

working. This was only 42% of the total labor force of the occupied territories, which was 152,700. Accordingly, there are 157 employers for every wage laborer, namely, less than three-fourths worker per single employer. If we want to be more precise, we will find that the majority of wage laborers in the 1967 occupied territories are civil servants. For instance, only 3,400 wage laborers are working in agriculture in the occupied territories, which means that there is less than one agricultural laborer for every 11 agricultural employers.

Thus, we are faced with a dangerous situation, i.e., the disappearance of Palestinian Arab wage labor from the productive sectors, in particular from the agriculture of the 1967 occupied territories. So the outcome is dual: the decline of production and a basic change in production relations. We will take citrus fruit production in the Gaza Strip as an example. During the last few years, it has averaged only 160,000 tons annual produce, which is less than two-thirds of the production in the 1975-76 season, which was 244,000 tons.

Concerning production relations, the employers didn't lose their positions in favor of an alternative Palestinian Arab social group or class, but in favor of the Zionist exploiter. This situation constitutes the base for the class unity which now exists in confronting the Israeli occupation. In this point lies the main distinction between the Israeli occupation model, whose interest lies in destroying the entire social and economic structure, and other colonial models.

After two decades, the Palestinian Arab labor force in the Israeli economy realized the falsity of the prosperity provided by working in Israel. Due to how the occupation functions, the Palestinian worker has no personal or collective future. On this level, he differs greatly from the immigrant labor force, whether from the countryside to the city, or from one country to another, for such an immigrant is in a cycle where he may be able to return to his origin when he saves enough money to reestablish himself and maybe even become an independent producer or other possibilities. Palestinians working in Israel are caught in a vicious circle. At best, they reinject (into the Israeli economy) the money they get from Israel itself. In such a situation, employers are changed into wage laborers, so it is self-evident that those who are originally wage laborers have no opportunity for a class or even functional advance.

## LINKING POLITICS AND ECONOMY

This is an example of the extreme decline witnessed in the occupied territories on various levels. There has been research on the destruction of this field or that, but it is the all inclusive form of destruction which deserves to be confirmed, in particular whenever politics are involved. Whatever has been said in describing the Israeli exploitation, it cannot precisely express the situation if it doesn't go deeply into matters which are so complex that the science of economy can only with difficulty encompass them. Thus a relationship has emerged in which politics are interlinked with economy to the extreme, as is the present with the past, and nationalism with the class question. All this occurred in a provocative form: For example, the Palestinian and his crops are dying from thirst simply because

since the occupation of 1967, Israel has prevented the drilling of new wells, and invents thousands of methods to prevent the Palestinian from obtaining the limited amount of water which he consumes. Perhaps he recently pulled up the citrus tree planted with his sweat and blood, for there is no water to irrigate the orchard. Perhaps he is the same employee who is charged with opening the water tap as much as possible, not only to irrigate the land of the settlement, but also to fill the swimming pool which was needlessly emptied simply because Mr. Settler likes swimming in clean water.

The case of those working in Israel is nearly the same. Not only must they bear daily discrimination; they are working on land which was originally theirs, not only in the collective sense, but perhaps the very land they themselves owned. The Palestinian is not only demanded to accept national and class oppression, but also the displays of the Zionist racist ideology, with its expressions of which the following is not the worst: «Arabs are dogs, Arabs are dirty...»

Two decades of occupation were enough to return matters to their point of origin. Those who did not understand Israel through its policy, did so through its practice which has expanded with the development of occupation and exploitation. This was particularly clear with the settlement policy which began to be applied more and more intensely, affecting most of the land of the territories, whereby the main Palestinian cities began to slow down, while others that seemed to be secure are hanging on the cliff, soon to be infringed upon. What is more obvious than Sharon coming into the heart of the Arab quarter in Jerusalem, or the Zionist settlers who infiltrated the heart of Hebron?

These developments deeply affected the totality of the underlying structure in the occupied territories, providing the organized political movement there with the required objective conditions. On the other hand, twenty years of experience created a broad, solid organizational and political structure with a flexible yet firm leadership. This leadership has not only learned from the experience of others, but from its own experience. Whatever has been said about the causal factors of the uprising, it should be kept in mind that the experience of occupation and oppression served as a form of collective education, not only for the leadership, but also for the masses.

This provides us with a picture of the economic background of the uprising, as well as of the relationship between the Palestinian and Israeli economies which are integrated in as much as integration is possible between the exploiter and the exploited, the top floor and the bottom one in a building. If this picture is clear and needs no further explanation, then what does need to be expanded upon is a point which is deeply connected with our research, namely the structural importance and the nature of the role the Palestinian economy in the occupied territories plays in the Israeli economic cycle. The full importance of this point will only be apparent via a practical example, namely the role of the Palestinian labor force in the Israeli economy. Its importance lies not only in its numbers, but by virtue of its being concentrated in certain fields, i.e., construction, agriculture and industry. Even this doesn't