteen months ago with buildings finished only two months ago. The Committee running it had been trying since 1971 to obtain permission from the Israeli authorities to build, without success. Plans exist for the extension of the one store building and the addition of a first floor. The construction was funded completely by donations from local people of the town or former residents now working in Jordan.

The aim is to provide activities for young people from Anbata. The main concern is that they have too much free time - schools hours are from 07.30 to 12.00 daily.

There are currently 400-500 members - only males.

The programme is heavily sports oriented. Facilities include a large indoor hall with a stage (for dance or performances); a weight training room and the use of two outdoor sports pitches belonging to the next door secondary school.

One major sports tournament is to be held each year.

Children can participate, free of charge, in any activities from the age of four or five years. At eighteen years of age they become paying members and are eligible for election to the Committee.

STRUCTURES:

The Center is run by a nine person Committee which coordinated the fund raising and the construction of the present facility. A new committee is to be elected by the membership in the near future.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS:

The Center has no international contacts as yet but, the Committee members are very eager and willing to host visiting sports teams.

VISIT TO AL-NAJAH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, NABLUS

HOSTS: Mr.Mosdak EL MASRY, Administrative Director
Mr.Abdel Karim KHRDER, President of the Student Council
Mr.Hisham DIREKAT, International Secretary.

HISTORY:

This is the largest Palestinian University in the Westbank. It started in 1918 as a girls schools. Previously girls who wished to continue their education had to travel to Jordan or Syria. During the 1930s the school began to offer a two year teacher training course.

In 1963 a new building was erected offering additional high schools facilities and introducing a community college.

In 1977 it developed into a university with two faculties: art and science. More than thirty students have been killed as a result of the unrest in the occupied territories since 1977.

STRUCTURES:

Today An-Najah University has nine faculties :

Arts	Science	Engineering
Agriculture	Fine Arts	Pharmacy
Economics & Administrative Sciences		
Education and Psychology		
Islamic Law (Shari'a)		

It's structured through:

Board of Trustees - Council of Deans -Administration Staff - Academic Faculties - Students' Council.

ACTIVITIES:

Fourty undergraduate courses are on offer, leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree.

Four faculties offer in master studies: arts, engineering, education and psychology, islamic Law.

In 1995-1996 a Ph.D. course in Chemistry will be available.

There are 6.000 students with male and female participation, approximately fifty per cent each.

ADDRESS by Mr KHRDER.

Abdel Karim Khrder welcomed the opportunity to discuss Palestinian youth and students issues with the delegation. The An-Najah Students' Council is run on democratic lines with eleven student representatives elected annually. More than 90 % of the students voted in the last Council elections. The student representatives are involved at all levels of decision making within the hierarchy of the university.

All candidates in the Students' Council elections are affiliated to Palestinian political parties. The current split of representation is 41% Hamas; 49% Fatah and 10% to others. They work as a coalition on students issues and it is student issues that are the main focus of their work.

However it is impossible to separate student politics from the larger political situation of Palestine.

In response to a question from the floor, Hisham Direkat explained that the Hamas support, at 41%, is indeed higher than the average Palestinian support for this party which stands at around 30%. However, this is perhaps a reflection of the political situation at the time of the elections when it appeared that the peace process was faltering and some students voted for Hamas as a way of protest.

With regard to the peace process, requests for permission by An-Najah to arrange meetings between the Palestinian universities have been rejected by the Israeli authorities, although some individual Arab students have met with Israeli students.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND CONTACTS:

Student placements to Oslo University plus in Germany and France every year. The Norwegian contact is the best established and currently five students per year are sent. Previously one student a year has been sent to Britain.

Academic staff take part in two way exchanges with Germany, France, England, Norway and the U.S.A.

The main difficulties in these exchanges are the financial ones. The university would very much like to extend this programme and to receive foreign students in Nablus.

The AL-Najah Students' Council has been unable to accept invitations from foreign student bodies to attend conferences, due to travel restrictions resulting from the occupation. However good correspondence is maintained with other student representative bodies, especially in Great Britain.

ADDRESS: Agricultural Cooperative Union
Nablus - West Bank
Palestine

PEOPLE PRESENT:

Mr. Basam AL WALLWELL
Head of Agricultural Cooperatives in the West Bank.

CONTACTS:

The Agricultural Cooperative Union has existed since 1987 and now includes eight major agricultural member cooperatives. These are at:

Nablus	Jenin	Salfeet	Jericho
Tulkarem	Qalqiliya	Hebron	Ramallah

ACTIVITIES:

Members are active in the following areas:

1. marketing;
2. olive pressing;
3. encouraging farmers to farm land;
4. market gardening in Jordan;
5. representing Palestinian agriculture internationally.

AIMS:

To follow and facilitate the necessary change in peoples' attitude as the peace process progresses.

To encourage a greater understanding by the local people of the functioning and benefits of a cooperative approach to small business.

To formulate educational and training programmes to:

- A. teach cooperative principles.
- B. consider cooperatives as social and economic units.
- C. encourage female participation.
- D. train staff in evaluation and planning.
- E. help build the new Palestine.

