

based traditional potentates (often carved from within the same notable families) that major political cleavages emerged in Palestine during the first half of the twentieth century. In Chapter 2, I discuss how these cleavages acquired a 'vertical' factional direction (as opposed to horizontal class alignments) recalling Alavi's conception of primordial loyalties among peasants (Alavi, 1973:44). Putative alignments in the countryside buttressed a hierarchical patronage system that succeeded in mobilizing peasants across the whole country in favour of village sheikhs and their urban protégés; with the latter appropriating the agricultural surplus through a combination of credit arrangements, crop-sharing, unfavourable trade terms, and forms of corvée (awnéh).

This system began to disintegrate during the latter part of the British Mandate (1920-1948), particularly during the Great Rebellion (1936-1939), when movements against tenant evictions (resulting from Zionist acquisition of absentee estates) and British immigration policies succeeded in absorbing the factional alignments within the nationalist movement. Because of the existence of two national communities in Palestine, however, class-based politics remained locked within the confines of the factional leadership.

At the structural level, the colonial state guaranteed and underwrote the growth of the capitalist sector (incorporating primarily the economic institutions of the Jewish yishuv) at the expense of, and partly through the appropriation of surplus from, the Arab peasant sector (Asad, 1976:4-8). It was in this period also that patterns of migration of peasants to the urban centres, and to British army camps, gave rise to the phenomenon of 'peasant-workers' that repeated itself - with more profound consequences - after Israeli occupation of the West Bank in the 1970s.

Chapter 3 discusses the ramifications of Palestinian physical dis-