

SYMPOSIUM STUDIES OCCUPIED TERRITORIES' AGRICULTURE

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[Article by Muhammad Abu Ghush: "Jordanian--Palestinian Efforts Are the Alternative in the Absence of a National Development Administration in the Occupied Homeland"]

[Text] The general secretariat of the joint Palestinian--Jordanian commission for the support of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people held a symposium on the possibilities for agricultural and food industrialization in the occupied homeland.

The symposium, which was the second in a series of symposia being held by the general secretariat, was attended by Dr Jawad al-'Anani, the minister of labor, and a number of officials, concerned persons and specialists in agricultural affairs, in addition to experts and researchers from the occupied homeland.

The General Secretary

The symposium was opened by Dr Fu'ad Basisu, the general secretary of the joint Palestinian--Jordanian commission. He gave an address in which he spoke about the study which the technical office had done concerning the potential for agricultural and food industrialization in the occupied homeland. He said that the impetus behind the study was the political, economic and social importance of agricultural and nutritional industrialization has in general, and in the occupied homeland in particular. Insofar as politics is concerned, the subject's importance is linked to its effect on improving the opportunities for exploiting the land and expanding marketing opportunities, thereby binding the citizenry to their land and creating solutions to the problem of food security. In addition, such development contributes to the limitation of integration in agricultural matters with the Israeli economy and to the reestablishment of integration with Jordan and the Arab world.

Dr Basisu said that the economic significance of such development is linked to improving employment opportunities and raising the level of the farmers' income, as well as to the creation of opportunities for absorbing technology and applying it to agricultural activities.

He added that, with respect to the social importance of such industrialization, its effect is linked to the creation of a network of interlocking social relationships, especially by means of the cooperative organizations which such development requires. In addition, it has the effect of raising the nutritional and health level of the population.

He pointed out that agricultural development determines both the present and the future of the Arab--Israeli struggle in Palestine via the struggle for land and sources of water and the investment of human energy and labor.

He said: "The purpose of the study was to analyze the attracting and repelling forces which act on agricultural development in general, and on the development of agricultural and food industries in particular."

Dr Basisu said that the repelling force is represented by the absence of a national development administration, and that this lack is reflected in the occupation authorities' rejection of numerous industrialization opportunities, as well as in the creation of difficulties in marketing operations and in the acquisition of the raw materials needed for these industries.

Dr Basisu spoke of the most important forces favoring development. These forces are linked to the available sources of financial, marketing and technological support. This support can be mobilized in a development administration which would fill the gap left by the absence of a national development administration. It would work through Jordanian--Palestinian and Arab efforts, as well as the independent effort of the Palestinian farmers who wish to develop and exploit their agricultural land in order to protect it, despite the harsh circumstances and situation.

Dr Basisu pointed out that the goal of the study was to analyze the potential for agricultural industrialization by means of a comprehensive statistical survey, in addition to carrying out a detailed sampling study of some of these industries and determining the mode of industrialization which is required and desirable in national terms and possible under the occupation.

Dr Basisu dealt with the painful events in Lebanon which are intended to wrest legitimacy from the PLO. He pointed out the interlocking nature of the plots against the people of Palestine, which confirms that the battle is continuous and unceasing, and that it is essential to work to preserve the Palestinians' land and the Arab--Palestinian industry, as well as to protect this identity from the measures and plans of the Zionist enemy.

Then Mr Jamal Salim, the agricultural adviser and a member of the study committee of the commission's general secretariat, submitted a summary of the state of agricultural and food industries in the occupied territories. He began speaking about the agricultural sector in the occupied territories by saying the following:

Agriculture's share of total local production reached 37 percent on the West Bank and 19.2 percent in the Gaza Strip in 1980, as compared with 6.7 percent and 10.2 percent for the industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza

respectively. Agriculture's share of the total local product is 5.7 percent on the East Bank and 6.2 percent in Israel.

Agriculture's share of the total work force fell on the West Bank from about 45 percent in 1969 to about 21 percent in 1981 (from 47,800 workers to 30,500). In the Gaza Strip, it fell from 33 percent to 10 percent for the same period.

Agriculture's share of the work force in some countries: Jordan 21 percent, Syria 32 percent, Iraq 43 percent, Israel 7 percent, Britain 2 percent, America 2 percent.

The Relative Importance of the Branches of Agricultural Production

The area of the West Bank is approximately 5,572 square kilometers. The cultivated portion does not exceed 30 percent. The area of the Gaza Strip is about 362 square kilometers, while the cultivated portion does not exceed 50 percent.

The cultivated area on the West Bank: fruit trees 60 percent, field crops 32 percent, vegetables 8 percent, citrus 1.5 percent, olive trees 47 percent.

The cultivated area in the Gaza Strip: fruit trees 40 percent, field crops 4.5 percent, vegetables 17 percent, citrus 40 percent, olive trees 45 percent.