NOTES:

There are more than 1.000 union members in Nablus.

In order to broaden their perspective, the Union would like to have opportunities to study models in other countries. They would be interested in examining the Israeli Kibbutz experience, but until now this has been impracticable due to the political situation: hopefully this will soon change.

A significant number of their members are young people and they consider this an important fact.

As part of the "new deal" between Israel and Palestine there will hopefully be a resolution of technical difficulties affecting the operation of cooperatives in Palestine, such as the water supplies, products transportation difficulties and travel permission restrictions on Palestinians.

Carmel Meehan - Demetra Dandolo - Anja Wolff

MID - WEEK EVALUATION 15.03.'95

The group met together before the evening meal for a brief evaluation.

Jussi Karkela chaired the meeting.

We tried to look at three areas: expectations, programme and technicalities. We touched on some of these, but due to time limitations did not have a full discussion on all of them.

The main points which were brought up were:

1. there was a mixed opinion on the political project balance within the trip, possibly related to confusion between the purpose of a fact finding mission as opposed to a study visit;
2. the group acknowledged that the Middle East is a new region for youth cooperation and therefore a visit to the area would not follow the same pattern as standard study visits within Europe;
3. it was felt that the programme was very full, leading to time pressures and sometimes also the group's inability to find 'space' to discuss together the impressions and questions generated by the visits and meetings;
4. the group generally felt that occasionally there was confusion in oth the hosts and ourselves as to the purposes of specific visits. Briefing previous to visits could be useful, for the coming days, both the group and the hosts; either in the hotel or during the bus journey;
5. inputs on the political and historical situation in the region to the group at the start of the visit would have been very useful. Several participants had difficulties finding explanatory material in their own countries before departure;
6. it was felt that participants were restricting themselves in speaking up, despite the fact that they are all experienced activists within their own organizations.

The following was unanismsunslly agreed upon:

- A. participants should have a more active role;
- B. the group should split into smaller interest groups and use travel time to discuss the visits.

DAILY REPORT FRIDAY 17.03'95

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Departure to Yad Vashim (Holocaust Memorial).
Visit of the Memorial. Lay wreath at the Memorial.

13.00 Meeting with the Deputy Director General of the
Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

18.00 Meeting at the Kibbutz: History and current
situation of the kibbutz movement in Israel.

09.00 Departure to Yad Vashim (Holocaust Memorial).
Visit of the Memorial. Lay wreath at the Memorial.

Two hours tour visiting the Holocaust Memorial of Yad Vashim. In the first place we visited the main building which shows on different panels with pictures, graphics and models the history of the Jews in the world from 1933 to the current situation and the creation and development of the state of Israel. Big emphasis is put on the history of Jews in Germany and Poland and a detailed explanation of their migrations to different countries in the world is offered.

We further visited the Memorial for the 500.000 Jewish children murdered by the Nazis.

We finally participated in a brief ceremony during which two representatives of our group laid flowers over the Memorial of the Holocaust where the names of the different concentration camps in Europe are drawn.

This was also the occasion to hold a press conference on our study visit. The Israeli media gave a wide coverage of this first Euro-Middle East initiative.

13:00 Meeting with Mr. Uri Bar-Ner
Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs'
Deputy Director General

1. Mr. Bar-Ner acknowledged the importance of the work done by the E.C. to develop youth programmes in Europe and with Mediterranean countries. he specifically mentioned the Youth-for-Europe programme and said that he is eager to know the details of the third phase, covering the next five years;
2. briefly explained what the Foreign Ministry's Emergency Centre, where the meeting was taking place, is, showing us the various world maps and the direct worldwide communication network linked with the Centre;
3. appreciated the fact that the group had visited, previous to the meeting with him, the Yad Vashim, as this is "of course a critical question for all of us in Israel";
4. stressed the need to enhance the peace process through cultural, educational and youth exchanges, realizing, however, how difficult this is;
5. confirmed the Foreign Minister's view on the "new Middle East": the importance of youth education, but above all of a "computerization of the whole Middle East - which is the real challenge for the future". We should bear in mind that 60% of the population in the Middle East is under 18 years, i.e. the area is "like a big kindergarten";
6. about dealing with Israel's neighbours: he has found a great desire for contacts, but also great difficulties, especially since relations must be built "from people to people". This implies the necessity to "change stereotypes and opinions we've had for 45 years, to meet each other, to mix, to exchange youth, to exchange teachers, to organize joint cultural events";
7. for the last 15 years there has been a peace treaty with Egypt, but no cultural relations. Being engaged in a comprehensive peace also entails changes in the intellectual approaches. Unions, writers, engineers and lawyers in Egypt will have to change their attitudes, i.e. not stopping those who want to cooperate with Israel: up to now they are still boycotted by the rest of the Arab world, although one should note that there are progresses;

