Social and Educational Welfare Policy in the Arab Sector in Israel

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Social welfare is customarily defined as 'all institutionalized policies designed to meet social needs'.[1] The state of Israel, which is acknowledged to be a welfare state, bases its welfare policies on the principle of redistribution of private and collective resources. Indeed, this principle has remained at the heart of Israel's welfare programmes, notwithstanding policy differences among Israel's governments from the establishment of the state until the present day.

Studies about Arabs in Israel usually focus on polito-historical issues and on legal discrimination. Little attention had been paid to social and psychological welfare discrimination that directly and intensively influences the quality of life of all Arabs in Israel. This matter is not a pure social-work or psychology-related issue. A series of interviews with Arab professionals in top positions – whose voices are not often heard – reflects the strong influence of the political affiliation and orientation of Jewish officers on the welfare of the Arab population in Israel. When researching Arabs' lives in Israel, every matter appears highly politicized.

Israel's welfare policy towards the Arab sector is difficult to ascertain for several reasons.

1. By its very nature, welfare is very broad in scope and encompasses several government ministries other than the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, including Health, Education and Culture, Construction and Housing, and National Infrastructures.
2. Many government ministries as well as local governing authorities in cities with mixed Arab/Jewish populations do not report on specific funds allocated annually to the Arab population for welfare purposes.[2] Thus, it is difficult to assess what percentage of the general budget in these offices and settlements is allocated specifically to the Arab population.

The first comprehensive study of welfare services in the Arab sector was published in 1991. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of this

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study, the researcher was forced to contend with insufficient documentation of government ministry policies towards the Arab sector as well as with a lack of information regarding the minimal services that did exist at the time.[3] This present article examines the impact of government welfare policies on the Arab sector from the point of view of key Arab administrators in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education. While the article does not elaborate on other ministries that directly or indirectly affect the welfare of the Arab population, it does take an interdisciplinary approach in its overall analysis of the welfare situation and its influences on Arab society. In conclusion, the article proposes changes in social welfare policies towards the Arab population.

PRE-STATE SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE ARAB SECTOR

Prior to 1948, in most of the Arab world, including Palestine, the prevailing social structure was a symbiotic relationship between an extended family structure and agrarian society on the one hand and the *zakat*[4] laws of Islam on the other. This symbiotic social order ensured basic social support for those who were elderly, sick, alone or homeless. By providing this support, the benefactor was guaranteed social status as well as spiritual peace and religious fulfilment.

Beyond this individual social support, collective social welfare services in the Arab sector during the 1920s were limited to the following: (a) institutions, primarily educational, funded by the Islam *waqf* and the annual *zakat* taxes; (b) Christian churches and institutions devoted to caring for orphans and the needy and to developing educational services; (c) a limited number of philanthropic Muslim and Christian women's organizations that helped the indigent and orphans.

British Mandatory authorities opened the first social services department in Palestine in 1944. The department focused on education and health, and it served as a nucleus for social welfare services after the state of Israel was established. Most of these social services were provided to city dwellers, and since the majority of Arabs lived in villages, they did not benefit from these services.

The 1948 war gave rise to a multitude of problems, both for those who became refugees and for those whose villages were transformed into shelters for those same refugees. All at once, these internal refugees lost everything. Suddenly, they found themselves unemployed, indigent, physically and mentally broken. Whole families were dismantled: many people died, while others fled across the borders. Overnight, the villages of refuge absorbed more than 30 per cent of their original population and had no time to make any physical or economic provisions whatsoever. Thus, the standard of living in these villages significantly decreased.

During this period, Arabs in Israel were governed by the Martial Law Administration and by the Minority Office. These two bodies did nothing to solve the psychological and social problems stemming from the war and the Palestinian refugee situation. In fact, the unemployment problem was exacerbated by limitations placed on the movements of Arabs. Special transit licences were neither granted on a regular basis nor to all those who applied.[5] Meanwhile, the Arabs had lost the communal institutions that prior to the war had handled their social welfare needs. The state of Israel and the United Nations Refugee Commission made sure that basic food needs were supplied monthly. The *waqf* committees in the Arab cities and a few church and other charitable organizations and women's groups provided limited and perfunctory services to the needy. No solutions were provided for other basic social needs or for the trauma of the war, and these problems only intensified.

POLICIES AND POLITICS IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

In every form of government, there is a strong relationship between the political policies and the social welfare policies of the ruling administration.[6] The state of Israel determines its welfare policies on the national level. In addition, a number of active voluntary organizations, such as the Jewish Agency, the Histadrut Labour Union Federation, the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), and Hadassah, also play a role in the country's social welfare policies. Not one Arab organization has had any impact on determining welfare policies for the Arab population.[7]

Since the establishment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (formerly the Ministry of Welfare), no special branch has been set up for Arabs, though a position of 'special adviser for Arab affairs' was created. So far, two people have filled this position, one a Jew and the other a Druze; neither was professionally trained in the field of social welfare.

By 1958, 15 welfare bureaux had been set up in the Arab sector, staffed by 32 social workers.[8] In the wake of political decisions made by senior ministry officials, the trend towards developing these services in the Arab sector was halted. In 1978, the director of the Northern District of the Ministry of Social Affairs convinced a number of Arab mayors to agree to set up collective welfare bureaux instead of local offices. His argument was that local offices would drain most of the budget that the local municipalities received from the Ministry of the Interior. The mayors, already suffering from a lack of funds, feared the negative impact that local welfare offices would have on their meagre budgets. These false allegations prevailed upon the Arab mayors, and four collective welfare bureaux were subsequently set up, in Acre, Nazareth, Hadera and Haifa. It is important

to note that setting up these collectives was in direct violation of the Welfare Services Law of 1958, which expressly states that 'a local authority will set up a welfare bureau to provide social services and aid for the needy'. During that period **[???]**, only 11 Arab villages and towns had welfare bureaux directly connected to local government authorities.[9]

Husni al-'Aabid, chair of the Follow-Up Committee on Welfare in the Arab Sector, claims that setting up the collective welfare bureaux was a purely political move whose primary purpose was to find ways to circumvent the law and to strip the Arabs of their rights to develop their villages and towns in all areas, particularly welfare. He maintains that from the time the Ministry of Social Affairs was established, its policies toward the Arabs were influenced by the political status of the National Religious Party (NRP), whose members had staffed the most senior positions in the ministry since its establishment.[10]

The decision to set up the collective welfare bureaux has had a far-reaching effect on the general development of the Arab sector in Israel. These bureaux limited the development of welfare services in all the Arab towns and villages and served to widen and institutionalize the welfare gap between the Arab and Jewish sectors. This resulted in impeding the general development and advancement of the Arab population and had a negative impact on the professionalism of Arab social workers.

Based on the assumption that Arabs are entitled to a portion of total welfare funding equal to their percentage in the general population,[11] studies of the Follow-Up Committee on Welfare concluded that by 1992 the Arab sector had received only 20 per cent of the total budget that should have been allocated to it by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[12] This shortfall resulted from the failure to establish welfare offices in each Arab town by 1978 and the subsequent establishment of the collective welfare bureaux. According to studies conducted by an Arab economist, 12 per cent of the ministry's 1998 budget was allocated to the Arab population. This figure is one-third lower than the percentage of Arabs in the general population and does not take into consideration the general destitution of the Arabs.[13]

The 1983 'Paradise formula' calls for one social worker per every 1,000 inhabitants. This formula has been implemented in most of the Jewish settlements and communities and, as of today, **[???]** in a number of Druze villages as well. In 1987, the Arab population numbered 680,000, while the number of Arab social workers totalled 116, representing a shortage of 564 Arab social workers according to the formula. The number of Arab social workers actually serving the Arab population was minimal: in the Galilee and part of the Triangle,[14] there was one social worker for every 11,000 residents, and in other areas, one social worker for every 7,000 residents. During this same period, 122 out of 238 ministry positions for the Arab sector went unfilled. According to a

formula proposed by Ram Can'an, one social worker position was allocated for every 2,000 Jews, while only one-third of a position was allocated to the same number of Arabs.[15]

Once the collective welfare bureaux had been set up, a village such as 'Araba, population 16,000, was served by one half-time social worker stationed in the welfare bureau in Acre. Needy residents of many villages had to travel up to 75 kilometres (round trip) to reach the office. It goes without saying that people requiring welfare services are usually poor and often have physical limitations.

