

diversified occupational-class basis. In this tendency towards diversification, Natufa presents a rather exceptional case of de-peasantisation in Palestinian society and mainly serves to illustrate the accentuated forms that external intrusions in non-viable agriculture might lead to at the village level.

Ras el-Tin, on the other hand, presents a condition of de-peasantisation from which generalizations can be made, since it exemplifies trends that can be observed in most highland villages.

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While the West Bank is no longer a peasant society in the sense that it has ceased to have a majority of owner-cultivators who derive their main livelihood from agriculture (cf. Thorner, 1971:203-206), it would be a mistake to consider the new transformation as constituting the creation of a rural-based proletariat. This 'transitional' status of Palestinian peasants is central to the understanding of their current ambivalent social identity. Having one foot still rooted into the village economy, and another forging towards work opportunity in Israel and abroad, this ambivalence can be illuminated by the following features of this duality in the peasants' identity:

(a) Family and clan connections continue to play a crucial role in the recruitment process and mobility of the peasant-workers within the Israeli economy. More experienced brothers, fathers, and cousins are often the first and last bond in the peasant's introduction to the wage-labour system outside the village. This constant interaction with, and dependence on, his kin, reinforces the migrant peasant's village identity as the central framework within which he obtains a living.

(b) The peasant's proletarian identity, or rather his potential