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EFFECTS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON PALESTINIAN WOMEN INSIDE
AND OUTSIDE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN WOMEN

Item 10 (a) of the provisional agenda.



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Note by the Secretariat

The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980, of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), held at Damascus from 10 to 13 December 1979, had an item on its agenda entitled "Inclusion of the Palestinian Women in the proceedings of the 1980 World Conference". Following the discussion on the item, the Regional Preparatory Meeting adopted a report which was originally issued by ECWA under the symbol E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/6/Rev.1. That report is attached for transmittal to the Conference.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN WOMEN INSIDE
AND OUTSIDE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Report adopted by the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the
Economic Commission for Western Asia

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Any serious attempt to tackle, even partially, the problems of the Palestinian woman requires a sound grasp of the nature of those problems and of the special circumstances in which they emerged. Such a grasp will not be acquired by examining those problems apart from existing political, economic and social conditions. Any study of the problems of the Palestinian woman that fails to link them to the "Palestinian question" and, consequently, to the "Palestinian problem" as a whole, and to relate them to the concerns of developing countries in general, will remain incomplete and will neither fulfill its objectives nor contribute significantly to the desired solutions.
2. The social conditions specific to the Palestinian woman, originate in and acquire an added dimension from the particular nature of the "Palestinian question". The special character of the "Palestinian question" is based on the more comprehensive national "Palestinian problem", which in turn acquires its special character against the background of the problems common to peoples of the third world and to developing societies. The expression "Palestinian question" refers here to the abnormal living conditions of the Palestinian people resulting from Zionist settlement in Palestine, be it through expatriation, occupation or colonization. The "Palestinian problem" refers to the Arab-Israeli conflict in general; it is seen as an expression of the contradiction that exists on the national level between the Arab National Movement, which is seeking independence, unity and social development, and Israel as the fruit of "Zionist action" and colonial penetration.
3. It is within that context that the depth of the problems facing the Palestinian woman, and the magnitude of the efforts needed to deal with them, let alone solve them, become clear. The Palestinian woman suffers from repression in the broad sense not only within Palestinian society but also on the national level. In addition to her problems as a woman in a third world society, the Palestinian woman, along with her fellow citizens, has faced persecution on the national level, be it under Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, in the territories occupied in 1948, or in the diaspora. These are urgent problems that should be researched and diagnosed as a matter of priority. Their solution deserves special attention from the international community.
4. The United Nations had adopted a number of resolutions that call for the study of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people and for the formulation of practical and specific programmes to help them to cope with vital issues and improve their living conditions. On the regional level, the Economic Commission for Western Asia, in resolution 27 (III), adopted at the Commission's third session (Doha, 10-15 May 1976), requested the Executive Secretary "to make arrangements to carry out a comprehensive study of the economic and social situation and potential of the entire Palestinian Arab people ... in close co-operation with

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the Palestine Liberation Organization". 1/ At the same session, in resolution 23 (III), the Commission called upon the Executive Secretary "to take all necessary steps, in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, for beginning the population census operations as soon as possible". 2/

5. The Economic and Social Council, in resolutions 2026 (LXI) of 4 August 1976 and 2100 (LXIII) of 3 August 1977, invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the specialized agencies, and other organizations in the United Nations system "to intensify, as a matter of urgency and in co-ordination with the Economic Commission for Western Asia, their efforts in identifying the social and economic needs of the Palestinian people". In resolution 2026 (LXI), the Council also requested the "agencies and organizations to consult and co-operate with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, with a view to establishing and implementing concrete projects to ensure the improvement of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people". It urged executive heads of those agencies and organizations to "formulate and submit to their respective Governments and/or legislative bodies proposals for ensuring the implementation of the provisions" of the resolution.

6. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people", in which the Assembly endorsed the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council concerning assistance to the Palestinian people and called upon the United Nations Development Programme, in consultation with the specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system, "to intensify its efforts, in co-ordination with the Economic Commission for Western Asia, to implement the relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council in order to improve the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people by identifying their social and economic needs and by establishing concrete projects to that end, without prejudice to the sovereignty of the respective Arab host countries, and to provide adequate funds for that purpose".

7. The United Nations Development Programme held a meeting for the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations at Geneva on 15-16 February 1979 to study the means for implementing General Assembly resolution 33/147. A special interagency task force was set up to study the needs of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza) and elsewhere, and to formulate specific proposals on the basis of that study. The task force was drawn from the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization. After endorsing the report of the task force, the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme approved, at its twenty-sixth session, held in June 1979, the allocation of \$3.5 million to finance specific projects for the Palestinian people in the various social and economic fields.

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 12 (E/5785), chap. III.

2/ Ibid.

8. The World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975, adopted a resolution entitled "Palestinian and Arab women", which read:

"The World Conference of the International Women's Year,

"Mindful of the objectives and goals of International Women's Year,

"Reaffirming the fundamental purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the maintenance of international peace and world security, and the development of friendly relations among nations,

"Deeply concerned about the prevailing conditions - political, social, demographic and economic - of the Palestinian people and, in particular, the conditions under which the Palestinian woman lives, and recognizing the close relationship between such conditions and the question of Palestine,

"Reaffirming the futility of speaking about equality of human beings at a time when millions of human beings are suffering under the yoke of colonialism,

"Considering that international co-operation and peace require national independence and liberation, the elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism, fascism, zionism, apartheid and foreign occupation, alien domination and racial discrimination in all its forms and also respect for human rights,

"Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has yet been achieved and recognizing that the problem of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East continue to endanger international peace and world security,

"Expressing its grave concern that the Palestinian woman and people have been prevented from enjoying their inalienable rights, and in particular their right to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, the right to self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty,

"Recognizing that the mass uprooting from the homeland obstructs the participation and integration of woman in the efforts of progress,

"Affirming the right of the Palestinian woman to develop a strong and more effective impetus to peace and the development of friendly relations among nations,

"Recalling General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974 adopting the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States,

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"Recalling the final resolutions and declarations of the regional seminars held in Mogadishu, Kinshasa and Caracas,

"1. Appeals to all women of the world to proclaim their solidarity with and support for the Palestinian women and people in their drive to put an end to flagrant violations of fundamental human rights committed by Israel in the occupied territories;

"2. Appeals also to all women in the world to take the necessary measures to secure the release of thousands of persons, fighters for the cause of self-determination, liberation and independence, held arbitrarily in the prisons of the forces of occupation;

"3. Appeals also to all States and international organizations to extend assistance - moral and material - to the Palestinian and Arab woman and people in their struggle against zionism, foreign occupation and alien domination, foreign aggression, and help them restore their inalienable rights in Palestine, and in particular the right to return to their homes and properties from which they have been displaced and uprooted, the right to self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

"4. Requests the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies, as well as all national, regional and international women's organizations, to extend their help - moral and material - to the Palestinian woman and its organization and institutes."

9. The World Plan of Action adopted by the Conference requested that the regional commissions of the United Nations formulate regional plans of action for the integration of women into development, with an emphasis on the characteristics and priorities of each region. The Economic Commission for Western Asia accordingly formulated the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia, which was finalized and endorsed at the Regional Conference for the Integration of Women in Development (Amman, 29 May-4 June 1978) and adopted unanimously by the Commission at its fifth session (Amman, 2-6 October 1978). The Regional Plan assigns a special section to the Palestinian woman, as a matter of priority for Western Asia. In addition, the recommendation on the Palestinian woman calls on the Commission's Executive Secretary to seek "to introduce an agenda item on the Palestinian woman at all world and regional conferences dealing with the problems of women and development, beginning with the regional preparatory meeting, to be sponsored for the countries of Western Asia in 1979, in preparation for the World Conference for the Decade for Women, to be held in 1980".

10. That recommendation was subsequently submitted to the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. The Committee, at its second session (27 August-7 September 1979), adopted a decision by which it (a) recommended "the inclusion of the social and economic needs of the Palestinian woman in the review and evaluation document to be prepared for the Conference", and (b) entrusted "the

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secretariat of the Conference, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Western Asia with the preparation of a report entitled "Special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman", which would be submitted to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, after its consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its next session".

II. SCOPE AND LIMITS OF THE STUDY

11. A number of considerations determined the scope of the present study on the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian woman. Among them, the following factors imposed certain limitations:

(a) International, regional and national sources and references lack specific information on the Palestinian woman and her living conditions making it impossible to prepare a complete and comprehensive study; thus the present study is only the nucleus of a serious study of the conditions of Palestinian women. It is hoped that the Conference will recommend this collection of what little and scattered information there is and the initiation of a comprehensive study of the social and economic conditions of Palestinian women.

(b) The time factor has limited the amount of research that could be marshalled, especially since the available information is incomplete and does not cover Palestinian woman in all communities in the occupied territories, either inside or outside the Arab countries.

(c) The availability of staff and of financial resources has been limited. A thorough study of the conditions of the Palestinian woman would require full-time personnel to gather and analyse data, as well as financial resources to guarantee the necessary mobility for data collection.

(d) Most important, any study of the living conditions of the Palestinian woman will be limited by the specifics of her political situation, which directly affect her social and economic conditions and the possibility of helping her to improve that situation. The Palestinian woman is part of the Palestinian people who possess abundant human resources but lack land, a country and other social, economic and cultural structures.

III. ZIONISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE

A. The Zionist factor

12. A sound grasp of "Zionist action", its role in modern Middle Eastern history and its impact on the political, social and economic conditions currently prevailing in the region can be acquired only by examining the emergence of that political movement in relation to other political phenomena that occurred at the same time and place. The time is the end of the nineteenth century; the place is the "Arab East", specifically Palestine. Four basic political phenomena dominated the area's history during the last century, and still do so to a large extent. The interaction of those phenomena, the contradictions they have generated and their subsequent negative and positive roles have produced current political, social and economic conditions in the Arab world. Those phenomena were:

(a) The collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the last of the Islamic empires of the Middle Ages, with the consequent disintegration of certain existing structures and the rise of others which have either replaced the old structures or have continued to co-exist with them;

(b) The increased competition between colonial Powers for spheres of influence within the far-flung borders of the Ottoman Empire, with the consequent division of that domain after the first world war into mandated areas;

(c) The emergence of the Arab National Movement as an expression of the identity of the Arab Nation among Islamic peoples, within the framework of modern nationalist thought, and its transformation into a political movement seeking independence, unity and social development;

(d) The emergence of "Zionist action" and its transformation into a political movement seeking to establish a Jewish Nation State as the solution to the "Jewish question", within the context of the general conditions prevailing in Europe in the nineteenth century. By participating in the activities of the colonial States, the Zionist movement received the Balfour Declaration in return at the end of the first world war.

13. Within this historical framework Zionist action manifested itself as a scheme to resolve the Jewish question by establishing a Jewish settler State, with the consequent creation of the Palestinian question. At the same time, Zionist action manifested itself as an integral part of a colonial scheme by the Western Powers to divide the territories of the Ottoman Empire into spheres of influence, which consequently led to a confrontation with the national movements of the Islamic peoples who were striving for unity and independence. As a Jewish movement, Zionism proposed a solution to the Jewish question based on the creation of a Jewish Nation State through evictive settlement in Palestine. The idea of establishing both a State and a settlement originated in the European thought prevailing at the time. Yet it was obvious from the beginning, especially to the Zionist leaders, that their movement could not carry out such a plan on its own and would have to depend on the support of some or all of the world Powers in order to realize its goals. Consequently, the movement entered into international

political alliances, remaining an organic part of them until today. Thus Zionism emerged in its colonial dimension, on the one hand, and in its national dimension at the Arab level, on the other, within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If this conflict has affected the political, economic and social growth and development of the Arab world in general, how much greater has been its effect on the Palestinian people and on the Palestinian woman in particular.

14. In fact, the two aspects of Zionist action, the Jewish and the colonial, were never equal. The latter was the primary factor which gave life to the former. The partnership of the colonial Powers and the Zionist movement within its Jewish context was never one of parity. Rather, it has always reflected the balance of power between the partners. Colonialism has remained the senior partner in the "Zionist project" and, as such, it has retained the final word in political decisions related to it and has reaped the greater benefits. After a full century of Zionist action, it is obvious that the colonial "partner" has scored much more success than has the Jewish "partner". The Zionist project has been successful in confronting the movement of the Arab peoples and in obstructing their advancement towards independence, unity and social development, especially in the case of the Palestinian people. Yet at the same time it has failed to solve the Jewish question and has been incapable of transforming the settlement into a Nation State with truly national characteristics. In addition, it has, on the one hand, created the "Israeli question", which derives from the isolation of the Israeli settlers and their inability to integrate with the peoples of the region and live harmoniously with them. On the other hand, it has created the "Palestinian question", which derives from the abnormal living conditions of the Palestinian people.

