

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP

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FOREWORD

As is the case with other peoples, the Palestinian people have various economic, political, educational and social institutions. These institutions exist both within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in the countries in which the Palestinians reside. The study at hand briefly deals with a number of such institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which have been under Israeli occupation since June 1967. Institutions in areas other than the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are mentioned in this study where the completeness of the presentation of information makes this advisable. The study also has a separate chapter which deals briefly with three institutions which exist outside of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, namely, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - the political, economic and social institution of the Palestinian people; the Production Society of the Sons of the Palestinian Martyrs (SAMED) and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). It should be mentioned that PRCS has branches in the occupied territories.

The study, therefore, illustrates the widespread nature of the nation-building institutions of the Palestinian people both within and outside of the occupied territories.

I. CHARITABLE AND SERVICE-ORIENTED INSTITUTIONS

After the West and East Banks of the Jordan entered in 1950 into a contractual shared sovereignty pending a final and just solution to the question of Palestine, the entire governmental apparatus, in education, health, social welfare, religious affairs and indeed in every sector of public life in the West Bank became a part of the Jordanian governmental system. Government employees and employees in other public sectors continue to be on the payroll of the Government of Jordan even after Israeli occupation.

After the 1948/49 Arab-Israeli conflict, and especially after the June 1967 War, socially conscious persons and groups of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip organized themselves to meet some of the social, cultural, educational and economic needs of the inhabitants, especially those who were affected by the conflict. Some social institutions were in existence before 1948, and a few date back to the early twentieth century. A considerable number of them, however, came into being in the three decades following the 1948/49 war. Some of these institutions were registered according to the Jordanian

laws and regulations and still maintain connections with the Jordanian authorities and receive financial support from them. Initially, they focused on needs unmet, or only partially met, by other organizations and governmental bodies. As these private, public and governmental institutions developed and the scope of their activities increased, they developed co-operation among themselves and in some cases with international organizations.

These institutions have provided the population with valuable services in various fields and supported and implemented various programmes as follows:

- Educational programmes, such as the purchase of textbooks on Arab culture, heritage and folklore for schools, programmes to improve educational opportunities and social development, encouragement of enrolment in colleges and universities, adult education and acquisition of languages;
- Community development projects for women and vocational training courses and seminars., including secretarial skills, typing, tailoring, home economics and sewing;
- Libraries and cultural programmes for youth and adults?
- First-aid centres, nursing schools and maternity wards; provision of equipment for operating rooms and hospitals, of health and medical care; basic health and hygiene programmes for mothers, infants and young orphaned children;
- Private schools (from kindergarten through twelfth grade) and a scholarship fund for university students, particularly those specializing in critical fields such as medicine and nursing;
- Orphanages that provide room, board, education and other needed facilities;
- Senior citizen centres for the disabled, the handicapped and the poor;
- Nurseries for needy children, children of working mothers and children whose mothers are enrolled in vocational training programmes or adult education courses;
- Programmes for the blind;
- Legal aid;
- Family planning and population control programmes;
- Handicrafts and small industries and businesses such as woodworking, carpentry and leather.

Women have played an active role in the establishment and functioning of various social, economic and educational institutions which serve not only women and children but the community as a whole. Discussing the reasons for this phenomenon, ECWA reported in a background paper that the "frequent absence of the male member of the family, the increase in the cost of living, and the general dedication to national development have influenced the leadership role of women in the society". 1/

Women's institutions have sponsored pre-school centres and kindergartens to care for the children of working mothers. Some workshops have been established that provide employment for women such as a rug-weaving project in which women are trained in weaving skills and a shirt and pajama factory. Several embroidery centres afford women the opportunity to prepare such items as Palestinian dresses, tablecloths, purses and pillow-cases. Some of the work is undertaken at home and several local shops have been established to market the produce of the workshops. Food stores have also been established where women can sell their own produce.

