

workers today constitute a semi-proletariat of peasant-workers, a relatively integrated sector of the Israeli labour force that is located at the bottom of the occupational structure, and which is becoming increasingly more difficult, but not impossible, to replace.

Obviously a large number of the Palestinian people belong to neither of those two categories. The big landlords of the Jordan Valley, the career bureaucrats of the Jordanian regime, the traditional working class of Nablus, the professional emigre stratum in Kuwait, the shopkeepers of old Jerusalem, the teachers of Ramallah, and many others, would not be able to find themselves in these ossified categories. But the dichotomy remains crucial, in my view, for the understanding of Palestinian collective self-consciousness today, at the core of which exists what an Arab writer referred to as the "abstention from class politics" (Ja'far, 1978) and what I call declassified politics.

The contemporary Palestinian national movement was given full momentum not in Palestine, but in the post-1967 diasporic community, among the dispossessed segments of the camp refugees. Its articulators and ideologists, however, were not to be found among the refugees but in a Palestinian intelligentsia which was completely uprooted from its productive base. It sought its fighting cadres and party militants in the camps only when its effective integration in the civic polity of the host Arab regimes was thwarted by regional interests of these states, and when their pan-Arabist pretensions were frustrated by the Arab defeat of 1967.

Thus a second generation of Palestinians radically alienated and alien from the experience of factional politics in the 1930's reformulated the tenets of an intensely regional (as opposed to pan-Arab) Palestinian nationalist ideology. The new movement was developed outside its territorial base, and severed from a stable community. Its social base was a