Two part-time social workers served the Bedouins in the South. This population, numbering 43,000, is spread over a large geographical area. The welfare bureau handled only 263 cases. This small number does not reflect a lack of welfare problems among this group, but rather the difficulties presented by the distance between the welfare clients and the social workers stationed in the bureau.[16] Thus, the welfare bureaux became a nuisance for the client population and a burden for the professionals who staffed them.[17] Government officials and Bedouin representatives have warned that cutting government budgets intended for development of Bedouin settlements constitutes a time bomb.[18] The problems of the Bedouins in the Negev, those living in the seven new villages established by the government and those living in their traditional villages (including some villages that have not been officially recognized), require the recruitment of a large number of professionals who have been specifically trained to understand, respect and help this special cultural group.

Despite the importance of formulas such as that of Paradise in devising a master plan for the Ministry of Social Affairs, they should be regarded only as an initial index and not as a compulsory prescription. The social problems in the Arab sector are many and varied: unemployment, family violence, displacement, lack of housing, juvenile vagrancy, illiteracy and teenage marriages, to name just a few. These problems require special treatment; accordingly, the Ministry of Social Affairs should regard the Arab population as a particularly needy group.

In 1992, after five years of intensive activity on the part of the Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, Ora Namir, then minister of labour and social affairs, ordered that the collective welfare bureaux be phased out gradually, to be replaced by welfare offices in the Arab towns and villages. This decision improved services considerably.[19] That same year, the ministry allocated 100 positions to the Arab sector for the coming five years, to be filled gradually. Minister Namir also began privatizing services in the Arab sector, particularly institutional services for retarded children and troubled girls. This trend towards expanded development continued despite changes in government. In 1998, there were 80 welfare offices in the Arab sector: 48 in Arab towns and villages, 11 in Bedouin villages in the Negev and the north, 14 in Druze and Circassian villages, seven in

regional councils, and an additional seven local welfare bureaux in mixed cities.[20] This is not to say that the quality of welfare services in the Arab sector is satisfactory or that it meets all the immediate needs of the population.

By 1996, after the collective welfare bureaux had been closed and the local offices opened, the number of social worker positions in the Arab sector reached 320. Despite this apparent increase, the gap between demand (for services) and supply was not eliminated because, in addition to handling family socio-economic problems, the welfare offices were also supposed to solve other social problems, such as unemployment, troubled teens, alcoholism, drugs, family violence, inadequate housing and school dropouts. According to Haidar's study,[21] since 1948, the Ministry of Social Affairs has not managed to solve even one of the above problems among its Arab citizens. Indeed, it can be claimed that the establishment of Israel to a large extent *caused* these problems, or at least exacerbated them. For example, evicting the Arabs from their villages led to housing problems in the mixed cities and the many villages that absorbed these internal refugees. Other factors that contributed to disintegration, alienation, crime and deviation within Arab society included the traumatic urbanization and artificial and sudden modernization that were forced on Israel's Arab population by economic, social and political changes, as well as intensive intercultural contact with the predominantly Western Jewish population and its government institutions. The welfare services operating in the Arab villages were not able to meet the demand. On the contrary, these services offered false expectations, which frustrated the client population and the professionals as well.

Gid'on 'Abas, Ministry Adviser on Arab Affairs,[22] believes that the Jewish district directors in the Ministry of Social Affairs advocated setting up collective welfare bureaux in the Arab sector as a convenient way to administer their operations. Setting up these bureaux eliminated the need for the directors to visit remote Arab villages that often had no easy access. Moreover, 'Abas claims that Follow-Up Committee pressure did not influence the ministry's eventual decision to close the collective bureaux. He believes that the change ensued from internal ministry developments resulting from his correct assessment of the actual situation and his recommendations.[23]

'Abas believes that the relative gap in social services between the Arab and Jewish sectors resulted from the fact that the Arabs themselves, as well as their mayors, leaders and *mukhtars* (traditional village leaders) are backward. **[???]** He does not claim that the ministry discriminated between different groups, but rather that services were granted only to those who requested them. For example, he thinks that Bedouins in the Negev did not receive any allocated positions or welfare projects because they did not demand any special funding. Haidar[24] concluded that Arab

ignorance regarding welfare rights is one of the reasons that the state of Israel has not solved even one social welfare problem in the Arab sector. Arabs should not be penalized for ignorance regarding social welfare rights. Rather, the state of Israel, as a welfare state, should be expected to educate all sectors of the population regarding their needs and their rights.

After his appointment in 1986, 'Abas set out to equalize the services provided to Druze and Bedouin communities whose residents serve in the army. This policy conformed to the Likud government's policy regarding equality among all groups doing military service. During his tenure in office, 'Abas established institutions, increased jobs and positions, and preferentially infused funds, especially to Druze villages. For example, in 1993 and 1994 Druze villages received funds representing 25 per cent and 20 per cent respectively of the total ministry budget intended for the Arab sector, even though the Druze population constitutes less than 10 per cent of the total Arab population of Israel.[25] This example indicates the direct relationship between ministry policies and the political orientation of decision-makers and key position-holders.

Another example of the political nature of this relationship is that the Ministry Welfare Advisory Bureau provided welfare services to Arab youth in order to control them politically rather than to implement the basic intentions of ministry services. In an internal ministry document, Mr 'Abas states that proper services must be provided for Arab youth to prevent them from joining hostile organizations such as Abna al-Balad, the Islamic Movement, the Communist Party or the Arab Democratic Party.[26]

In summary, it is impossible to disregard the degree to which politics have affected the professional policies and decisions of the ministry towards Arab citizens.

GAPS IN WELFARE SERVICES

1992 marked a turning point in the level of welfare services in the Arab sector, as acknowledged by those working in the field. Nonetheless, despite the drastic improvements in the number of welfare offices, the number of positions and the type of services offered, the Arab sector still suffers from the discriminatory budgetary policies of the ministry. Welfare services are closely tied to the budgets of the village councils. Since 25 per cent of each welfare project is funded by the local government, in many cases Arab government authorities postpone implementing or completing projects because of internal budgetary problems.

When faced with a choice between extending their services horizontally (to a large number of clients) or vertically (comprehensively but to a limited number of clients), many welfare offices prefer the first alternative. This less intensive option often results in treating the source of the problem only superficially at best, with no chance of providing in-depth treatment and

certainly not preventive treatment. For example, a novel programme in Nazareth set up special clubs for children from violent homes. According to the less intensive option, children would attend these clubs three times a week so that a large number of needy children could benefit from the project. The more intensive model would dictate that fewer children would be able to attend the club – but five times a week, where they would be served a hot meal and have more hours of supervision.

Amal al-Far, director of the Nazareth Welfare Office, which is the largest and oldest welfare facility in the Arab sector, claims that such a policy decision is very difficult from a professional point of view even though budgetary constraints do not leave her much choice. For example, in the project for children from violent homes, she was forced to choose the less intensive model in order to serve the greatest number of children. She was aware that children not given the opportunity to participate in the project would have no alternative at all. While al-Far would like to be able to operate according to purely professional considerations, budgetary constraints have forced her, and the staff of other welfare offices as well, to make do with superficial rather than comprehensive professional performance.

Professionals such as al-Far who are responsible for carrying out welfare policy also have to mediate between the laws of the nation and ministry policies. She claims that despite her obligation as bureau head to implement laws such as the government Welfare Services Law, the government does not provide the Arab sector with dedicated funds to implement the law, so that she finds herself busy persuading the government to provide the necessary funds instead of concentrating on developing projects in accordance with the Welfare Law.[27]

A major impediment to narrowing the welfare gap is the shortage of public buildings in the Arab sector. In addition to its public bomb shelters, the Jewish sector also has sufficient public buildings to house its welfare projects. In the Arab sector, in contrast, each welfare project must confront the problem of finding an appropriate building or of raising money for rental costs. A large percentage of the funds provided by the local government authorities goes to renting these buildings. Most of the local government authorities in the Arab sector still do not have a master plan or a blueprint outlining programmes to erect public buildings that could serve welfare clients in the Arab sector.

