

Even in the event that cooperatives are permitted to receive "foreign" aid, the actual disbursement of funds received in still subject to last-minute approvals.<sup>1</sup> Each cooperative has to provide extensive details to Officers-in-Charge in the Military Headquarters, just to make sure that everything is in accord with Israeli policies.

4. Inadequate service infrastructures. The status of auxiliary cooperative infrastructures deteriorated sharply after occupation. The services of education, training, research, and auditing all came to an end due to a sealing off of the West Bank for the services rendered by the Cooperative Institute and the Audit Union, which both have their headquarters in Amman. The number of staff employed at West Bank branches of the Jordan Central Cooperative Union declined from 22 on the eve of occupation to 10 in early 1981. Cooperative staff have been denied training opportunities, which has caused further worsening in their morale. With such a low level of auxiliary services, the mediocre performance of cooperatives is not unexpected.

#### Development guidelines

Agricultural cooperatives have not assumed a primary role in West Bank agriculture, before or after Israeli occupation. Their role in accelerating agricultural development while the West Bank is still under occupation is untypically complex and involves diametrically opposed interests. Despite important reservations arising from Israel's control of all cooperative activities, those parties interested in assisting Palestinians under occupation cannot

<sup>1</sup> Jenin Agricultural Cooperative, for example, failed to collect any of the JD 160,000 it was granted by the Joint Committee, because it failed to have its projects approved by the Military Administration.

overlook the fact that cooperatives are among the very few channels available for funneling aid. This, therefore, entails three fundamental guidelines in their dealings with cooperatives, namely the following:

1. Providing all possible assistance to existing cooperatives, but with attention to the political ramifications of their activities.
2. Improving the efficiency of cooperatives and auxiliary infrastructures through a concerted effort bearing on existing constraints, most importantly by upgrading the calibre of management in the major marketing cooperatives.
3. Searching for alternatives, other than cooperatives, as means of implementing development plans. Foremost, this might include direct dealing with individual farmers or small groups of farmers.

These general proposals will be elaborated in more practical terms in the chapters which discuss about development measures.

#### D - Voluntary agencies

Being the focus of intensive international interest for such a long time, and because of their transitional status under Israeli occupation, the West Bank and Gaza Strip have witnessed during the last decade a marked surge in the number and scope of activities of what are described as voluntary agencies (VA's). The number of these agencies at the present is about 17, but those engaged in rural development in various forms are just six, namely: