

was the labour centre for a very large number of Palestinian workers. And for most of these workers, living conditions were appalling. the following testimony by a Palestinian union leader describes the situation:

Thousands of unskilled workers in Jaffa cannot afford a house to sleep in- they sleep in tin huts or in the open. the rent of a decent room in Jaffa amounts to about two thirds of the wages of an unskilled worker. The fallah in his own village is spared this expense, he does not have to sleep in the open and he does not pay rent. For 18 years past, hardly a single house has been built for the laborers or the poor; the municipality does not build them and no one feels that it pays to build for them commercially...I am not exaggerating if I say that in some seasons in Jaffa, when the oranges are being loaded, some 10-15 thousand people live in the city and its suburbs without a single proper latrine. That may pass unnoticed in a village, but in a city it becomes sickening. Thousands live in tin huts without the most elementary accomodation and without any water supply except that they can carry in small jars from a far distance. I observed that in many of the hut-colonies, they hardly use more than a cubic meter of water a month. (19)

Low wages and poor working and living conditions were worsened by the widespread unemployment which characterised the Palestinian economy during that period.

Unemployment under British Colonialism

The phenomenon of unemployment has been a controversial issue for many Israeli official writers. Most believe that Palestine's economy in general, and the Jewish one in particular, experienced very little, if any, unemployment during British colonialism (Ohana,1981; Kimmerling,1983; Flapan,1979). It is argued that, due to the influx of Jewish capital, Palestine's economy flourished. Sussman, for instance, admits that there was unemployment among both Arabs and Jews during