15. Zionist literature clearly shows that the Zionist leadership was fully aware of the implications of its scheme from the beginning, and of the impossibility of realizing its objectives with the continued presence of the Palestinian people on their land. Consequently, they deliberately sought to "negate" the Palestinian people and to create a false impression that denies the existence of the Palestinian people on their land - hence, Lord Shaftsbury's dictum, "A land without people for a people without land", can be seen as Zionist propaganda. In so doing, the Zionist leaders sought to give the impression that the land was empty, crying out for settlers to develop it. It would thus follow that the activities of Zionist settlers would not harm anybody, but to the contrary, would reclaim a small portion of the large earth and put it on the map of the inhabited world.

16. When the falsity of this approach was exposed, the Zionists switched their propaganda to negate the Palestinian people culturally, which is essentially a more racist approach. Zionism attempted to deny that the Palestinian people possessed any of the traits of a culture, attributing to them barbaric qualities and blaming them for the alleged destruction of the land which "flowed with milk and honey" and its ultimate deterioration into barren desert and infected swamp. These allegations were refuted by visitors to Palestine during that period, including one of the spiritual leaders of Zionism, Ahad Ha'am, who as a contemporary of the Zionist settlers at that time, confirmed in his letters from Palestine that the country was both developed and prosperous. Zionism was evidently attempting to convince the public that the abuses it was perpetrating in

Palestine were only an attempt to rescue the land and its inhabitants from barbarism and to transform it, in the words of Theodore Hertzl in The Zionist State, into "an advanced base of civilization against barbarism". This slogan, however, soon lost its appeal through over-use.

17. Following the emergence of the Palestinian National Movement, Zionist propaganda replaced this approach with a theory of political negation and with clichés designed to distort the humanitarian nature of the Palestinian struggle. This stage, which is at its height today, is based on the denial of the national affiliation of the Palestinian people to their land - Palestine - and hence, on the denial of their right to return to the land and to self-determination. This constitutes a denial of their right to set up their own independent State in Palestine, a refusal to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and hence a refusal to negotiate with the PLO in order to settle the problem. While Zionist action towards the Palestinian people has been characterized by negation and exclusion, the Palestinians have countered by insisting on participation and assertion of identity.

18. Zionist action has had a more severe impact on the Palestinian woman than on the Palestinian man, since she has had to bear the consequences of that action in addition to the burdens imposed on her by her own society, both before and after the establishment of Israel. It is obvious that the poorer classes and those at the lower levels of Palestinian social structure, including Palestinian women, have sustained greater losses from Zionist action than have the rich and the more élite classes. In fact, the disaster experienced by the Palestinians has pushed the Palestinian woman and her problems, both political and social, to the bottom of the list of priorities of the Palestinian movement.

B. The Zionist entity: the formative period

19. Although the Zionist settlers in Palestine have spoken of peace and coexistence with the Palestinian people, these avowals have never been credible. In fact, Zionist leaders were aware of the dimensions of their settlement plan from the beginning, and they recognized that the plan could only be realized through oppression and expulsion of the Palestinian people. They sought to accomplish the task through various methods and as quickly as possible.

20. From the beginning Zionists sought to "Judaize" land, markets and labour and made a serious effort to build a military tool of aggression. The "Judaization of the land" is nothing but the transfer of ownership from Arab to Jewish hands, with the consequent uprooting of Arab farmers from their land. "Jewish labour" was merely a way to force Arab workers away from production processes, and the "Jewish market" merely meant the boycotting of Arab products. The role of the military machine was to ensure, by force when necessary, that those policies were carried out. Zionist settlement thus sought to eliminate the material base for the Palestinian people on their land.

21. Actually, the struggle in Palestine between the Jewish settlers and the indigenous population was not determined by the successful cumulative effect of

the activities of the Jewish settlers but rather by the military activity and terrorism carried out by Zionist organizations against the Palestinian people. It is well known that the Palestinian people did not leave Palestine in 1948 as a result of the limited land left at their disposal, or because they had sold the major portion of their land, thus leaving themselves with insufficient space. Actually, all facts point in the opposite direction. In 1948, Jewish settlers owned only 6 per cent of the land in Palestine. Likewise, Palestinians did not flee their country owing to the lack of employment opportunities or to the boycott of Arab labour, in accordance with the "Jewish labour" policy advocated by the Jewish settlers. Despite the efforts of these settlers to boycott Arab goods under the "Jewish market" policy, Arab goods retained internal and external markets. In short, the Zionist settler movement did not succeed in taking over the country through efforts to "Judaize" land, labour and markets. The country was taken over by repressive military action. Consequently, the occupation of Palestine through Jewish settlement left a severe impact on the indigenous population, especially on the weak and poorer segments of Palestinian society, including the Palestinian woman.

22. The success of zionism in achieving its goal of establishing a Jewish State, even in a portion of Palestine, had a profound influence on the determination of its future policy. The 1948 military victory increased Israel's self-confidence and strengthened the conviction of its leaders that the full plan could be achieved in one or more stages. Its success in expelling and displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, and its consequent success in blocking their return, strengthened the Zionist leadership's concept of "negation". It therefore embarked upon a course of action based on the concept that the local population was a transient element on the land, which could be expelled if the necessary power were available. As such, the dispersion of the Palestinian people and their forced dissolution remained central objectives of zionism and became permanent policies that are being pursued even today.

23. It is the conviction of the Zionist leadership that he who has political power determines the relationship between the inhabitants and the land. The general approach of the leadership has always been to sever the relations between the Palestinian and his land. The Palestinian people are today experiencing the results of Zionist success in displacing them and in distorting the general fabric of their society. The Zionists' insistence on following their traditional policies is the cause of the suffering experienced by the Palestinians on various levels. The sufferings of the Palestinian woman as a result of displacement and disruption of the social structure have continued longer and been more bitter than the sufferings of Palestinian men. Consequently, her development and the improvement of her status in society, has been significantly delayed both on the narrow Palestinian level or in the wider sphere of Arab society. The priorities of the Palestinian people as an underdeveloped society seeking development and social growth were over-turned by conditions resulting from their enemy's military victory and by their consequent dispersion and the partition of their land, along with the fragmentation of their social structure. All these factors pose a threat to their identity and have relegated the struggle of the Palestinian woman for the improvement of her status within her society to a position of lower priority.

24. The establishment of Israel played a profound role in disrupting the social structure of the Palestinians and delaying their development and growth. The "exclusion" and "negation" approach that was slowly launched in the early days of Zionist settlement gained momentum with the Balfour Declaration (1917) and during the British Mandate in Palestine and reached its peak during the military operations of 1948. It has continued ever since, with increased momentum following the 1967 war. The most devastating impact of the establishment of Israel on Palestinian society was its fragmentation and transformation from a harmonious group constituting 70 per cent of the population of its native land into a number of minority groupings of different sizes, scattered in a number of Arab countries and elsewhere. Not only did the Palestinian people lose their political base, but their very national identity was endangered as well.

25. In 1967 Israel completed the conquest of Palestine and went on to conquer territories belonging to neighbouring Arab countries. In so doing, Israel eliminated any remaining semi-normal conditions which had continued for the Palestinians, in one form or another, in Gaza and the West Bank between 1948 and 1967. After the 1967 war, the Palestinians were transformed from a people living in their homeland, in full or in part, to a people divided into three distinct groups: those dispersed in Arab countries and elsewhere, those colonized in 1948 occupied Palestine, and those living under occupation in Gaza and the West Bank. That situation profoundly influenced the determination of the goals of the Palestinian struggle, which inevitably moved towards resolving the most pressing problem - namely, the normalization of the people's abnormal living conditions. The issue of "return" became the highest priority.

26. It is noteworthy that the Zionist plan has not yet been fully realized. It has not completed the tasks it assumed when it was presented as a political plan, neither from the point of view of its Jewish or its colonialist interests. So far, Israel has been unable, either peacefully or militarily, to end decisively its struggle with the Arab Nation on its own terms; neither has it been able to subjugate the Palestinians to the dictates of a plan founded on Zionist principles. From the Jewish standpoint, zionism has taken the slogan "solution of the Jewish question", to mean the gathering of the majority of Jews in a political entity in Palestine, which would extend its protection and hegemony over the remaining Jewish minorities in various parts of the world. Today, over 30 years after the establishment of Israel and after nearly a century of Zionist action, zionism has failed in this central objective. Only about 20 per cent of the Jews of the world have settled in Israel, which has remained directly dependent upon the support of the majority outside the country. Nevertheless, Israeli parties on the whole are still Zionist and justify their existence by a continued effort to realize the full Zionist plan - a purely Jewish State in all of Palestine. Therefore, the central concern of the current Zionist effort remains bringing Jewish immigrants to Israel and absorbing them into Israeli society. In view of this situation, the Zionist leadership must continue its efforts to realize the full plan or otherwise lose the justification for its existence, which it would not willingly do.

27. As the leadership presses on in its struggle to realize its full objectives, it will, naturally, refrain from defining the human, geographic and political limits of its plan until after it has decisively settled the question ideologically.

In fact, not only do the Zionists in power today not want to adopt a clear decision on this issue, they are actually incapable of doing so, owing to the contemporary subjective and objective conditions of zionism. Consequently, any settlement concluded or accepted by Israel will not be a final solution but rather a step along the way to the full realization of the Zionist plan; as such, it will be similar to other intermediate measures, such as the Conference of Basle, the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of Israel. This being the situation, no solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict can be expected soon, let alone a solution to the Palestinian question. This means that a struggle will continue in the region, especially between the National Palestinian Movement and Israel, which will prolong the suffering of the Palestinians and hinder their social and economic growth. Consequently, it will prevent the Palestinian woman from dealing with her specific problems and deflect her struggle to solve them.

28. Since 1973 talks and negotiations have continued on what is called "political settlement". Those talks proved that Israel is not ready for a final, comprehensive or just solution, not even a solution based on Security Council resolution 242. It is evident from an examination of the positions of the political forces active on the Israeli political scene and from their publicly announced settlement plans that no effective force within the ruling Israeli establishment will accept even the bare minimum acceptable to the Palestinians. This minimum, established by the Palestine Liberation Organization, is expressed in the resolution of the fourteenth session of the Palestine National Council, which called for the establishment of a Palestinian State on any portion of Palestine liberated from occupation. Furthermore, none of the various positions of the Israeli factions themselves enjoy enough support from the Israeli establishment or the public to constitute an officially adopted position that could serve as the basis for negotiations or agreements. Consequently, the Israeli leadership will remain, at least for the foreseeable future, incapable of adopting a decisive position on the settlement of the Palestinian question, thus leaving "No decision" as the only remaining alternative.

29. The slight shifts observed in some Israeli positions, as compared to those of traditional Zionists, fall far short of the minimum position acceptable to the Palestinians, and will remain so for many years to come, even within the framework of United Nations resolutions on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. On the other hand, the Palestinian people, under present conditions and within the circumstances surrounding their dispersion abroad and their occupation at home, are not in a position to accept the announced Israeli proposals. The struggle between Israel and the Palestinians will continue and will be prolonged, thus increasing the suffering of the Palestinian people and centring their struggle around the political issue, which will continue to command top priority, with the consequent relegation of social issues, including the problems of the Palestinian woman, to a position of marginal importance. It is therefore important that help be extended to the Palestinian woman by external sources so that she can cope with the demands of daily living.

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

30. The rise of Israel completed the destruction of Palestinian society that was launched by Zionist settlement. In addition to the uprooting, expulsion and dispersion of large segments of the Palestinian population, other segments were subjected to occupation and oppression. The Palestinian people thus lost the moral and material components necessary for forming or maintaining a society. After the war of 1948 and during the war of 1967 and the period after it, the Palestinians found themselves scattered in different groupings in Arab countries and elsewhere, faced by different and difficult political, economic and social conditions. The variety in the conditions of the different displacement locations, coupled with the geographic and to some extent political separation of the Palestinian groups, had a profound impact on the disintegration of Palestinian society, to the point where it ceased to be an integrated, cohesive social structure.