Charitable institutions in the West Bank are organized in three regional unions: the Jerusalem district, Al-Khalil (Hebron) district and the Nablus district. These three unions are organized into the Federation of Charitable Societies. Charitable institutions also exist in the Gaza Strip. Of these institutions, the Society of In'ash el-Usrah in Al-Bireh in the West Bank and Palestinian Red Crescent in the City of Gaza are among the most noted for their activities.

In its study entitled "Social institutions", ECWA noted that following the 1948/49 Arab-Israeli conflict, which resulted in the Palestinian refugee problem and, following the June 1967 war, in Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, private and public non-governmental social institutions tended to increase in number and to expand the scope of their activities. 2/

In his monograph entitled The West Bank and Gaza: Toward the Making of a Palestinian State, E. Nakhleh furnished lists of important clubs, labour unions and charitable societies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They are as follows:

Important Charitable Societies in the West Bank and Gaza, January 1978

3/

Gaza

Arab Women's Federation
Gaza Strip Employees
Red Crescent
Arab Women Graduates Union

West Bank

Arab Children's Home Society, Jerusalem
Arab Ladies' Society, Jerusalem
Arab Society for the Blind, Jerusalem
Arab Women's Federation, Beit Sahur
Arab Women's Federation, Bethlehem
Arab Women's Federation, Nablus
Arab Women's Federation, Tulkarm
Birzeit Ladies' Charitable Society, Birzeit
In'ash al-Usra Society, al-Bireh
Islamic Charitable Society, Hebron
Jericho Ladies' Charitable Society, Jericho
Jordanian Society for the Protection of Family, Jerusalem
Islamic Maqasid Society, Jerusalem
Ladies' Society for Child Care, Beit Jala
Red Crescent, Jenin
Red Crescent, Jerusalem
Red Crescent, Hebron
Society of University Graduates, Hebron
Hebron Ladies' Charitable Society, Hebron

Important Clubs in the West Bank, January 1978

4/

Club	Town
Arab Thought Club	Jerusalem
Arab University Graduates Club	Jerusalem
Athletic-Cultural Club	Nablus
Employees' Club	Jerusalem
Juvenile Club	Nablus
Orthodox Youth	Ramallah
Ramallah Club	Ramallah
Syriac Club	Bethlehem
Salwan Club	Jerusalem
Women's Federation	Bethlehem
Young Ladies' Club	Nablus

Labor Unions in the West Bank, January 1978 5/

<u>Union</u>	<u>Town</u>
Commercial Vehicles Drivers	Nablus
Construction and Public Employees	Ramallah
Construction and Public Employees	Tulkarm
Engineers	Beit Hanina
Federation of Vocational Unions	Jerusalem
Gas Bottle Distributors	Ramallah (al-Bireh)
Workers and Employees of the Electricity Company	Jerusalem
Workers' Union	Bethlehem
Workers' Union	Ramallah

In addition, chambers of commerce exist in Bethlehem, Al-Bireh, Al-Khalil (Hebron), Tulkarm, Ramallah, Nablus, Jinin and Jericho.

Many institutions which had received financial and moral support from the Government of Jordan continued to do so after the West Bank came under Israeli occupation in June 1967 until early 1979 when a joint PLO-Jordan Committee was created to provide financial assistance to the various social, cultural, educational and health institutions and to trade unions and municipalities.