8. Israel, with its Western culture, is perceived as "different", perceived as wanting to impose this Western culture. Efforts are necessary to change this perception, to show that it is not justified;
9. there are definitely misperceptions on both sides and only cultural cooperation and youth exchanges will change them. Exchanging hundreds of businessmen won't change them;
10. new developments in the relations with Egypt are:
 - since September 14, 1993 -i.e. after the signature of the principle declaration between Israel and the P.L.O.- Egypt is showing increased willingness to cooperate. In January 1994 a cultural exchange agreement has been signed by the two governments and scientists, academicians and professors of the two countries agreed to meet every six months to review what has been accomplished. "This is to be considered as an important step";
 - the Egyptian top writer Abu Salem took part in Israel's main book fair. Mr. Bar-Ner stressed the importance of what he considers the two most important media to change people's attitudes: TV/radio and books. He said he's therefore proud that it is now possible to get the first Egyptian books in Israel and vice-versa. The same trend can be seen, he mentioned, with books from Morocco and Jordan; He also emphasized the role of Abu Salem, who had to face boycott and problems in his private life because of his willingness to cooperate with Israel and still had the courage of doing it, opening a new important dialogue between former enemies;
 - the first Egyptian film was recently shown at the Haifa Film Festival;
11. there is progress, but it is an uphill battle;

12. Europe can help, also because it is sometimes easier to meet and/or cooperate "outside", e.g. in Europe than at home. Mr. Bar-Ner mentioned some examples:
- the 1995 Lille Festival, in France, was dedicated to the peace process in the Middle East. Not only this implied the participation of 200 Israeli and 50 Palestinian artists, but more importantly it allowed a joint Jewish-Arab performance of "Romeo and Juliet". This brought a message of peace which 1 000 ambassadors and 10 000 speakers would have never achieved;
 - a joint exhibition of Palestinian and Israeli painters was organized in the prestigious Meridian Gallery, in New York;
 - a concert with Israeli and Palestinian musicians celebrated the first anniversary of the Oslo declaration of principles, on September 14, 1994;
13. it is important and necessary to promote cultural and youth activities in order to develop and enhance the peace process - this will mean real reconciliation. Mr. Bar-Ner's current personal engagement is dedicated to developing cooperation in the field of culture, education and academic youth affairs between Israel and Jordan. His main concern is technological education and a protocol has been signed to exchange information and experts in this field. His second major concern is the computerization of the school systems: in Israel every 11th child has a computer station at school - the same should be reached in Jordan;
14. regarding relations and cooperation with Palestinians, he advocated the gradual development of an infrastructure for cultural relations. He said that this is something obviously very difficult, but not impossible as shown, for example, by the joint performance of "Romeo and Juliet", for which rehearsal started during the intifada, in Jerusalem and Ramallah. "Once the football team of Jordan will play in Jerusalem and the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra will perform in Amman, we shall know that peace is achieved - much more than with any treaty". He made in this regard a proposal: to organize a visit to Europe for a joint Israeli-Palestinian group of young people and/or to have joint seminars and conferences. This in order to realize a one-to-one understanding and one-to-one contacts to break stereotypes;

15. "developing the desire to understand each other is a major challenge worldwide. One must learn to understand and then to tolerate, to accept the other's culture, educational system and traditions. But there can be no tolerance without understanding and no acceptance without tolerance. One must learn to tolerate, even if s/he disagrees with the other". He made examples to illustrate this process: textbooks for pupils in Eastern Europe still hold a great deal of biased texts against the Jews. Israel is now working with the authorities in Poland, the Czech and Slovakian Republics, Germany, Russia and Lithuania to modify the books, to train teachers "and...it works !". Disagreements in some cases persist, but cooperation is fruitful.
- "If peace and cooperation have been achieved in Europe, where conflicts prevailed for hundreds of years, it should be possible here too where the conflict has been for the past one hundred years. Europe has maintained various languages and cultures and still people came together and live in peace and this should serve as a hopeful example for us";
16. once that every young Israeli learns Arabic and each young Arab in Israel learns Hebrew, things will become easier. But Israeli have neglected Arabic for too long, it was just optional for students, "competing" with English and French. Mr. Bar-Ner would like Arabic to be made compulsory in schools.

NOTE: during his whole speech, Mr. Bar-Ner stressed the vital importance of a "people-to-people, culture-to-culture, school-to-school" relation.

FOLLOWING QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

- Q. What practical steps can you take to develop youth exchanges ?
- A. In all our cultural agreements with Europe there is a specific part on youth exchanges - through our Youth Council. This is important because when mentioned in an official agreement, exchanges are also financially supported (usually the sending country supports the travel and the hosting country provides accomodation). The aim and hope now is to develop exchanges among schools, to organize joint festivals, sport activities and visits with Jordan and Egypt, as it was already done not long ago with China and India. Israel has a specific budget line for youth exchanges. With regard to programmes with Arab countries, Mr. Bar-Ner would "love to see and learn from the other side, because it is very important not to be patronizing".
- Q. With reference to the fears present in both Israeli and Arab communities, what is the reaction of parents when their children take part in joint Arab-Israeli events ?
- A. One must first of all not forget that 5 millions Israeli are surrounded by 200 millions Arabs. The country still tries to overcome the state of war and hate (from both sides) which naturally leads to fears - especially as even "the best army cannot prevent terroristic acts". Spreading terrorism as some countries have been doing spreads fears. Those fears multiply when "knowing that some leaders want to stop terrorism, but cannot control it and others have the power to control it, but don't want to, or even call for more terrorism. One must face true reality, if one wants to solve problems. True reality means also the possibility for one individual to kill hundreds in a suicide attack and the non-ability by the Palestinian authorities to control or prevent this. True reality

means that those Arab countries which could intervene do not and that, on the contrary, there are countries like Iran supporting terrorism. In addition mentality and psychology of both sides must be kept in mind: in Israel the holocaust is still an extremely important component of the collective memory. Israelis are full of fears, we may even be obsessed, but this is understandable because the holocaust was the attempt to eradicate us totally as a people". Oslo has generated great hopes and still one has to count on continuing tensions: influential Arab personalities still claim that peace with Israel is not wanted and that no Jew should remain in Palestine.

