

During forty years of British mandate, during most of which Palestine was run by pro-zionist governors, the British promise was duly honored. Through enormous support from the Mandatory Government, the Jewish population in Palestine rose from 84,000 (11 percent of total) owning 2 percent of land area in 1922 to 608,000 (33 percent of total) owning 8 percent in 1946.

On November 29, 1947 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution recommending the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab occupying 42 percent of the total area and another Jewish allotted a share of 57 percent. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to remain under U.N. administration.

Arabs and Moslems outside Palestine were vehemently opposed to the partition plan, which stimulated their generally unstable regimes to pledge their "brotherly" support to hopeful Palestinians. Consequently, armed hostilities erupted. In May 1948 Britain withdrew from Palestine and the Jewish National Council declared the foundation of the State of Israel. The subsequent months witnessed a series of military failures for the Arab forces.

At last, and after Israeli forces extended their control well beyond the partition plan, the war was stopped and bilateral armistice treaties were signed with Israel at Rhodes in 1949. Being the custodian of the eastern front, and in response to British pressure and promises, King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan gave to Israel at Rhodes 450 square kilometres of the area under his control, which by then had come to be known as the West Bank.

By 1950 Palestine had been dismantled into three separate political entities; Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. The West Bank

was annexed to Jordan, so fulfilling King Abdullah's ambitions for a viable kingdom. The Gaza Strip, on the other hand, was put under Egyptian mandate awaiting further developments.

#### The West Bank economy prior to 1950

The economy of the country under the British witnessed a limited growth in the service sectors connected with the government, agriculture and handicraft industries. However, it was clear that resources allocated for development purposes in Arab communities were far smaller than those allocated to Jewish communities. Consequently, there was a growing trend towards a division of labour whereby Jewish immigrants took over most industries, international trade and banking. Arabs, on the other hand, were left largely with peasant forms of agriculture, small businesses, public service and workshop industries.

The economy of the interior part of Palestine, which was to become later the West Bank, was more retarded than that of other parts. Its population density was considerably higher, since it encompassed one third of Palestine's Arab population inhabiting only one fifth of the total area. Furthermore, land in that region was of poor topography and least endowed with water resources.

On the whole, therefore, West Bank society prior to 1948 was characterized by a subsistence peasant economy which was heavily dependent for its survival on its economic ties with more prosperous parts of Palestine.

#### Transition to Jordan

Due to its integral affiliation with other parts of Palestine, the West Bank faced major problems when it was suddenly severed