In addition, the indigenous institutions, services in the medical, educational, cultural, social, legal and economic fields have also been provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and, to a lesser degree, by a number of foreign charitable and voluntary institutions and organizations, mainly from the United States, such as the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), International Committee of the Red Cross and Near East Council for Churches Committee for Refugee Work

(NECC). In the above mentioned monograph, the author indicated that the services of the charitable institutions reach "Many people who are not served by government agencies and UNRWA", and that in order to avoid duplication, the Federation of Charitable Societies co-ordinates activities with municipal authorities and with the clubs, chambers of commerce and labour unions.^{6/}

Among the more prominent organizations is the Jam'iyat In'ash el-Usra (Society of Family Rehabilitation). The Society is a women's charitable organization aiming at raising the standard of women in particular, and the Palestinian community in general. The Society has various projects which serve its general aims:

- Vocational centres, where women are trained in sewing, embroidery by machine, knitting by machine, secretarial work and hairdressing, - Projects where certain products are produced such as hand embroidery, loom-made mops and mats and home-made food products?
- Student aid in the form of university scholarships, clothing and transportation expenses for needy students;
- The Society also financially helps, either regularly or on an emergency basis, families that have no one to support them and administers a sponsorship scheme;
- Medical cares The Society tries to provide free medical care to needy families through the co-operation of doctors, pharmacists and hospitals;
- Cultural projects, which include a kindergarten and day-care centre, Palestinian folklore and research centre that issues a quarterly entitled Heritage and Society and has a folklore museum and a library which contains 4,000 books, literacy centres in Al-Bireh and villages in the area, summer school for students who need improvement in certain subjects.

II. EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Prior to occupation, the educational system of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was regulated according to the Jordanian Law of Education and Culture of 1964 and the Jordanian educational curriculum was applied to government schools. There were nine years of free compulsory education from the age of six, divided into six years of elementary education and three years of preparatory education. The law also provided for three additional years of free education in high school. The education programmes provided for the Palestine Arab refugee communities in general are the joint responsibility of UNESCO and UNRWA, in accordance with a 1950 agreement whereby the Director-General of UNESCO assumes technical responsibility for the educational programmes while the Commissioner-General of UNRWA is administratively responsible for the implementation of the programme. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, UNRWA operates elementary and preparatory schools. UNRWA has no secondary programme other than vocational training. Secondary schools are run by the Israeli military authorities.

Under Israeli occupation, the educational system in the West Bank is connected with the Jordanian Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Government of Jordan continues to pay the salaries of teachers and educational personnel who are appointed before June 1967. The Jordanian educational curriculum and the examinations system are still applied to government schools

in the West Bank, with the exception of East Jerusalem, where the Israeli educational curriculum is being applied to government schools. The Israeli authorities, however, have introduced considerable changes in the curriculum of the governmental schools in the West Bank.

Government schools in the West Bank are operated by the Office of Educational Affairs under the Israeli military government. This office also licenses private schools and supervises the curricula and textbooks of private institutions. The Office of Educational Affairs has six Regional Offices.

Private schools are run by charitable or religious institutions. Those which operate in East Jerusalem are not obliged to teach the Israeli curriculum as government schools are. All kindergartens in the area are run by private institutions. In 1971 private schools were estimated to constitute approximately 11 per cent of the educational institutions in the West Bank.

To limit the effects of Israel's application of its educational curriculum to public schools in East Jerusalem, moral and financial assistance has been provided by Arab, mainly Palestinian and Jordanian, authorities to East Jerusalem non-governmental schools to make them an alternative to government schools.

There is a very high primary (elementary) school enrolment in the occupied territories. According to ECWA's study, over 90 per cent of the children between the ages of 6 and 14 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip receive elementary education from private, governmental or UNRWA schools.

A large number of children receive secondary education at private or government schools. In 1973, more than 320,000 received elementary, preparatory and secondary schooling in the occupied territories (230,000 elementary, 58,000 preparatory; and 32,000 secondary).

Arab high school graduates may continue their studies at four institutions for higher learning in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip. These institutions began as schools and became colleges, some of which acquired university status. Over the years they have established modern facilities, including libraries and laboratories, and have enlarged their staffs. They are co-educational. These institutions' operations expand yearly. The number of students has grown considerably from a total of 4,652 in the 1979/80 academic year to 6,176 in the 1980/81 academic year.