- Q. Which solutions do you see, from an Israeli point of view, to these problems ?
- A. The priority is the better knowledge of "the other" and this can happen through the following actions:
- learning Arabic - there is at the moment in Israel a huge advertising for adults' courses in Arabic;
 - developing exchanges with Arab schools;
 - developing joint educational institutions;
 - teaching more in our curricula about life in Arab countries.

There is still a long way to go. Until now everybody was obsessed with security and for a very long time one could not find anybody to talk to. This has resulted in many practical problems which are still to be faced, just to mention one the lack of flats or dormitories for Arab students. And from the psychological point of view people on both sides are not yet in favour of rapid peace developments.

- Q. How are Israeli youth organizations related to the government and who should be contacted to develop cooperation ?
- A. In every municipality there are youth centers and clubs. They decide independently on whether and how to organize youth exchanges. One should add that each year we have thousands of Europeans coming to Israel through direct links with these centers and clubs. As for the government dimension: one department, with its own staff and budget, within the Ministry of Education is in charge of youth and sport affairs. Within the

Foreign Affairs Ministry there is also an office in charge of the bilateral agreements referred to above. The Ministry of Education mainly supports school exchanges, while its youth and sport department helps developing cooperation among youth movements. There is further the Youth Council, which is a separate independent public entity, supported by the Ministry of Education. The Council acts as contact organization for municipalities and has the task of promoting and developing youth exchanges. It has an autonomous substantial budget and its youth delegates are listened to by the various ministerial offices in charge of youth policies. Contacts with the Youth Council may facilitate all further cooperation and the Council can also provide detailed lists of potential partners in Israel.

- Q. Considering on one side the importance of military service for young Israeli and on the other the long-lasting impact of work-camps and other international voluntary service projects on participants' behaviors, why not initiate compulsory summer camps for joint Israeli/Palestinian groups ?
- A. Mr. Bar-Ner considers this a very good idea, although he would not agree in making it compulsory, but rather "strongly recommended".

At the end of the meeting the representative of the European Commission's Youth Unit confirmed that within Youth-for-Europe III specific possibilities to support Euro-Middle East exchanges have been foreseen, under action D, covering programmes with non-EU member countries.

Christiane Andler

18.00 Meeting at the Kibbutz in Tel - Aviv:
history and current situation of the Kibbutz
movement in Israel.

The Kibbutz idea started with the immigration wave in 1882 of the Jews from the Eastern European countries to Israel. They were originally mainly from Russia and they established themselves around Tel-Aviv and Galilee. Later immigrations of secular Jews originated the first conflicts so that the newcomers established themselves in the North East of Israel.

From the beginning the Kibbutz experience included some industries, originally glass factories. The kibbutz were getting the land from the Jewish National Funds, as a loan for 99 years with open possibilities to renewal.

On the educational process one can say that people in the Kibbutz were learning from real life and after that they developed what is considered the philosophy of the Kibbutz. In general terms, the Kibbutz system developed in the people a very good sense of community since childhood. Children lived in a house different from the one of the parents, with a deep social life and with the motivation of not growing influenced by the stereotypes of the parents.

At the beginning of the century the main income of the Kibbutz was the agriculture. In fact the Kibbutz that we were visiting started in 1927 and only in 1943 they opened a hotel as a weekend alternative for the citizens of Tel-Aviv. They also developed different industries: in 1970 a plastic factory and in 1990 a pharmaceutical one.

In 1979 they visited Orlando, Florida and they had the idea of developing a water park resort center. Since then the income of the kibbutz comes from the Water Park (45%), from the two industries (50%) and from the agriculture (5%).

The Kibbutz pays for 80% of all personal expenses and the rest 20% is paid by the members. Allowances are distributed monthly in equal parts to all members. 95% of the expenses of the children are paid by the Kibbutz in order to maintain the independence from the parents the remaining 5% is paid by the individual families.

The Kibbutz movement has been going through a deep crisis in the recent past and only the ones with industrial alternatives were able to survive. The future is uncertain because of the changes in society: it is not clear the sense of community that wheter present has been central in Kibutz until now will survive with the actual increased mobility of members of the Kibbutz. The economic dimension and the fact that everything today can be sold

PRESS RELEASE

YOUTH COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN UNION AND MIDDLE EAST: FIRST JOINT STUDY VISIT IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

MARCH 10 to 21, 1995

From March 10 to 21 a delegation of 30 youth workers from European Union and Middle East countries will take part in a first joint study visit to develop youth co-operation in the two regions.