Another problem facing welfare services in the Arab sector is that some types of welfare services are provided only via voluntary organizations, such as those that help the elderly, rehabilitate released prisoners, provide support for former alcoholics or assist the handicapped. Since there are no such organizations in the Arab sector, the Ministry of Social Affairs sees it as necessary to train the public to establish, organize and run such organizations. Thus, the local welfare bureaux have devoted part-time positions to this purpose, positions that are deducted from the total

number of allocated positions required for the welfare client population served by that welfare bureau. This need demonstrates that the Paradise formula does not always apply in the Arab sector. If the laws of the state necessitate the establishment of voluntary organizations in order that a sector may receive welfare funding, then the state must supply additional funded social worker positions to those groups whose social and economic conditions preclude setting up these organizations on their own.

Even though the number of social worker positions in the Arab sector has risen, the level of services provided is still poor. One reason is the poverty level among the Arabs as compared to the Jews.[28] All of the Arab towns and villages in Israel with the exception of the village of M'alia are in the bottom five percentiles on the socio-economic scale, and are concentrated particularly in the two lowest percentiles.[29]

Poverty in the Arab sector is concentrated especially among the weakest groups in the population, such as children and the elderly. Figures indicate that since the 1960s, between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of Arab children live below the poverty line.[30] This statistic is particularly grave in view of the fact that the Arab local governing authorities are themselves distressed financially as a result of budgetary inequities. Thus, they cannot be expected, either now or in the foreseeable future, to run projects designed to reduce poverty among children or to deal with the immediate sociological and educational results of this poverty.

It appears, then, that the ministry is not interested in getting to the root of the social problems in the Arab sector. Without comprehensive, fundamental and wide-ranging solutions, social, familial and psychological problems are only exacerbated. The minimal and superficial efforts made to solve only the most pressing difficulties simply means that the basic problems continue to disrupt individuals and society at large. Thus, this partial funding actually goes down the drain, and no real results can be seen. For example, in 1998 the welfare bureau in Nazareth proposed a master plan for all matters under its jurisdiction with a budget totalling five million shekels. The ministry's response: 'Be reasonable. Set feasible priorities.' The budget was cut to 900,000 shekels, and the head of the bureau, Amal al-Far, was forced to relinquish fundamental elements of the project. Regarding the bureau's regular annual budget for that year, she stated, 'I assume that this year's budget will have a discrepancy of 100,000 shekels. I have written several letters to the ministry, and they've authorized 10,000 shekels. I must continue to fight this battle. A great deal of my time and energy is devoted to administrative matters of this type.'[31]

POPULATION DIFFERENCES AS REFLECTED IN WELFARE POLICY

The Arab and Jewish populations of Israel differ in many areas, including family structure, culture, religion, existing social institutions, and

demographic structure. Thus, it might be expected that the Ministry of Social Affairs would adapt its goals, work methods and staff training to the particular needs of the client population. Without such adaptation, welfare policies are likely to constitute a detrimental intrusion on the unique nature of the society and culture. What were intended as welfare solutions become problems in themselves for the individual and for the society as well. For example, in cases of sexual abuse of minors within a family, the law requires that the abuser be imprisoned and that the victim be given shelter and emotional counselling. Experience with actual cases, however, has shown that imprisoning the abuser (who is usually a close relative) leads to the family being ostracized by the community. Thus, the victim is abused many times over: first by the original attacker; then by her family, which accuses her of breaking up the family circle and disgracing the entire family; and finally, by society as a whole, which spurns her and her family and blocks off all possibilities for rehabilitation. In such cases, the police and the social worker usually extract a commitment from the family not to harm the girl physically; nonetheless, they cannot protect the girl either psychologically or socially. In handling such cases, the ministry would better serve this population by adapting its treatment to the social structure, the values and the religious principles of Arab society. This adaptation could be implemented if Arab sociologists, anthropologists and mental health professionals were to examine ministry laws and propose a set of laws whose intentions are suited to Arab society.

Another example from the field of welfare also illustrates how ministry policies are not suitable to the Arab sector. According to the Welfare Law, those who are sick and confined to their homes can receive help at home for a fee. This assistance usually amounts to a limited number of hours per day, or sometimes only a few hours a week. This law does take the needs of the Arab elderly into consideration. However, according to Arab social norms, a family member living with or near an elderly person must help with the person's daily care, even if this assistance constitutes a hardship. Because of these norms, family members will do everything they can to avoid sending the helpless old person to an institution. Thus, this extended family structure directly reduces the necessity for government budgetary spending. The law, however, forbids immediate family members, such as sons and daughters, to be paid for any help they give to their elderly relative even if the care of this relative has forced one of them to stay home and lose a source of income. In such cases, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Joint Distribution Committee of Israel have not adapted existing laws to the social and cultural structure of Arab society.

Halfway houses for troubled teenage girls are yet another example. Girls are transferred to these houses if, after several months in a shelter with appropriate counselling, they refuse to return to their families. In halfway houses in the Jewish sectors, groups of four to five girls live

together and work to support themselves. In the one halfway house for such girls in the Arab sector, two counsellors and a social worker supervise the girls 24 hours a day. In Arab villages, it is not acceptable for young girls to live on their own. Thus, the expenses incurred by the Women Against Violence organization are much higher in the Arab sector. The Ministry of Social Affairs does not take this cultural reality into consideration in determining the annual budget for shelters and attendant projects in the Arab sector.[32] Consequently, the money allocated for halfway house counsellors is at the expense of other psychological and social programmes, so that the level of services provided to these distressed girls is decreased through no fault of those running the project.

As of 1998, the ministry had demonstrated no flexibility towards the special situation and unique conditions of Arab welfare clients. The ministry has never funded a basic study to ascertain the needs of Arab society. Moreover, it has not seen fit to train Arab social workers to adapt themselves to the special needs of Israel's Arab residents, including Druzes and Bedouins.[33]

Arab social workers who treat problems such as family violence and alcoholism cannot rely on theories that apply to families in Western society, nor can they make use of the state's existing treatment facilities. Unique programmes devised by the ministry are not at all appropriate for the Arab sector because of differences in familial and cultural structure.[34] Arab social workers have submitted a proposal to the ministry for creating their own programme and adapting it to the needs of the target population. For such a programme to be created effectively, the ministry must fund a staff of Arab professionals from various disciplines (including a social worker, a social psychologist and a sociologist or anthropologist) and back up their work with appropriate assessment to determine the programme's effectiveness. This programme has not been implemented because it would require considerable funding. Similar programmes, however, have been regularly implemented in the Jewish sector, particularly among new immigrants.

The Israeli academic community has also disregarded the differences on all levels between the dominant Jewish population and the Arabs. Schools training social workers have not seen it necessary to offer even a single academic course focusing on Arabs. They do, however, offer special courses about immigration and Ethiopian and Russian family structures, and have trained cadres of professionals to deal with these special groups.[35]

Israeli professional literature on welfare services also mainly ignores the existence of the Arabs and does not devote any special sections to enlightening professionals or decision-makers regarding the special welfare needs in Arab society. The Ministry of Social Affairs has never funded studies on the welfare situation in the Arab sector, nor have other government institutions. In contrast, in recent years the ministry has

funded dozens of studies on immigration and immigrant absorption and on other ethnic minorities.[36]

WELFARE SERVICES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

There is an intimate relationship between the type and quality of welfare services provided to a particular group and the educational achievement level of its students. The declared policy of the Israeli Ministry of Education is to promote weak students and to narrow scholastic and social gaps between social classes.[37] The Ministry of Education believes that weak population groups require special assistance in order reach appropriate levels of achievement and, in fact, to conform to the Compulsory Education Law. To achieve this goal, the ministry allocates special funds for the social and mental welfare of all students, and particularly for those students living under difficult social conditions. An examination of welfare activities within the Arab school system in Israel reveals a shortage of three types of resources: (1) appropriate educational centres; (2) funded positions; and (3) tools and materials necessary for proper functioning.

