

into several ambitious policies and practices, starting with the addition of some 18 agronomists to the staff of extension agents. Demonstration plots on new crops and techniques were organized with such an intensity that they practically covered all farming areas. Credit facilities and food aid were advanced to pioneering farmers at concessional terms. Marketing of produce into Jordan was aggressively promoted through a liberal export-subsidization scheme. The flow of farm produce to Israel was permitted, although at a small scale and when it did not compete with local produce. As a result of official enthusiasm, production practices were markedly modernized and certain patterns of agriculture undoubtedly achieved high rates of growth.

But official interest in West Bank agricultural development proved to be short-lived. Favourable policies were gradually superseded by noticeably depressive policies. This change seems to have been motivated by a number of economic and political factors. In the first place the Israeli economy itself was rapidly entering a severe recession which was accompanied by a drastic curb in public expenditure which included heavy cuts in the budget of agriculture.

Still more importantly Israel began to realize that it should address itself to countering arguments advocating the establishment of a Palestinian State, mainly by pre-empting the production base of its potential components: the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Furthermore, Israel's economic policies in the occupied territories appear motivated partly by a colonial intent, whether in terms of exploiting their resources or cultivating their sizeable consumption potential. Expansion in local production would,

from Israel's point of view, jeopardize the flow of Israeli goods to the occupied territories and might depress prices in Israel itself.

Against this mixed background, the agricultural policy of the Military Administration seems to rest, at least for the present, on the following guidelines:

1. Reducing the area under active cultivation to a minimum size in an effort to facilitate quiet transfer of land to Israeli hands. This, as explained in the section on land resources, has been accomplished by a wide range of land confiscation and closure policies.
2. Curtailing all patterns of farming which entail visible and long-term attachment of farmers to arable land. Foremost, this applies to olives, grapes, and almonds. In contrast, the Department is far more interested in promoting annual field and vegetable crops. Lop-sided sectoral emphasis is spelled out clearly in the Annual Plans prepared by the senior Israeli officials in the Department of Agriculture.¹
3. Controlling all water resources and restricting water use in Arab agriculture to the minimum, other usable reserves going to Israeli settlements.
4. Expediting the mobility of labour from rural communities into Israel or, alternatively, to neighbouring countries.
5. Exploiting untransferable abundant resources, particularly immobile labour (eg old men and village women), in producing

1. Examples: All pest control demonstrations for olives have been stopped since the early seventies; distribution of seedlings requires approval by senior officials; seed oils and Spanish olive oil are permitted in at concessional terms.