

In fact, the most vital economic resources in Palestine, such as the construction of the biggest electricity generating station in the country, the extraction of salt from the Dead Sea, and the setting up of a modern transportation and road system were given to Jewish concessionaries (Zureik, 1979:59).

Moreover, during the Second World War when government needed to expand its police and military projects, it gave most contracts to Jewish employers. For example, out of 61 Police buildings financed by government: 27 or 44.3 per cent were offered to Jewish contractors; 12 buildings or 19.7 per cent were constructed by direct Departmental labour; 18 or 29.5 per cent by Jewish and Arab contractors; 8 by unspecified contractors and 6 buildings or 9.8 per cent only were given to Arab contractors.(34)

In almost all government jobs, Arab workers were given the unskilled jobs while the better paying skilled jobs were given to Jewish workers. Arab workers in government enterprises received far below the average wage paid to their Jewish counterparts for the same job. (35) For example in the Department of Public Works, the wages paid for Arabs per one man-day worked throughout 1942-45 were at least half of the wages paid for the Jewish worker. For the year 1942-43, wages received by an Arab worker calculated per one man-day were estimated at 220 mils, compared to 470 mils paid for similar work performed by a Jewish labourer: 270 mils for Arabs and 558 for Jews in 1943-44; and 349 mils compared to 752 in 1944-45.

The gap between Jewish and Arab wages was even greater when employment was obtained through a contractor (an Arab or a Jew), rather than directly from the government. Wages paid by the contractor