

was bound to expose and embarrass the traditional leadership. It is not surprising therefore, that the 'bosses and notables' took a hostile attitude towards the party." (Allush, 1967:85).

But later Allush describes how the leaders of al-Istiqlal "due to their class instincts, returned to the bosom of the traditional leadership, while the peasants and workers took up arms to resist British colonialism, under the leadership of organizations founded independently." (ibid.:86).

But al-Istiqlal was not the party of the Palestinian bourgeoisie, for the simple reason that the bourgeoisie had no party during the period.²

The amorphous character of the Palestinian bourgeoisie brings us to a second problem in conceptualizing class formation; namely, the limitations of class politics inherent in a situation where the structural conditions for the growth of a hegemonic class were not obtainable.

Can we speak of a Palestinian bourgeoisie as having existed prior to 1948? We have referred earlier to a 'hegemonic class of landlords and urban notables'. This intentionally ambiguous formulation--one which will have to remain ambiguous until more rigorous research is undertaken on the subject--rests on the observation that only the landlords and associated urban functionaries have behaved politically as a class. They were 'hegemonic' because they had a certain degree of access (through municipalities, judgeships, etc.) but no control over the colonial state apparatus, and because, as landlords and patrons, they appropriated the largest portion of the agricultural surplus. The factional political system was, to them, the most appropriate system for the preservation of their privileges and the reproduction of the social order in which they prevailed. Within that order class conflict, social conflict and potential class conflict persisted: between landlords and share-croppers, between landlords and peasant proprietors (through unfavourable market relations), between urban capitalists and wage labourers, between the village