31. According to the figures of the official population census of 1922, approximately 750,000 persons lived in Palestine at that time, about 80,000 of whom were Jewish settlers and others who had taken up residence in the country prior to the Jewish settler movement. According to the second official census of 1931, there were over one million people in Palestine, including approximately 175,000 Jews. Since no official censuses were taken after that date, all figures cited by various sources are approximate. The population of Palestine before the outbreak of the 1947-1948 war was around 2 million, including approximately 600,000 Jews who owned around 1.5 million dunums of land, equivalent to 7 per cent of the total area. After the fighting ended in late 1948, only 156,000 Arabs, out of a total of 900,000 who had lived there before the fighting broke out, remained in the land occupied by Israel, which constituted 80 per cent of the area of Palestine. Approximately 1 million Palestinians congregated in the West Bank, which was annexed to Jordan, and in the Gaza strip, which remained under Egyptian administration. Half of these people were refugees from parts of Palestine occupied by Israel and the other half were local residents. In addition, an average of 100,000 Palestinians sought refuge in each of Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan (East Bank), and tens of thousands more fled to other Arab and non-Arab countries. Since then, the demographic distribution of the Palestinian people has changed radically, owing to a number of factors, the most important of which was the war that took place in June 1967, which thrust about half a million Palestinians, originally in the West Bank and Gaza, outside the borders of their country. The distribution was also significantly influenced by Palestinian migration from one country to another, especially between the Arab countries and particularly to the oil-rich countries of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. The large increase in the number of Palestinians at all their points of dispersion is a phenomenon that bears attention. Figures published by the United Nations in particular indicate that the number of Palestinians had reached 3,250,000 in 1975, with approximately half living within the borders of Palestine. Estimates indicate that this figure will reach 3.8 million in 1980, and over 4.5 million by 1985.

32. The 1975 figures indicate that the number of Palestinians living in areas occupied in 1948 reached 436,000, with 395,000 in the Gaza strip and 775,000 in the West Bank. This constitutes one half of the Palestinian people, who are divided into two groups: those in the land occupied in 1948, who are officially

considered Israeli citizens but are actually under Israeli colonialism, and those in the areas occupied in 1967, who are under Israeli occupation and subject to its military authority. The figures on Palestinians outside Palestine, for the same year, indicated the presence of 642,000 in Jordan (the East Bank) (other references put the number of Palestinians in the East Bank at over 1 million), 183,000 in the Syrian Arab Republic, 285,000 in Lebanon, 204,000 in Kuwait, 100,000 in other Gulf States and 195,000 in other countries of the world. These figures also indicate that around one fifth (20 per cent) of the Palestinian people still live in camps, especially in areas occupied in 1967 and in the adjacent States. A total of 76,000 live in 20 camps in the West Bank, about 200,000 live in 8 camps in Gaza, about 215,000 live in 10 camps in the East Bank (Jordan), about 100,000 live in 15 camps in Lebanon, and 54,000 reside in 10 camps in the Syrian Arab Republic. This brings the total number of existing camps to 63, inhabited by a total of approximately 650,000, which is a high proportion. It should be noted that most of these camps were set up near cities and, in many cases, have become the slums of those cities.

33. Several very significant features emerged from the statistics on the age structure of the Palestinian Arabs in the occupied lands in 1970, 3/ and a comparison with the figures of Palestinians in other groupings did not reveal any major differences. One of the most prominent features was the high proportion of children under the age of 14 - nearly 50 per cent - as compared to only 30 per cent for the Jewish settlers. The 15-29 age group constitutes 24 per cent of the Arabs and 26 per cent of the Jews; the 30-44 age group makes up 13 per cent of the Arabs and 20 per cent of the Jews; the 45-64 age group constitutes 8.6 per cent of the Arabs and 20 per cent of the Jews and the over-65 group make up 4 per cent of the Arabs and 7 per cent of the Jews. This means that there are 20 per cent more children below working age among the Arabs than among the Jews, whereas there is a 16 per cent margin in favour of the Jews in the age group that makes up the labour force (persons between the ages of 15 and 65). These figures underline the high fertility rates of the Palestinians, which range from 40 to 50 per thousand in all the areas where they are located.

34. Another 1970 survey of the population structure of the Palestinian Arabs, according to sex, revealed another significant feature - namely, the low proportion of males, as compared to females, in the 14-65 age bracket in the areas of Palestine occupied in 1967. 4/ Whereas the proportion of males is slightly higher in the under-14 group, the ratio changes among members of the 14-65 group. The number of males and females are almost equal in the areas occupied in 1948, but the proportion of females to males rises in the West Bank and rises even more in the Gaza strip, whereas the proportion of males remains slightly higher in all age groups in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Kuwait. This phenomenon, which increased in the years that followed the 1967 war, underlines the migration of young men of working age from the areas occupied in 1967, thus creating an abnormal situation, especially for females of marriageable age. 5/ This situation has been aggravated in later years.

3/ Government of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1971.

4/ Ibid.

5/ Syrian Arab Republic, General Census, 1970; Palestinian Research Centre, Palestinian Statistics.

35. A 1973 survey of the characteristics of the labour force (both sexes), conducted in the areas occupied in 1967, 6/ revealed a high proportion of manpower outside the labour force, especially among females. For example, 214,000, of a total of 341,000 people in the over-14 age group in the West Bank, were outside the labour force, which meant that only 127,000 were in the labour force. Of those, 126,000 were actively employed. During the same year the number of females in the same age group was 179,000, of which 159,000 were outside the labour force and only 20,000 in it. Of these, 19,000 were actively employed. In Gaza this trend was even stronger. Though the number of those in the labour force has increased, owing to the demands of the Israeli market, the situation is still far from its natural balance. It indicates that the Palestinian woman has not entered the labour market in accordance with her quantitative and qualitative potential, thus preventing her from achieving economic independence and consequently promoting social dependence. The situation is basically the same outside Israel, despite slight variations in a limited number of places, such as the suburbs of Beirut.

36. The available figures, despite their lack of comprehensiveness and their inaccuracy, show a high proportion of university graduates among the Palestinians. In Lebanon, for example, in 1971 two per thousand were university graduates. A survey of public opinion among the Palestinian population reveals that much importance is attached to education as a way to rectify social and economic conditions. However, figures published by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) point to a sharp drop in the number of 14 year-old students, as compared to the number of students in the 6-11 age group; 88.4 per cent of the latter age group are enrolled in schools, but the figure drops to 67.1 per cent for the 12-14 age group; it drops again to 37.3 per cent for the 15-17 group and goes down to 8.3 per cent for the 18-20 group. This sharp decline in the proportion of students among young people of school age is due, to a large extent, to the virtual absence of vocational schools, which forces large numbers of youth in these age groups to work in shops, garages, small factories or in services.

37. Having been deprived of their land and country, the Palestinians have been left with only one possible area of investment - the education of their people. In this field the Palestinians have scored significant success. The notable exceptions to this trend are the camp residents and the Palestinian woman. Outside aid should concentrate on these two sectors.

6/ Government of Israel, op. cit., 1974.

V. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE PALESTINIAN WOMEN

A. Palestinians in the lands occupied in 1948

38. It was only natural that Israeli policies towards the Palestinian population that remained under Israeli control in the lands occupied in 1948 should be an extension of the Jewish aspect of the general Zionist movement - namely, the "Judaization" of land, labour and markets in Palestine. Israel adopted a policy of both political and socio-economic repression against the Palestinian people in order to allow the identity of the new Jewish settlers to overshadow the identity of the indigenous residents of the country, who were thus reduced, overnight, from a large majority to a small national minority. The basic instrument of repression was the military, with its repressive laws. These were imposed by Israel on the Arab minority directly after occupation and they are still in effect in one form or another today. The primary objective of imposing martial law on the Palestinian minority was the destruction of their political cohesion and their economy, and the disruption of their social growth. Israel was thus able to transform the Palestinian population into groupings resembling the colonized "bantustans" of South Africa, an act which facilitated efforts both to uproot and evict the Palestinians and to control their future during subsequent stages of the Zionist scheme. In pursuing that objective, the Zionists subjected the Palestinians to various forms of racist, national and socio-political repression.

39. When the armistice was declared following the end of military operations in 1948, a total of 170,000 people remained in the areas of Palestine occupied by Israel. These consisted of approximately 120,000 Moslems, 35,000 Christians, 15,000 Druze and a few thousand Bahais and Circassians. The Moslems made up approximately 70 per cent, the Christians 20 per cent and the Druze 10 per cent of the population. 7/ By 1960, this total population had reached 260,000. It went up to approximately 300,000 in 1965 and 400,000 by 1967, after Israel annexed East Jerusalem and its population. By 1974, the total population had risen to over half a million. This means that the natural growth rate of the Palestinians under Israeli rule was over 4 per cent, which is one of the highest rates in the world.

40. The Arabs living in areas occupied in 1948 (not counting East Jerusalem), lived in 104 purely Arab villages and towns, and in six cities with mixed populations - namely, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Lydda, Ramallah and Jerusalem. Around 60 per cent of the population, including residents of the cities of Nazareth, Shafa, Amr and Kafr Yassif, lived in Galilee (northern district). Another 20 per cent of the Arabs lived in the triangle (the central district), while the remainder are scattered in the areas of Haifa and the Negev. Statistics indicate that 70 per cent of them, including the Bedouins in the Negev, lived in rural areas, while the remainder lived in cities. Owing to the nature of the geographic

7/ Habib Kahwaji, The Arabs under Israeli Occupation, 1948 (Beirut, Research Centre of the Palestine Liberation Organization, 1972), p. 9.

distribution of the Arab population within the lands occupied in 1948, especially in upper and lower Galilee where Palestinian communities actually formed pockets in which Palestinians constituted a majority, and owing to the proximity of these locations to the Arab borders, these Arabs retained their national affiliation and national identity. They were not overwhelmed by the fact that they were a minority within Israel as a whole, since they belonged to the absolute majority beyond the borders and constituted a majority in their own localities. In addition, they had limited contact with Jewish settlements, owing to the restrictions imposed by the military authorities on their freedom of movement and on their choice of work and place of residence.

41. The first problem that confronted the Palestinian Arabs under Israeli rule was that although they were considered Israeli citizens, they were not treated as such. Instead, they were denied the rights and duties of citizenship and were subjected to repressive military measures barring them from participation in public political, social and economic life. The Koenig Document, 8/ with its advice to the Israeli authorities concerning the Arab minority, illustrates Israel's policy towards the Arab minority under its rule. This document, named after the governor of northern Galilee in occupied Palestine, was actually a memorandum submitted by Koenig to the Israeli Ministry of the Interior and later to the Prime Minister, I. Rabin, in 1976. It was supposed to remain confidential but was published by the Israeli newspaper Al-Hamishmar. The document was an evaluation of the conditions of the Arabs in the northern district, Galilee, and contained a number of proposals for Israeli action in dealing with the Arabs, whom Koenig regarded as a very serious threat to the security of Israel.

42. A review of the document reveals that Koenig was mostly disturbed by two factors: the demographic issue and the growing nationalistic sentiment among the Arabs of Israel. To Koenig, the "demographic issue" meant the natural growth rate of the Arab minority, which, as projected, would have made the Arabs a 51 per cent majority in the northern district by the end of 1978. By mid-1975, the Arab population in the northern district reached approximately 250,000, whereas the number of Jews in the same area was 289,000. During the same year, the Arab population in some subdistricts of the north, such as West Galilee, reached 67 per cent, and in lower Galilee it reached 48 per cent, which he considered a disturbingly high rate of growth. During that year the Arab population in the northern district increased by 9,035, whereas the Jewish population grew by only 759.

43. Koenig's fears reflect a basic crisis that faces every settler community, and Israel in particular. When such an entity fails to attract additional immigrants, then it has failed to fulfil its central goal. Israel, in particular, has been attending carefully to the issue of maintaining an overwhelming Jewish majority in its population at a time when the natural growth of the Arab population has alarmed its political leadership. It is this natural growth rate that prompted Israel's leadership to direct special attention to encouraging the immigration of Jews to Israel, with all the consequent external activities, especially the

8/ See Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. VI, No. 1 (1976).