Portion of cultivated land which is irrigated: West Bank 5 percent, Gaza Strip 56 percent, East Bank 7.4 percent, Israel 44 percent, Syria 9.3 percent, Iraq 49.3 percent, Lebanon 29 percent.

Agricultural Commerce

Agricultural exports from the occupied territories are almost completely limited to citrus fruits, olive oil, grapes, tomatoes and cucumbers.

About 90 percent of all the occupied territories' imports come from Israel.

About 60 percent of the occupied territories' total exports go to Israel.

Israel's exports to the occupied territories are five times greater than its exports to the other countries of the world.

The West Bank's trade with Jordan equals 16 percent of its trade with Israel, while the Gaza Strip's trade with Jordan equals just 6 percent of its trade with Israel.

Israel provides the West Bank with about 20 percent of the total amount of vegetables which it takes in, including about a third of the tomatoes and three quarters of the watermelons sold on the local market.

Citrus Fruits

The share of agricultural income accounted for by citrus crops on the West Bank is 8 percent (citrus follows olive trees, which account for 23 percent, in importance). In the Gaza Strip, citrus fruits account for 50 percent of agricultural income.

The share of total exports accounted for by citrus fruits is about 15 percent on the West Bank and 90 percent in the Gaza Strip.

Area Covered by Citrus Trees (Dunams)	Average Output (Ton/Dunam)
West Bank: 25,451	2.9
Gaza Strip: 71,579	2.5
The East Bank: 20,516	2.6
(Israel): 363,000	4.2

Agricultural and Nutritional Institutions in the Occupied Territories June 1983

Type	Number	Percent of Total	Number of Workers
Olive Oil Presses	311	36.5	2,036
Ovens	105	12.3	462
Oriental Sweet Shops	79	9.3	271
Oriental Candies	65	7.6	327
Soap Factories	37	4.4	263
Other	255	29.9	3,482
Total	852	100.0	6,841

The total number of workers given above is equal to about 5 percent of the total work force in the occupied territories.

The Soap Industry

Exports of soap are worth more than a million Jordanian dinars. This is equal, on average, to the share of exports accounted for by vegetables, which in turn is divided among more than 10,000 farmers and workers.

for 1978--1980):

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Soap 6.9 percent, vegetable oil 19.6 percent, citrus fruits 13.7 percent, vegetables 7.5 percent, olive oil 20.9 percent, others 31.4 percent.

There are 37 soap factories on the West Bank, producing 6,500 tons a year of soap, and 27 are pre-occupation factories.

The number of factories which produce more than 500 tons a year is 11.

The number of workers at the soap works is 256.

About 85 percent of the total output is sold on the East Bank and in other Arab countries.

Olive oil constitutes 84 percent of the soap by weight (for new soap).

The soap factories have been consuming about 4000 tons a year, which is about half the amount used for nutritional consumption on the West Bank.

Industries Based on Citrus Fruits

Output: 175,000 tons in the Gaza Strip and 75,000 tons on the West Bank.

In the Gaza Strip, there are seven stations for sorting and loading fruit which suffice for the quantity exported. They employ 1,150 workers.

As a result of poor marketing and the drop in exports, the prices for citrus fruit have come to lie far below the cost level. The producers and the owners of the loading stations have suffered great losses.

The price of the wooden crate is 500 fils. The loading fee is 210 fils. Transportation to 'Amman costs 350 fils. Various fees total 150 fils. This is the cost per crate without the fruit.

Sorting and grading services in the Gaza Strip began in 1959. On the West Bank, they started up in 1977, when a factory was set up in Qalqiliyah with 250,000 dinars worth of capital. Its capacity was 15 tons per hour and it had 150 workers and employees. The factory is currently out of commission. It operated only for one season.

Industries Related to Grapes

Grapes account for 6 percent of agricultural income on the West Bank. It follows olives and citrus fruit in this regard (olives 23 percent, citrus fruit 8.2 percent).

The area occupied by vineyards on the West Bank was 89,000 dunams in 1982. Their output was 52,000 tons.

In the Gaza Strip, vineyards occupied 8,500 dunams and produced 7,600 tons of grapes.

Average output per dunam on the West Bank was 600 to 800 kilograms.

The Dabuqi variety accounted for 80 percent of output, while the Shami and Hilwani varieties accounted for 15 percent.

Marketing

The West Bank takes 45 percent of its own grape output. The East Bank takes 25 percent, the Gaza Strip takes 15 percent, and Israel takes 15 percent.

Wine making uses 4000 tons of grapes while 300 tons go to Israel and 1000 tons go to the West Bank.

Another 2500 tons are used to make raisins, malban [a sweet] and treacle.

Industries Based on Vegetables

The West Bank produces 200,000 tons of vegetables. A quarter of that consists of tomatoes, while another quarter consists of watermelons and cantaloupe. In addition, 22,000 tons of eggplant and 18,000 tons of cucumbers are produced. The Gaza Strip produces 70,000 tons of vegetables, including 14,000 tons of tomatoes and a thousand tons of cucumbers. The output is consumed fresh locally, with the exception of tomatoes, cucumbers, watermelons, cantaloupes and eggplant. Surplus quantities of these goods are exported to the East Bank.

