

patriarchal heads of the four main sub-clans (hamayil). These attempts are increasingly successful and revolve around issues which are crucial to village collective life, such as the establishment of an electricity cooperative, the building of a girls' preparatory school, and the exploitation of the village waqf land for development projects.

These activities invariably come into conflict with the narrowly defined familial interests of the village elders and wujaha', whose traditional links with the Jordanian authorities across the river continue to ensure a political base for their authority. The elders also attempt to keep a working relationship with the Israeli military government which views with suspicion the projects adopted by the Youth Association -- the only organized civic institution in the village. A mark of this challenge can be seen in the composition of the executive of the Association in its last election (1977) when it ceased to be a Barghuti dominated structure and become representative of a cross-section of all the village clans (5 seats for the Fallahin, 2 for the Barghutis).

It must be emphasized, however, that the village social structure does not lend itself to class politics. It is perhaps indicative of the extent of the social homogeneity of the local clan structure that Marxist politics, which have a pervasive influence among the youth of Ras el-Tin (as evidenced by the periodic interrogation and imprisonment of members of the Youth Association by the Security Forces for their communist activities), have no class content whatsoever. Their thrust is almost exclusively confined to patriotic activities, or to such general civic projects as described above. The Youth Association, or at least the radical elements within it, view the development of cooperative enterprises which undermine the patriarchal basis of village authority as both its objective and raison d'être.