1. Shortage of Appropriate Educational Centres

Figures show that between 75 per cent and 85 per cent of Arab three-year-olds and close to 50 per cent of four-year-olds are not enrolled in any educational centre whatsoever. In comparison, 96 per cent and 98 per cent respectively of Jewish children are enrolled in appropriate centres. The Follow-Up Committee for Educational Affairs in the Arab Sector feels that this failure to enforce the law requiring compulsory education from age three stems from the fact that such enforcement would primarily benefit the Arabs. Thus, they believe that the Education Ministry's undeclared policy in the field is to institutionalize the existing gap between the two population groups.[38]

The dropout rate in Arab schools is constantly rising. To date, **[???]** no sincere and comprehensive effort has been made to treat the source and scope of this problem. In 1984–85, the dropout rate in the Arab sector was 40.55 per cent of all students in grade 12,[39] compared to a dropout rate of 55 per cent in 1996.[40] In 1998, the dropout rate in the Jewish sector among a comparable student group was 18.4 per cent. Since the establishment of the state, there have not been sufficient programmes provided for Arab student dropouts, such as Industrial Development Centres for Youth.[41] These special centres provide a solution for students who reach junior high school with only minimal reading and maths skills. These children do not suffer from mental retardation but rather from environmental deprivation. There are five Industrial Development Centres for Youth in the entire Arab sector, one in the Negev. According

to Haidar's survey, around 20 additional centres are needed. The centres in the Arab sector serve only boys; there is no parallel programme available for Arab girls. Since the dropout rate has increased almost 11 per cent over the past ten years, we can assume that the number of programmes required for these dropouts in the Arab sector should also be increased. One such centre is under construction in a Druze village, while the minister's adviser on Arab affairs has estimated that an additional three centres are needed immediately.[42]

Note, too, that special programmes for dropouts, such as vocational training schools or vocational courses offered by the National Insurance Institute, do not exist in the Arab sector, though they are available to the Jewish population. In summary, the Arabs suffer from acute social, educational and economic deprivation because of a shortage of programmes geared to Arab school dropouts who are not employed.[43] Such a problem is not evident in the Jewish sector for three main reasons: (a) a relatively low dropout rate; (b) availability of appropriate educational centres for dropouts; and (c) mobilization into the Israel Defence Forces, where social, educational and vocational guidance is provided to marginal youth.

If close to 55 per cent of Arab students drop out of school before completing the 12th grade, it is reasonable to assume that most of them have joined the workforce, even though some are as young as 14.[44] These youngsters work under dreadful conditions and illegally; they are exploited, both in the number of hours and the type of work allowed for this age group, and they are not given the opportunity to complete their educational or vocational training.[45] This type of employment only broadens and institutionalizes the gap between Jews and Arabs. Added to this grim picture is the shortage in educational and cultural centres geared to this age group, such as community centres, sports centres and youth clubs.[46] These young people constitute the nucleus of the next generation of Arab adults, a generation that is uneducated, unskilled, economically powerless, and lacking in firm cultural and social ties to the society in which they live. Moreover, from a sociological point of view, it can be expected that the percentage of these young people likely to deviate from social norms exceeds their actual percentage in the general population. Because of a shortage in funded positions for social workers and counsellors to handle street gangs in Arab villages, no preventive measures are taken in respect of these problems.

There is also a shortage in protective custody institutions for Arab juvenile delinquents. Some are tried and sentenced to serve in prison alongside adult criminals; others must wait to serve their sentences until a place in an appropriate correctional institution is found for them.[47] Today the trend is towards privatizing the protective custody service in order to meet the needs in the field.

Special education in the Arab sector has also been hit hard by a lack of funding and appropriate institutions. From year to year, the gap between growing needs and limited services widens, thus exacerbating the problem. In 1994, at least 215 five-year-olds were supposed to be placed in special educational centres; however, these centres could not be set up, so the children remained in the regular school system. In 1997, at least 5,232 Arab children from first to ninth grades who had studied in regular classes were to be transferred to special classes; this transfer did not take place. That same year, an additional 1,373 Arab children were to receive special education services in their regular classes; these services were also denied them. Moreover, by 1997, no funding was available to open special classes for at least 3,029 Arab children targeted for such classes.[48] The Action Committee for Special Education in the Arab sector wrote a letter to the late minister of education, Zevulun Hammer, reminding him of the conclusions of the 1994 master plan to implement the Special Education Law issued jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Pedagogic Administration and the Special Education Division. This letter, however, as well as subsequent committee activities, did nothing to change the special education situation in the Arab sector. As of 1997, there was a shortage of paramedics, aides and professional supervisors to work with special groups such as the blind, the deaf and the mute, to say nothing of a lack of special schools for these groups. Moreover, institutions such as vocational junior high schools geared to special education needs were also lacking. There was also a shortage in adequate educational programmes and after-school enrichment programmes in Arabic. And, as in other welfare areas, there were not enough public buildings targeted for special education needs.[49]

In addition to services provided by the Psychological Counselling Service (PCS), a variety of other programmes are available that offer welfare services to children and youth. Some are government programmes, such as those under the auspices of the Education and Social Services Division, or quasi-governmental, such as those sponsored by the Histadrut Labour Federation. Other programmes are sponsored by private organizations, including Na'amat (organization of working women and volunteers), WIZO, the Zionist Federation, and the Islamic Movement.[50] Following is a summary of the services provided in the Arab sector by some of these organizations.

Education and Social Services Division. Through 1997, the services of the Education and Social Services Division were not made available to Arabs based on the claim that the organization was funded by Jewish donors from abroad. That year, the Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education threatened to petition the High Court of Justice and, indeed, carried out this threat. The division presents its budget as a government budget funded by the state. Its annual report states: 'The Education and Social Services Division uses

government allocated resources to bolster and empower weak groups in the population by developing new initiatives'.[51] Furthermore, the division does not claim to be a service exclusively geared to the Jewish population. 'The goal of The Education and Social Services Division is to develop *all* students from weak groups who are studying in academic tracks, in classes geared to partial matriculation, in guidance classes and in youth centers, in order to help them find a way to fit into society.' (Emphasis in original.)

As of today, **[???]** some elements of this programme are being implemented partially and in a limited way in a number of Arab villages. Most are run under the auspices of the urban renewal programme and are not available to Arabs. Funds granted to these restricted operations are also limited, thus precluding an effective and fundamental attack on educational problems.

Na'amat. Na'amat began its operations in the Arab sector at the end of the 1960s. By 1998, Na'amat ran a relatively limited number of projects in the Arab sector in comparison to the Jewish sector. These include three vocational schools and 30 guidance classes for female dropouts and for women in 11 Arab villages. A programme to help female dropouts complete their matriculation certificates was offered in a number of schools. In all, these programmes have helped 700 girls. In addition, Na'amat, in cooperation with the National Insurance Institute, offers courses in Arabic for single mothers (especially widows), as well as a course in business entrepreneurship and clubs for around 300 businesswomen. Na'amat provides legal assistance through two Arab attorneys (as opposed to 20 Jewish attorneys who serve the Jewish sector). The organization also offers assistance to women who are the victims of family violence and has allocated four of the 15 beds in its battered women's shelter for Arab women. In the field of pre-school education, Na'amat set up 18 daycare centres in the Arab sector (compared to 330 in the Jewish sector), in addition to one mixed daycare centre in Jaffa and five nursery schools.[52]

Na'amat has reduced its operations in the Arab sector because of financial difficulties within the organization and also in the Histadrut Labour Federation. What's more, the small number of daycare centres founded by Na'amat also reflects the fact that the minimal fee, after Ministry of Social Affairs subsidies, still constitutes an economic burden on large families in the Arab villages. The ministry is not willing to grant these families a special fee different from that charged in the Jewish sector.[53]

WIZO. The few women's centres set up by WIZO specifically to serve Arab women can be found in Haifa, Nazareth and Acre. These centres offer activities for women and programmes for children. The organization also runs a centre for single mothers, which plans on developing a special

programme for Arab women in the Haifa area. WIZO has also set up a centre for Circassian women, three centres for Druze women, and one centre in a Bedouin village. These centres all offer similar activities.