The objectives of the study visit, find his roots in the frame of the peace - process going on in the Middle East . With this study visit we want to make the participants acquainted with youth organizations, initiatives and policies in Israel and Palestine and to establish contacts with Israeli and Palestinian youth structures in view of future common projects. A reciprocity visit to Europe is foreseen for the second half of this year.

The 21 organizations from Jordanian, Israel, Palestine and Europe, represent: national youth councils, student unions, political parties' youth wings, environmental, work camps, and exchange programmes.

The study visit has been organized by the International Christian Youth Exchange in Europe, an interfaith European non - governmental youth exchange organization in co-operation with the General Union of Palestine Students and the Young Leadership of the Labour Party. The study visit is supported by the Commission of the European Union, within the frame of the European Union's exchanges programme with Mediterranean countries.

More detailed information can be obtained by contacting:

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PRESS CONFERENCE:

**Strand Hotel
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March 21, 1995 at 12:00 a.m.

**Association of the Icy in Europe
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DAILY REPORT SATURDAY 18.03.'95

This day we were under the leadership of our guide. At 9.30 in the morning we left for Massadah, one of the most interesting archaeological sites in Israel. We went by cablecar to the top of the rock where the old fortress is located. It was constructed to be a refuge for Herod the Great in case of rebellion. Technically it was a very advanced fortress, with its big cisterns, heating system for the Roman bath and beautiful mosaics. In 66 AD a Jewish revolt occurred here, even though it was considered as impossible. But after some time the Romans put together enough troops and started the siege to conquer the fortress. There were 1.000 Jewish men, women and children to defend the fortress against the 15.000 Roman soldiers. But when the Romans entered they found all the people dead: they had all committed suicide so they wouldn't end up as Roman slaves.

After Massadah we went to the Dead Sea for a swim. It was very funny that we could just lay down on the water and float around. After our swim we had lunch and drove to Jericho to see its historical sites. Jericho is about 10.000 years old, and we saw there the remains of Hisham's palace dating from the 8th century, with impressive floor mosaics. We also saw the vestiges of old Jericho, dating from 8.000 BC.

We then travelled back to Jerusalem and gave a big applause to our guide since it was the last time with him and had dinner after an interesting and relaxing day.

Gyrd Steen - Jens Christensen

DAILY REPORT SUNDAY 19. 03. '95

Leaving Jerusalem at 09.00 for the Gaza Strip, where we were going to stay for 2 days, we arrived after about two hours at the Gaza "border". The Palestinian control was quite short. We left our bus at this check point. Another, older, bus with Gaza number plate, took us inside the Gaza Strip. Three persons from the Fatah Youth Movement were waiting to welcome us at the border.

1st visit: Youth Center of Beit Lahia

The center is newly created (3 weeks earlier). We were received by Mr. Rizeq ELBABA, the coordinator, who explained the aims of the center: it tends to cover activities in sport, culture and social fields. programmes are planned concerning health care, environment protection and youth work.

Mr. Elbaba emphasized women participation in mixed activities, something unusual for Palestinians.

2nd visit: Refugee camp in Jabalia

Our group splitted in small teams of 4 or 5 persons to visit different families. Jabalia was originally a refugee camp created by the time of the 1948 war. Now - a - day, it's a town of 90.000 habitants. Families welcomed us very friendly. We discussed with them about daily life as well as the general situation in the Gaza Strip.

The economic situation seemed very difficult for Palestinian families because of the high rate of unemployment, even for skilled people (estimation: 500 doctors are unemployed in the Gaza Strip which has 1.200.000 inh.). The reasons are that on one hand the intifada didn't allow economic development, and on the other Palestinians could not, and still cannot, go to neighboring countries easily to look for jobs.

3rd visit: Khan Yunis Social and Cultural Center

Khan Yunis is the second big town in the Gaza Strip, 20 km from Gaza city, and has 150.000 inh. The Center was created 1 year ago, supported by several foreigners NGOs from Canada and Europe. The main support is provided by a French organization called "Enfants et réfugiés du monde". But the idea of creating the Center came from the Administration Council of the PNA.

The full time staff is composed by 4 workers, the Center includes a library for young and old people. It organizes exhibitions, training courses in the artistic field and seminars on youth work issues.

4th visit: **Khan Yunis Youth and Sport Center**

The President welcomed us in the middle of a crowd of male teenagers. The Center has been created in 1960. One of the rooms along the sport field is supposed to be a library of Khan Yunis. There are not many books and all of them are very damaged. Asking about the participation of female teenagers in sport activities, we were told that in order to have also girls participating the Center would need indoor facilities.

The Center is directed by a Board of 9 members, elected for 2 years.

In the evening we visited the central office of the Fatah Youth movement in Gaza (see technical report).

They gave us a briefing about the transformation into a normal political youth organization. Earlier their work was concentrated in struggling against the Israeli occupation. Right now they are working on a women programme and cooperate in the putting into practice programmes of the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

They also plan leadership - training programmes.

