

clans. The roots of these conflicts go beyond the administrative reform. Northern notables traditionally used to complain from the way their fate was tied to "the whims of the Jerusalem effendis"--as expressed by the Nablus historian Ihsan al-Nimr (al-Nimr, 1973:17). This hostility persisted even after the unification of Palestine under the British Mandate. Several decades later, when al-Istiqlal, the only mass-based pan-Arabist party began to mobilize Palestinian Arabs around an anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist program it invariably encountered factional opposition from the Jerusalem clan-based parties of the Husseinis and Nashashibis. Those difficulties were due in no small degree to the fact that the leader of al-Istiqlal, Awni Abdul-Hadi, belonged to a family of big landowners in the Jenin (Nablus) area. (In his history of the Palestinian national movement, E. Tuma, however, attributes the downfall of al-Istiqlal to other causes; those include: British opposition, financial difficulties, and the restrictive conditions for its membership, cf. Tuma, 1976:199).

What was the social basis for clan power? It seems to have been associated with two related variables. One was the number of men that clan notables can mobilize on their side in factional struggles--a factor which was dependent, as far as peasants were concerned, on the amount of land under control by the clan head and the intricate system of patronage he concluded with his sharecroppers and semi-autonomous peasants, including his ability to act as their creditor in an increasingly monetized economy. The second variable was the accessibility of the clan head and his relatives/aides to public office--hence his ability to extend services to his clients in return for their support in factional conflicts (including votes for municipal elections, which became a major arena of rivalry under British rule).

Power over the peasantry, expressed in this system of patronages, and the reinforcement of that power by the holding of public office mutually rein-