Zionist conferences. Despite all this, the flow of immigrants to Israel continues to decline, while the rate of emigration from Israel is rising. The number of Israelis living abroad reached approximately 300,000 in 1976. In view of the decrease in the number of immigrants arriving in Israel, the rise in the number of emigrants and the increase in the Arab population at one of the world's highest rates of growth, the Zionist leadership sent out demographic danger signals, as in the case of Koenig. If enough Jews cannot be drawn to Israel to maintain the population balance as envisaged in the Zionist scheme, then the second best alternative facing the Zionist leadership is to make more Arabs leave Israel, which is what is proposed by Koenig in his document. This would be done by harassing the Arabs, applying economic and political pressures and obstructing their social progress and economic growth.

44. The 1967 war, according to Koenig, gave a new and strong impetus to nationalist sentiments among the Arabs of Israel, which was further fostered by the opening of the borders, the consequent freedom of movement between territories occupied in 1948 and those occupied in 1967 and the consequent contact with the Arabs beyond the Jordan River. The 1973 war, the resulting political developments and the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a political force that was being increasingly recognized in international circles as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people only strengthened and fostered this sentiment. Koenig pointed out that the increase in the number of Arabs in Israel over a period of time constituted the basic factor in the Palestinians' sense of power. He was further alarmed by the fact that the Arab population groupings in the north, whose sense of nationalism was growing, were contiguous and constituted a majority in their areas. All this was viewed against the background of the northern district (Galilee), which was part of the proposed Arab State under the 1947 partition resolution, a fact which made Koenig fear the possibility that the Palestinians would achieve self-determination through a popular plebiscite, which would naturally be in their favour. Consequently, Koenig recommended the acceleration of the "Judaization" of Galilee, the whittling down of the Arab population pockets, and their separation by intensive Jewish settlement. He also called for the adoption of a stricter and sterner policy to confront manifestations of nationalist sentiment, especially in terms of parties and national leaders.

45. Koenig also regarded the improved economic conditions of the Arabs in Israel and the accumulation of capital by some of them as another reason for their growing nationalist sentiment, their sense of power and, consequently, their ability to resist Israeli policies. He pointed out the inconsistency in the implementation of development and "Judaizing" projects in the north whose objective was primarily to attract Jewish settlers to that area, while 25-50 per cent of the workers on those projects were Arabs, who were able to improve their economic conditions. In addition, social security and other economic benefits relieved Arab workers of the burden of securing their living conditions and thus gave them time to examine national and social issues. Koenig finally proposed the following:

(a) Limiting the employment of Arab workers on state development projects to no more than 20 per cent of the total workers;

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(b) Increasing taxes on Arab income and intensifying tax-collection procedures;

(c) Obstructing Arab agencies for the distribution of consumer goods and paralysing their operations;

(d) Depriving large Arab families of a state allowance while maintaining such allowances for Jewish families by channelling such allowances through the Jewish Agency and other Zionist organizations that excluded Arabs from their programmes;

(e) Exerting efforts to prompt state institutions to give priority to Jews, both as individuals or groups, over Arabs in all procedures.

46. Koenig, who is by no means an isolated voice in Israel, goes on to list the advances that the Arabs of Israel have achieved in education as a result of improved economic conditions, social security and benefits they had received in schools and institutions of higher learning, in terms of admission requirements and tuition, as another reason for the rise of nationalist sentiment among them. The continuation of this trend, in Koenig's view, would produce greater numbers of educated Arabs who would form the core of a political leadership which was dissatisfied with the status quo. He therefore recommended the following:

(a) Increasing restrictions on the admission of Arabs to universities and institutions of higher education, especially in the social sciences, which would inevitably lead to fewer college and university graduates;

(b) Directing Arabs towards the study of natural and applied sciences and professional and scientific disciplines, which would be time-consuming and would therefore not allow involvement in nationalist and political activities;

(c) Facilitating the departure of Arab students to pursue their studies abroad, while complicating their return and employment, thus prompting them to emigrate;

(d) Taking harsh measures against all activist university students.

47. The above indicates the attitude of Israeli officials towards the Arab minority population under their rule - a population that had previously constituted an overwhelming majority exercising sovereignty over its land but which had, as a result of the rise of Israel, become a nearly impotent minority of persons who live as aliens in their own homeland, under the rule of an incoming settler majority which is antagonistic for reasons of class and national sentiment and even denies them the right to exist in their native land. All this occurred despite the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, announced on 14 May 1948, which stipulated that "Israel will seek to develop the country in the best interests of all its citizens, and will maintain political and social equality between all its subjects without sex, religious or ethnic discrimination, and will guarantee freedom of thought, worship, education and culture". What actually happened was that Israel treated the Arabs under its rule as members of a

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persecuted ethnic minority, who were discriminated against socially, racially and economically. They remained third-class citizens, since oriental Jews were second-class citizens.

48. Examples of such discrimination abound. 9/ For instance, four days after its establishment, Israel imposed military rule on the Arab areas under its control. It later extended this rule to other occupied areas, including all of Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev. This rule was based on the Emergency Laws of the mandate Government, which had been imposed on Jewish areas when the clandestine Zionist organizations intensified their activities. When the mandate Government imposed those rules it was attacked by one of the Zionist labour leaders, Dov Youssef, who later became a minister in the Israeli Government and held the post of Minister of Justice:

"The question is this. Will we all become exposed to legally licensed terrorism ... or will the freedom of the individual prevail? There is no guarantee that a citizen will not be detained all his life without trial. There is no chance of appealing a decision of the military ruler and no possibility of turning to the High Court. The authority has unlimited power to deport any citizen at any moment. Moreover, even if a person might have done nothing wrong, it is sufficient that a certain decision be taken in some office to determine his future. The only options are freedom or chaos. When the authorities in any country arouse wrath, fury and resentment against the laws, they cannot expect respect for the law. The citizen should not be asked to respect a law that deprives him of all that is lawful." 10/

49. The military system of government is one of the most important elements of the repression and discrimination practised by the Israeli political authorities, and it has been the only form of government that the Arab minority has ever known. In Israel, military rule is based on 170 articles, compiled under 15 chapters that cover restrictions on freedom of transportation, movement and the choice of residential location. They also include restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of the press. These laws give the military governor unlimited powers and threaten the freedom of the individual and his property. The military government has its special courts, which are distinct from the civilian courts and not subject to them; consequently, their rulings cannot be appealed.

50. The Israeli system of military government differs from other similar systems in that it is the instrument of authority in implementing an evictive settlement policy, and at no time have its duties been confined to security. In Israel the military government was responsible for breaking up the national unity of the Palestinians who remained in Israel, fragmenting their social cohesion, and

9/ See the annual reports of the United Nations Committee to Investigate Israeli Measures that Affect the Human Rights of the Residents of the Occupied Territories, which was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2443 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968.

10/ Kahwaji, op. cit., p. 134.

destroying their independent economic base. This led to the consequent economic dependence of the Palestinian people and their exploitation by the Zionist settlers; meanwhile, their political absorption was prevented and their social isolation within the Zionist entity as a whole was maintained. Military rule was exercised over all the Palestinian people in Israel without distinction, including the urban, rural and Bedouin populations. It affected all the Palestinians, thus serving to promote unity among the Palestinians in their struggle against their oppressive rulers and to promote political unity as they were pushed into a growing confrontation. This led, in turn, to the escalation of their protest and struggle against the military, on the one hand, and to the counter-development of repressive measures, on the other hand.

51. The primary duty of the military authority was to suppress the struggle of the Palestinians against Zionist political authority, to subjugate them to its dictates, and finally to force the Palestinians to accept political and socio-economic discrimination. An additional basic task of the military authority was to pave the way for the enforcement of the basic Zionist objective of depriving the Arabs of land ownership and the consequent seizure and "Judaization" of the land. Military rule was strictly imposed until 1966, after which it was eased in form but not in fact. During those long years Israel was able to accomplish most of its objectives. It succeeded in reducing the Arab minority under its rule to population groupings in which they lived but of which they were not an integral part. By dividing the country into military zones and limiting travel to people with special passes issued by the military governor, the Israeli authorities reduced the Arab population centres to isolated pockets, incapable of integration or interaction. By seizing the ownership of the major part of Arab property when the bulk of the Arab population consisted of rural farmers, Israel destroyed the only material basis for the cohesion of a semi-autonomous Arab economy. Arab farmers were evicted from their own economic sphere, without being allowed to enter the general economic arena of the country. Most of them shifted from independent work on their own farms and fields to employment as hired labourers, mostly as seasonal workers earning very low wages, at least during the first two decades after the founding of Israel. They worked in the Jewish labour market and lived in the Arab population centres, an arrangement similar to that in the bantustans of South Africa.

52. Thousands of farmers were evicted from their homes, lands and villages; many of them were expelled from their homeland under military rule and in accordance with its law. Before the first population census following the establishment of Israel, the military authorities selectively expelled tens of people from every Arab village and town. The military authorities would surround a village before dawn, impose a curfew and gather the people in central squares, where the people were subjected to mass interrogation, after which "undesirable elements", chosen on the basis of previously prepared lists, or on the basis of information received by these authorities on the political activity of these persons or their relatives, were expelled. The actual expulsion method, which is still used today, involved the moving of these people in trucks which dumped them near the border of an Arab country. This kind of action, coming on the heels of the dispersion which took place during the war, aggravated the disruption of Palestinian families, some of which were divided into several parts, each located in a different country.

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It was in this context that reference was made, during the early years of Israel's existence, to the "re-unification of families".

53. The impact of this scattering was much more devastating for the poorer and weaker families, and the Palestinian woman suffered much as the result of her separation from father, brother, husband or son. In addition, the remaining "fragments" of the rural communities from which many of the people had fled, were "merged" into large communities; many of these people were removed from their homes and lands and shipped to other localities where they were added to other villages. They resided in houses they did not own, while their own property in their original villages was seized. They were given, in compensation, land which they did not own. The sudden changes introduced into the life of these conservative farmers created countless social problems.

54. Hundreds of villages were thus emptied of their Arab residents, and these villages were then demolished and all their features obliterated. Moreover, whole populations of certain villages were shifted, under the pretext of one "security reason" or another; the villagers were told at the time that this was a temporary measure that would be revoked at the end of the state of emergency. These people have remained refugees in Israel and still live outside their villages and homes today, as is the case with the residents of the two border villages of Akrath and Kafr-Bir'im in upper Galilee.

55. The military governors, who were chosen from among the supporters of the ruling party, naturally remained the instruments of the party in the implementation of its internal policies, especially during general and local elections. The military governor, with his broad powers and extensive relations and contacts, would concentrate, along with his aides, on carrying out his role in the service of the ruling party, after having nearly completed his Zionist mission on the various political, economic and social levels. His most significant activities were the following:

(a) Intervention in parliamentary, municipal and local elections in favour of the ruling party through terrorism or enticement, especially during an election period;

(b) The banning of any political movement on the local or national level that was independent of the Zionist parties and the harassing of organizations attached to or allied with Zionist parties other than the ruling party;

(c) Domination of the educational system, especially through the appointment of teachers, who play a vital role in Arab circles and the application of pressure to ensure subjection to the political dictates of the ruling party;

(d) Encouraging sectarianism and tribalism in Arab society, thus fueling internal struggles in order to distract the attention of people from their real problems, and isolating and harassing progressive forces while giving support to the traditional, reactionary and collaborative elements in Arab circles;

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(e) Obstructing the growth and development of social and cultural institutions in Arab circles that could improve congenial ties among youth and raise their moral and material standards;

(f) Creating an atmosphere of anxiety and despair in youth circles to prompt them to emigrate; this was done by making them feel that they were constantly humiliated and under siege, psychologically, economically and politically;

(g) Making it possible for other "organs" of the authority to infiltrate Arab circles for inciting internal conflicts.

