

to talk about an impending withdrawal and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state that is able to exercise its rights to a national economic policy.

A less idealistic political scenario is the one spelled out in Camp David accords, which talk about "total autonomy" for the people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But agreement on autonomy has proved to be more semantic than substantial since talks in this regard have come to a stalemate because of sharp divergences in political views. Three years after Camp David the three partners of the "Peace Treaty" are no closer to agreeing on the substance of the advocated autonomy. Even if ultimately they manage to strike a compromise, it may not be possible to implement because of strong opposition by local residents.

A third scenario envisages continued Israeli occupation. This is a solid and fairly well-defined political discourse which has troubled most West Bankers for 15 years. Clearly enough, most sides (including many Israelis) would like to see an end to this situation. But as we argued earlier, the questions of what to do next and when to do it are not likely to find easy answers.

The researcher has debated over the question of choosing a viable political scenario with many leading politicians and economists. All Palestinian and Arab leaders who were interviewed in the course of this research recommended restricting developmental studies which are conducted by economists residing inside the occupied territories to the present context of continued occupation, whereas they agree that researchers stationed "outside" Palestine might embark on problems of a broader and more theoretical perspective.

The arguments in favour of this choice are numerous and fairly convincing. Most well-informed politicians believe that Israeli

control of the West Bank (and the Gaza Strip) will continue in one form or another for as long as Arabs remain unable to force Israel to leave. This seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. In the meantime Israel is likely to implement policies which are intended to exploit their local resources and market potential to the best interest of Israel's ailing economy.* Counting on the record of the past 15 years, this entails a grave and sometimes irrevocable damage to some basic resources and sectors. Consequently, the priority should go, as Palestinian leaders see it, to taking those measures and policies which would help stop the deterioration of the local production base and ameliorate the impact of Israel's annexation policies. To this end, the Arab Summit Conference of 1978 earmarked \$150 millions and created a permanent agency, the Palestinian-Jordanian Joint Committee (PJJC).

However, developmental efforts launched by the PJJC and other international organizations (e.g. voluntary agencies, EEC, UN specialized bodies) are all faced with the chronic dilemma of inadequate information. Statistics released by Israeli sources are far too conjectural (and possibly biased) to permit using them for planning purposes. Furthermore, they are not detailed enough to permit drawing conclusions for localized or specialized purposes.** This entails a distinctive "location" advantage to economists residing in the territories themselves, which is not accessible to those living outside Palestine.

* Examples of economic exploitation were discussed earlier in this thesis in Chapters III, IV, and V.

** For example, statistics of all occupied territories are covered by 43 pages in the Statistical Abstract of Israel for 1980, as contrasted to 677 pages devoted to Israeli statistics.