WIZO plays an active role in one Arab community centre in the village of Tarshiha, particularly in activities geared to children and youth. The centre serves 350 children. In contrast, in the Jewish sector, WIZO has 22 centres, 30 clubhouses, 16 play centres, five educational centres, and a hotline for children at risk.

In mixed cities, many Arab children are enrolled in WIZO daycare centres. In Tel Aviv, WIZO has set up three multipurpose daycare centres for Arab children from troubled families. WIZO also has a daycare centre in Jaffa. In the Jewish sector, WIZO runs 167 nursery schools and three daycare centres. Several Arab students study at WIZO's vocational schools, which have an open admissions policy.[54]

WIZO does not provide services for the elderly in the Arab sector, while in the Jewish sector, it operates close to 100 centres for the elderly, one senior citizens' home, and a hotline for the elderly.[55]

In summary, the two most influential women's organizations in Israel are not eager to set up centres in Arab villages for budgetary reasons. The three WIZO centres operating in Druze villages are run on a voluntary basis.

Arab Voluntary Organizations. Two serious studies have attempted to estimate the number of local organizations and associations that provide welfare services in the Arab sector: a 1991 study conducted by the Jaffa Research Center and a 1993 study conducted by the Givat Haviva Jewish-Arab Center for Peace. The 1991 study **[???]** reported on 186 local organizations, committees and associations in the Arab sector operating in 36.84 per cent of all Arab towns and villages.[56] Of these, the 5.4 per cent set up before 1948 are primarily Christian charitable organizations; close to 75 per cent of the remaining organizations were established between 1980 and 1990. The few groups set up before 1960 (around three per cent) are usually committees or Islam associations organized in the mixed cities. Recently, an important feature of such groups has been their focus on social, cultural and political development. This ideological thrust has probably been influenced by intercultural contact between Palestinians living in Israel and those living on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in the Arab Diaspora. Another contributing factor is the rise in the number of college-educated Arabs as well as the increased ideological power of the Islamic Movement. Note that until 1990, 18.3 per cent of all voluntary Arab organizations in Israel belonged to the Islamic Movement. The authors of the 1991 study assumed that this percentage was much higher but that the actual figure was difficult to assess because many of these organizations centred their activities in the mosques. Moreover, within the Islamic Movement, it was difficult to isolate social welfare activities from

other Movement activities. Furthermore, most of the organizations and associations were either overtly or covertly affiliated with political parties or other political or religious organizations.[57] The 1993 study revealed that up to 36.84 per cent of the centres in the Arab sector belonged to the Communist Party and 14.73 per cent to the Islamic Movement; almost 10.52 per cent of all the Arab villages had centres run by local women's organizations. The Histadrut ran centres in 72.63 per cent of the Arab villages; activities of other groups such as Na'amat or WIZO were extremely limited and, in some places, negligible.[58]

Not all the organizations reported on provide the expected level of activity. At least 40 per cent operate on a temporary or seasonal basis. Functioning organizations usually focus on services for young children, such as running private nursery schools, providing training centres, and introducing computers to the Arab villages. Most of these organizations are financed by outside funds, and their ongoing services are dependent on continued outside support. They have no way of becoming financially independent.

These voluntary organizations played a significant role in the Arab communities and provided welfare services that other institutions, such as the local government, were unable to establish in the Arab sector.[59] On the other hand, the very existence of these organizations, centres and associations is another example of the degree to which social and educational welfare in Israel has been politicized.

2. Shortage of Funded Positions

The mental and social well-being of students within the school system directly affects their school performance. Therefore, the Ministry of Education employs psychologists and educational counsellors to serve the system and the individual. Their duties can be summarized as follows: (1) screening students for various educational settings; (2) matching school services to the specific needs of the students; (3) providing the children, as individuals and as a group, with emotional and social support; and (4) directing and advising the system regarding students or issues that affect the mental and social well-being of a student or a group of students.

In 1996, psychologists were employed in only 32 per cent of Arab schools, compared to 75 per cent of Jewish schools. This gloomy picture is even worse than it appears on the surface when we consider that all of the psychologists and counsellors in the Arab sector hold meagre part-time positions that are not sufficient to meet the needs of the students they are supposed to be serving. For example, a city such as Acre, with an Arab student population of almost 2,700, has one half-time psychologist. The required ratio, according to the Psychological Counselling Service, is one full-time psychologist for every 600 students.[60] The situation in Acre is not an anomaly; rather, it represents the norm in the Arab school system.

Under such circumstances, psychologists and educational counsellors work mainly to solve immediate and pressing problems and do not have the luxury to develop educational and psychological welfare programmes or to devise preventive strategies that would meet the needs of every institution or community.

There is a serious shortage of psychological counselling services in the Arab school system. When asked about the quality of services in their schools, 97 per cent of Arab principals employing a school psychologist requested that the PCS increase the psychologist's job percentage. A report issued by the PCS indicates that:

> … when measured by the make-up of counseling services in a school, the gap between the Jewish and non-Jewish sectors is extreme. Only 3% of schools in the Jewish sector have no PCS personnel whatsoever, while in the non-Jewish sector, 51% of schools have neither a counselor nor a psychologist. 58% of schools in the Jewish sector have two mental health professionals, as compared to only 7% of non-Jewish schools.[61]

3. Shortage of the Tools and Materials Necessary for Proper Functioning

Diagnostic tests. The PCS has chosen to adapt and standardize psychological tests that have proved effective in Western countries. Since the establishment of the state, the PCS has not seen fit to fund development of a battery of diagnostic tests and tools geared specifically to the language and the social and cultural structure of the Arab sector. Arab psychologists responsible for screening children and assigning them to special educational institutions have testified that the locally developed tools available to them do not adequately measure the real status of Arab students.[62] Needless to say, the fate of a student is often sealed for life as a result of these tests. In the Ministry of Education's five-year plan, the PCS has promised to correct this injustice.

Professional literature. Since 1948, the Ministry of Education's Staff Programmes Department and the PCS have issued hundreds of books and pamphlets geared to educational counsellors, psychologists and special education teachers who work with schoolchildren of all ages. Fewer than five have been issued in Arabic, and all were published during the last five years. **[???]** Thus, Arab professionals are forced to work without necessary reference materials or, alternatively, must translate existing materials into Arabic. This literature does not always meet the needs of the Arab school system. Moreover, translation consumes precious work hours, leaving a part-time counsellor or psychologist without sufficient time to treat all problem areas.

In summary, cumulative shortages in the school system can be attributed to the following omissions on the part of the Ministry of

Education: failure to adapt its policies to the needs of the Arab sector; failure to carry out its five-year plans; failure to allocate funds according to the actual needs of the Arab sector and not according to percentages in the total student population; and failure to construct permanent buildings. These shortages have led to serious injustices, both for welfare clients within the school system (namely pupils requiring special education) as well as for ordinary students who may be harmed by having to study alongside these problematic students.

PROFESSIONAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEES

In democratic countries, it is very common for professionals to organize themselves into professional associations. Generally, the purpose of such organizations is to ameliorate employment conditions and advance professional status. People active in such organizations usually try to modify the economic policies of various government ministries in order to enhance their own professional status and improve the terms of their employment. Arab mental health professionals, in contrast, have organized themselves with the express purpose of effecting changes in government policy regarding civil equality, equal opportunity, equal allocation of resources to Jews and Arabs, and improvement of services granted to the Arab sector. Such changes would eventually improve conditions for Arab professional workers as well. These professionals are battling for the most elementary goals, such as opening special education classes, rather than for expanding programmes in such classes or for improving the employment conditions of special education teachers.

One sign of Arab professional political involvement is the establishment of professional follow-up committees. These committees developed naturally in the wake of professional conferences in education (since 1984) and social welfare (since 1987). Key academics, professionals and fieldworkers saw the importance of making the entire Arab population and, in fact, the whole country aware of their individual frustrations with the level of services. Intellectuals, political figures and other Arab leaders gather at these conferences, which are held every four years. Conference activities take place across the country, in Arab communities in the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev, and in the mixed cities, in order to ensure public support and enthusiasm.

