

the Leagues failed because the Israeli Civil Administration imposed on it tasks which, given the increasing claims made for Jewish sovereignty in the West Bank, were mutually exclusive. On the one hand the Leagues were being combed to act as a surrogate for Israeli power and as an alternative "moderate" Palestinian leadership, on the other hand it was to act as a repressive apparatus against the nationalist movement. But since the success of the former task would have required to grant the Palestinians territorial concessions which would lend it a measure of credibility as a moderate Palestinian movement, the absence of such concessions brought the Leagues own undoing as a rural political movement and left it naked with its second, repressive, function.² As such it can be claimed that Israeli rule in the West Bank (and Gaza) continues to rest on structural foundations of economic integration re-inforced, increasingly, by direct coercive power.

Conclusion

We have traced above the consequences of dislocation of traditional agrarian Palestine and the emergence of three distinct social formations in which the remnants of that society are embedded today. The centrality of the West Bank (and Gaza) in those formations lies in two aspects of this configuration: One, it is the only segment of historic Palestine in which agriculture constitutes a meaningful component of the region's political economy; and two, it is the arena over which Palestinian sovereignty is being contested today, In contrast to the predicament of the Palestinians in the Israeli and neighbouring Arab formations West Bankers were the least subject to the convulsions in social structure that Palestinians underwent elsewhere. They alone have retained a semblance of a social order that bears continuity with the nation's historic past. Only there a Palestinian peasantry, divorced from its coastal landlords and urban elite, is still entrenched in the high-