

effecting the drastic changes in Palestine's rural class structure.

The large-scale land and peasant expropriation, coupled with other social and economic difficulties developing in the process, altered the class composition of rural Palestine. Within the context of Palestine, where questions such as the quality and quantity of land available for cultivators were veiled with political ramifications, the problematic of identifying the rural classes becomes very sensitive. An attempt is made to establish a proper criterion for identifying Palestine's rural classes, particularly within the category known in the Marxist literature as "rural poor" or "rural proletarians" (See Chapter Four). A first hand examination of the controversial land surveys will be provided. It is hoped that this enquiry, which relies on British reports, will enable us to unveil some of the facts concerning the class issue and enhance our understanding of the process of peasant differentiation.

Strong indications of the development of a capitalist economy in agriculture were evident at various levels. Chapter Four focuses on the economic side of the change process and emphasizes the development of the local capitalist market, the role of competition in agriculture and the impact of these emerging forces on the rural economy.

Along with this development, a process of ruination of a large section within rural Palestine was also emerging. The phase of destruction is elucidated by using historical records which pertain to statement made by some fallaheen, as well as information gathered from elderly Palestinians we interviewed. As in earlier chapters, this section underlines the significant role played by the colonial state in facilitating and expanding capitalist development.

Developments at the political/ideological level and their immediate