The most prominent of these institutions is Bir Zeit University, which is a private institution. It was established in 1924 as a preparatory school and later became a college. It instituted a university course in 1953. In 1963 its two-year diploma course was recognized by the American University of Beirut, which grants graduates of Bir Zeit University, and also of other Arab, American and British universities, special conditions for admission to second or third-year courses. The University now has a four-year course and is recognized by other institutions in the region. The Israeli military administration granted the University in June 1973 a licence to operate a four-year study programme. The University, which receives local and foreign financial support, has three faculties: literature, natural sciences and education. It offers a B.A. programme in academic disciplines and an M.A. in education, recognized by all universities in the Arab states and by American universities. The University employed 124 lecturers and enrolled 1,367 students in the 1979/80 academic year.

Al-Najah University in Nablus was founded about 60 years ago. It operated as a school from 1918 to 1967, when it became a college. The Israeli military administration granted it recognition in 1975 and it is also recognized by universities in Arab countries. In 1979/80 the University employed 100 lecturers and had 1,982 students and has departments in natural and social sciences, architecture, education, psychology and English.

Freres University of Bethlehem, which is connected with the Brothers of the Christian Schools at Bethlehem, was established by the Apostolic Delegation. It has been operating since October 1973. It is supported by Christian (mostly Catholic) institutions abroad.

In 1979/80, Bethlehem University employed 85 lecturers and has 811 students. The University has departments of literature, natural sciences, social sciences, the humanities, art, business administration, hotel management and practical nursing.

The College for Islamic Studies in Hebron (Al-Khalil) was founded in 1971, reportedly on the initiative of the former mayor of Al-Khalil. Its aim is to prepare cadres of teachers in Islamic studies, and to qualify graduates to continue to Islamic religious institutions for higher learning such as Al-Azhar University in Cairo. The college offers a B.A. degree. In 1979/80 it employed 15 teachers and enrolled 473 students.

Al-Azhar Seminary in Gaza is the only institution for higher learning in the Gaza Strip. It was founded in 1954 with the intention that it should become an affiliate to Al-Azhar University in Cairo. The academy offers high school graduates two years of college-level studies in Islam. At present, the institution employs 40 lecturers and has 200 students.

One of the major resources of the Palestinian people is their skilled manpower. Palestinian university graduates specialize, among other things, in the fields of engineering, medicine, teaching, construction, banking and commerce. They constitute a scientific and managerial resource in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

A feature of cultural life in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been the considerable number of clubs and literary societies. The clubs, some of which had been established as far back as 1920, differ from one another, but as a rule include several sections: a literary section, a political section, a sports section and a library. The best known are those of Jerusalem, Nablus, Al-Khalil, Jinin, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Tulkarm. The Arab Club of Nablus had at one time 3,000 members.

In the past, these organizations' activities were accompanied by an important literary and intellectual life, and writers, artists, poets, historians and translators have exerted a sizable influence. However, since the occupation, cultural and educational life has been curtailed.

Activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) observed the conclusion of 31 years of service to Palestine refugees on 30 April 1981. Over the last three decades, the United Nations General Assembly has passed many resolutions relating to UNRWA. General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 may be regarded as its founding charter. In the resolution the Assembly recognized the necessity of continued assistance for the relief of the Palestine refugees to prevent conditions of starvation and distress among them. It also recognized that constructive measures should be undertaken at an early date with a view to the termination of international assistance for relief.

Over the years UNRWA has become an organization dispensing services to a refugee population now numbering 1.8 million people (about half of the total number of Palestinians) living in five territories administered by four different Governments - services which would normally be provided by national Governments in the spheres of education, health and social welfare. UNRWA has become an established institution in its area of operations and plays a central role in the lives of the Palestine refugees registered with it. It is noted in the report of the Commissioner-General that, "Since UNRWA performs quasi-governmental functions in the spheres of education, health and relief, it represents to them an assurance that their existence is not overlooked by the international community".^{7/}

The services of the Palestine refugees are provided by over 16,700 locally recruited staff members, the great majority of whom are themselves Palestine refugees. They are under the direction of international staff in 113 posts (88 UNRWA, 20 UNESCO and 5 WHO). Over 90 per cent of the UNRWA income is derived from voluntary contributions by Governments, who by the size of their contributions will set the limits on UNRWA programmes in 1981 and beyond.

