

THE WEST BANK AND GAZA  
DATA BASE PROJECT  
INTERIM REPORT NO. 1

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## INTRODUCTION

The original research proposal for the West Bank Data Base Project was defined as the compilation, analysis and assessment of all relevant information on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The end product of the study is to be a comprehensive data base which will reflect the realities in these territories. The study was planned to cover the following areas of investigation: Law, the military, sociology and demography, economy, urban planning administration, infrastructure and political trends. In the second phase it is intended to complete and integrate the data and to develop it into hypotheses which will be discussed and tested. Then proposals and policies for dealing with the territories will be devised (for a short description and a budget of the second stage, see Appendix III). We considered it imperative to undertake such a study, because the current political discussion on the future of the territories is based on deliberate or inadvertent misunderstanding of the realities and the fast-changing conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We believe that a firm data base will enable us and others to assess future developments, to formulate updated policies and to help prevent the discussion from being overtaken by events.

As we could not find sufficient funds to carry out the major study intended, we decided to embark upon what we termed a Pilot Study. Through the generous assistance of Professor Stephen P. Cohen, Director of the Institute for Middle East Peace and Development in the Graduate School of the City University of New York, and the assistance of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East in Tel-Aviv, we began the work in May 1982.

Five researchers were involved in the study: Annette Hochstein (Policy Analyst and Planner), Michael Weil (Economist), Joseph Guidenian (Statistician), Marcel Korn (Legal Expert), and Aron Turner (Urban Planner). They were asked to prepare background papers in their respective disciplines. Their work was coordinated by Mrs. Hochstein and Mr. Weil, Directors of Nativ Policy and Planning Consultants.

The researchers were instructed at this stage to collect data from official sources, published material, books and articles, but not to conduct field work. The depth of the data at this stage had to be a function of its availability, but all data compiled had to be firm and doubled-checked. The researchers were also directed to concentrate on issues and areas which seemed to the undersigned most pertinent to the current political discussion.

The background papers and maps, with a list of primary sources, of people to be interviewed, a catalogue of existing documents and suggestions for further study were submitted to the undersigned who integrated and analyzed them. A theoretical part, which includes some hypotheses and interpretations, was added.

The results of the Pilot Project and the patterns that emerged from it surprised us, although we consider ourselves well informed on matters concerning the territories. First, we were surprised to find that data is readily available and can be obtained without too much difficulty if one knows what one is looking for, where to look and is reasonably stubborn. Second, although much of the data collected at this stage is published material, its compilation and the interdisciplinary teamwork accompanying it shed new light on a situation that had formerly seemed so well known.

Although the conclusions and interpretations offered in the Pilot Study should be regarded as provisional, pending further research, they have already contributed to the current political decision-making process, and to the political discussion.

Some findings were made public, in connection with the new initiative of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, concerning the territories. The response has been very encouraging (see attached clippings). It has proved to us the need for ongoing policy-oriented study of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which will serve decision makers and scholars in their search for a solution to the problem of the future of the territories.

Jerusalem  
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Meron Benvenisti