

engulfed the Arabs of Haifa after 1948, discovers to his amazement that the artisans of Nablus in 1967 have learned Hebrew faster than the Israeli tourists can buy their wares! (Habibi, 1974:64).

Changes in the fabric of daily life associated with wage-labour employment away from one's habitat -- and related patterns of consumption and social interaction -- should not be confused with feelings of injustice, antagonism and exploitation that have permeated the particular Israeli imposition of those changes. To be sure, wage-labour proliferation, class and occupational mobility, and urbanisation could have occurred under more "just" conditions, that is, conditions not involving land confiscation from the peasantry and without the current degree of political repression. But the consequences may then be just as irreversible: the land can be restored to the people, so to speak, but the peasants cannot be restored to the land -- for we no longer have a peasant society.

One way of examining the question of reversibility is to evaluate the functional importance of the Arab labour force for Israel itself. It has been suggested by several economists that wage-labour remunerations of Arab workers have been more important to the occupied territories than the contributions of Arab labour to the Israeli economy. Van Arkadie, for instance, cited total Palestinian participation (for the West Bank and Gaza) as constituting only six percent of total employment in the Israeli labour force, and 12 percent of all manual workers (Van Arkadie, 1977:61). Official data, however, show a 270% increase in that proportion over a ten-year period from 2.1 percent in 1970 to 5.7 percent in 1979 (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1980:24, Table 7). During the same period the proportion of the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza working in Israel increased more than threefold, from 11.9 percent to 34.7 percent. In return, these workers earned an amount equivalent to one-