

normal wages if only they could find work. (29) The severity of unemployment among the Jewish labour force, furthermore, led the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Histadrut) to resort to providing cheap food services to its labouring population. The phenomenon of "Jewish labour kitchens" was widespread in most Jewish settlements. On this one report stated:

The Jewish labour Kitchens are alleviating the plight of Jewish labourers by supplying them with 3 meals (a day) at a cost of only 50 mils as compared with 100-150 mils during the earlier period. (30)

If Jewish unemployment was serious, as the preceding data show, why then was it ignored by the official literature? The decision to conceal information about unemployment was politically motivated. In fact, data reveal that the Histadrut authorities intentionally concealed information on unemployment and silenced other labour bodies who attempted to reveal it. In a secret dispatch sent by the British Central Intelligence Department (C.I.D) in January 1936 the following was reported:

The Histadrut are endeavouring to conceal the true state of affairs in connection with unemployment among Jews... Speakers at public meetings often touch upon the subject of unemployment and the Histadrut endeavours to stop the speech or persuade the speaker to change the subject... During the month of December it is understood that at least five Jewish firms were forced into bankruptcy." (31)

And, in another document:

It is reported that the Histadrut is reticent regarding the existing state of unemployment, and is concealing employment figures, despite requests to make them known by the Poale-Zion Party. (32)

Concealing unemployment data was deemed necessary by the Histadrut in order to encourage further settlement and carry on in the building