

## Social and Ecological Crisis in a Palestinian village on the West Bank: a discursive archaeology

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This paper seeks to present a study of local structures through which global circumstances are negotiated. I have argued elsewhere (Kaim 1997, 1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2004) that if we are to understand the social and cultural implications of the integration of the whole planet into a single global system we must study the local level. This is the level at which action takes place, and it is through action that structure is connected to circumstance. The presentation is heavily ethnographic rather than theoretical. However it follows the theoretical points outlined elsewhere (Kaim 1997, 1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2004). It concerns the village of Tustas (not the village's real name), which is a Palestinian village on the West Bank, nestled in the Judean hills overlooking the Palestinian plain. It is a mixed Christian and Muslim village with a total resident population of approximately 1,000, about two thirds of which is Christian and one third Muslim. In particular I look at the development of social and ecological crisis as indicative of the interaction between local and global forces, structures and circumstances.

Tustas has undergone two major social-economic movements since the mid-nineteenth century. These changes of historical circumstance have been profoundly important in the development of current structures and dispositions. For this reason, here we are concerned with the relation of social-economic historical circumstances to structures and dispositions. In the earlier Ottoman period social and economic relations were based on an articulating corporate kinship and expressed through clans. In the late nineteenth century emphasis moved to a peasant domestic economy focussed on the household as the unit of production, distribution, and consumption. Since then there has been a second movement to the current situation in which the household has been reduced to a unit of consumption and the individual is the primary economic actor. The relationship of kinship to production was transformed, most basically through Ottoman and British reforms.

The cumulative effects of Turkish land reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century and British land and tax reforms in the early twentieth served to integrate Tustas into the money economy<sup>1</sup>. Until the late nineteenth century life in Tustas, as elsewhere in Palestine, was based

on subsistence production expressed through and based on notions and categories of kinship. Essentially, through the reforms ownership of land, the primary resource, came to be invested in the individual title-holder rather than kin groups. At the same time, the title-holder had individual responsibility for the payment of taxes owing on the land under title. In this way the previous reliance of individuals and households on co-operative labour within the clan was transformed. The individual title-holder (especially after the British reforms of the 1920s and 1930s) was required to make money in order to pay the land tax. In this way, also, the economy was changed from one essentially organised around production for use-value to ensure the livelihood of the community of producers, to one organised around production for exchange-value and to produce saleable surplus.

These changes had more immediate and hard-hitting practical effects on the villagers, however. They suffered economic failure and were thrown to the brink of starvation. A combination of the reforms with local inheritance practices and rising population meant that many villagers had plots too small fully to support their households. Without adequate means of subsistence they could not reproduce themselves economically; they did not have enough to eat. Acute hunger (*aj-ju'*) was common and very real in the late Turkish and early British periods. Since the British period, when emigration to the Palestinian plain began, a major reason for leaving has been so that the people could *eat*, rather than simply to increase their income.

The two major social-economic movements referred to (from kin-, through household-, to individual-based economic life) have occurred in the past eighty years. Tustasis' kin conceptions have not fully adapted to the change. Previously, the clan provided a social, economic, and political model. It was a "second government" (*hukumāt thānawīya*); it is no more. The social, economic, and political model provided by the clan is no longer appropriate to the Christian villagers' social-economic organisation. Neither is it fully appropriate to the Muslims' organisation.

Tustasi Muslims have found a modern religio-political structure of authority suitable to their community. That structure is the Muslim Brothers (MB)- Hamas. Because of the communal features discussed elsewhere (Kaim 1997, 1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2004) Tustasi Muslims are able to mobilise their people by use of the idea of being 'asabi<sup>2</sup> in conjunction with notions of religious unity. In doing this the modern political authority of the MB-Hamas and its activists is legitimated in ostensibly 'traditional' kin and religious terms at the same time as it maintains the efficacy of those terms.

Tustasi Christians cannot do this because the ideologies of their political parties do not permit such use of kin notions. Rather those ideologies are inimical to such use and explicitly oppose themselves to ‘familism’ which they see as a source of political impotence, and one which lost them Palestine in the first place<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, for the reasons discussed in Part One the Christians cannot promote a ‘religious kinship’ among themselves whereas the Muslims use religious unity to reinforce their claims of being ‘asabī.