The following data and information are primarily extracted from the Commissioner-General's report. Under an agreement between UNRWA and UNESCO, the latter is responsible for the professional aspects of the UNRWA/UNESCO education programme. The UNRWA/UNESCO education programme in 1979/80 included general education at elementary and preparatory (lower secondary) levels in UNRWA schools, vocational and teacher training at UNRWA centres and a university scholarship programme. In addition, UNRWA provides some pre-school education activity, youth activities, adult training in crafts and

medical and paramedical education and training.

In 1979/80, the largest single UNRWA activity was general education, and a total of 314,164 pupils were enrolled in the 627 UNRWA elementary and preparatory schools in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, served by a teaching force of 9,479. A further 87,641 refugee pupils were known to be enrolled in government and private elementary, preparatory and secondary schools in the same areas and approximately 41,460 non-eligible children were in UNRWA schools.

One of the most useful educational opportunities is the vocational and teacher-training education offered to Palestinian refugees by UNRWA. Of the UNRWA training centres in the Middle East, there are three UNRWA training centres in the West Bank, Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, Ramallah Women's Training Centre and Ramallah Men's Teacher Training Centre, and one in the Gaza Strip, namely, Gaza Vocational Training Centre.

Preventive and curative services were provided to eligible Palestine refugees at the 100 UNRWA health units and by special arrangement at 15 government and two voluntary agency clinics. Other medical services to eligible refugees were subsidized at government, university and private health institutes in various parts of the Middle East. In addition, there are three central UNRWA laboratories in Gaza, Jerusalem and Amman. UNRWA continued to operate a small hospital of 36 beds in Qalqiliyah (West Bank) and nine camp maternity wards, the majority of which are in the Gaza Strip. It also administers, jointly with the Public Health Department in Gaza, a tuberculosis hospital at Bureij.

Intensive in-service training of doctors, nurses, midwives, sanitation and supplementary feeding staff was carried out. UNRWA's relief services comprise the distribution of basic rations, the provision of or assistance with shelter in individual cases of special hardship or in such special circumstances as the displacement of refugees, and hardship and welfare assistance.

III. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Before Israel's occupation of the West Bank, municipal government in this area derived its authority from the 1955 Jordanian Municipal Law and its amendments, which gave municipal government the authority to act in various fields such as town planning and zoning, regulation of the use of water, electricity, regulation of business, transportation, public health, town protection and others. According to this law and its amendments, municipal government came under the authority of a district commissioner, who in turn was responsible to the Minister of the Interior in Amman.

After the June 1967 war, Israel's Minister of Defense assumed, by Israeli military regulations, the authority previously exercised by Jordan over the West Bank and the Israeli military governor assumed the authority of the district commissioner. A civilian liaison officer from Israel's Ministry of the Interior took over the role of the Jordanian Minister of Interior. Israeli military government also assumed, as of June 1967, legal authority in the Gaza Strip.

Under Israeli occupation, government in these two areas operates on two levels: local government and civil administration, which includes such departments as agriculture, interior, transportation, social welfare, education and health. These departments are headed by Israeli officers attached to the military headquarters in both areas and are subject to the rules and regulations of the military occupation authorities.

Different forms of local government are applied to cities, towns, villages and refugee camps in the areas under study. These types include municipalities, town councils, rural councils, mukhtars 8/ and camp managers who fall within the jurisdiction of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The first municipal elections for towns and cities in the West Bank since 1967 were held in 1972. In 1976, the military authorities permitted the holding of municipal elections for the second time in the West Bank. These elections resulted in the election with an overwhelming majority of new leaders who are relatively young, have a strong sense of Palestinian nationalism and call for a self-determination for the Palestinian people. During the Israeli occupation, no municipal elections have been held in the Gaza Strip and the city is run either by an appointed mayor or by the Israeli military authorities.

