

even in the latter period of British rule.

What is significant in the Ottoman reforms as far as factionalism is concerned, was the administrative separation of the Jerusalem sanjak (which included, at that period, around three-quarters of the population of Palestine) from the northern sanjaks (districts) of Akka and Balqa' (which included the best agricultural lands) (Lesch, 1977:280). Jerusalem, it should be remembered, differed from the main urban centres of Palestine in that it was detached from its rural hinterland. Its elite, in the main, were not absentee landlords, nor was there any organized form of interaction between the city and its rural population (Abir, 1975:291).

Two consequences of the administrative separation of Jerusalem on factional politics can be cited here: One was the relative independence of, and possibly privilege accorded to, the Jerusalemite notables by virtue of their direct relationship to the High Porte. This independence was doubtlessly influenced by the interest accorded to the holy city (with undisguised imperialist ambitions) by the European powers. Porath suggests that this relative autonomy, however, had a marked negative consequence on general political life in southern Palestine; namely, the weakness of local voluntary associations for the advancement of education and social welfare--in contrast with the northern districts and Damascus where such associations were vigorous. This weakness flowed from the strong dependence of Jerusalem on the central government (Porath, 1975:3-4). In class terms this can be explained by Jerusalem's "parasitic" social structure: its dependence on religious endowments, international charities, and weak organic links with the rural base. The city was the Mecca of Palestine, but it certainly lacked a Quraishite ruling class!

The other consequence of administrative separatism was the intensification of factional rivalry between Jerusalem-based clans and Nablus-based