

2. Labourers from the occupied territories are heavily concentrated in the construction sector (48%) and in other manual occupations which are shunned by Israeli workers because, in general, they consider them dirty or poorly remunerative. This trend is further accentuated by the constant availability of cheap workers commuting to Israel from the occupied territories. Despite turbulent labour relations in Israel and rapidly rising inflation rates, cheap Arab labour has helped buttress rapid development in Israel's huge construction sector.

3. Labourers from the occupied territories are characterized by a high spatial and inter-factory mobility. Because they are denied any form of collective bargaining, they can be hired and fired at will, and in the process seek alternative jobs in different locations or occupations. This has provided Israeli firms with marked security against a background of chronically tense relations with Jewish labour unions.

4. The higher wages and standards of living in the occupied territories have stimulated a substantial boost in the purchasing power of their residents. The benefits of this consumption surge are reaped largely by Israeli manufacturers who provide the two territories with about 90% of its imported goods (see section on Trade in Chapter V).

On balance, Israel has gained substantial economic and political benefits by integrating the Palestinian labour force into its economy, particularly more so that these labourers commute daily to their home towns. And in order to facilitate this process and bolster its "positive" effect, the Military Administration has opened many recruitment offices and a number of vocational training centres. These centres offer short training courses in

manual occupations demanded by Israeli firms which, "merely perpetuates the bias that confines Palestinian workers to the role of manual labourers in the Israeli economy."¹

Conclusions

The basic elements of the continuing conflict over major West Bank resources could be summarized as follows:

1. Acquisition and control of land is the focal point in the conflict. Israel strives in various ways to claim as much as possible of the occupied territories. In addition to fostering direct measures to facilitate achieving this objective, Israel appears determined to curtail to a minimum all such forms of land use which would enable local residents to expand the area they utilize. This applies most importantly to those forms of land use which involve visible and long-term attachment to land, such as urban uses and certain forms of agriculture (eg. fruit trees).
2. Israel considers the West Bank water resources as an integral part of its own. By minimizing water supply available for use by local residents, it helps reduce their attachment to land, weaken their economic base, and either increase their integration with Israel's economy, or even facilitate emigration.
3. Israel's labour policy in the West Bank aims at two major objectives. The more desired objective is to minimize the size of local population by facilitating emigration. But Israel would like to see those who stay become subordinated to its own economy instead of expanding their production base at home.

1. Van Arkadie, op cit, p 63.