The Follow-Up Committee for Education in the Arab Sector in Israel is composed of representatives from the following groups: teachers' organizations, education professionals, the Head Follow-Up Committee, parent associations and university students. The declared purpose of the committee is to supervise education in the Arab sector and to seek educational equality between the Arab and Jewish sectors.[63] Arab schools report to the committee about every problem that the Ministry of

Education does not adequately handle. In actuality, the committee supervises and speaks for educational services in the Arab sector.

The Follow-Up Committee on Welfare in the Arab Sector was set up following the first Arab welfare conference held in 1987. Its members are social workers, psychologists, educational guidance counsellors, economists, and representatives from the Head Follow-Up Committee. The committee set its goal as improving services and economic conditions in the Arab sector by pressuring responsible government ministries for funds and positions.[64]

The two follow-up committees mentioned above believe in the importance of surveys and studies as a bargaining point in the professional debate over budgets and services and as a means of pressuring various government ministries. Recently, the Follow-Up Committee on Welfare in the Arab Sector proposed establishing a centre for applied research in order to implement committee decisions.[65]

Despite the perceptible influence of these two committees, and despite the top professional level of their staffs, not one government ministry has officially recognized them as representative bodies. Over the years, the committees have met with education and welfare ministers from various political parties, but each of these ministers explicitly related to them as individuals rather than as representatives of official organizations. Following this same policy, welfare district managers have tried their best to delegitimize the follow-up committees. They warned both Arab and Jewish ministry employees not to participate in follow-up committee conferences because the ministry does not recognize the committee's existence and does not agree to release its social workers to attend workshops organized by the committee.[66]

Arab expectations on the one hand, and the political response of government ministries on the other, served to enhance the trend towards politicizing the follow-up committees. Nevertheless, the two committees continued to declare their political neutrality. Dr Sami Jaraysi, the first chairman of the Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, tried to underscore the nature of the gap that the committee was trying to close, as well as the committee's political neutrality:

> … we have no solutions. Changing policies, circumstances and positions that have existed for dozens of years is not easy. It is difficult to expect that an organization lacking in political or partisan strength can correct what has gone wrong for generations. Nevertheless, neither we nor you (Arab population as a whole) have ever believed that it would be simple or easy to make the necessary changes. We have been and will continue to be a moral, social, humanitarian, nonpartisan, and unofficial force striving from faith to achieve full equality in all areas.[67]

The working conditions of Arab educational and welfare professionals have forced almost all of them, at some point in their professional careers, to spend time confronting 'the powers that be' rather than focusing solely on personal development and professional undertakings. The experience of Dr Mahmud Saleh, a senior psychologist in the Psychological Counselling Service, provides one illustrative example. In order to influence the PCS to include standardization of psychological tests for the Arab sector in its five-year plan, he had to canvass members of Knesset who would be willing to apply pressure in order to mobilize resources and funds. The extent of political involvement required and the difficult work conditions lead to rapid professional burnout. Moreover, limited resources are quickly exhausted, and precious energy is dissipated on political wheeling and dealing and on seeking budgets, activities that have no direct connection to the ethos of their profession. Such an atmosphere ultimately leads to a drop in the level of services and harms the client population.

IS THE STATE OF ISRAEL A WELFARE STATE FOR ITS ARAB CITIZENS?

The state of Israel takes pride in being a relatively young country whose progressive social legislation surpasses that of more established Western nations. Yet one must consider the information outlined above, as well as other data that points to large gaps in the level and quality of welfare services provided to Israel's Arab population compared to its Jewish population.[68] In view of all this evidence, the question becomes: is the state of Israel a welfare state for its Arab citizens as well?

According to Shahar, 'welfare policies are those policies whose goals are to ensure freedom from want and from unemployment, social security and well-being for all the nation's citizens'.[69] He also outlines the following conditions defining social distress:

1. Low per capita income.
2. Inferior living conditions.
3. Large percentage of families subsisting on welfare.
4. High unemployment rate.
5. Many marginal and disenfranchised young people.
6. High crime rate.
7. Low-status occupations.[70]

In the following discussion, I will attempt to examine the extent to which each of these conditions exists in the Arab sector in Israel.

1. Low Income

Seventy-six per cent of all employed Arabs are in the bottom three to five percentiles on the poverty scale and constitute the majority in the four lowest percentiles.[71]

2. Inferior Living Conditions

The immediate causes of housing problems in the Arab sector are as follows: expropriation of Arab lands; limitations on the jurisdiction boundaries of Arab villages so that they cannot develop and build new neighbourhoods for young couples; serious housing problems and slums in the mixed cities caused by the influx of internal refugees starting in 1948; and a large discrepancy between mortgages granted to eligible Arabs and housing costs in Israel. As a result of these factors, housing has become one of the most acute problems facing Arabs today. Land for construction in Arab villages has become a rare commodity. The villages can be developed and expanded only by allowing them to annex government lands and sell them to young Arab couples at subsidized prices and by improving mortgage terms.

3. Welfare Payments

In cities in the Jewish sector, only two per cent of families on average receive welfare payments; among the Arabs, this number is 20 per cent. Figures provided by the National Insurance Institute indicate that in 1997 in Nazareth, for example, the percentage of those on welfare was 12 times the national average. In 1996, a quarter of the Arab population lived below the poverty level even after receiving social welfare allowances. This figure is half for Jews.[72]

4. Unemployment

The highest unemployment rate is found in the Arab villages, particularly in Druze communities. It often reaches 11 per cent of the workforce in a given community. The actual unemployment rate is much higher than the official rate for the following reasons: the unemployed often do casual labour in the village or on family land; women who don't work outside the home are not registered as unemployed; some people fail to register at the Unemployment Bureau, either because the bureau is too far away from home or because unemployment is considered a shame for Arab men.[73]

5. Problems of Youth

Almost 50 per cent of Israeli Arab youngsters under the age of 18 are not in any educational environment whatsoever. No Arab community in Israel offers any comprehensive local or regional solutions for dropouts, disenfranchised youth or troubled youth.

6. Crime Rate

The crime rate in the Arab sector among young people and adults is disproportionately higher than the percentage of Arabs in the general population.[74] This is the result of a shortage of welfare institutions for young people as well as a lack of preventive and treatment programmes.

7. Occupational Status

Twenty per cent of the Arab workforce are employed in white-collar jobs, while 41.9 per cent work in agriculture, industry, mining, construction and transportation and 10.5 per cent work in unskilled labour.[75] Thus, the Arabs do most of the country's manual labour.

According to Shahar's criteria,[76] then, most of Israel's Arabs live under conditions of social distress. Moreover, if we disregard subsidy allowances granted to children, to widows, widowers and orphans, and to the elderly, which are equal among all population groups,[77] figures attesting to the quality and scope of actual welfare services indicate that the state of Israel does not provide its Arab citizens the same welfare services as it does its Jewish citizens.

There are those who would contend that Israel has done well by its Arab citizens in the area of social welfare. This contention is based on a comparison between the conditions of Arabs living in Israel and those living in Arab countries. Such a claim serves to embellish the little that the state actually does for the welfare of its Arab citizens. Arab citizens live and work and pay taxes in Israel and must conduct their daily lives according to conditions in Israel. Accurate and effective comparisons can be made only with other sectors within the country and not with other nations and societies living under different conditions and having different relationships with their governments.

There is a close and inevitable relationship between the political line of the ruling administration and its welfare policies.[78] Allocation of welfare budgets is based on ideological, humanitarian and moral motives. These motives lead the government to take responsibility for social matters by allocating budgets and developing services.[79]

It is evident, then, that the state of Israel itself played a role in producing and establishing the social distress now experienced by the majority of Arabs. The state of Israel was responsible for uprooting numerous Arabs from their communities and confiscating their property, leading to psychosociological problems characteristic of immigrants. Employment and housing shortages have stemmed from the 18 years of Martial Law (1948–66) as well as from laws prohibiting Arabs from congregating on and working their own lands, which had been designated as closed military areas. The refugees who flooded to the cities and villages drastically increased the local population, and communities had no time to prepare for this influx or to provide appropriate services. The consequences of all this are still being felt today and are reflected in almost every aspect of economic and social life within the Arab community.

