

in various contracts. These organizations are committing actual fraud, moving in to make a quick buck on the backs of people who have been oppressed for 47 years.

The racket of the World Bank and other "internationals" works as follows. The World Bank sends a delegation to Gaza, on the average, twice a month. The World Bank delegates send letters announcing the dates of their arrival, but never inquiring as to whether the proposed dates are convenient for their hosts. They arrive, often in groups of two, and take up lodgings in one of the two Gaza hotels. They enjoy a \$1,000-a-day expense account, far exceeding what they need to pay locally. They spend their time interrogating Palestinian Authority representatives, going through their books, and generally taking up valuable time. They engage frequently in outright harassment. For example, one World Bank delegation went to Gaza recently to investigate an alleged discrepancy in Palestinian accounts, amounting to \$4 million. After a week of checking through accounting books, the World Bank crew had to acknowledge that the missing sum was due to a transcription error made by the World Bank. In addition to the World Bank delegations, there are also those streaming in from Harvard University.

Sometimes, an "international" will come up with a well-heeled project. For instance, a \$2 million price tag will be put on a project for some local improvements. The only hitch is, the Palestinians must hire two experts to do the relevant feasibility studies and so forth, to the tune of about \$700,000 apiece, by the time the project has been completed. When one reads in the press of agreements reached between some European country and the Palestinian Authority for "technical assistance," what this usually boils down to is the following: The country in question offers its technical assistants, to the tune of \$20,000 a month. Palestinian political authorities have made clear that with the same amount of money, 20 Palestinian engineers could be gainfully employed in real projects. In general, when a bilateral deal is made, the "donor" country gains 75% and the Palestinians 25% of the value of the contract. A still more outrageous example of arrogance vis-à-vis the Palestinians is the idea floated in Washington at the Department of Commerce, whereby "preferential treatment" would be given the West Bank, which would be allowed to export goods to the United States at reduced or no tariffs. The hitch was that the West Bank be designated a "non-independent country."

To appreciate the extent of World Bank fraud, it is useful to compare World Bank offers to actual needs. If in Gaza, as has been officially estimated, there are 60,000 unemployed, and if \$10 a day were allocated to keep these people alive on some form of unemployment compensation or welfare, then a total of \$600,000 a day, or \$18 million a month, would be required. Normally, in contracting, one figures that 20% of total expenditures will be allocated for labor costs; that means that, in order to employ this number of unemployed even at these slave wages in construction, one would have to have a

project with a \$90 million investment. In comparison to this figure, the World Bank Emergency Rehabilitation Program

## Samieh Samarra: Our wealth is our people

Samieh Samarra, head of the newly founded Palestine Radio and Television in Gaza, is one of the few people one meets in Gaza whose optimism has not been dampened by the difficulties encountered in the peace process. "It is the first time that Palestinians have ruled themselves, the first time we have government authority, the first time we can say and do what we want," he told *EIR*.



He makes no bones about the duty, as he sees it, for Palestinians worldwide to join in the effort. "Why don't they come here? We're building the first realistic state, the others are just sheikhdoms." Comparing this to the experience of Israel, which was "a state built on an idea, but had to bring people in from the outside," Samarra stresses that "we are all here; we have the land here and the people here. We have families whose histories go way back, they are rooted in the Ottoman Empire days. This is our wealth." Such wealth, he explains, lies in the unique experience that Palestinians have gained, over a hundred years. Samarra proudly points to a young girl working in the radio station, saying, "This girl, 18 years old, has lived all her life under occupation. Think of the experience that that constitutes."

Samarra sees the new media outlet, which is to be outfitted by Marconi and provided technical assistance by the British, as a means of reaching out to the Palestinian community in the entire Middle East, including the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and Jordan, communities in Baghdad and the Gulf countries. "We want to influence them," says Samarra, "to bring them back. We have to dismantle the Palestinian camps, solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and bring in Palestinian resources to build up Gaza." Looking to the experience in Jordan, Samarra is optimistic: "Amman is a beautiful city, built by Palestinians. Now we can do the same thing here in Gaza."