

forced each other. Influential village patriarchs who succeeded in consolidating large estates for themselves after the dissolution of the musha' system, would soon send few of their capable sons or relatives to establish themselves in the regional centre or alternatively acquire a public post themselves. It has been suggested that the power of those potentates can be measured by the degree of transition in residence from their rural base to the district centre (Shim'oni, 1947:331).

Landownership under semi-feudal conditions (i.e. leasing the land to share-croppers through the wakil, the landlord's agent), were not always necessary as a basis for factional power. There were cases in Palestine where a clan's power was rooted almost exclusively on the holding of public administrative office--that is, on its ability to organize its members' skills in the service of the state, with landownership and mercantile activities playing a marginal role. This seems to have been the case with the Nashashibi clan (Shim'oni, ibid), who--after the Husseinis became central contenders for the leadership of the nationalist movement, despite the small size of their landholdings. (Tuma, however, describes the Nashashibis as "one of the two great feudal families in the country," 1976:203; compare also with Kanafani, n.d., 75-76).

The challenges posed by the Zionist movement and its success in creating modern and independent Jewish institutions, as well as the inability of the colonial government to accommodate Palestinian nationalist aspirations, all compelled the machinery of factional politics to perform a role to which it was thoroughly unsuited. While the Arab leadership was capable of effective mobilization of the masses against the British colonial presence, and for independence, dislodging the Zionist colonies would have required a radically different strategy. Such a strategy would have involved the nationalist movement into a protracted struggle and class alignments which in all likli-