Dinner we had at one of the first opened restaurants in Gaza after the self - rule agreement: the Abu Hassira fish restaurant.

Dominique Nguyen - Katharine Raadin



TECHNICAL REPORT - FATAH YOUTH MOVEMENT

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FOUNDING

The Fatah Youth Movement is the biggest fraction of the PLO, founded by Yasser Arafat in 1959. Fatah has until now been based on a democratic and Palestinian nationalistic ideology, working for the liberation of the Palestinian state.

The first Fatah Youth movement (FYM) club was established in the Westbank in 1983.

WORK

Since the beginning the FYM worked with both social and political activities, based around the universities. By the beginning of the intifada. in 1987, half of the 10.000 members was in jail on the change of working against the occupation.

Their main commitment today is working for the peace process, and their members are very active in all practical work for reconstructing the Palestinian society.

STRUCTURE

Today the FYM in Gaza has around 12.000 members, 9.000 of them from the universities. They are in control of the student councils in most of the Palestinian universities.

They are organized with an Executive Committee of 13 members, and they have 7 districts with own offices. They also have local leaders at colleges and the universities. Together with the Fatah Youth Movement of the Westbank they are trying to build a national structure of the FYM, but the closure of the borders around Gaza and the Westbank makes this difficult.

DAILY REPORT MONDAY 20.03.'95

Palestine Avenir Foundation

The Foundation has recently been established in Gaza after its founding members carried out an extensive research to monitor the basic needs of people living in Gaza. The results of the research shows that in this very small and crowded area of Palestine there is a lack of services, especially for women and children, no proper hospitals and laboratories, no day - care centers, no welfare net.

The Palestine Avenir Foundation has been operating for some time in Gaza and has just moved to a new office. our group was received by the director Ms. Yolla HADDADINE as well as by two co - workers, Mr. Yasser and Mr. Ibrahim, former human rights activists now working with the Foundation.

One of the Foundation's first activities was to distribute clothes to families in Gaza. In cooperation with the Gaza Center for the protection of the Environment they're arranging a project for cleaning up the area and preserving nature from great quantity of waste.

The Foundation is planning to establish a women's health center which will provide the following services:

- maternity and birth center where information, training and advice will be given to pregnant women;
- family planing activities, a new concept in Palestine where mostly women, but young couples as well, will benefit from information and counseling, which is up to now absent;
- a unit for early detection of women cancer, where further education on hygiene will also de organized and prevention taught;
- a center for children where activities like theater and music will be set up as well as mobile libraries, this in cooperation with an existing organization which has been already active for 5 years in publishing books in cooperation with Arab writers, including books for blind children.

Part of these programmes are implemented with the support of the French Foundation " Equilibre".

Down's Syndrome Right to Live Society

Founded in 1933 by a group of motivated Palestinian women, the Right to Live Society is a non - governmental organization located in a small rented house in Gaza. The first of its kind in this area. Mostly supported by donations from local and international donors, the Society aims to train and support a small number of children who suffer from Down's syndrome in being more independent in their daily life and thus be accepted and respected as members of their community and not mistreated and humiliated.

Most of the work is carried out by volunteers: six teachers, one social worker, one physiotherapist and one music teacher, as well as the Director, Ms. Adala ABU MEDEEN, work with small groups of children on a daily basis divided in four groups according to their age. Experience has proved that starting the training earlier brings better results and children progress quickly. Training mothers who come together with their children, is also a part of the activities of the Society, as well as cooking meals for fundraising.

The Society faces many problems, like the lack of funds and equipment, restricted space, lack of transportation for the children living far away. They mainly depend on donations for running costs. There is also a very big waiting list of more than 300 children can be accommodated in the present house.

The Society hopes to develop further and to establish workshops for older children as well; The possibility to send volunteers, preferably trained young people at any time of the year for medium and long term voluntary service was discussed.

It was quite obvious during this visit that the people of the Society are very committed and have offered a lot of love and care to the children they train.



The Palestinian Trade Union's Youth Work

We were received by Mr. Rasem AL BAYARY, the Secretary General.

The Palestinian Trade Union started its youth activities when the Palestinian National Authority was established. The International Community Trade Union is open to youth movements and relations with various Trade Unions youth movements have been established all over the world. The Union now wishes to intensify its relations with European Trade Unions' youth wings.

Last July a Cultural Center, funded by the Norwegian Trade Union, opened its doors; the L.O. (Norway) has also given support for constructing new housing for the workers.

The Left Youth of Sweden has built a kindergarten for children of workers here in Palestine. It's not yet finished but it already owns a big plot of 1.700 sq. meters. The ABF (Swedish Labour Movement and Education Union) is also supporting basic education by providing assistance and materials.

The unemployment rate in Gaza is 62 % and people are at the moment not allowed to travel to Israel to work. In the past about 55.000 workers were employed in Israel and they could even increase up to 120.00. before the present closing of the borders to Palestinians working in Israel, only 18.000 were allowed to work in Israel. This because of violent episodes. Mr. Rasem believes that the majority of the Israeli people want peace.

He pleaded for the possibility to build "bridges of interest" between Europe and Palestine and for the promotion of the youth movement within the Trade Unions and universities.