As of January 1978, 25 municipalities and municipal councils existed in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip, that of the City of Gaza. In the absence of Palestinian national political authorities and institutions in these two areas, these municipalities and municipal councils are the highest indigenous political institutions and, in addition to their regular functions on the local level, they have performed activities of political significance. Municipal elections and municipalities have been instrumental in the emergence of political leaders on the national level. They are also the mechanism through which Palestinian political attitudes are voiced and communicated. Through the process of elections, candidates adhering to various political currents become members of the municipal councils.

IV. PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, PRODUCTION SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE PALESTINIAN MARTYRS AND PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

In this chapter, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Production Society of the Sons of the Palestinian Martyrs (SAMED), and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) will be discussed in greater detail.

Palestine Liberation Organization

The Palestine Liberation Organization is the general organizational framework within which Palestinian organizations, such as commando groups, trade unions, professional associations, prominent figures and others act for the realization of Palestinian national goals.

PLO was created in 1964 by the Arab League as the official representative of the Palestinian people. In June 1964, the first Palestine National Convention was convened in Jerusalem. Its members, totalling 424, served as representatives of various Palestinian constituencies mainly from the Middle East and North Africa. The Convention adopted a number of resolutions which provided for the creation of an infrastructure that has to do with Palestinians in various fields: administrative, political, financial, economic and military. The administrative and political bodies are herein described: the National Council, the Executive Committee and the National Fund.

There are many arms of PLO, including a large number of professional and trade unions which perform functions related to their skills: the union of women, artists and writers, lawyers, labourers, doctors, students, engineers etc. The work of the Union of Palestinian Women is of particular interest in view of the worldwide interest in the development of women.

PLO is also composed of a number of organizations the largest of which is the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (PATH). Next to it come the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP), Sa'iqah and the Arab Liberation Front.

Major institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization

The National Council

The most important of the institutions within PLO is the National Council/ the Palestinian equivalent of a parliament. Membership in it is nominated by a committee of the preceding Council, after consultations between the Council and the organizations and individuals constituting PLO.

In its fifteenth session in April 1981, the Council deemed as necessary the participation of all the Palestinian national forces and bodies, whether in the occupied territories or outside of them, in all the PLO institutions, including the National Council.

The Council is the supreme authority formulating policies and programmes for PLO. Its term of office is restricted to two years, but it can meet regularly in ordinary sessions upon the request of the Executive Committee or a quarter of its members. The National Council in its eleventh session (January 1973) created a Central Council from its own membership to follow up and implement its resolutions. The Central Council, which numbers 21 persons, is headed by the Chairman of the National Council and its membership is distributed among commando organizations, unions and independents.

The Executive Committee

The National Council selects from its own members the Executive Committee whose number does not exceed 15. Committee members in turn elect the Chairman. The Executive Committee is in permanent session and it is responsible to the National Council collectively and individually for the execution of the policies, plans and programmes drawn up by the National Council. Each member of the Committee has his own field of activity such as foreign affairs, information and culture. From among the functions performed by the Executive Committee are supervision of the various bodies of PLO, issue of directives and implementation of the financial policy of PLO.

The National Fund

The first National Council resolved that a Palestine National Fund be established. Revenues for the Fund are derived from a fixed tax levied on Palestinians by the Arab Governments in whose countries they reside, financial contributions by the Arab Governments and peoples, loans and any additional source approved by the National Council.