56. Hundreds of thousands of dunums of land were expropriated from Arab farmers in Israel under the military rule and on the basis of a series of laws issued by the Israeli authorities. Article 125 of the Emergency Law, which is the basis of military rule, entitles the military to cordon whole areas and define the terms of entry or departure. This article specifies that the military commander is entitled to declare any specific region or part of a region an area restricted for security reasons. Once farmers are barred from cultivating the land for three years the land become subject to the provisions of the Ottoman Law on "fallow land", under which the ruling authorities have the right to confiscate the land and deprive its owners of their ownership rights. Over the years, Israel issued a number of laws which allow the authorities "legally" to confiscate Arab property to meet the needs for the "Judaization" of the country. The military governor was the one who administered these laws or facilitated their implementation by other administrations. At the same time, the military governor served as a "safety valve" to ensure that the verdicts of civilian courts favourable to Arab litigants were not enforced. This was arranged by declaring that lands whose ownership was in dispute - those the courts had decided belonged to Arab owners and could not be confiscated by the authorities - were classified as "restricted areas" or areas of "military exercises" or "border areas" or "security areas". The lands were then confiscated and transferred to Zionist institutions to become waqf (religious endowments) of the "Jewish people", which could not be sold or leased to non-Jews.

57. Once the Arab farmer was deprived of his land he had no alternative but to become a hired or seasonal worker, mainly working in agriculture for the Jewish settlers. In the beginning the Israeli settlers entered into share-tenancy arrangements (half or quarter shares) with the Arab farmers whose lands had been confiscated and turned over to the settlers. The settlers received the bulk of the crops, without exerting any effort beyond the exploitation of the privileges extended to them as new Jewish settlers. They merely had to go to one of the land-lease authority offices and pay a small rental fee. However, even this possibility was closed to the Palestinian farmers when the authorities issued a law banning such arrangements. The proportion of Arab villagers working in agriculture declined from 75 per cent when Israel was established to less than 20 per cent by the end of the 1970s, clearly indicating the success of Israel in uprooting the Arab farmer from his land and his traditional work.

58. Briefly, the most significant feature in the life of the Palestinian Arabs in the lands occupied in 1948 and consequently the most influential, was their transformation from a majority to a minority of the population within an evictive

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settler entity and the loss of their main base of economic independence - namely, their land - with their consequent transformation into a hired labour force working in construction or agriculture and generally on a seasonal basis - in short, their proletarianization. Since this shift did not take place naturally or spontaneously but was planned ahead of time and forcefully executed, it had a stronger impact.

59. The Arab minority struggled bitterly against the Israeli policies on all levels - political, economic and social - and especially against the general Israeli approach to the "Judaization" of Arab land not only as a means of production but also as a national homeland. Actually, the record of the struggle for the land and their attachment to it, with all that such an attachment represents, is the record of the struggle of this minority against Zionist colonialism. The Arab woman shared in this struggle and bore her share of the burdens and, in fact, the impact on her was even more severe and detrimental. However, the State had the upper hand and was able to realize its goals, even though it has not yet completed its programme.

60. In seeking to realize their goals, the occupation authorities exercised every possible form of repression and racial discrimination, limiting freedom of movement and of political and cultural expression, and restricting the rights of Palestinians to work and reside where they chose, as well as their opportunities for education and social growth, and applying general economic pressure. The rebellion of the Arabs living in lands occupied in 1948, as manifested in the "Day of the land" or in the recent confrontation between the authorities and the farmers of the village of "Mi'ilya", expose the claims of the Zionist occupation authorities regarding improvements in the living conditions of the Arab minority under occupation.

61. Along with its policy of political repression and social and economic havoc, Israel also strove diligently to demolish the Palestinian identity of its Arab minority through a carefully devised policy of programming education in the schools in such a way as to define the human and national values of the Arabs according to the wishes of the Israeli planners. These planners continue to regard the Palestinian Arabs as part of the Arab people and, as such, as the "national enemy", who now live in Israel not by any "historical right" but rather because Israel has granted them the "right to exist"; as such, the Palestinians are subject to the will and design of Israel. The national history of these students is thus being distorted, since according to the Jewish view, Palestine has no history in the absence of "God's Chosen People" from "the promised land". In the absence of the "Jewish people", the "full land of Israel" becomes a mere geographic entity, devoid of all history, as are the people who have lived on the land continuously but are not "chosen".

B. Palestinians in areas occupied in 1967

62. Ever since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, it has pursued a policy in both areas based on annexation, economic attachment, the construction of settlements and the "Judaizing" of the land, with the consequent uprooting of the people or their transformation into hired workers in the Jewish labour

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market, in preparation for the annexation of both areas to Israel when circumstances permit. Actually, Israeli practices in Gaza and the West Bank since 1967 have not differed greatly, either in principle or in objective, from the policies directed towards the Arabs in areas occupied in 1948. The policies simply reflect differences in the sizes of the populations in the two areas. The density of the Arab population in Gaza and the West Bank is much higher than in Galilee or the "triangle", especially when compared with the Zionist settlements in those areas. Consequently, the actions of the occupation authorities in Gaza and the West Bank have seemed more severe, especially in recent years. Ever since Begin unveiled his "self-rule" plan and Israeli plans to annex occupied territories became obvious, the struggle between the Arab population and the occupation authorities has intensified. As the residents of the West Bank are escalating their struggle to break the yoke of occupation, the Israeli authorities are also escalating their repressive measures and oppressive rules. This situation is inflicting extensive damage on the lives of the Arabs in these areas, seriously harming their economic and living conditions. It is only natural that the end result of this struggle should be further suffering for this portion of the Palestinian people, and in particular for the poorer and weaker sectors, including women. The prominent feature of the struggle there is the battle against occupation, which takes up most efforts and activities and diverts attention from the other problems - human, social and economic.

63. The Israeli proposals put forward as the basis for a "settlement" in the areas occupied in 1967 obviously do not constitute an acceptable basis for negotiations on the future of those areas; they also fail to meet the even minimum conditions required within the framework of United Nations resolutions, let alone the Arab position generally and the Palestinian position in particular, which is based on the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Begin plan for self-rule, the broad outline of which was adopted at Camp David, is a transparent attempt to cover up the actual annexation of territories occupied in 1967, but without the people who live there. The plan provides for the transformation of these people into isolated groupings, similar to "bantustans", in preparation for their expulsion, whenever circumstances permit, or for the facilitation of their "voluntary emigration" because of the pressures of daily living conditions, be they political, social or economic. The plan deprives them of political sovereignty over their land, and its settlement programme prevents the building of a cohesive Arab society with an independent economy in these territories, since it places all State-owned land (which constitutes the majority of agricultural land and includes all community property and wastelands), and all water sources, natural resources and the like, under the control of the State - Israel.

64. The members of the Arab population will be given the right, theoretically at least, to choose their nationality. If they chose Israeli citizenship, and are granted it, they join their brethren of the lands occupied in 1948, which is an unenviable situation. If they retain their present Jordanian nationality, they become a national community living in a foreign country, while they are still living on their own land, in their own cities and villages, and even in their own homes, thus constituting a situation unique in its abnormality.

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65. It is known that Begin's plan for self-rule is confined to local services, which prompted the Bethlehem municipality to describe it as an "administration for public cleaning and garbage collection services". The plan also requires that the Israeli occupation army remain in these territories and that the offices of the military Government remain open in the cities and the larger villages, where it will be responsible for "security". The elections discussed within the framework of self-rule negotiations are no more than a compulsory referendum requiring a "yes" or "no" response to measures defined by the occupation authorities. They are thus by no means free elections to determine the nature of political or administrative representation.

66. The alternative Israeli plan, which is proposed by the official Israeli opposition and which is based on what was originally known as the "Allon Plan", after former Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, is also inconsistent with the common understanding of the word "settlement", as expressed in the simple formula, the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories in return for Arab recognition of its legal existence. The Allon Plan fails to fulfil even the minimum conditions of Security Council resolution 242, since it provides for the annexation of the largest possible area with the lowest possible number of people and the return to Jordan of the dense population groupings of the West Bank and Gaza. This would take place within the terms of an agreement that would keep bridges open between the two banks of the Jordan, which would remain, according to this plan, the "security border of Israel". As such, the main concern of this plan is to get rid of the Arab population in the territories in order to avert the demographic danger and to maintain the "racial purity of the State of Israel". The most noteworthy feature of the "Allon Plan" is that it was not adopted by the Israeli Government, not even by the Government in which Allon participated as a foreign minister. Today, this plan has no hope of securing the support of the majority of the Israeli ruling hierarchy and becoming an official Israeli position which could serve as the basis for "settlement" negotiations. Nevertheless, without being officially announced as such, the plan remained the basis for Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza until the Begin Government took office in 1977, at which time the door was flung wide open for settlements in accordance with the policies of the new ruling party, the Likud.

67. At present there is no indication that any possible "settlement" will be reached in the foreseeable future. The proposal of the party currently in power is not acceptable to the Arabs, the Palestinians or to the Israelis. Furthermore, the plan of the alternative party is unacceptable to both Arabs and Israelis. Consequently, the current occupation status will be prolonged, as will be the struggle against it, which will bring more repressive measures and which means more suffering for the Palestinians living in areas occupied in 1967. Thus, all peace-loving people should mobilize their forces to lift the yoke of occupation from the Palestinian people and to help them escape its burden, which has truly become unbearable.

68. The following summarizes aspects of the situation in these territories:

- (a) Ever since the occupation in 1967, Israel has persisted in setting up

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civilian and paramilitary settlements in open violation of international conventions and agreements, as spelled out in the decisions of the Geneva Conventions (Fourth Convention - article 49 (6)). These settlements have clear-cut political objectives, as admitted by the Zionists. The Israeli High Court, in its verdict on the "Ellon Moreh" settlement near Nablus (November, 1979), contradicted the testimony given by the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, Raphael Eitan, which stated that the "Ellon Moreh" settlement was set up for "security" reasons.

(b) Israel allowed its citizens and civil institutions to own land in the occupied territories, contrary to international conventions. It also took over State-owned lands and natural resources in the territories and it further exerted pressure on municipal and village councils to link basic utility networks (water, electricity, transportation and the like) with those of Israel.

(c) In violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel forcibly moved thousands of people from their places of residence to other locations, in order to facilitate the control of the areas by the occupation authorities and in order to pave the way for their annexation to Israel with the least possible trouble. One prominent example was the forcible movement, by the Israeli military authorities, of thousands of people from Gaza to the West Bank and North Sinai.

(d) The Israeli occupation authorities refused to allow members of Palestinian families residing in the West Bank or Gaza who had been outside Palestine to return to their homes and to reunite with their families.

(e) The Israeli authorities harassed the educational institutions in Gaza and the West Bank through police action against students and the suppression of student movements and by closing the institutions for long periods and reducing their freedom of action, especially in determining their curricula and importing textbooks. A report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization accused the Israeli authorities of adopting educational policies in Gaza and the West Bank designed to paralyse Palestinian culture. 11/

(f) The Israeli occupation authorities set restrictions on local medical, educational and social institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, which would obstruct "self-rule", an act in keeping with Israeli intentions of annexing these territories. It also contradicts the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which does not permit interference in local institutions, except for security reasons; it is clear that Israeli interference does not stem from such considerations.

(g) In the territories occupied since 1967, Israel has practised collective

11/ "Report by the Director-General on the situation of the national education and the cultural life of peoples in the occupied Arab territories" (UNESCO 18/C).

punishment, demolished homes, expelled and deported Palestinian residents and detained Palestinians without trial for prolonged periods. It has also imposed curfews, restricted freedom of movement, political expression and the right to hold meetings, and imprisoned and tortured Palestinians, as confirmed by the reports of international committees set up to investigate Israeli practices in those territories, whose findings condemn such practices as violations of human rights according to the provisions of the Geneva Convention. 12/

69. Activities initiated in Gaza and the West Bank after their occupation in 1967, and which continue today, point towards changes in these territories similar to the changes that took place in the areas occupied in 1948. Immediately after the occupation of these territories, the issue of their future was raised, and they were described as "bargaining cards" in the hands of Israel, from which withdrawal should take place upon reaching a "settlement". These views were based on a number of considerations, including apprehensions over the demographic issue. A few muted voices referred to the danger of Israel's becoming a colonial Power. However, all these views were opposed to the integration of the occupied territories into the Israeli economy. However, those responsible for government policies in these areas at that time, headed by the then Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, viewed the occupation as a golden opportunity to break the Arab boycott and to penetrate Arab markets through the West Bank and the "open-bridge" policy, in order to exploit the natural and human resources of those areas. They paid no attention to the demographic problem since they were confident of the ability of Israel to cope with this problem somehow. An Israeli defence ministry report on the economic conditions in areas occupied in 1967, stated: "These territories constitute a supplementary market for Israeli goods and services and a source of means of production, especially unskilled labour, for the Israeli economy." 13/

70. Actually, the territories occupied in 1967 were promptly linked to the Israeli economy and placed in its service. The 1967 occupied territories became the second most important importer of Israeli consumer goods, after the United States of America 14/ and the second most important source of cheap labour for the Israeli market after Israel itself. There was a high proportion of women and children among these workers, especially among those involved in seasonal work and the harvesting of crops. Arab workers from the territories occupied in 1967 were

12/ See Report of Amnesty International, 1979 and the annual reports of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

13/ Unit for Co-ordination of Activity in the Administered Areas, Israel Ministry of Defense, Development and Economic Situation in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and North Sinai, 1967-1969: A Summary (October, 1979).