The Trade Union has been the first to support the peace process at the time of the Madrid talks and does not accept Palestinian or any other domination or restriction of its functions; Their most important task is to provide employment for their workers, this is, they feel, the best way towards peace.

Activities organized by the Trade Union for young people:

- cleaning campaign in Gaza involving a considerable number of young people for collecting waste;
- 6 - 7 workshops for women where sewing was taught;
- training for youth work with, among others, courses in first aid for sport accidents;
- sport activities organized for young people;
- distribution of food and clothes in a campaign supported by donations.

The Trade Union needs to rehabilitate young people in opposition with previous jail detention. In spite of support offered by foreign Trade Unions to overcome unemployment, more would be needed.

Eleni Gazi

Meeting with President Yasser Arafat

Jussi introduced the group and expressed our appreciation and gratitude for this opportunity to meet. Ms. Katerina Tsavdaridou presented the opportunities offered through Youth-for-Europe III to develop youth cooperation between EU countries and the Middle East.

A questions/answers session took then place:

Q. What does President Arafat consider most important in youth cooperation between Europe and Palestine ?

A. Youth is future. The target of the peace process is peace for the new generations. We need courageous people because peace will be the peace of the braves. The role of youth is important: youth can keep the balance in a difficult situation. It is a challenge and we are ready to face it.

Q. Which are the main obstacles on the way towards peace ?

A. There has been no accurate and honest implementation of what has been agreed upon. We do not want to look at those who wish the collapse of the peace process. We do not want to give them a chance. The agreements were signed last July and we are now in March. This delay in the implementation is negative for the peace process, it gives fanatics the opportunity to continue their destructive work and gives credit to the idea that peace is not going to work. If generals have the last say in Israeli decision-making, they will work towards a "lebanization" of the situation, that is they will try to create a very confused climate, like in Lebanon a few years ago, so that they may keep their power positions.

The Israeli opposition accuses Rabin of representing Palestinian interests and yet Rabin faces only one opposition, whereas I face four: the Palestinian, the Islamic, the Arab and the Christian oppositions. But I will carry on.

Q. Will Hamas participate in the peace process ?

A. Let them come and participate. We are open to dialogue and to the masses. When I started I was alone.

Q. When the peace process started you were accused of dividing the Palestinian front and of causing fighting among Palestinians. How can you absorb the oppositions you referred to before ?

A. Through elections. We have full confidence in our people. For every 1 000 Palestinian university students, there are 18 post-graduates - while for every 1 000 Israeli university students there are 14 post-graduates. A major part of our problems is caused by the fact that most of the promises made by donors have not yet been fulfilled and this has not allowed the increase of the economic standards of our people. Nevertheless our moral is high because we know that respect and trust will enable us to overcome. The Chinese saying "all winds cannot move a mountain" applies also to our situation.

One of the Israeli participants expressed then his joy in being able to attend this meeting and President Arafat commented "we started as cousins, but now we are friends".

We were then introduced personally one by one to the President and pictures were taken as memory of this for us extraordinary event.

Eleni Gazi



FINAL EVALUATION

During the evaluation session and in the post-study visit feedback received, participants unanimously expressed enthusiasm for the visit: the programme was rated as extremely stimulating, the contacts made as very productive and the technical/organizational side (accommodation, food, transportation) as very good.

Within this general positive evaluation the following comments were made by at least one person within the group of participants:

1. some days were very full with meetings and visits, others comparatively less: a better balance would have been ideal;
2. it would have been good to have two buses at the group's disposal, instead of one, so as to allow the choice between different project visits;
3. sometimes the intervals between meals were too long and sometimes very short. The idea of carrying some apples and water was a very good one;
4. regular daily sum-ups were missed;
5. the group composition was very well balanced and the group dynamics very positive;
6. it could have been better to share the leadership team tasks among all participants, rather than leaving them all up to the team only;
7. more working groups on the various issues approached during the visit would have allowed more collective elaboration right on the spot;

8. a lack of coordination with the Labour Party Youth was noted. A solution might have been to have, together with the Palestinian project coordinator also, also an Israeli one;
9. the duration of the study visit should have been shorter, since staying away from home/work for 12 days is problematic. On the other hand other participants felt that in order to "digest" the contents of this kind of visits less days would not have been positive;
10. for some of the meetings/visits too short time was available for interactions with our hosts;
11. Euro-Israeli-Palestinian joint-projects should be expanded;
12. more information on the programme contents would have been useful upon arrival, at the beginning of the visit and possibly also a briefing on the projects/hosts to be met right before every visit.

Jan Bal and Jussi Karkela

ASSESSMENT

The overall assessment of the study visit is definitely a very positive one.

This evaluation has been shared by participants, organizing structure and partners in the Middle East.

The objectives of the visit were:

1. to gather information on the situation of organized youth in Israel and Palestine;
2. to understand priorities in youth work in Israel and Palestine;
3. to establish contacts with Israeli and Palestinian youth organizations in order to develop trilateral cooperation with European counterparts;
4. to establish contacts, for future cooperation, with Egyptian, Jordan and Lebanese youth organizations.

