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Palestinian American Research Center

PARC Newsletter

PARC Formalizes Organizational Status

Nearly two years after the first meeting of its steering committee took place, the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC) has become a reality thanks to the hard work of the committee and the enthusiastic support of its members.

PARC emerged out of the conviction shared by several scholars that although the Palestinians have been the focus of world attention and a considerable amount of scholarly writing for decades, no American center or organization existed that promoted Palestinian studies. In this spirit, the steering committee first met in the spring of 1997 to lay the groundwork for such a center – PARC.

The committee moved to draft a mission statement and articles of incorporation. After much hard work by the committee and co-presidents Dr. Philip Mattar and Dr. Ann Lesch, PARC carried out its initial fundraising campaign and was established as a non-profit organization in the District of Columbia by the fall of 1998. This past October, the committee hired a part-time director for the Center's U.S. office, Dr. Michael Fischbach.

PARC has also taken steps toward hiring a director for the Jerusalem office it hopes to open by the fall of 1999.

PARC intends to apply for membership in the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, a federation of similar scholarly organizations.

PARC is "off and running," and looking forward to the future!



The building housing PARC's new U.S. office at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia south of Washington

PARC Opens U.S. Office Near D.C.

In January of this year, PARC moved beyond the planning stages, beyond its legal existence on paper, to a new level when it opened its new U.S. office in Virginia just south of Washington, D.C. Thanks to the generosity of Randolph-Macon College, PARC Director Dr. Michael Fischbach opened the doors of PARC's stateside administrative office and commenced operations. PARC's office is now located on the beautiful campus of Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, 90 miles south of Washington and 12 miles north of Richmond just off Interstate 95. (cont.)

PARC Aims to Solicit First Fellowships in the Fall of 1999

PARC aims to solicit proposals for its first fellowships this coming fall. The PARC steering committee hopes to be able to provide several fellowships to assist scholars engaged in research in Palestinian affairs. PARC is particularly interested in helping fund research that will expand the field of traditionally understudied aspects of the Palestinians, such as sociology, health, the arts, geography, archaeology, religion, and urban planning, to name a few.

The PARC steering committee places a high priority on turning around as many of the funds PARC receives into fellowships as possible, and encourages interested scholars to watch for announcement of the fellowship solicitations.

Special Thanks!

PARC extends its special thanks to the following contributors:

Patrons (\$1,000-5,000)

Mrs. Harley C. Stevens

Founding Members (\$250)

Laurie Brand, Charles Butterworth, Lawrence Davidson, Mary Ellen Lane, Ann Lesch, David Lesch, Philip Mattar, Farhat Ziadeh

PARC is also grateful to Brenda Martin and Susan Hees for help with in producing this newsletter.

Web Sites of Interest

A regular feature in each issue of the *PARC Newsletter* will be a listing of web sites relating to Palestinian studies. In this way, PARC hopes to assist scholars studying the Palestinians locate useful information on the internet.

→ UNISPAL

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF?OpenDatabase>

This exhaustive site contains the UN Information System on the Question of Palestine. The site allows the researcher to search for almost any document relating to the Question of Palestine ever issued by any UN agency. The site can be searched by date, title, subject, or body of issuing. It also contains maps. This is an indispensable site for those interested in Palestine before the United Nations.

→ Bir Zeit University's "Our Voice"

<http://www.birzeit.edu/ourvoice/index>.

This is an online collection of research, viewpoints, and analysis on current and historical topics ranging from politics to religion to architecture from Bir Zeit University staff and students.

→ ARIJ (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem)

<http://www.arij.org>

This site contains information on environmental issues in Palestine, including research papers, maps, and environmental profiles of Janin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jericho, Hebron, and Bethlehem. (continued next page)

The State of Palestinian Studies Today

In the recent years since the onset of the Oslo peace process and the rapid spread of the internet began affecting the scholarly study of Palestine and the Palestinians, scholars interested in Palestinian studies have begun taking stock of the state of the field and establishing agendas for the future.

The result has been a series of questions, challenges, and action. Within Palestine, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994 as a result of the Oslo Accords has altered the ability of Palestinian scholars to conduct research. The redeployment of Israeli troops from parts of the occupied territories and the creation of a PA civil administration has led to the growth of Palestinian academic centers and scholarly publications. The internet age has also affected the situation, with numerous organizations and associations in Palestine now having web sites.