Problems in the area of vegetable exports are largely limited to tomatoes. There is one tomato paste factory, which is located in al-Khalil. It has been shut for a few years.

Industries Based on Tobacco and Persian Tobacco

On the West Bank, 4100 dunams are planted with tobacco and Persian tobacco. They produce 280 tons. The Janin region has 95 percent of the ordinary tobacco. Al-Khalil has 1200 dunams of (Hishi). There is no tobacco cultivation in Gaza.

Tobacco accounts for .2 percent of agricultural income.

Companies in the Tobacco Industry

The 1964 Jerusalem Cigarette Company. This company accounts for 60 percent of total production and employs 135 workers.

The 1975 al-'Alamiyyah Company in Bayt Jala. This company accounts for 5 percent of total production and employs 35 workers.

The Israeli companies market in the occupied territories. They have 30 percent of the market on the West Bank and 40 percent in the Gaza Strip. Arab companies are not permitted to market inside Israel.

There are two Persian tobacco factories in Ramallah and a third one in Nabulus. They employ 40 workers, and 250 dunams are planted with the crop.

There is one Persian tobacco factory in Israel. It markets most of its output in the Gaza Strip.

The Dairy Products Industry

Large areas of pasture land have been taken out of production, and as a result of this, a decline of 39 percent has occurred in sheep and goat production, while a decline of 60 percent has occurred in cattle production.

Average per capita consumption of milk (kilogram/year): 62.3 for the West Bank, 41.8 for the Gaza Strip, 198 for Israel.

All of the liquid milk sold in the towns of the occupied territories comes from Israeli production.

There are no competing Israeli sheep and goat products.

The West Bank has nine primitive factories for producing dairy products. The only exception is the factory at the Arab manufacturing project at Ariha. These factories employ 31 workers.

Gaza has four such factories, which employ 17 workers.

Industries Related to Poultry

The West Bank imports 60 percent of the eggs it needs from Israel, as well as 73 percent of the chicken it needs.

There are nine fodder factories on the West Bank and there is one in Gaza. They employ 85 workers and produce 2,560 tons a month.

Tanning Hides

Al-Khalil has 8 factories, which employ 32 workers. (These factories are primitive in comparison with those in Israel.)

Cold Storage Facilities

There are two facilities in Nabulus and two others in Tulkarm. Their capacity is 3900 cubic meters.

The Sesame Paste Industry

There are 14 factories on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. They employ 90 workers.

More than 95 percent of the sesame seeds needed for these factories are imported from Mexico, Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Vegetable Oil

There is a vegetable oil company in Nabulus which employs 300 workers.

There is also the Hilal and Partners Company in Gaza, which employs 15 workers.

Carbonated Beverages

The West Bank has no factories. There are the two 1965 and 1975 factories in Gaza. They employ 219 workers.

Arab Sweets

There are 79 shops in the occupied territories where Arab sweets are made. They employ 271 workers and consume 3 tons of cheese a day.

Bakeries

There are 105 bakeries in the occupied territories, and they employ 462 workers.

The Foundations for Developing Agricultural and Nutritional Industries

The standard of national benefit must be introduced into the evaluation process. The number of workers must be increased. The exploitation of the land must be expanded. The organic connection between the Israeli economy and the economy of the occupied territories must be decreased. Wealth must be distributed among the various levels of society. Priority must be given to projects outside the towns, for the sake of horizontal expansion. National production's share of the local market must be increased. There must be more serious engagement with craft industries. Partial modernization of machinery and the means of production must occur. More effective maintenance services must be provided. Small producers must be helped to buy raw materials wholesale. The necessary guarantees for loans must be facilitated. The marketing of industrial products must receive assistance.

A General Discussion

After that, a general discussion took place which affirmed the following:

The importance of holding such symposia and of having concerned and specialized persons from the occupied homeland take part.

The need to take into consideration the recommendations of the symposium held by the Union of Agricultural Engineers on agriculture in the occupied homeland.

The importance of evaluating the principle of using the idea of national benefit as a standard and a measurement of support for projects in the occupied homeland.

The need to change the mode of consumption in the interior, thereby lessening the organic connection between the Israeli economy and the economy of the occupied territories, as well as the need to confirm the role of "information" in treating and directing this subject.

The effectiveness and vital importance of continuing to support our people in the occupied homeland, and of nourishing and mobilizing the resources of the support fund belonging to the joint committee, in order to meet the needs of the citizens and strengthen their steadfastness in the face of the enemy's plans. Clinging to the land is the decisive sign and standard in the Arab--Israeli struggle.

The need to provide marketing channels and areas in the Arab countries.

The need to avoid local competition in the agricultural sector and in agricultural and nutritional industrialization.

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