14/ Eric Rouleau, "The Palestinians in Purgatory", Le Monde, 9 January 1973.

employed in the Israeli labour market in large numbers, especially in the fields of agriculture and construction and, to a lesser extent, in industry, and they rapidly became one of the main pillars of that market. By 1973 there were over 70,000 officially registered workers, not counting the unregistered workers, who probably numbered half as many. Most of the second group was made up of women and children, who were more exposed to exploitation owing to their lack of work permits and, as such, were at the mercy of the employer or contractor. This created an uproar in liberal and labour union circles within Israel itself.

71. Owing to the number of the Arab workers and the failure of the occupation forces to impose restrictions on Jewish employers in terms of wage scales or social security and health benefits, they soon became competitors of their Arab brethren in the areas occupied in 1948, who worked in the same sectors but who had, over the years, acquired certain privileges in terms of wages and securities. It was only natural that Jewish employers would prefer to employ Arab workers from the 1967 territories, since that would decrease their expense and increase their profits. These workers, men, women and children, are not only exploited but they also work under harsh and humiliating conditions. These workers are transported to their work sites in trucks owned by the contractors, who charge them exorbitant rates in addition to the commissions they receive for employing them. They sometimes sleep at the work site, many times without a permit from the military governor, which exposes them to possible arrest and trial for the violation of the regulations imposed by the military Government, an offence subject to imprisonment or a fine. Agricultural workers who sleep at their work site live in shacks under shameful conditions, while construction workers live in the unfinished buildings, harassed by the police and the civil guards, who take revenge on them for Palestinian resistance operations carried out in Israel. The very first act of the Israeli police following a Palestinian resistance operation is usually to round up the Arab workers in the area and to arrest, detain, interrogate and insult them.

72. The economic annexation of the occupied territories and the control of their exports, imports, manpower and natural resources opened a large consumer market for Israeli goods and provided Israel with an abundance of cheap, unskilled labour, which could be exploited in the ugliest of manners. This also provided Israeli capital with new investment opportunities. As a result of these policies, these territories were transformed into Israeli "colonies", whose linkage with Israel became stronger with time. Simultaneously, Israeli dependence on them for the building of its economy became greater, thus increasing Israeli attachment to them and leading to the creation of pretexts for withdrawing from these territories and for their annexation. In addition to occupation, the economic colonization of the territories occupied in 1967 is actually the basic problem facing the Palestinian Arabs in those areas. Along with other concerned parties, the Palestinians attach the highest importance to Israeli economic colonization. By ending occupation, they seek to eliminate this form of "colonialism". However, this does not necessarily mean that efforts to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians in these territories and to relieve their daily burdens should be lessened, especially in the case of the Palestinian woman.

73. Arab workers in the 1967 occupied territories do not receive the same wages as Jewish workers, or even as the Arab workers in Israel. In addition, they are

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deprived of all social security, health and unemployment benefits and end-of-service compensations. This violates international norms and constitutes a violation of the most basic human rights. A large proportion of these workers entered the Israeli labour market "illegally" - that is, without a permit from the military governor's office in the area in which they reside. As such, by working "secretly", they become liable to expulsion and prosecution from all sides. They also work under inhuman conditions, be it in terms of wages, working hours, the nature of the work, hardships in securing and discharging the work or mobility between residence and work site. The situation has become so widespread that some Israeli newspapers have taken up the cause and published articles exposing the maltreatment of these Arab workers in Israel. ^{15/} Moreover, Israeli employers employed large numbers of young Arab children at very low wages, in violation of internationally accepted labour laws, especially those involving child labour, and even in violation of Israeli labour laws, as specified in the charter of the Israeli labour union (Histadrut) itself, an act which aroused an international and even a local backlash against these practices. ^{16/}

74. Once the Israeli labour market had absorbed all the male labour potential of the territories occupied in 1967, it started to recruit Arab women from those territories. A study on the conditions of the Palestinian woman in the occupied territories ^{17/} indicates that a large number of Arab women in the villages of Galilee, the triangle, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are leaving household duties in the villages to become hired workers in the Israeli labour market, harvesting crops or working as unskilled labourers in the textile, food and manufacturing industries. The study indicates that this trend began after the 1967 war as a result of the consequent changes in the economic structure of Israel. A study by the Israeli Defense Ministry on the labour potential of the occupied territories and their ability to meet the needs of the Israeli market, notes the importance of recruiting Palestinian women: "It seems that the male labour potential in the cities and villages of the West Bank has been utilized fully, so any expansion of the labour potential must involve the mobilization of women for the purpose." ^{18/} In fact, the occupation authorities set up seven vocational training centres, supervised by the Government, to train women in sewing and embroidery, in order to prepare them for work in Israeli clothing factories.

^{15/} Examples of these articles can be found in such Israeli newspapers as HA'ARETZ (30 July 1972 and 3 August 1972) and YEDIOT AERANOUT (9 August 1972).

^{16/} See United Nations Development Programme, Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Assistance to the Palestinian People to the Inter-Agency Meeting (20 April 1979), p. 21; and Ma'ariv, 21 July 1971.

^{17/} Amal Samad, "The proletarianization of Palestinian women in Israel", MERIP REPORTS, No. 50, (Washington, D.C., August 1976), pp. 10-15.

^{18/} Unit for Co-ordination of Activity in Administered Areas, op. cit.

75. However, most of the women in the territories remain unemployed for subjective reasons involving the social conditions prevailing in Arab society and objective reasons involving the transformation of the economy of the occupied territories, especially as a result of their annexation to the Israeli economy. Under the impact of the opening of the Israeli labour market, the programmed assault on the independence of the Arab economy in the occupied territories and the flooding of local markets with Israeli consumer goods, many economic activities were disrupted, especially in the agricultural and handicraft sectors. Consequently, the number of local job opportunities decreased and competition for the limited remaining opportunities increased, leaving women with a very small share. Since the prevailing traditions of large segments of the Palestinian population restricted women's freedom of movement, and consequently their ability to work at sites far from their place of residence, many of these women preferred to assume household duties, and even to remain unemployed, rather than to work under the prevailing conditions. Nevertheless, the number of women working in the fields of education, nursing and services is increasing.

76. In order to evaluate the impact of this transformation on the Palestinian woman, the situation must be considered within the framework of the general shift of Arab farmers from independent agricultural work to hired labour, a trend which was given increasing impetus with the launching of Zionist settlements in Palestine in 1882 and which has continued up to the present. This shift has been taking place under special conditions which distinguish it from similar phenomena, since it is taking place within the framework of an evictive settlement plan, with all the consequent political and social ramifications. In order to evaluate the impact of this shift, we must consider the following dimensions:

(a) The cultural dimension. The Palestinian woman is Arab and her action is guided by the aggregate of social and religious traditions of her people and nation.

(b) The national dimension. As the Palestinian woman joins her husband in the service of the Israeli economy, the capacity of Israel to continue its aggression against the Palestinian people and the Arab nation is enhanced, while the components of the independent Palestinian economy and, consequently, the cohesiveness of Palestinian society, even in its narrow context, are further weakened.

(c) The class dimension. The shift of the Palestinian woman, in comparatively large numbers, from household work to seasonal work in farms, textile plants or manufacturing plants does not constitute a step forward in the improvement of her social position. Moreover, if she is uprooted from her traditional position in her society without being given guarantees of permanent work in which she can advance, this will only create additional crises in her society, especially if the two previous dimensions are also taken into consideration.

77. Actually, within the framework of her present family, national and class circumstances, the shift from domestic work to seasonal hired labour did not improve the situation of the Palestinian woman as much as it increased her burdens

within her society. The problems of the Palestinian woman in the occupied territories are not restricted to the general political issue of the Israeli occupation of these territories; nor are they restricted to economic, employment or unemployment questions or to the issues of work location, wages or the difficulty or ease of securing work. They go beyond all these to include the general social aspects of her life, such as the following:

(a) A high proportion of illiteracy prevails among women over the age of 15 - up to twice the illiteracy levels among men. 19/

(b) The number of girls in secondary schools is half the number of boys. During the 1977/78 school year, the number of secondary school students in the West Bank was 31,014, composed of 20,121 boys and 10,893 girls. 20/

(c) The number of women who have had nine years of schooling or more are few, especially among camp residents, because the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) does not operate secondary schools in camps and because parents place a greater priority on the education of boys, the most important reason being the economic assistance provided by the boys. 21/

(d) Domestic and family restrictions limit the movement of women and their ability to devote themselves to work outside the home.

(e) The scarcity of nurseries and the lack of kindergartens prevent women from going out to work. This problem is intensified by the fact that most Palestinian homes lack the facilities that could compensate for this shortage, which increases the child-raising burdens imposed on the woman.

(f) There is a lack of vocational and technical training centres that would enable women to acquire specific skills that they are unable to acquire in regular schools. 22/

(g) The general health conditions in Palestinian groupings - especially in the camps - malnutrition, the increasing cost of medical treatment and the shrinking medical services have left their impact on the most vulnerable segment of the population - women and children. A reliable study on health and medical services in the West Bank points to a rise in Arab infant mortality between 1973 and 1975 from 70 to 80 per thousand. 23/ The data point to a general crisis in medical services, especially in relation to the needs of women in this respect.

19/ Jamil Hilaal, The West Bank: the Socio-Economic Structure, 1948-1974, (Beirut, Research Centre of the Palestine Liberation Organization, 1974), p. 196.

20/ United Nations Development Programme, op. cit., p. 26.

21/ Jamil Hilaal, op. cit.

22/ United Nations Development Programme, op. cit., p. 29.

23/ Ibid., p. 33.

C. Palestinians in refugee camps

78. The uprooting of the Palestinian people from their land, the loss of their homeland and their eventual dispersion were accompanied by a number of elements which were destructive to the social structure of the Palestinian people in general and detrimental to the growth of the poorer and weaker segments of the Palestinian population in particular. One of the results of displacement was the reversal of the priorities of general social activity, especially in the case of those who left Palestine for other countries. In addition, the gap between the Palestinian social classes became wider, and interaction between the people was interrupted. All this had a profound effect on the course of subsequent events in Palestinian groupings outside Palestine. The rich and middle classes were scattered in various Arab cities and elsewhere, especially in capitals, and busily sought to establish themselves in their new environment. The farmers and poorer classes were quartered in densely populated "camps", which in time mostly became shanty towns and slums, and were deprived of opportunities for work, education, health care and political participation.

79. Regardless of whether they were grouped in camps or scattered in nearby and far-off cities and villages, and regardless of whether they depended on UNRWA aid to camps or successfully built or rebuilt their lives in their locations of dispersion, all were subjected to the reality of being "refugees". This meant dependence on current developments in their countries of residence, on the existing employment possibilities and on the extent to which they were endowed with skills and expertise. 24/ In general, the collapse of Palestinian society after the Zionist occupation of Palestine meant, in effect, the collapse of the social position of all its members, to one extent or another.

80. According to UNRWA statistics, 1,652,436 Palestinians registered with the Agency as refugees in 1975, including 646,215 in camps and others outside the camps. They were distributed as follows: 25/

24/ Sami Hadawi, Bitter Harvest: Palestine Between 1914-1967 (New York, New World Press, 1967), p. 176.

25/ Economic Commission for Western Asia, Demographic Situation of the Palestinian People (8 May 1979), p. 131.

