

When I first embarked on this study a few years ago, my conceptual framework was one informed by recent studies of 'peripheral formations' in the post-colonial period, and particularly by the debates on capitalist transition and internal differentiation within the peasantry. There was the particular problem of establishing the location of Palestinian specificity into these theoretical formulations, as it would involve any such regional study. But the empirical material gathered seemed to 'fit' and be illuminated by the theoretical framework available. The emerging patterns focussed into a familiar terrain: a displaced peasantry re-located into expanding urban centres; a dislocated former landed gentry whose access to the land was blocked by the creation of a new Europeanized state; the generation of rural surplus labour which could not be re-absorbed by the fragmented and parcellized village holdings - or by the stagnating nature of the rural economy; massive demand for cheap and semi-skilled village labour internally (Israeli market) and externally (migration to the Gulf and the Americas); and finally, an emergent class consciousness reinforced by daily encounters with an employer who is also a colonial master.

The interpretation of those trends required an elaboration on, and modification of, current theories of peasant economies in peripheral societies. In particular, there was a need to take into account the actual colonial relationship with Israel - no 'neo-' or 'post-colonial' development here. There was also the problem of a society<sup>1</sup> whose constituent parts, as a result of war(s), were dispersed over a number of states and social formations - integrated only by a broad national movement. The attempt at a modified 'formula' was not satisfactory. It was challenged by several specificities of the Palestinian situation. To appreciate this problem of theoretical grounding, I will cite a passage of empirical generalization from Samir Amin concerning which