

their dependents as the pattern of land tenure began to change in Palestine under the mandate. Neither did Qaisi/Yemeni factionalism present alternative ideological affiliations for peasants in the struggle against their landlords or the central authority. In Spain, to provide a contrasting example, peasant factionalism affiliated with Carlists or Liberals--each providing an opposing position on questions of land reform and state decentralization (Terrades, 1978). In Palestine we observe occasional and isolated such cases of peasant factionalism having a class content (the nearest example is perhaps the struggle between the Baraghteh clans and the fellaheen in the Bani Zeid areas, towards the end of the 19th century--Barghuti, 1979).¹ But both these factions, and the more important Qaisi-Yemeni affiliations, belonged to a different era. With Zionist land purchases increasingly encroaching on the stability of Palestinian land tenures, a new framework of alliances was called for.

Class Formation and Factionalism

The foregoing analysis attempted to demonstrate how a combination of sectional alignments, based on putative and clan-patronage relations, channelled the political consciousness of Palestinians into forms of identifications which countervailed over the development of class formations and class consciousness. These "diversions" took various forms as we have already suggested: whole villages siding with one clan leader against another set of villages (as in the civil wars in Jebel Nablus, 1841-1858); members of a socially differentiated urban clan acting in solidarity against members of another clan (Tuqan vs. Nimir; Husseinis vs. Nashashibis, the latter especially during the revolt of 1936); and village potentates recruiting poorer peasants to act as cannon fodder in factional politics. But it is not sufficient here to say that factionalism diverted the masses from potential forms of class solidarities; that would be a teleological escape. Rather we must show with historical examples that it could have been otherwise (i.e. that class politics