Furthermore, the state expropriated the Arabs' right to manage and make use of funds belonging to the Muslim *waqf,* which had played a central role in charitable undertakings in the Arab community. Before the establishment of the state of Israel, the *waqf* funded a variety of projects

whose goal was the well-being of the individual and of society as a whole. Since 1948, the Arab community of Israel has not been able to regain its control of *waqf* property,[80] nor has it managed to establish any philanthropic organizations of the same order and economic magnitude.

During the 1948 war, many Arab educators fled to Arab countries, leading to a serious shortage of qualified professionals. This shortage was a blow to Arab society, and particularly to the educational system. The fact that unqualified persons gained entry into the system until such time as new cadres of professionals could be developed can still be felt in the Arab school system. Moreover, employment of Jews as teachers and school principals and as developers of educational programmes and philosophies only served to increase Arab lack of confidence in the educational system.

Current official policy is to increase welfare services to the Arab sector. Those who have been appointed to execute this policy, however, do not necessarily agree with this political line. They have no wish to further the welfare of Arab communities and often find various ways to deter funding or to block the execution of ministry decisions. For example, the Ministry of Social Affairs has approved a nationwide programme geared to children at risk. A high-ranking official in the ministry's Northern District has decided to enforce this project only in communities with over 50,000 inhabitants. Based on this decision, almost all the Arabs of the region, with the exception of those living in Nazareth, have been excluded from the project.[81]

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE

Despite the change in government policies towards Arabs, particularly those policies backed up by legislation, there are no assurances that funds earmarked for Arabs will reach their destination. These funds can be blocked at a number of levels: by government officials who don't necessarily approve of progress for Arabs; by budgetary problems in the Arab local government authorities, which have a tendency to swallow up funds dedicated for other purposes; and by problems of budgetary inequality between Jews and Arabs living in the mixed cities. Consequently, I propose the following steps for changing this existing situation. These steps can be directed, implemented and supervised in the future by follow-up committees, professional organizations, Arab leaders and representatives in the Knesset, and others as well.

1. A. In order to neutralize the power of government officials who are hostile to the Arabs, a separate Authority for Welfare and Education should be set up in the Arab sector. This authority should be funded directly by the government and run by Arab officials and professionals. Budgetary allocation should be according to designated projects

needed to develop the Arab sector and not according to the percentage of Arabs in the general population.

B. An Arab public steering committee, made up of public leaders, academics and professionals, should determine the policies of this authority. Its staff appointments should be according to their professional skills and qualifications for the job rather than upon their political affiliation. The steering committee should find an appropriate formula to tie the activities of the authority to the needs of local Arab government authorities and should determine the type of cooperation and financial and executive responsibility for each party.

C. The Authority for Welfare and Education would hold special courses for mental health workers in order to train them to meet the special needs of the Arab population. This training would place particular emphasis on the special cultural circumstances of Druze and Bedouin groups. The courses would provide instruction on the unique culture of the Arab family and the importance of the community in the life of the individual and the Arab village as a whole. Professional workers should also be trained to adapt Western theoretical treatment issues to the special needs of Arabs.

D. The authority would research the special needs of the Arab population. It would develop and standardize diagnostic and intelligence tests that conform to the needs of Arab schools. It would also modernize the reference library by acquiring books and materials geared to the experience and needs of Arab pupils and professionals. Moreover, it would develop preventive programmes and use them to educate the community.

E. The authority would strive to provide channels to educate Arabs about their rights to welfare services.

2. The government should formulate budgetary five-year plans or three-year plans for bridging the education and welfare gaps between the Jewish and Arab sectors. Until complete equality has been established, extensive affirmative action policies must be enacted in order to compensate for the injustices of the past 50 years. Such extensive projects are already being implemented for other minority groups, such as immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.
3. The state should compensate the Arabs for losses incurred through mismanagement of *waqf* funds. This could be accomplished by establishing special funds for social and educational development, welfare and charity. These funds would not constitute compensation for *waqf* monies. Such compensation will apparently be included in the final settlement negotiations with Arab representatives from Israel and abroad regarding peace in the region.
4. The state must make special funds available so that the authority can train its professional staff to handle emotional and social problems that

have arisen among Arabs who lost their homes, properties and family and were transformed into refugees. These professionals should treat the social problems of those still considered refugees as well as of the original residents. These special funds could be considered as initial compensation for loss of life and well-being in the wake of the 1948 war.

5. The Arabs must be given the opportunity to recruit donations from Christian and Muslim Arabs living in Arab countries or other locations abroad, just as the Jewish Agency, WIZO, Hadassah and other organizations solicit funds for education, welfare and charity from Jewish donors worldwide. Similar charitable organizations organized in the Arab sector wiould develop educational, mental health and welfare programmes.

Establishing a separate Authority for Welfare and Education in the Arab sector would make it possible to provide extensive and in-depth services that can meet the special needs of Arabs. This authority, together with other organizations in the field, could develop preventive programmes and strive to equalize welfare services in the Arab sector with those available in the Jewish sector.

SUMMARY

The relationship between Jews and Arabs within Israel is by its very nature political and is characterized by a dominant majority and a dominated national and cultural minority. This political reality is reflected in every interaction between the two groups. The general policies of any modern country make their mark on its welfare policies as well. The state of Israel is a welfare state and has always placed social welfare as one of its foremost national priorities, particularly during extraordinary times, such as the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia in the 1990s. The state of Israel, however, has not applied the welfare principle of redistributing resources to its Arab citizens. With the exception of equal subsidy allowances granted to children, to widows, widowers and orphans, and to the elderly, the welfare situation for Arabs does not resemble and is not equal to that for Jews. This inequality is the result of political motives as well as general policy decisions regarding welfare and other issues made by all of Israel's governments. Despite the dramatic improvements in welfare services in the Arab sector since 1992, the percentage of the welfare budget that actually reaches the Arab welfare bureaux is only 12 per cent of the total budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs. This figure is one-third lower than the actual percentage of Arabs in the population and significantly lower than the actual welfare needs of the Arab population. It is impossible to separate welfare problems in the

Arab sector from political policy. Thus, any proposed solution for improving welfare conditions must take this actuality into consideration. Judging from past experience, it appears that the most effective way to improve welfare services for Arabs is to set up a separate and independent Authority for Welfare and Education in the Arab sector.

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Husni al-'Aabid, Director, Industrial Development Centre for Youth, Nazareth, Chairperson of the Follow-Up Committee for Welfare in the Arab Sector, 26 Feb. 1998.
Amal al-Far, Director, Welfare Bureau, Nazareth, 19 March 1998.
Harb Amara, Director, Programme for Children at Risk, Nazareth, Member of Follow-Up Committee for Welfare, 26 Feb. 1998.
Jihad S'ad, Director, Division for the Elderly, Nazareth, Member of National Association of Social Workers, Member of Follow-Up Committee for Welfare, 19 March 1998.
Dr Mahmud Saleh, Senior Psychologist, Psychological Counselling Service (PCS) in charge of the Arab sector, 23 April 1998.
A'aida Tuma Suleiman, Director, Women's Corps Against Violence, 6 April 1998.