Production Society of the Sons of the Palestinian Martyrs

The Production Society of the Sons of the Palestinian Martyrs (SAMED) was founded in 1969 to provide work for the families of Palestinians who had lost their lives in military action. The following years have witnessed an expansion of SAMED production activities in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Several technical and commercial agreements have been signed with a number of States. New production branches and professional technical training centres have been opened since 1969. SAMED also established workshops and manufacturing centres in Beirut, Tripoli and other Lebanese cities. SAMED produces, among other things, furniture, clothing, towels, bed covers, plastic commodities, school equipment and folkloric items. SAMED has participated in exhibitions and fairs in different countries. In most of the Arab countries it has established permanent exhibitions. Contacts have also been established with parties and co-operatives in certain Western countries such as Italy, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Norway.

Palestine Red Crescent Society

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was founded on 25 December 1968 by medical doctors in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. According to the Geneva Convention only one national society has the right to fulfil the functions that are undertaken by such societies. At the international conference in Istanbul in 1969 the Society secured a resolution allowing the establishment of PRCS branches in every country where Palestinian populations resided, such as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Kuwait, Tunisia, Qatar, the Gaza Strip and the United States of America.

PRCS has been accepted as a full member in the Arab national societies of this type and accepted as an observer by international societies such as the Red Cross and the Red Lion. PRCS co-operates with the International Committee of the Red Cross and co-ordinates with it to deal with subjects such as reuniting families, correspondence and contact between families in the occupied territories and people outside and committees for distributing medicines, food, blankets and contacting and visiting detainees in Israeli prisons.

By 1979, PRCS has established 30 hospitals and 100 clinics which have activities in various fields, such as maternal and infant protection. Additionally, it has professional training centres.

One of the important hospitals is Nazareth Hospital for children in Lebanon; it has 40 beds and 7 incubators. There is also the Ramleh Hospital which includes the Centre of Artificial Limbs and Physiotherapy. PRCS has founded two nursing schools in Beirut and Tyre, and there is a plan for a third one in Saida. Each of these schools has a library where books are often donated by well-wishers. UNICEF has given audiovisual equipment. In addition, there is the Centre for Typing, Secretarial Work and Sewing on the outskirts [peripheries] of the Bourj-el-Barajneh refugee camp.

PRCS attaches an importance to preventive medicine which aims at fighting unsanitary conditions in the refugee camps where population density is very high. It also has programmes for control and sterilization of the water, garbage collection and anti-rodent and vaccination campaigns. These programmes are carried out by volunteers, social workers and nurses.

The hospitals and clinics of PRCS, which receive thousands of cases a day, treat Palestinian patients as well as patients from among the peoples among whom hospitals operate.

V. CONCLUSION

The foregoing pages illustrate that Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as areas to which the Palestinians have been dispersed, have their own private and public institutions that perform social, educational, economic and cultural functions of importance to the inhabitants. The emergence of a number of these institutions has been a direct result of the fact of living under occupation or in dispersion.

The existence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of a structure of indigenous institutions, as the study at hand shows, is suggestive of the Palestinians' ability to contribute to their well-being in the economic, administrative and educational fields. In the advancement of their socio-economic development, Palestinians have laid a strong emphasis on the establishment of educational institutions for higher learning and of institutions oriented towards the offering of economic services and vocational training.

Notes

1/ Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), Social Development and Human Settlement Division, Background paper on social conditions in the occupied Arab territories of the West Bank and Gaza (Beirut, 1977), p. 23.

2/ Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), Social Development and Human Settlement Division, "Social institutions" (Beirut, 1979), pp. 1-2.

3/ Emile A. Nakhleh, The West Bank and Gaza: Toward the Making of a Palestinian State (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), p. 32.

4/ Ibid., p. 34.

5/ Ibid.

6/ E. Nakhleh, op. cit., p. 33.

7/ Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 1 July 1979-30 June 1980, Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/35/13), pp. 1-2.

8/ Where a village or a small town does not have a local or municipal council, respectively, it is administered for the most part by one or more mukhtars, persons chosen from prominent clans by the military authorities.

