

By the mid-1970s, the Israeli and Jordanian sides eased their embargo on cooperatives. Some new cooperatives were registered and a few others were revived. In its search for a leadership other than the PLO, the Military Administration discovered that cooperative activities could possibly play an important role in the future, especially if cooperatives were kept under their stringent control.

As for Jordan, it also started to funnel some grants and loans to a small number of cooperatives, mostly for housing purposes. By 1978 the total funds channelled from Jordan amounted only to JD 82 thousands distributed among 25 cooperatives.¹

In the late seventies, three major developments emerged which helped to accelerate the activities of cooperatives. First, the formation of the Palestinian-Jordanian Joint Committee (PJJC) in the Baghdad Summit Conference of 1978. The said committee was entrusted with all efforts to bolster the "steadfastness" of Palestinian residents in the occupied territories. Second, a number of foreign voluntary agencies (mostly American) embarked on a relatively aggressive developmental effort. The PJJC and voluntary agencies envisaged a primary role for cooperatives in expediting their programs. Third, the Military Administration evidently reaffirmed its earlier belief that the reactivation of cooperatives - as long as it was done under its strict control - might offer Israel attractive political and economic gains. In addition to syphoning large amounts of money, most of which could end up in Israel, the Military Administration learnt that by

1. Adnan Obeidat, The Cooperative Movement in the West Bank - its Present and Future (Amman: The Jordan Cooperative Organization, 1979) p 6.

using its right to register new cooperatives or permit them to receive aid, it could give extra leverage to its internal tactics and politics. The ramifications of these variables will be evaluated later in this section.

In response to the revived interest in cooperatives, many new ones were registered and the West Bank in effect witnessed a surge of cooperative activity. By the end of 1980 there were 321 registered cooperatives. Table (IV-4) shows the vocational distribution of these cooperatives, their functional status (operational or frozen)¹ and date of registration relative to occupation.

Table (IV - 4)

West Bank cooperatives

(December 31, 1980)

Type	Number of cooperatives			Date of registration	
	Total	Functional	Frozen	Pre-occupation	Post-occupation
Total	321	131	190	220	101
Agricultural-total	202	42	160	177	25
Credit and thrift	142	1	141	141	1
Livestock	16	10	6	7	9
Olive presses	11	11	-	9	2
Multi-purpose	33	20	13	20	13
Non-agricultural	119	89	30	43	76

Source: Files of the Department of Cooperatives.

The above data point to important features in the present setting of West Bank cooperatives. It shows, for instance, that more than two thirds of all cooperatives are of an agricultural nature

1. Frozen cooperatives are those which have stopped functioning but are still officially registered, pending reactivation or legal liquidation.