Outside of Palestine, new questions about Palestinian studies have emerged. Such questions drew dozens of scholars to the University of Chicago in February to a conference entitled "The Uncertain State of Palestine: Futures of Research." The conferees, including Palestinians, Americans, and Israelis, not only presented and discussed papers but also wrestled with the applicability of such concepts as post-coloniality to the Palestinian situation.

PARC was founded precisely to assist scholars as they confront new research agendas. Watch for information in future editions of this newsletter.

PARC's Fundraising Efforts Continue

The key to PARC's success thus far has been a special combination of vision, hard work, and the financial support both of individual and institutional members and outside funding agencies. PARC's first major fundraising effort took place in the spring of 1998, when the Center received an amazing

PARC Office continued from Page 1

The PARC steering committee was heartened to see Randolph-Macon College's commitment to PARC's success. In addition to becoming an institutional member of PARC and donating scarce office space on its campus (see photo on p.1), the college also provided office furniture, a new computer and color printer, software, internet access, and telephone and fax service. Beyond this, Randolph-Macon agreed to assist PARC by granting Dr. Fischbach a one-course teaching reduction to allow him to devote more time to PARC's activities. In total, Randolph-Macon's in-kind contribution to PARC has thus far exceeded \$8,000, excluding the telephone service and the cost in rent that PARC has saved.

Director Fischbach encourages any visitors passing through Ashland to stop by and visit. PARC's office lies in the heart of campus on the second floor of the Campus Safety Building, 203 Caroline St.

response to its first call for membership.

Nearly one-half of a small group of some one hundred persons invited to join PARC and enable its initial efforts to reach fruition through their contributions responded with membership pledges. Beyond that, 11 academic institutional members and three institutional members have joined.

PARC steering committee members have aggressively solicited grants to begin funding PARC's programs. This past January, The Earhardt Foundation provided PARC with its first grant to enable it to establish its U.S. office and hire a director. Proposals have also been submitted to The Rockefeller Foundation and The Ford Foundation. Finally, a spring 1999 membership drive is underway.

In these ways, PARC plans to open its Jerusalem field office and offer its first fellowships this fall. PARC appreciates the continued support of its members.



PARC Director Michael R. Fischbach

Web Sites *(cont. from p. 2)*

→ Palestinian Authority

<http://www.pna.org>

The official site of the Palestinian Authority. Contains links to various ministries, including statistics.

PARC's Steering Committee

Co-Presidents:

Ann Mosely Lesch
Philip Mattar

Members:

Judy Barsalou
Charles E. Butterworth
W. Benson Harer
Omar M. Kader
Rashid I. Khalidi
George K. Tanham
Mark A. Tessler

Advisors:

Mary Ellen Lane
Joe D. Seger

Director:

Michael R. Fischbach

Academic Institutional Members:

Florida State University
Georgetown University
Haifa University
Harvard University
Mississippi State University
New York University
Randolph-Macon College
University of Arizona
University of California
University of Chicago
University of Utah

Institutional Members:

American Near East
Refugee Aid (ANERA)
PAL-TECH, Inc.
UCBWM

Coming Up...

Conferences of Interest

27-28 May: Forging Regional Cooperation in the Mediterranean Basin (Arles, France). Contact: Nasrin Gidony, (busadm@bgumail.bgu.ac.il)

27-30 May: Workshop on New Approaches to the Study of Ottoman and Arab Societies, 18th to mid-20th Centuries (Istanbul, Turkey) Contact: Ursula Wokoek (wokoek@post.tau.ac.il)

11-12 June: The United States and the Middle East: Diplomatic and Economic Relations in Historical Perspective (New Haven, Conn.) Contact: Salim Yaqub (salim.yaqub@yale.edu)

PARC's Mission

PARC's goals are:

- ◆ to promote Palestinian studies and support scholarly integrity
- ◆ to promote communication, understanding, and cooperation between American and Palestinian researchers
- ◆ to provide access to research opportunities and resources for American and Palestinian scholars and students
- ◆ to reinforce American and Palestinian educational, cultural, and research institutions.

PARC's functions are:

- ◆ to provide a U.S. office that will raise funds and support PARC's activities

◆ to open an office in the field, run by a director and appropriate staff, that will assist American scholars working in the field, and be a place of contact for scholars to meet, exchange ideas, and cooperate

◆ to provide grants and fellowships to Americans and Palestinians for research, professional development, and advanced studies

◆ to expedite projects sponsored by other institutions, maintain relations with research facilities and libraries, and provide institutional affiliation to independent researchers

◆ to create and maintain a reference library with electronic access to facilitate global research

◆ to maintain a program of publications which will report on research findings and ongoing and projected research programs

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