Number of Palestinian refugees (1975)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Out of camps</u>	<u>In camps</u>	<u>No. of camps</u>
1	West Bank	295,138	219,136	76,002	20
2	Gaza Strip	336,416	136,368	200,048	8
3	East Bank	636,778	421,966	214,812	10
4	Lebanon	197,974	96,358	101,616	15
5	Syria	186,130	132,393	53,737	10
<u>Totals</u>		<u>1,652,436</u>	<u>1,006,221</u>	<u>646,215</u>	<u>63</u>

81. Following the destruction of the independent Palestinian economy, a population with a peasant majority - which, as "refugees" had become a landless agricultural people - assembled in the camps. ^{26/} The land, as far as the Palestinian peasant was concerned, was not only a means of production but also the basis of his culture and the framework for the continuity of his inherited traditions, as well as the source of his self-esteem and his status among his people. As such, the loss of his land represented not only the loss of the material base of his life, but the total collapse of his world and his position. The farmers remained jobless, living off the rations distributed by UNRWA, since the labour markets in the three main host countries - Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon - were very limited. In fact, they were labour exporters. The aid offered by UNRWA did not exceed \$0.20 daily per capita, which meant it could not be the sole source of support. Thus the Palestinians were willing to do anything for any kind of wages, to meet the basic demands of life. This placed a cheap and eager work force at the disposal of Arab economic forces, without ensuring any tangible returns for the improvement of the general living and social conditions in the camps.

82. Despite all negative or positive changes, the Palestinian camps remained mere agglomerations and never became a functioning social body or a society with recognized human components. The groupings were imposed on the tent-dwellers, without giving them even a choice of location, a decision not necessarily based on social or humanitarian considerations. The geographical location of a camp was not based on the interests of the refugees themselves. In fact, locations were generally not suitable for any human activity, including industry or agriculture, except in the narrowest sense of the word; as such, they did not provide even a weak production base. Residents of camps lived under very harsh conditions, and still do, despite some improvements. The density of the population, the bad housing conditions, the absence or scarcity of basic services, all set against the background of the agglomerative social structure, the absence of social or

^{26/} Sami Hadawi, Bitter Harvest: Palestine Between 1914-1967 (New York, New World Press, 1967), p. 176.

political leadership, the lack of employment opportunities, and the repression and humiliation to which the camp residents were subjected, made life in the camps as far removed as possible from normal human conditions. It was only natural that these conditions, with all their negative elements, should make a greater and more intensive impact on the Palestinian woman living in the camp, since she was confined to the camp more than was the man. This was further reinforced by the traditions of the Palestinian society, which imposed restrictions on her movement or her departure from the existing structures.

83. Life in the camp did not create the kind of ambiance that helps people acquire qualifications or skills. In fact, the shabby conditions of camp life constantly reminded the people of what they had lost through the loss of their homeland. In view of the few available opportunities for growth or progress or advancement towards future goals, the camp residents found themselves in a vicious circle which was difficult to break. A longing for an anticipated "return" based on the conviction that being a stranger was only a transitional phenomenon, coupled with the difficulty of breaking away from the camp, or the state of being a refugee at large, and integrating into the surrounding societies, be they Arab or otherwise, created a sense of loss, emptiness and social fragmentation and consequently led to frustration and alienation. 27/

84. It is obvious that the various groups and segments of Palestinians, whether located in areas occupied in 1948, in Gaza and the West Bank, or dispersed elsewhere, regarded their situation in the wake of the establishment of Israel and the consequent developments, not as an accomplished fact to be accepted and accommodated, but rather as a "summer cloud", a transitory phenomenon that would soon fade away. For them, the "Palestine question" was still a live issue on both the local and international levels, and a solution inevitable - a solution that could not be considered a real solution if it did not involve their "return". Consequently, they regarded their abnormal conditions as transitory, believing that they need not be dealt with in a permanent way.

85. Actually, regardless of both the Palestinian and Arab perspectives on the political issue, the Palestinians have never been absorbed into the social and political framework of the areas in which they have lived since the occupation of their homeland. Even though they have resided within such a framework until now, they have never actually become part of it. The issue is both subjective and objective in the sense that not only are the Palestinians inabsorbable, but the objective conditions do not permit their absorption. The only remaining alternative is for the Palestinians to cling to their identity, which requires that they work for their "return" to the homeland. This applies generally to all Palestinians but it is most conspicuous in the case of the Palestinians in camps, where the "return" issue overshadows all others. The Palestinian camp has thus become the symbol of the intractability of the Palestinian problem to all proposed solutions, including absorption and resettlement. As such, it has become the target of all the political forces active or involved in the Palestinian issue, regardless of their background and methods. This, in turn, has left both a negative and positive impact on the camp, without making camp life any easier.

27/ Halim Barakatt and Peter Dodd, *River Without Bridges: A Study of the 1967 Arab Palestinian Refugees* (Institute for Palestinian Studies, 1968), pp. 32 ff.

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86. It was only natural that the camps would become the centre of Palestinian political activism in the effort of the Palestinian people to regain their right to their homeland. As such, the Palestinian camps became the target of all the political forces opposed to them. Their inhabitants were subjected to the severest repression and terrorism. Whole camps were subjected to the fiercest Israeli aggression. In addition to the harsh living conditions in the camps, the social deprivation and the political repression to which the people were subjected, these densely populated agglomerations became military targets for "Israeli retaliatory operations" or "disciplinary raids", and rarely was a camp spared collective repression, indiscriminate shelling or planned destruction. Among the worst experiences of the Palestinian camps was that of Tel-E-Zatar, which was overrun following a long siege during the Lebanese civil war. The experience of Tel-E-Zatar might not have been unique. Each camp has its own story, and some have been just as atrocious. United Nations files are bulging with records of Israeli attacks on Palestinian camps and the Organization has adopted countless resolutions condemning Israeli aggression against these camps. Despite this, some camps, especially those near the Israeli borders, have suffered beyond imagination, as is the case today with camps in South Lebanon which are subjected to constant and indiscriminate shelling. As a result of the constant attacks on Palestinian camps, residents of some camps formed caravans of displaced people who no sooner settled in a place than they were forced to move on, going from one camp to another. This only increased the people's misery. In addition to the loss of large numbers of people, aggression against Palestinian camps deprived their residents of the stability that had prevailed even under harsh conditions and eliminated the social or material base that might have provided the minimum conditions for the development of a degree of social cohesion among the Palestinian people, especially those in camps.

87. Life in the camps was not only hard and harsh, subject to repression and instability, but also destroyed the initiative, self-reliance and self-esteem of the people. The isolation of camp residents, the scarcity of opportunities available to them, the absence of any means of training or acquiring skills to improve and advance themselves, continued dependence on UNRWA rations, which offends their personal pride and dignity as a people, had a destructive psychological impact on camp residents and, consequently, on their esprit de corps. Refugees can do nothing about their social situation, and consequently suffer from intense internal frustration, not knowing what will happen to them nor how long their situation will continue. They resent the feeling that they are wasting their lives in the camps after having already lost land, money, dignity and self-esteem, while being incapable of changing their situation. The deep sense of frustration and impotence felt by Palestinian men, especially the youth, over their inability to change the existing situation is even more intense in the case of the Palestinian woman, whose life is linked to that of her frustrated and powerless man.

88. The most prominent feature of the Palestinian refugee camps has always been the marginality of their economy, especially as this relates to an independent Palestinian economy. As a Palestinian work force emerged in the camps, it was used to serve the Arab or foreign economic forces in the host countries or elsewhere and was not utilized to build an autonomous base that would enable the Palestinians

to return to their homeland and rebuild their own society. UNRWA aid to camp residents, designed to keep body and soul together, did not cover all their needs. In fact, some people received no aid at all. The Agency has now halted its food and health aid while continuing to support education. In the early years, the work force of Palestinian camps was outrageously exploited. Their miserable situation, the absence of work opportunities, their restricted freedom of mobility, their lack of union membership and their inability to secure work permits were exploited to secure cheap labour, and placed the Palestinians at the mercy of employers. Without any political or union support to secure even minimal rights, camp residents capable of working were hired as seasonal or daily workers, mainly in agriculture and, to a certain degree, in construction. In the beginning, owing to the nature of the work available, it was easier for camp women to find jobs harvesting crops or working in textile factories or in domestic service.

89. The economy of the camps thus remained marginal, and education became the main avenue for improving the situation of the individual. Men had a greater advantage than women in this respect, for reasons related to the nature of the Palestinian society and because parents preferred to finance the education of boys over girls. The general result was that the marginal status of the Palestinian woman greatly exceeded the general economic marginality in the Palestinian camps.

90. This marginality is underlined by the figures prepared by the Statistics Department of the Government of Lebanon in 1971 on the labour potential of Palestinian camps. 28/ The figures showed that around 60 per cent of all workers were still being paid on a daily basis and only 8 per cent had long-term contracts. The figures also showed that 21 per cent of the workers were employed in seasonal agricultural jobs, 13.6 per cent worked in construction, 12 per cent in industry, 2.4 per cent in transport, and 14.4 per cent in business and hotel services. The figures indicated that a total of 36.7 per cent of all workers were employed in "other services" or "undefined services" and that only 40 per cent of the work force was actually working. 29/

91. Another recent (1977) study 30/ indicated that around 63 per cent of all those working earned an income of less than 500 Lebanese pounds, or less than \$US 200. The study also pointed to a radical change in the kind of work in which the youth are engaged, as compared with the work in which their fathers and grandfathers were engaged. Whereas around 80 per cent of those questioned were employed by others, 76 per cent of their grandfathers and 60 per cent of their fathers had been self-employed. This tendency underlined a general trend among Palestinians away from self-employment, and it stressed the fact that they thus derived their livelihood from economies over which they had no control and which they could influence only in an indirect manner. This study also underlined the high proportion of

28/ Rosemary Sayigh, Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries, (London, Zed Press, 1979), p. 120.

29/ Ibid., pp. 121-122.

30/ Samir Ayyoub, The Palestinian Class Structure (unpublished thesis, The Arab University).

Palestinians who did not have a guarantee of permanent employment, forcing many to hold more than one job. Around 75 percent of all who responded expressed dissatisfaction with their current jobs, either because of the low wages, the difficult working conditions or the attitudes of their superiors towards them.

92. One of the most conspicuous findings of the study was that around 85 per cent of all who were questioned indicated that they did not believe that the individual Palestinian could change his class status. Camp residents gave a number of reasons to justify this conviction, the most important of which were:

(a) Dependence. A spirit of dependence and general despair continues to prevail in the camps. The nature of the services provided by UNRWA to refugees were instrumental, to a large extent, in creating this spirit of dependence, which later developed into a dependence on the Arab countries primarily and, to a lesser extent, on the United Nations, to liberate their land and to restore their homes and possessions to them. This resulted in a general feeling of impotence that rendered individuals unable to do anything to change their living situation or social status. 31/

(b) Repression and terror. Camps were subjected to strict supervision by security agencies, as mentioned above, and camp residents were deprived of certain basic freedoms - namely, the freedom of movement, assembly and organization were restricted. Camps did not have the means for collective security, especially in the face of the Israeli attacks on them, and they remained a prime target for continuing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Under such conditions, very little initiative remains, and very few self-improvement efforts continue, since even a bare minimum of security and stability is not available.

(c) Domination. The average individual in the camps, especially the woman, was subject to domination from all sides. Tribalism still dominated the agrarian groupings, the old generation dominated the younger generation, man dominated woman, father dominated son, brother dominated sister, and all were subject to the authority of UNRWA officials, especially in matters related to their means of livelihood and to services provided by the Agency. In addition, the Palestinian camp was subjugated by the organs, laws, regulations and restrictions of the State, and camp residents had no alternative but to acquiesce. They were dominated by fear in a situation where submission and surrender no longer helped while insubordination would bring external oppression. The rebellion and outrage of the camp residents remained suppressed for a long period, consuming them internally. They were not prompted to open defiance until the Palestinian revolution broke out, overturning their situation.

(d) Stagnation and degradation. Even though the camp continued to retain the elements of mechanical solidarity, which provided it with the minimum level of social cohesion, it lacked all the factors necessary for organic solidarity, which

31/ Basim Serham, "The Palestinian camp under revolution", Journal of Public Affairs, Nos. 41 and 42 (1975), pp. 432-440.

are most important in achieving social interaction and growth. 32/ With the fall of the Palestinian régime there was no one left to assume the collective responsibility to preserve the Palestinian people. The collapse of the institutions that protect and improve society posed a real threat to the basic continuity of Palestinian life. With the advent of camp life, the pace of Palestinian social life slowed down, and most efforts to rebel against the situation crumbled in the face of despair, impotence and subjugation. This state of affairs defied every attempt to break out of it until the rise of the Palestinian revolution, which opened new horizons which had not been available previously.

