

PARC

PALESTINIAN AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER

PROMOTING PALESTINIAN STUDIES AND SCHOLARLY EXCHANGE ON PALESTINIAN ISSUES

Letter From the Chairs

More than three years ago, several specialists on Palestinian issues began to discuss the idea of creating a research center that would focus on Palestine. We hoped to model it on the highly successful overseas centers located around the world.

Despite the attention given to diplomatic and political questions and despite the growing interest in social and economic concerns, we felt there remained serious gaps in scholarly research on Palestine.



Ann Mosely Lesch



Philip Mattar

Moreover, we believed that the lack of an academic center had contributed to the declining number of doctoral theses written on Palestine – in all fields – and had limited the ability of Palestinian, American, and other scholars to interact and contribute to each other's intellectual development.

We hope that the effort to increase the range, quality, and depth of research focusing on Palestinian issues, and on understanding these issues in their global context, will be advanced significantly by establishing this academic center.

Today, we are pleased that the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC) is a reality. We are gratified that many students, scholars, and academic institutions

responded enthusiastically to our initial appeal for support in 1998. This enabled us to open the U.S. office at Randolph-Macon College, directed by the historian, Michael R. Fischbach. We also asked Hiba Hussein, a Jerusalem attorney, to assist with the registration of our field office while we simultaneously searched for a permanent director. Mouin Rabbani has recently agreed to take on that position.

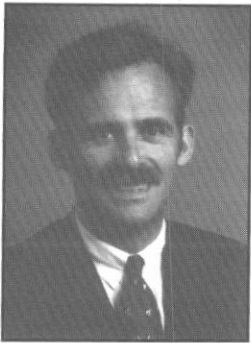
Subsequently, we have received funding totaling nearly \$220,000 from the Earhart, Ford, Rockefeller, and Tananbaum foundations and from the U.S. Department of Education. As a result, we mounted our first fellowship competition in the spring of 2000. We were pleased with the high quality and the diversity of the proposals, and we anticipate that equally innovative proposals will be submitted for the second round, the deadline for which is January 15, 2001.

In the coming year, we expect to complete the registration of the field office, undertake activities there to benefit Palestinian and foreign scholars, and launch new fund-raising drives. We hope you will come to the PARC panel at the MESA conference (8 a.m., Friday, November 17, 2000) to hear more about our plans and discuss how you can help. We're eager to attract the active involvement of scholars who are committed to deepening the understanding of all aspects of Palestinian history, culture, society, economy, and politics.

*Ann Mosely Lesch and Philip Mattar
Co-Chairs, PARC Steering Committee*

From the Director's Desk

PARC has had a busy year, and there is much to report, most notably that we successfully undertook our first annual fellowship competition and have awarded funds to nine scholars to carry out their research on Palestinian issues. A more detailed discussion of the competition and the awardees can be found within this newsletter. This major accomplishment could not have been undertaken had it not been for the generous support of the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.



Michael R. Fischbach

In addition, PARC hired Hiba Hussein, a Jerusalem attorney, as a part-time director of its office in Jerusalem/Ramallah until a permanent director could be located. We also asked her to assist with the registration of our field office while we simultaneously searched for a permanent director. Mouin Rabbani has recently agreed to take on that position. His bio can be found on page four.

The establishment of PARC's U.S. and field offices has allowed PARC to carry out two major fund-raising campaigns in 1999 and again in 2000, which netted not only individual and institutional members, but also major grants from the Earhart Foundation, the Tananbaum Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. PARC is a registered not-for-profit organization in the District of Columbia, has received 501(c)(3) status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and has established its own web site (www.parcenr.org). PARC continues to function with the assistance of the Council of Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), which manages the grants received before PARC obtained its official registration.

Beyond infrastructural developments, PARC featured a presentation on "The State of Palestinian Studies in Palestine Today" by noted scholar Dr. Salim Tamari at the 1999 Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference in Washington, D.C. This year at the MESA conference in Orlando, Fla., PARC will host a panel discussion, "Rule by Records: The Impact and Legacy of British Rule in Palestine." Details of this event are included in this newsletter on page eight.

PARC has grown and begun its programs in support of Palestinian studies to a degree that some of us could scarcely have hoped for in such a short period of time, thanks to the support of our members and donor organizations.

Michael R. Fischbach

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