

the voters (jobs, etc.), reinforces faction-based conflicts in the village, especially those with a strong confessional (religious) base (Nakhleh, 1975: 512). Thus factionalism here persists but in a clearly different context than the one prevailing prior to 1948: patronage today is related to access of privileges spared by the Israeli state to the Arab population through the Zionist parties. It has become a means for Zionist legitimisation in the Arab sector.

Non-patronage politics expressed by support for the Israeli Communist Party (ICP) is usually interpreted as a demonstration of nationalism rather than a reflection of (working) class consciousness. This at least is Nakhleh's position (who calls it a 'protest vote', *ibid.*:515). It is not clear, however, why a party which articulates the national aspirations of an ethnic minority cannot also be working class based. Since there has been wide-range proletarianisation among Palestinian villagers in Israel, and since the CP happens to capture, on the average, at least half the Arab votes there is indeed every reason to believe this to be the case. Malik, in fact, suggests that there is a positive correlation between the increased size and proletarianisation of Arab villages in Israel and the tendency to vote communist (Malik, 1978); on the other hand Arab vote for the communist list in the Histadrut (Israeli Federation of Labour) has been traditionally smaller than the communist vote for parliamentary elections (Zureik, 1979:170). One should remain aware, moreover, that even class politics in the Arab village (to the extent that it is expressed in communist voting) is subject to factional manipulation at the kinship and confessional level.

An indicator of the qualitative changes in the class composition of Israeli Arabs can be observed in the shifting employment structure. The most notable shift has been the absolute decline in farm employment, from 58.2% in 1954 to 15.2% in 1980 (A. Israeli, 1976; Statistical Abstract of Israel 1982: