

third the gross national product of the two occupied regions, annually, but have had no meaningful alternative source of employment, aside, of course, from emigration.

This argument cannot be reduced to a question of reciprocal benefits and liabilities, however, even if we assess the relationship in strictly economic terms. Remunerations from employment must be considered alongside the increased importance of the occupied territories as a main outlet for Israeli commodities. But, in addition, Arab labour in Israel must be viewed in the context of its critical function in key sectors of the economy where neither replacement by Jewish workers nor mechanisation (optimum allocation of resources have been reached) is possible. Examples of this rigidity in the structure of employment can be found in the building trades and the service sector. Furthermore, official data indicate a considerable increase in the weight of the Arab labour force in those sectors: in construction, from 12.3 percent to 29.7 percent of the total Israeli labour force, including Israeli Arabs, during the period 1970-1980; in agriculture, from 5.6 percent to 29.7 percent. In those sectors it will be difficult to coerce Jewish workers to "recede back" into jobs from which they have "escaped" without incurring a high degree of strain within the labour unions and perhaps accentuating ethnic (Oriental-Ashkenazi) tensions (cf. Levavi, 1978:7).

A comparison of the position of migrant workers in Western Europe with that of Palestinian workers in Israel might yield useful theoretical insight to our analysis. The case of Israel, nevertheless, is especially problematic because of the colonial relationship it maintains with the subject population and because Palestinian workers are commuters rather than (temporary) residents.