

and kinsman reaching all the way to the small peasant debtor and landless labourer.

The extended role of the colonial state apparatus after the Great War paradoxically strengthened the role of the 'leading families' of Palestine since alternative institutional mechanisms of 'intermediate' power were absent. They became the mediators of the state to the rural masses and urban poor as well as their representatives (or rather, their clemencers) to the central authorities, (Sabella, 1976:38; Migdal, 1980:20-22). Both the limitations and strengths of the factional system were demonstrated in the response of the traditional leadership to the 1936 revolt.

The spontaneous peasant uprisings which marked the initial period of the revolt compelled the two main nationalist parties--the Arab Palestinian Party representing the Husseini faction, and the National Defense Party, representing the Nashashibis--to merge in the framework of the Arab Higher Committee. Both clans represented the same class (if the term can be used here), and both stood to lose their privileges if independent peasant politics were to prevail, even temporarily. However, the Husseini's stronger links to the land, al-Haj Amin's role as the mufti of Jerusalem, and the Defense Party's past record of collaboration with the British authorities, all ensured that the Nashashibis would play a secondary role on the Committee.

In that merger we observe the appearance of factional politics defactionalized. What happened, however, was simply the temporary suspension of factional politics at the national level of leadership, while the institutional linkages of the hierarchical pattern of vertical alliances remaining intact.