93. Not enough data are available to draw a map of the social structure in exile in general or even in any one specific location. In the Palestinian camp, standards and criteria become confused; but there is enough information to draw a picture of the broad outline of social and political trends which, while not fully applicable to the Palestinian camp as such, are not completely unrelated to it either. These are: 33/

- (a) A mass movement towards the services sector, with employment basically in jobs of low or medium pay;
- (b) Slow progress in the emergence of a class of industrial workers;
- (c) Continued exclusion from the agricultural sector, even in the agricultural countries;
- (d) Greater involvement in intellectual professions, such as teaching;
- (e) The migration of the educated and of skilled workers to the oil-producing countries;
- (f) The continued poverty of families that derive their livelihood from unskilled labour.

94. It is evident from the above-mentioned trends that education was a major factor in the development of the lives of camp residents. This is a recurring impression among those who have studied living conditions in Palestinian camps. Education was the means by which the Palestinian, especially the camp resident, could improve his personal situation and, consequently, that of his family. Although this impression is true to some extent, there was actually no "educational miracle" among the Palestinians in dispersion. The Palestinian masses were not transformed by UNRWA schools into skilled workers, teachers, doctors and engineers; neither did education revolutionize their social and economic conditions, as some occasionally claim. Nevertheless, there was an obvious increase in the proportion

32/ Ahmad Abu Zaid, The Social Structure, part 2 (Cairo, the Arab Book Printing and Publishing House, 1967), p. 192.

33/ Sayigh, op. cit., p. 123.

of university graduates among Palestinians in exile. There was a deep-set conviction that education was the key to success and to a better life, not only for the individual but for the group as a whole. Deprived as they were of land and homeland, the Palestinians had nothing left to invest in except their human resources, which they accomplished through education. Parents made many sacrifices to ensure the education of their children, and there are many individual success stories in this field, each with its own special details. One feature common to all was the difficulty encountered by both parents and children in pursuing higher education and securing admission to the professional world. Yet the success scored by the Palestinians in this field has made it possible to talk about an "economic cycle" in which this investment played an important role, ultimately helping to bring about a certain degree of cohesion.

95. However, the Palestinian enthusiasm for education is in sharp contrast to the failure of UNRWA to provide for all the educational needs of the Palestinian refugees, even though its educational services constitute its best service. The short-comings of the Agency are obvious in terms of school curricula, training of teachers, the confining of education to elementary and preparatory levels, the scarcity of technical institutes and the low standards of those that are functioning. A study that examined the standards of educational services offered by the Agency in the Tel-el-Zaatar Camp drew attention to the following points: ^{34/} (a) overcrowded classes; (b) the double-session system; (c) automatic promotions; (d) a shortage of teachers; (e) delays in the appointment of new teachers; (f) failure to arrange for teacher transfers before starting the school year; (g) failure to provide school textbooks for students by the beginning of the school year.

96. Figures released by the Agency on the number of students in schools for the school year 1970/71 clearly underline the limitations of the so-called Palestinian "educational miracle". These figures show the high ratio of dropouts after the age of 14:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
6-11	88.4
12-14	67.1
15-17	37.3
18-20	8.3

97. At the age of 14, students move on to secondary schools and, later on, to institutions of higher learning. Fourteen is also generally the year of maturity, and thus many girls drop out. However, the fact that the Agency does not offer educational services on the secondary level, as it does on the elementary and preparatory levels, coupled with the lack or shortage of secondary schools in or near the camps, increases the number of dropouts, especially among the girls.

^{34/} Hani Mandas, Work and Workers in the Palestinian Camp (Beirut, Research Centre of the Palestine Liberation Organization, 1974), pp. 58-60.

There are a limited number of schools that will cater to dropouts, and their enrolment capacity is limited. The Sibling Technical Institute in Lebanon, for example, is the only one of its kind and has an enrolment capacity of only 200 students. The expense of studying in comparable Lebanese institutions is beyond the means of camp residents. This means that a large number of students end up learning trades in handicraft shops, small factories and the like. 35/

98. The apprehension of the Palestinians over their economic dependence and over their political repression has not been allayed, despite developments in camps in recent years. Even high-income Palestinians do not view their social and economic conditions with equanimity and confidence because they do not possess the political power to protect their gains. Continued harsh political, social and economic conditions in the camps have led to a state of social insecurity that has created potential distrust in all values and beliefs, thus threatening to destroy the heritage of the past and erase all principles and standards. Even if some Palestinians succeeded in rebuilding their lives that would not affect society at large, which as a whole would remain incapable of choosing new models or general patterns of conduct. Consequently, it becomes impossible to draw up long-range plans. This situation is more readily observed among the lower-status groups because they are the ones who are most affected. 36/

99. Even if the facts and figures given above were only partially accurate, the impact of the situation on Palestinian society would still have been strong, particularly on the camp populations; and while these conditions have left a mark on the Palestinian man, the impact on the Palestinian woman, who lacks the resources needed to improve her situation, has been even greater. Consequently, it is essential that her special problems should receive the greatest possible attention.

100. General living conditions in the camps make the residents vulnerable to disease and increase the rapid spread of infection. The population groups most exposed to health hazards in the camp - namely, women and children - suffer most as a result of these bad conditions. Camps are overcrowded, with people crammed into unsanitary houses that hold up to 10 persons per room. Vital facilities, such as water networks, drains and public sanitation are below any acceptable standard. Moreover, the low income level of camp residents forces them to live under harsh conditions, with insufficient food and inadequate clothing and to reside in houses that provide little protection from the cold of winter or the heat of summer. The medical services provided by various organizations are below the minimum acceptable level. Camps have virtually no preventive health measures, especially since there are no covered water supply systems, the sewers are open, and the commonly used toilets are few in number and unsanitary. In addition, the people, and especially the women, are only vaguely aware of the principles of public and preventive health, and this hampers efforts to combat and confine the spread of diseases. The

35/ Sayigh, op. cit., p. 120.

36/ Wajih Diaeddine, The Palestinians in the Arab Homeland (Cairo, Arab Research and Studies Institute, League of Arab States, 1978), p. 150.

health problems related to sexual practices, including the treatment and prevention of diseases, and the problems of pregnancy and childbirth pose some of the most serious challenges facing the women in the camps. Reports of doctors who have worked in camps indicate that the sex education of women of the camps is very low, which obstructs family planning efforts, particularly in the face of inherited traditions. Some reports have referred to the frequent outbreak of contagious diseases, such as measles, chickenpox, typhoid, whooping cough and polio among the children of the camps. 37/ Gastronomic ailments such as indigestion and worms are common, along with malnutrition and such skin parasites as scabies. Among the women the most common ailments are anemia (10 per cent), pelvic disorders, tuberculosis, enlargement of the thyroid and tooth decay. Among the elderly, the most common ailments are respiratory and heart disorders, problems of the gastronomic system, diabetes, skin diseases, rheumatism and other rheumatic diseases.

37/ Abdul Salem Hussni, "Advanced study by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society" (Beirut, Planning Centre, Palestine Liberation Organization, 1975).

VI. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

101. The Palestinian people have continuously sought to organize themselves in their struggle to confront the Zionist settlement plan. Different types of organizations were developed depending on the requirements of the particular political situations in the areas of dispersion. As a result, a number of institutions were formed both inside and outside the occupied territories which aim at meeting some of the social and economic needs of the Palestinian people.

A. Inside the occupied territories

102. The Palestinian people living in the occupied territories have been subjected to many social and economic problems, which have already been delineated in section V above. These problems, resulting from occupation or dispersion, had a great impact on family life and the responsibilities and rights of family members. Exile, imprisonment, forced separation of families, limited opportunities for education and employment and limited and inferior social services made the establishment of institutions designed to fill the gap created by the absence of national structures a matter of the utmost urgency. As a result, multisectoral institutions were established to provide services in education, vocational training, health, community development, culture and other areas. These multisectoral, multipurpose social institutions are generally initiated and administered by Palestinian women. Often they serve a large number of Palestinian women.

103. In the West Bank today there are approximately 100 popular organizations. They are all voluntary, non-profit, charitable organizations concentrated in the main cities and serving many functions.

104. These social institutions provide services that public institutions have been unable to provide. As a consequence of occupation, public services were transformed into a high-priced commodity, thus placing a heavy burden on the limited income of the population. The social and psychological orientation of the Palestinian people also discouraged use of such services. Thus, popular institutions have had to provide the following:

- (a) Services for children: nurseries, primary schools and orphanages;
- (b) Services for women: hospitals, mother and child-care centres, family planning guidance, literacy and home economics programmes, and vocational education;
- (c) Services for students: scholarships for intermediate, secondary and university education;
- (d) Services for the mentally and physically handicapped: vocational rehabilitation and education;
- (e) General services: general health care, libraries and assistance to poor families, either financial or in kind.

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B. Outside the occupied territories

105. Following the dispersion of the Palestinian people in 1948, many social institutions were established in the Arab host countries. The Palestine Liberation Organization has 18 socio-cultural institutions. They include both social service organizations and professional groupings. In addition to these institutions, others have been formed to provide complementary services and to meet the needs of Palestinians in different geographic areas. Four of these institutions are particularly active and instrumental in reaching Palestinian women, who are both participants in and beneficiaries of these programmes.

The General Union of Palestinian Women

106. The General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was established in 1965 as the only popular representative of the Palestinian women. Its programme of action was accordingly designed to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian women within the framework of the Palestinian struggle and to assist in dealing with the daily needs of women, especially in the camps. GUPW established centres for various services and it assigned priority to the establishment of kindergartens, which at this point serve only 1500 children out of a total of approximately 15,000 children who are eligible for such basic services. GUPW also established two orphanages in Lebanon. It is in the process of setting up a vocational training centre so that women can increase their employment opportunities, add to the income of the family and improve their productive skills.

Samed

107. Samed was established in 1970 as the productive institution for the Palestinian people. Among its most important objectives are the following:

- (a) Qualifying Palestinians for employment through vocational rehabilitation;
- (b) Assisting in producing goods in accordance with the needs of the Palestinians, especially those in camps, and their purchasing powers;
- (c) Preserving Palestinian heritage through national handicrafts and marketing the products as widely as possible.

108. Samed has 33 workshops throughout the Palestinian communities, in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, with 70 per cent of the workers being female. The workshops produce clothes, blankets, wooden and metal furniture, leather products and shoes, toys and related articles for children, plastic educational materials and traditional needlework. At present, Samed is organizing literacy training programmes for its workers, as well as on-the-job training to improve their productive skills.

The Palestine Red Crescent

109. The Palestine Red Crescent (PRC) was established in 1969 to provide health services to the Palestinians living in the camps. In Lebanon alone, the Red

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Crescent has established nine hospitals with a capacity of 600 beds. It has a clinic in every camp as well. A special centre for the rehabilitation of the disabled was established in 1976, which provides artificial limbs, physical therapy and vocational training for the disabled.

110. PRC has also established three centres to train young women and men in secretarial work and sewing arts. It has established centres for training nurses, laboratory and X-ray technicians and assistant pharmacists. At present, it is involved in developing its nursing programme into a nursing school.

Welfare Society for the Martyrs' Families

111. As a result of the death of many Palestinians in their struggle for self-determination, many families have been left without a primary source of financial support. In response to their urgent and immediate needs, the Society was established in 1965 to assist the families of Palestinian martyrs in various parts of the world. The Society essentially provides monetary assistance to meet various needs. It provides monthly allowances and pays for medical services and elementary and secondary education for children.

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112. The living conditions in the camps and in the occupied territories require special concentrated attention from international bodies and various sources of assistance. It is important that such assistance be channelled through the Palestinian institutions that serve a large sector of the population, especially those institutions that serve women and thus serve the whole family. Assistance to the Palestinian woman must be co-ordinated and well-planned and should include long-range provisions, since a solution to the whole "Palestinian question" seems a long way off. Political priorities will continue to be emphasized, thus relegating social issues and needs to a secondary position. Such assistance will alleviate the suffering of Palestinian women and their struggle to meet the challenges of daily existence.

113. The document entitled "Effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian women inside and outside the occupied territories: special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman" (A/CONF.94/4) presents a range of project proposals for social programmes that cover many aspects of the life of the Palestinian woman. It can serve as a guide for international co-operation and co-ordination in translating projects into specific activities during the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women.
