typical of the West Bank prior to the war, and of Jordan before and after the war. The areas of buildings begun during 1974 - 79 increased at 7% and they consisted almost entirely of private buildings.[1] Vivian Bull noted that buildings started in the city of Nablus in 1964, for example, were equal to the total urban construction in the West Bank in 1970.[2] The slow growth in the construction sector has resulted in over-crowding and a low level of housing facilities. According to a recent study the proportion of West Bank families of which three or more members occupy one room is 52%, as compared with only 4% in Israel.[3]

The construction sector has serious problems arising from Israel's efforts to minimize Arab physical presence in Palestine. This policy is effected through a number of agressive policies. Most importantly, this includes the denial of Palestinians not holding the Israeli-issued West Bank identity card of their right to build houses in their home towns. This cuts off what had been for long the most important source of finance for an unusually vigorous construction industry in the West Bank prior to occupation. The problem has been greatly aggravated by recent regulations banning all constructions (by Arabs) within 150 meters (450 feet) of all roads connecting West Bank towns.[4] This has drastically reduced the land area fit for housing and industrial services. The construction

1 Derived from Table H/1 in the Administered Territories Statistics Quarterly 1980, op. cit., p. 98.

2 Vivian Bull, op. cit., p. 98.

3 Bakr Abu Kishek, The Housing Crisis in the Occupied Territories, (West Bank: Birzeit University, 1980), p. 17.

4 Instructions to applicants for construction licenses. A circular signed by the director of the Central Construction Planning Office at Beit Eil and addressed to all local authorities, May 1981.

industry has been additionally affected by the absence of housing credit institutions and the uncertain political environment.

Trade

Trading patterns in the occupied territories underwent comprehensive restructuring immediately after occupation. Trade with Jordan was reoriented within what came to be known as the "open-bridge" policy. That entailed permitting continued flow of West Bank export commodities to the traditional markets in Jordan and the Gulf states. Imports from Jordan, in contrast, were drastically curtailed because of security restrictions and very high tariffs. This has resulted in a large surplus which helps cover the West Bank deficit incurred in trade with Israel. More than 70% of exports to Arab markets consist of agricultural commodities (largely olive oil and citrus products. Industrial goods consist mainly of samneh (ghee), soap and stone.

Trade with Israel, on the other hand, has developed to a much more significant level. Israeli goods were given unrestricted access to the markets of the occupied territories.

Conversely, product from the territories were admitted to Israel on a small and selective scale and only when that served a felt need. Within this frame of inequitable terms of trade, Israel succeeded in less than two years following occupation in becoming by far the largest trading partner with the West Bank, providing it with over 86% of its imports and receiving 61% of its exports (see Table V - 9).