

SETTLEMENT—BUILDING

Throughout the 20 years of occupation, the Israeli government has stressed the importance of creating new realities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The overriding aim was creating a situation which would rule out Israeli withdrawal from these territories, or at least insure Israeli control if limited military withdrawal was required at some point. Thus, the most obviously threatening aspect of Israeli occupation policy has been the construction of settlements. In 1975, there were 2,581 settlers in the West Bank. Today, there are more than 60,000. (These figures and those in the article in general exclude Jerusalem.) See table no. 1 for the increase in settlers.

TABLE NO. 1

| Year | No. of settlers |
|------|-----------------|
| 1975 | 2,581 |
| 1976 | 3,176 |
| 1977 | 5,023 |
| 1978 | 7,361 |
| 1979 | 10,000 |
| 1980 | 12,424 |
| 1981 | 16,119 |
| 1982 | 20,600 |
| 1983 | 27,500 |
| 1984 | 42,600 |
| 1985 | 52,000 |
| 1986 | 60,000 |

During the term of the Labor Alignment government (1968-77), the average annual increment of settlers was 770. During the Likud's term (1977-84), the average annual increment was 5,400 settlers. The difference in these figures should not lead to any mistaken political conclusions about fundamental differences between Labor and Likud policy on the matter of increasing settlers. In the first year these two blocks joined to rule 'Israel' in a coalition government (1984), there was an increase of 15,000 settlers. The decline in the annual increment in 1985-6 is not due to policy change, but to Israeli economic difficulties.

By 1986, there were 104 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli government, in view of international pressure to limit the construction of new settlements, is now concentrating on thickening the existing settlements with the aim of having 100,000 settlers in the territories. This goal was to be met in 1986; at the current rate, it will be met in the early 1990s.

PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN 'ISRAEL'

There are 436,000 Palestinians aged 14 or older living in the West Bank. Of these, 154,000 are in the labor force. One-third of the labor force works in 'Israel'. In the Gaza Strip, the comparable figure is 264,000, of whom 87,200 are in the labor force, half of them working in 'Israel'. Figures vary since many are hired on a daily basis and illegally, but an estimated 100,000 Palestinians sell their labor power in the 1948 occupied territories. Half of them work illegally, without a work permit. The workers from the territories can be divided as follows: 48.3% work in construction; 19.5% in services including low



Gaza youth line up for daily work in Tel Aviv.

status jobs such as cleaning, dishwashing and gardening; 18% in industry and 14.2% in agriculture.

These workers must commute daily. They work long shifts (12 hours) and are paid less than half of an Israeli worker's wages (\$133 as opposed to \$333-533 average monthly wage). The Histadrut (Israeli Labor Federation which is simultaneously a corporation) collects dues from those who work legally, but without providing the benefits received by Israeli workers. Palestinians from the territories pay 20% of their wages in taxes directly to the Israeli state treasury, whereas this deduction from an Israeli worker's paycheck goes to the National Insurance Institute. The amount saved by the Israeli economy due to wage differences between Palestinian and Israeli workers has increased from \$4.7 million in 1968, to \$390.2 million in 1984. The Israeli economy saved a total of \$3049.8 million between 1968 and 1985. See table no. 2.

TABLE No. 2

| Year | Workers from occupied territories in 1000s | Israeli annual savings in millions of dollars |
|------|--|---|
| 1968 | 4.0 | 4.7 |
| 1969 | 9.5 | 12.7 |
| 1970 | 19.8 | 34.1 |
| 1971 | 33.1 | 53.7 |
| 1972 | 50.8 | 76.3 |
| 1973 | 59.3 | 118.3 |
| 1974 | 66.5 | 145.4 |
| 1975 | 63.9 | 141.3 |
| 1976 | 63.2 | 142.9 |
| 1977 | 62.0 | 160.2 |
| 1978 | 67.0 | 172.3 |
| 1979 | 73.0 | 209.9 |
| 1980 | 73.2 | 231.8 |
| 1981 | 73.9 | 254.9 |
| 1982 | 76.6 | 268.1 |
| 1983 | 84.3 | 274.8 |
| 1984 | 86.9 | 390.2 |
| 1985 | 86.1 | 256.2 |
| | total | 3049.8 |

The Israeli state saves 15% of the Palestinian workers' total wages which is what would ordinarily be paid to an Israeli worker in benefits such as retirement and National Insurance ►