



جمعية صوت العامل النقابية  
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## NEW SAWT EL-AMEL REPORT:

### Separate and Unequal - The History of Arab Labour in pre-1948 Palestine and Israel

Dear colleagues and friends,

Sawt el-Amel is pleased to present its new report, *Separate and Unequal: The History of Arab Labour in pre-1948 Palestine and Israel*.

*Separate and Unequal* provides an alternative view on labour history in pre-1948 Palestine and Israel as well as an assessment of the current situation of the Arab labour force in Israel. The report attaches major importance to the Palestinian labour movement before 1948, as the prevailing historical narrative – at least in the non-Arabic speaking world – presents the Palestinian Arab labour movement as unauthentic. Popular movements of Palestine's native population are generally depicted either as puppets of the conservative Arab leadership or as a result of the Histadrut's efforts to organise Arab workers. *Separate and Unequal* emphasises the distinct features and achievements of independent, Palestinian Arab grassroots activism which played a crucial role in the political and socio-economic developments of the time and which enjoyed considerable support from the Palestinian working class and peasantry.

Moreover, *Separate and Unequal* provides insight into the relationship between Arab and Jewish workers and their institutions in Palestine and into the impact of Labour Zionism on the Arab working class and the political developments in general. The report concludes that on the one hand, contrary to the general perception, before 1948, there was a broad-based and diverse Arab labour movement in Palestine and on the other hand, that ideology and practice of the Histadrut contributed significantly to the separation of Arab and Jewish workers and to the dispossession and uprooting of the native Palestinian people. Moreover, today, the New Histadrut fails to live up to its mandate – the representation of all workers in Israel.

The findings of *Separate and Unequal* regarding the current situation are summarised as follows: Its history as well as current practices disqualify the Histadrut as a suitable and trusted representative of the Arab labour force in Israel. In order to combat the root causes of poverty and unemployment, working Arab men and women need an independent platform to meet, organise and learn, as awareness and access to decent work are basic requirements for the community's socio-economic well-being and wide-spread participation in civil society and public life.

The research and conclusions presented in the report are of crucial importance for Sawt el-Amel's mandate and strategic vision. Moreover, we hope that *Separate and Unequal* will contribute to the global discussion on the principle of decent work in general and initiate an open debate about workers' rights of the Arab citizens in Israel. We will be glad to receive your comments, questions and suggestions on the contents of the report and on Sawt el-Amel's work in general. Please feel free to contact us.

*Separate and Unequal* is available online on our website [www.laborers-voice.org](http://www.laborers-voice.org) at:

English version: <http://www.laborers-voice.org/english/publications/reports/ArabLabour.pdf>

En Français: [http://www.laborers-voice.org/english/publications/reports/arab\\_labour\\_French.pdf](http://www.laborers-voice.org/english/publications/reports/arab_labour_French.pdf)

Sawt el-Amel would like to thank Dialogue Review for providing the translation into French.

In solidarity and with best wishes for 2007,

Wehbe Badarne  
General Director