

with German and American wages sent home, and to a lesser extent with Israeli money converted into dinars.

Historically, of course, land was both a source of wealth and status (wajaha). Rich peasants were those who were either big landlords and tax-farmers (as was the case with the heads of the Baraghteh clans in neighbouring Bani Zeid), or their agents (wukala<sup>C</sup>). In either case these patriarchal lords commanded both authority and a considerably higher amount of wealth than their fellow-villagers. Their authority was based on their ability to mobilize their clan members and dependents on the side of their urban notable allies in times of factional conflicts, while their wealth was based on the returns of the land in addition to the high rates of interest they charged on money lent.

Until the end of British rule, one of the main sources of internal differentiation in the Palestinian village was peasant indebtedness to wealthy landlords. In years of bad crops, the landlord would extend credit to the poor farmer as an advance for buying seeds and paying the ploughman. Against this credit, the farmer would sign portions of his land as security, and eventually -- especially in the event of the occurrence of successive bad yields -- he would lose his best land to village notables. According to this pattern in the Ramallah district, many peasants in Ras el-Tin lost their lands to Birzeit and Burham landlords; those in Abu Shkheidam to Birzeit landlords; and those in Mizra'a to the landlords of Deir Ghassaneh and Beit Rima. Thus the process of differentiation was not only internal to the same village, but also divided regions into "poor" and "wealthy" villages. The crucial determinant of this latter process of land transfer was the presence or absence within the village of notables with strong links to the government, and before that, to the tax-farmers.