

those supporters of either of the two factional parties who were not involved in patronage relationship. These class 'intrusions' into factionalism became more disruptive as clashes with the colonial authorities and the Zionist movement became more intense (1936, 1938, 1945-1948), thus challenging the capacity of the hegemonic stratum of landlords to maintain its political leadership.

The factional leadership in its turn had to make concessions to followers who were not tied to it by patronage relationship, and also to conclude alliances with other parties in the context of a united front (e.g. the formation of the Arab Higher Committee). Thus class politics and factional politics had periodic fusions, especially in periods of crises, but which always ended with the dominance of clan sectional interests over class solidarities. Moreover, these 'fusions' were always characterized by strains on the political system as a whole. That strain reached its height in the 1936-1938 period when landless peasants entered the nationalist movement en mass and compelled the factional leadership to take increasing positions of militancy which threatened its organizational foundation. It was at this point that the hegemonic class of landlords and urban notables chose to intervene directly and diffuse the Revolt. In the case of the Nashashibi's Defense Party, they even went overboard and organized "Peace Units" to crush the rebels. (Kanafani, n.d.: 105). But this process of confrontation had its price for the factional leadership; disgruntled elements in the nationalist movement began to desert them and establish their own political base, forged outside the factional system. We will refer to three such groups here, each reflecting a different class (or potential class) position.

Case One is the Qassamites. This was a movement of peasant warriors who fought against the British in 1935 under the leadership of a minor religious sheikh, Izz ed-Din al-Qassam, and then as an amorphous contingent within the revolt of 1936-1938. Evidence shows that they were recruited by al-Qassam