

Chapter Four

The West Bank: Structural Change Under Israeli Rule

(1967 - 1982)

"The people of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) form the largest bulk of the Palestinians -- numerically, economically, and intellectually -- anywhere in the world. It is a group, to my great regret, . . . whose body is here but whose head is outside"

General Binyamin Ben-Eliezar
(Israeli Military Commander
of the West Bank)
Jerusalem Post, Sept. 20, 1979

The Demographic-Territorial Dilemma in Israeli Policies

Israeli policies towards the "administered Territories", as they are referred to in official statements, have been from the beginning of the occupation the subject of controversy between contending factions within Labor Zionism, and -- with the coming of the Likud into power -- between those who favour a territorial settlement and those who oppose it. It seems however, that regardless of the political settlement that might be arrived at, the government was determined to hasten the process of merging the Palestinian communities within the boundaries of pre-1967 Israel. If territorial concessions have to be made, there will be an existing single socio-economic entity which is becoming increasingly difficult to divide. This conception is confirmed in a 1970 Ministry of the Interior publication, titled Guidelines for Regional & Physical Planning. In it the plan suggested for the West Bank emphasized "the settlement of the unpopulated Jordan