

the Zionist state after the 1948 occupation, were 'integrated' into the Israeli labor force. Segregation would be a more correct description. Racist discrimination barred them from many white collar jobs, while security pretexts ruled out employment in military and other industries considered strategic by the Zionist leadership. Other forms of discrimination mitigated against the Palestinians forming a stable, concentrated industrial proletariat. Industry was not established in Palestinian communities. Rather, Palestinians had to commute to work sites placed according to Israeli socioeconomic needs.

The Histadrut played a pivotal role in this official policy. It controls 25% of Israeli industry, but has not established a single factory in Palestinian communities. Though it runs hundreds of vocational schools for Jews, there are only two for Palestinian Arabs, showing the intention to keep the latter in unskilled jobs. These discrepancies are obvious in the Galilee: Nazareth is the home of 28,000 Palestinian workers, but has no factories; 61% must commute to work. In contrast, the nearby Jewish settlement, Upper Nazareth, has a work force of only 11,000, but 160 workplaces and factories (*Al Fajr*, June 21, 1985).

Institutionalized discrimination occurs under many guises. Though Palestinian workers in the Zionist state can now hold health and unemployment insurance, they are cut off from many other benefits (especially in child sup-

port and housing) which are reserved for those who have served in the Israeli occupation army. No Palestinians live in the 150,000 flats built by the Histadrut. Palestinians are also subject to arbitrary treatment when seeking to use benefits to which they are entitled, due to the racism of the Israeli officials and civil servants.

Pay is patently unequal. A reportage in *Al Fajr*, May 20, 1983, related a typical pattern: «A young worker described a situation in the Kitane factory in Beit Shan, inside the 'green line'. All the employees who worked there manufacturing curtains were Israeli citizens, half were Arabs with Israeli citizenship. Men and women, both Arabs and Jews, worked side by side at the same machines but it was commonplace that wages for Jewish men were the highest, followed by Palestinian men, then Jewish women and finally, at the bottom of the heap one again - Palestinian women...Following a series of labor disputes led by Palestinians, and at the insistence of the predominantly Jewish workers' council of the Histadrut, it was decided that rather than bus in Arab villagers, the unemployed locals, all Jewish, should have priority.»

That Palestinians in the Zionist state are used as a cheap labor reserve is seen even more clearly under the impact of the economic crisis. By January 1985, Nazareth's unemployment was at 25%, among the highest in 'Israel'. The number of unemployed in

Um al Fahm rose from 160 to 250 workers from November to December 1984 alone. The head of the local council, Hisham Mkhmid, protested that people were being dismissed «merely because they are Arabs.» Hundreds of Palestinian Druze in Galilee villages are unemployed after completing military service, although the Zionist authorities have tried to make the Druze community feel privileged, in an attempt to divide the Palestinians. 1985 was full of dismissals of Palestinians, some long-time employees. The Histadrut doesn't fight such firings. On the contrary, it complies in efforts to alleviate the economic crisis without impinging on the privileged status of Jewish workers.

The slogan «Jewish labor only» was discarded in practice some time ago, due to the needs of Israeli capitalist growth, but with the economic crisis, it was resurrected as a way of disciplining Palestinian workers. Besides Kach's violent attacks on Arab workers, this tendency is supported by Israeli officials, such as Nasim Narah, head of the Israeli National Insurance Association. In October 1985, he declared that Palestinian Arab workers in Tiberius restaurants should be dismissed and replaced by Jews.

To be continued...The next issue of «Democratic Palestine» will contain the conclusion of this article, focusing on Palestinian workers in the 1967 occupied territories. ●

JDEC — A Political Issue

With the Zionist occupation of the remainder of Palestinian lands in 1967, the authorities launched a campaign aimed at destroying the Palestinian economic infrastructure. In recent years, the Jerusalem District Electric Company (JDEC) has been targeted for liquidation.

Most recently, the IREC (Israeli Regional Electric Company) has taken legal measures to collect an \$ 11 million debt owed by the JDEC. If the Jerusalem company doesn't pay its debt within the next several weeks, it will be passed into the hands of a court-appointed receiver. This would mean confiscation of all its funds in Israeli banks and the auctioning off of other properties to pay the IREC.

In 1980, a similar attempt was made when the occupation authorities de-

clared their intentions to liquidate the JDEC once and for all, by purchasing all its concessions. However, under the pressure of local and international protest, the Israeli High Court was forced to modify the court order, allowing the Ministry of Energy to purchase concessions only for areas officially annexed to the Zionist entity. The West Bank was thus off limits.

Ever since the June 28, 1967 anne-

xation of Jerusalem to the Zionist entity, the occupation authorities have worked on a plan to take over the JDEC, along with all Palestinian national institutions. They started by confiscating the shares in the company held by the Jerusalem municipal council prior to the occupation, which amounted to 8.3% of the total shares. This was followed by the deportation of the president of the JDEC's administrative council, Rouhi al Khatib, to Jordan. Two new members were