NOTES

1. Avraham Doron, *The Welfare State in a Changing Society*, Jerusalem, 1992, p.42 (in Hebrew).
2. Aziz Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*, San Francisco, 1991.
3. Ibid.
4. The *zakat* is a system of taxes on property, land, animals, capital and jewellery. The *zakat* is considered a religious commandment and constitutes one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam.
5. Uzi Benziman and Atallah Mansour, *Subtenants, the Arabs of Israel: Their Status and the Policies towards Them*, Jerusalem, 1992 (in Hebrew). **[???]**
6. See Doron, *The Welfare State in a Changing Society*, chs.1–3.
7. The activities of several organizations in the Arab sector will be described below.
8. See Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population.*
9. Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*, **[???]** 1987 (in Arabic); Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*, Nazareth, 1991 (in Arabic).
10. Husni al-'Aabid, interview, 26 Feb. 1998; Amal al-Far, interview, 19 March 1998; Harb Amara, interview, 26 Feb. 1998; A'aida Tuma Suleiman, interview, 6 April 1998.
11. This assumption applies to similar population groups. In the case of Arabs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs should allocate funds according to development needs and problems specific to the Arab population. Thus, while the percentage of Arabs living in Israel ranges from 16 to 18 per cent of the total population, the welfare funds allocated to meet their needs should range from 40 to 50 per cent of the total annual welfare budget until the gaps between the two groups have been bridged.
12. Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel* and *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*.
13. Amin Faris, personal communication, 1998.

14. Triangle: concentration of Arab villages in the centre of Israel.
15. Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*.
16. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, internal documents, 1990. **[???]**
17. For more information on the level of services, see Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel* and *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*.
18. Alouph Hareven and As'ad Ghanem, *Retrospect and Prospects: Equality and Integration*, Jerusalem, 1997 (in Hebrew).
19. Jihad S'ad, a member of the Follow-Up Committee and the National Association for Social Workers, points out that the National Association supported the decisions of the Follow-Up Committee, thus playing a major role in spurring this change. The Association even called for studies in order to verify the authenticity of the demands of the Arab sector at that time: interview, 19 March 1998.
20. Ministry Welfare Advisory Bureau, internal document, 18 Jan. 1998. **[???]**
21. Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*.
22. The official title is Ministry Adviser on Non-Jewish Affairs.
23. Interview, 16 May 1998.
24. Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*.
25. 'Abas, internal documents, 1996. **[???]**
26. 'Abas, *The Arabs in Israel 1948–1990*, internal booklet, p.9. **[???]**
27. Amal al-Far, interview, 19 March 1998.
28. For more details, see 'As Atrash, *Days Go by: Unemployment among Arabs in Israel*, **[???]**, 1995 (in Hebrew); Amin Faris, *Beyond the Pitta-Bread: Poverty and Economic Gaps among the Arabs in Israel*, **[???]**, 1993 (in Hebrew). See also Hareven and Ghanem, *Retrospect and Prospects*.
29. Central Bureau of Statistics, Publication No.1082, **[???]** 1996, pp.39–40.
30. Ahmed S'adi, 'Poverty among Arab Children in Israel: A Question of Citizenship', in Johnny Gal (ed.), *Children Living in Poverty in Israel: A Multidisciplinary Study*, Jerusalem, 1997 (in Hebrew).
31. Amal al-Far, interview, 19 March 1998.
32. A'aida Tuma Suleiman, interview, 6 April 1998.
33. For more on the significance of adapting professional training to the needs of the population, see Marwan Dwairy, *Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Arab-Palestinian Case*, New York, 1998.
34. Harb Amara, interview, 26 Feb. 1998.
35. One exception was the Central School for Social Workers that offered Arab social workers a one-time special orientation training session on violence: Husni al-'Aabid, interview, 26 Feb. 1998.
36. Husni al-'Aabid, interview 26 Feb. 1998.
37. See introduction by Avi Levi in Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, *Work Plan of the Education and Social Services Division for the Academic Year 1997–98*, Jerusalem, 1998, p.ii (in Hebrew).
38. Follow-up Committee for Arab Education in Israel, *Report on the Status of Arab Education in Israel*, internal document, Feb. 1998. **[???]**
39. Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*.
40. Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education, *Report on the Status of Arab Education in Israel*.
41. Hebrew acronym *Maptan* (Industrial Development Centres for Youth).
42. Ministry of Social Affairs, internal documents, 1997. **[???]**
43. Husni al-'Aabid, interview, 26 Feb. 1998.
44. According to Faris, *Beyond the Pitta-Bread*, 71.4 per cent of the Arab population in the 15–17 age group worked full time, while close to 26 per cent of Jewish youth in the same age bracket worked full time.
45. For more details on work conditions for Arab girls, see Barbara Swirski, 'Israeli Women on the Assembly Line', in Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, *Women in the Global Factory*, trans. Shlomo Swirski, Haifa, 1987 (in Hebrew). **[???]**
46. Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*.
47. Ibid.
48. Jaber 'Asaqla, personal communication, 18 Feb. 1997.

49. Hareven and Ghanem, *Retrospect and Prospects*.
50. Exact figures on the involvement of the Islamic Movement in welfare services in the Arab sector were impossible to obtain, despite numerous inquiries. It is common knowledge that the Islamic Movement runs organizations and institutions that provide services to single-parent families, families of prisoners, students, the poor and the needy, and others as well.
51. Ministry of Education, *Work Plan*, p.2.
52. Carmel Eitan, Na'amat spokeswoman, personal communication, 2 Sept. 1998.
53. Noah Sabo, Na'amat Information Department, personal communication, 31 Aug. 1998.
54. WIZO, Information and Publicity Department, personal communication, 17 Sept. 1998.
55. WIZO, *Facts and Figures*, WIZO booklet, 1997 (in Arabic). **[???]**
56. As'ad Ghanem, *Israel's Arabs at the Onset of the 21st Century: A Basic Survey*, Givat Haviva Jewish–Arab Center for Peace, 1993 (in Hebrew). **[???]**
57. Jaffa Research Center, *Guide to Private Associations and Institutions for Arabs in Israel, 1990*, Nazareth, 1991 (in Arabic).
58. Ghanem, *Israel's Arabs*.
59. Jaffa Research Center, *Guide to Private Associations and Institutions for Arabs*.
60. Dr Mahmud Saleh, interview, 23 April 1998.
61. Rahel Arhard, *Guidance Counseling and Psychological Services in the Educational System*, Jerusalem, 1996, p.41 (in Hebrew).
62. Dr Mahmud Saleh, interview, 23 April 1998.
63. Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education, *Report on the Status of Arab Education in Israel.*
64. Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*.
65. Harb Amara, interview, 26 Feb. 1998.
66. Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*; see also Information Committee, *Operations*, Nazareth, 1991 (in Arabic).
67. Information Committee, *Operations*, p.4.
68. See Khaled Abu 'Asba, *The Arab School System in Israel: Status Quo and Alternative Structure*, **[???]**, 1997 (in Hebrew); Majid al-Haj, *Education among the Arabs in Israel: Control and Social Change*, Jerusalem, 1996; Follow-up Committee for Arab Education, *Report on the Status of Arab Education in Israel*; Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Proceedings of the Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel* and *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Social Services for Arabs in Israel*; Follow-Up Committee on Welfare, *Third Conference: Towards a Comprehensive Program of Welfare Services in the Arab Sector*, Ma'lia, 1996 (in Arabic); Information Committee, **[???]** *Operations*; Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population*.
69. David Shahar, *The Welfare State of Israel – Gaps, Poverty, Distress and Welfare Policy in Israel: Basic Concepts and Problems*, Tel Aviv, 1987, p.33 (in Hebrew).
70. Ibid., p.23.
71. Faris, *Beyond the Pitta-Bread*; see also Alouph Hareven, *Retrospect and Prospects: Full and Equal Citizenship?*, Jerusalem, 1998.
72. Hareven, *Retrospect and Prospects.*
73. For more details, see Atrash, *Days Go by: Unemployment among Arabs in Israel.*
74. Haidar, *Social Welfare Services for Israel's Arab Population.*
75. Benziman and Mansour, *Subtenants*.
76. Shahar, *The Welfare State of Israel*.
77. In 1997, for example, child allowances were equal in the two sectors – for details, see Hareven and Ghanem, *Retrospect and Prospects*.
78. Doron, *The Welfare State in a Changing Society*.
79. Center for Social Policy Research in Israel, *Resource Allocation for Social Services*, Jerusalem, 1997 (in Hebrew).
80. The scope of this article is too limited to provide a detailed explanation of the history of the struggle of the Palestinians in Israel over the right to manage *waqf* property or to outline the extent of this property and its importance toward improving the welfare situation in the Arab sector.
81. Husni al-'Aabid, interview, 26 Feb. 1998.