

workers' attempts to form separate labour organizations were often disrupted and Arab union leaders were frequently jailed. When the first Arab Labour Congress was held in 1930, less than half of the labour delegates could attend, the rest were either in prison or under house arrest. Moreover, labour newspapers were often banned, workers' strikes were violently crushed and licenses to form unions were almost always denied. (57)

To form their own organizations Arab workers did not only have to face the opposition of the state. They also had to combat the Histadrut which often tried to intervene in their affairs and, in more than one instance, broke their strikes. (58) Perhaps more important was the fact that these workers had to fight an internal enemy for whom organized labour had become a threat to their political status.

During the 1930s, when Arab workers' organizations were formed in almost every major city and village in Palestine, traditional leaders, mainly Heads of large Hamulas, began to feel threatened. In a move to counter the growing power of labour organizations they began to form similar organizations and to infiltrate the labour movement. Their role as mediators between the state employer and the Arab workers was more disruptive than beneficial to the labour movement. (59)

The indigenous Palestinian working class struggled at various fronts. At the pure economic front, workers' demands for higher pay, less working hours and better working conditions were voiced through the frequent strikes they waged. Between 1931 and 1933, not a single month passed without at least one strike. These strikes affected almost every industrial sector and thousands of Arab workers. (60)

In 1935, one year before the 1936-39 revolution, striking Arab