We feel that the first three objectives have been reached.

As to the fourth one, contacts could be established only with Jordanian umbrella organizations (Youth League) because of visa difficulties which have made it impossible for the invited Egyptian and Lebanese participants to attend.

We must underline that similar obstacles were faced also for the Palestinian participants for their stay in Israel: their presence was tolerated. One incident is, however, to be reported: on the evening of March 20, at the Gaza border control one of the Palestinian participants was threatened with arrest by the Israeli border police because of his irregular visa position in re-entering Israel and only the prompt phone intervention of a Knesset member could clear things out.

One fifth objective should have been added when submitting the application for financial support to the European Commission: to provide an opportunity for a joint Israeli-Palestinian youth initiative. After the completion of the project we realize how not at all for granted such cooperation should be taken, in spite of the dramatic changes taking place in Middle East and specifically through the peace process. While on both sides, particularly in projects at the grass-roots level, we noticed a very lively and strong interest in understanding opportunities offered through the EU for cooperation with European youth NGOs, joint ventures between Israeli and Palestinian youth organizations are something completely new. This meant on one side a sort of healthy competition to show the European participants who could do things better, but on the other also implied a lacking coordination among the various local Israeli and Palestinian partners.

The follow-up activities which have materialized from the visit, up to today, are:

- A. a Danish volunteer to work at Birzeit University from May to August 1995, with the task of setting up bilateral student exchanges;
- B. a British volunteer to work in Gaza for the summer, with the aim of developing exchanges between the UK and the Palestinian territories;
- C. a study visit to Europe planned for next August for Middle East youth;
- D. a Euro-Israeli-Palestinian training course on international work in Belgium;
- E. a 3-week stage for two Palestinian youth coordinators in Brussels.

Following the visit the E.C. Youth Forum and the Flemish Youth Council have indicated interest in including in their 1996 planning activities with the Middle East.

Recommendations elaborated for the European Commission, as one of the results of the visit, follow in this final report.

Publications, description material and brochures of single projects and organizations met during the visit are available at the ICYE European Secretariat.

Sergio Andreis

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The following recommendations for the European Commission emerged from the study visit (participants, leadership team, organizing structures and projects/organizations met):

1. cooperation in the youth field between the EU and the Middle East should be continued and expanded: developments in the Middle East are crucial for Europe's future and youth in the Middle East need the exposure and direct contacts with other world areas, after decades of isolation - as almost obsessively repeated during the visit: the challenge is the forging of a new generation of leaders working for common, peaceful Middle East integration, in a region where youth are the great majority of the population;
2. cultural differences, difficulties and mistrust -among all the actors in the region, but also towards external initiatives- should be constantly kept in mind: superficial and/or improvised approaches in implementing cooperation schemes may lead to counterproductive effects;
3. both Israeli and Palestinian youth movements/projects/groups are far from monolithic and at the same time undergoing rapid changes: this evolution should be monitored so that the Commission's priorities support the peace process and satisfy the actual needs of youth in Israel and Palestine, within the larger Middle East perspective;
4. the creation of a Middle East Youth Council should be fostered, in order to offer a structural framework within which cooperation with European -but also from other world regions- youth NGOs may develop;
5. "Euro-Arab dialogue" initiatives should be transformed into "Euro-Middle East" dialogue, in order to always allow Israeli integration;

6. priority should be given to:
 - 6.1. training programmes in intercultural education and youth work, in order to enhance differences as enriching cooperation factor rather than elements of confrontation outbreak;
 - 6.2. multilateral, rather than bilateral, activities, so as to facilitate the awareness of a common "Middle East" identity of youth, with interdependent future;
 - 6.3. information schemes clarifying the EU intentions and priorities, to avoid misunderstandings with partners in the region: written as well as audio-visual materials in Arabic and Hebrew could be very useful to this end;
 - 6.4. programmes with NGOs, which represent the most lively section of youth work in the region;
7. from what we could learn while there are common needs which are felt as such in the whole region, i.e. the curiosity for what is going on in the youth field "in the outside world", there are then differentiated needs in Israel and Palestine and within the various Israeli and Palestinian youth sectors: a differentiated approach is therefore needed, if successful actions are to be carried out. The situation in Gaza, even within the Palestinian context, is something very specific, with dramatic health, family planning and economic problems. "Traditional" youth programme schemes -in the sense of the experiences made through Youth-for-Europe I and II and through the priority actions in the youth field- should be accompanied by programmes, which are currently under the responsibility of different DGs within the Commission: synergies should be developed among DG XXII and DG I (Mediterranean - Mashrek-Israel Unit - specifically budget lines B7-5055, B7-5050 and B7-711), DG VIII (Human Rights Task Force - budget line B7-522) and E.C.H.O.;
8. visas remain an obstacle for the participation of Arab youth: special attention should be given to this aspect, to avoid obvious frustrations and drawbacks in cooperation efforts;
9. participation of women from the Muslim areas of the region should be facilitated, through ad hoc invitations and/or specific programme contents.

Sergio Andreis and Jan Bal

TECHNICAL DATA ON THE ORGANIZATIONS MET

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