

Jerusalem Activities

(6 weeks)

Starting last week of September 2004

Along the lines of the program of activities agreed upon between PPC/GI and the Peace and Democracy Forum (PDF) in East Jerusalem, a number of activities were held in Jerusalem starting from the last week of September through the first week of November 2004.

The activities included two workshops, two lectures/discussions, preparatory meetings with partner institutions, and youth groups, in addition to preparatory meeting/discussion with Israeli groups interested in peace activities.

Workshops

- 1- Around 35 artists (actors, singers, painters, play writers and art critics) attended a workshop held at the premises of the Palestinian National Theatre. The Geneva Initiative was introduced and the document was distributed. A representative of the Nusseibeh-Ayalon peace plan presented the main points of the plan. A serious discussion followed and the participants expressed various degrees of support for peace efforts.
- 2- The artist's workshop came a week after a discussion meeting was held between PDF and representatives of the art branches involved. In that meeting, the Geneva Initiative was discussed and a plan of action was drawn to promote artists involvement in peace effort.
- 3- A preparatory meeting with a number of Jerusalem-based journalists was held to prepare for workshop in which 20 journalists would debate the Geneva Accord. A preliminary date was set for this workshop on 4 November but was postponed due to the sudden events that started with the deterioration in the health condition and then the death of President Yasser Arafat.

Other Activities

- On 23 September more than 25 students from Al Quds University attended a lecture about the Geneva Initiative and the peace efforts.
- On 2 October more than 35 students and activists from Azariye (Bethany) participated in the discussion that followed a lecture by PPC Steering Committee Member Saman Khouri on the Geneva Initiative and the current political situation in the Palestinian territory.

- On 7 October more than 20 intellectuals and professionals from the northern areas of Jerusalem participated in a discussion about the current situation and the peace plans, with emphasis on the effects of the Segregation Wall that is being constructed by Israel in the West Bank and its impact on the overall peace efforts in the region.
- On 14 October a Preparatory meeting took place with representatives of the Teachers Union to discuss the peace plans, including the Geneva Initiative, and to prepare for a workshop with the Jerusalem teachers on peace efforts.
- On 19 October a meeting was held with the Old City Youth Association to agree on activities in the old city Jerusalem during the month of Ramadan.
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- Moreover, issues of "Attareek" were regularly distributed to a list of regular recipients (around 200) including institutions, clubs, hospitals and hotels of local and Arabic-speaking guests.

Jerusalem activities

Second half of November until the end of December 2004

With the end of the official seven days mourning over the passing away of the late President Yasser Arafat, the Jerusalem office of the Peace and Democracy Forum (PDF) resumed its public campaign activities in conformity with the program held in coordination with and under the auspices of the Palestinian Peace Coalition (PPC/GI).

During the week following the end of the official mourning, preparatory meetings with the administrative committees of the local institutions in different locations, in and around Jerusalem, were held in order to reschedule the implementation of the program of activities which was later held as follows:

Nov. 29 : *Al-Qastal Society* in Azariyya hosted a public meeting with over 30 activists from the local refugees grouping. The Geneva Initiative was presented and the document was handed out to the participants. The presentation was followed by a discussion of the various articles, especially the points pertaining to the issue of Palestinian refugees.

Dec.1 : "*Zahrat al-Quds*" Society in Azariyya/Abu Dis area hosted a group of over 25 local business people when the GI document was given to the participants, and, after a short presentation, a discussion was held for more than two hours.

Dec. 3 : PDF held a meeting at the 7 Arches Hotel hall for 15 young activists from the Palestinian chapter of the "*Crossing Borders*" group. A hot discussion followed the presentation and distribution of the document. The proposed map of Jerusalem was subject of the main discussion.

Dec. 7 : Over 25 students and youth activists from Essawiyya attended the meeting and the subsequent discussion of the GI, which was held in coordination between PDF and the "*Al-Essawiyya Society for Education and Sports*".

Dec. 15 : In Essawiyya around 20 business people and local community leaders attended a meeting and discussion of the GI and the upcoming presidential elections. The meeting was held at the *Essawiyya Women Association* and attracted good attention of the neighborhood.

Dec. 14 – 16 : Three local sports activities were held in Essawiyya under the banners of the Palestinian Peace Coalition. A crowd of over 70 young men attended the football match and similar crowds attended a tournament in Karate and in Swimming. All the youth who participated or who attended the matches appreciated the PPC's interest in the youth in Jerusalem and were attentive when PDF introduced the GI. On Dec. 22, Saman Khoury distributed medals and trophies to the winners of the said tournament on behalf of the PPC/GI. A special shield was delivered to Mr. Yasser Abed Rabbo, Head of the PPC in gratitude for the support of the youth activities in the Jerusalem area.

Dec. 15 : The Geneva Initiative and the upcoming local governments elections were discussed with candidates from Azariyya and Abu Dis. The crowd of more than 30 people expressed understanding of the GI and the atmosphere accompanying the process of elections including the attempts to go back to official Pal-Isr. negotiations.

Dec. 17/18/19 : Under the banners of PPC/GI, three sports and social activities were held involving youth and teams from Azariyya, Abu Dis and Sawahra. Over 100 people, including the participating youth and their parents were involved in the volleyball match, in Tai Kwan Do competition and a competition of different local Dabke groups. The winners received medals and trophies, and the groups received shields presented and sponsored by PPC.

Dec. 20 : A crowd of around 200 people attended a meeting to distribute the 78 *Shields* made especially to honor teachers and women who participated in local activities. The activity, which coincided with 40 days commemoration in honor of the late President Arafat, was sponsored by the PPC.