

lumpen-proletarian community with a marginal belonging to the "host" social formation. (A marginality, we might add, which is reinforced by a continued threat of physical expulsion from the country, as the recent events in Lebanon have demonstrated).

The quest by the Palestinian national movement for a state of its own through a territorial compromise with Zionism (after the 1974 National Congress in Cairo) involved much more than a concession over matters of basic principles ("liberation of the whole of Palestine", etc.). It heralded an ideological jump in PLO practice from messianic thinking to strategic thinking. This step has been interpreted by some observers as the sign of maturation of a Palestinian "protectionist" bourgeoisie, or perhaps of a potential state capitalist bourgeoisie within the PLO bureaucracy, seeking its own flag and army (e.g., see Agha, 1967:27ff; Ja'far, 1978:122). Such an argument seems to involve an understanding of class politics reflected through simple ideological reductionism (i.e., the state "equals" the presence of a bourgeoisie, therefore the quest for a state involves a bourgeois attempt to institutionalise the "revolution"). But how does this correspond to the reality of the situation? Although the Palestinian bourgeois strata in the West Bank, Gaza and (perhaps) Jordan would probably prefer to have a state of their own, there is no evidence that they are behind the quest for a Palestinian state, or even that they are likely to benefit from it. To the extent that individual capitalist, or even groups of capitalists (such as West Bank chambers of commerce, which include many small merchants) have put forth a coherent political position on this question, they seem to favour a decentralized relationship with Jordan as the "lesser of all evils" (cf. Abboushi, 1980:12). In most occasions, however, they provide a verbal support for the PLO. Within the PLO leadership itself the position for a state (as opposed to the rejectionist