

Expectedly, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has displayed considerable interest in researching various development in the occupied territories. To help pursue this interest in a systematic manner, the PLO established its own Research Centre in Beirut. One of the most authoritative references on the West Bank's socio-economic transformations during the Jordanian and early Israeli rules is the book by Jamil Hilal which the PLO published in 1975.¹

Hilal's analysis of the West Bank's demographic and economic transformations which were precipitated during Jordan's lop-sided and often oppressive rule is fascinating and has become a major reference on the economics and social history of the area during that period. Though his coverage of the post-occupation era is partial (1967-74) he has, nevertheless, produced a comprehensive analysis of developments taking place shortly following occupation. He describes at length the evacuationary character of Israeli occupation, which he believes is a distinctive feature compared with classical forms of colonialism. He therefore demonstrates that Israel's policies in the territories, especially those related to their economies, are intended in the end to achieve the Zionist dream of absorbing all the land of Palestine within the Biblical Eretz Israel.

Hilal's book is an original contribution to the political history of the West Bank, as viewed by a Marxist historian. The only

1. Jamil Hilal, The West Bank: Social and Economic Structure, 1948-74, (Beirut: Palestine Research Centre, 1957).

reason why it has not gained wider publicity in the Middle East is that it is available only in English.

Notwithstanding Hilal's deep insight into the political background of West Bank economics, including the agricultural sector, it is clear that the book falls far short of analyzing the situation of individual farming patterns. Furthermore, as its author had been deprived of access to primary sources of information, he also has had to rely almost exclusively on Israeli data for his treatment of the post-occupation era. Accordingly, the usefulness of the book as a reference for planning agricultural development is limited, but it remains an invaluable reference on the West Bank's political economy during a sensitive period of its history.

Rainfed Agriculture

The researcher has had access to a large number of technical papers dealing with the various aspects of rainfed farming. Among the most valuable references in this respect were the papers submitted to the FAO Regional Seminar on Rainfed Agriculture, held in Amman in September, 1979. Through the courtesy of FAO's Regional Office in Cairo the researcher received copies of all 37 papers presented in that seminar. Some of them were very useful, whether as sources of information or new ideas. Prominent examples are:

N R Carpenter: An Outline Proposal for a Systematic Approach to the Development of Rainfed Areas of the Near East.

Ch Krishnamoorthy: Cropping Systems for Optimum Utilization of Resources under Semi-arid Conditions.

David Gibbon: An Approach to the Improvement of Rainfed Agriculture Systems in the Mediterranean Region.