## Social–Ecological Crisis

### *Context of the crisis: land and kinship in Ottoman Tustas*

In the Ottoman period Tustas had several areas of land devoted to different uses. It held a piece of land (called *an-Nazla*) on the Palestinian plain which was devoted to cereals such as wheat and barley. This area was under *mushā‘* (or, common) ownership. Households were allocated plots of this land which were re-allocated each year. Around the village itself, on the hills on which it stands, were, and still are, extensive terraces under olive trees. Finally, there were vegetable gardens surrounding the built-up area but within the terraced area, divided permanently between the village’s families (‘ā’ilāt). Since the expansion of Tustas’s built-up area in the late nineteenth century the gardens have come to be scattered between houses. The terraced hill land under olives still surrounds this area of houses and their plots.

An-Nazla was sold by village notables in the late nineteenth century. The sale illustrates the point that not all of Tustas’s land was divided fairly among the people who actually cultivated it. The sale of an-Nazla by the notables was possible because they had registered it with the Turkish authorities as their *personal* property. The inefficiency of Turkish surveys and investigations meant that this was not an uncommon occurrence in Palestine at that time (see Schölch 1982; Johnson 1982). Indeed, it was so common that by the time the British arrived they found the national notable elite strongly entrenched precisely because it had consolidated its power and privileges through extensive land accumulation aided by Ottoman policies<sup>4</sup>. The British were much more efficient in surveying the land and allocating titles to individuals actually cultivating it. Their introduction of a comprehensive system of land registration, ownership, and taxation (see Government of Palestine 1946) stimulated a major transformation to individual holdings.

Today land of the village is still divided into clan areas. For these purposes the Christians are

reckoned to constitute two clans, but the Muslims only one. Division into these areas occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Faras took the central area, the Muslims the southern, and the Ghazal the northern zone. Among the Muslims dār Abū Mahmūd took the eastern side of the Muslim area while dār Abū Ahmad took an area on the western side. It is important to note that this dominant group was, at that time, considered two clans. The Muslim area was divided into two named sections, in contrast to the single area demarcated during my field work. Thus, at that earlier time the village was divided into four quarters. The different quarters were designated by spatial terms, but were associated with specific clans which had exclusive rights to the use of the land in them. They were called *hārat ash-shāmīya* (northern quarter), *hārat al-qiblīya* (southern quarter), *hārat al-fauqa* (upper quarter), and *hārat at-tahta* (lower quarter). These last two received their designations from their relative placement on sloping ground, and were identified with the two 'hamulas' dār Abū Ahmad and dār Abū Mahmūd both of which traced descent from Ishāq. Hārat ash-shāmīya was associated with the Ghazal, and hārat al-qiblīya with the Faras. At the time of my field work while people generally knew of these older designations the haras were more commonly referred to by the names of the hamulas occupying them. Thus, they were generally referred to as *hārat al-Ghazal*, *hārat al-Faras*, or quarter of the Ghazal and quarter of the Faras respectively. Significantly, the upper and lower quarters have now been collapsed into one, terminologically at least, reflecting the tendency to refer to the Muslims as a single clan<sup>5</sup>. They are now designated by the term *hārat al-muslimīn* (the Muslims' quarter), a designation used by Muslims when objectifying their hara, as much as by Christians, and *hāratnā* ("our quarter"), used by Muslims only.

In the original division each clan's holdings were discrete from those of the others indicating a direct and close relation between land and kinship. Muslims now do, however, have land in the areas of the two Christian clans. They acquired these tracts by sale as well as by a system of lending to finance the emigration of large numbers of villagers after 1948. There are also two households from the Faras living in the Ghazal quarter. No Muslims or member of the Ghazal live in the Faras quarter excluding the old village which has had a mixed population since before the division into quarters occurred. Three Muslim families live there. Only one household (consisting of a recently married man and his wife and children) from the Faras lives in the Muslim area, far removed from the other Christians.

Land belonged to the community at large (*aj-jami'*) before the Ottoman land reforms. The clans controlled access to land through the allocations made by the village notables, but the

constituent families actually cultivated it. In common perception “our village was [made up of] clans and the whole country was [made up of] clans.” Each clan conducted its affairs as a unit and quite independently of the others.

Each constituent family of the hamula (or ‘ā’ila) had a member, usually a genealogically senior male, who was responsible for it and who oversaw cultivation and distribution of production from the portion allocated to it. The notables generally came from the larger ‘ā’ilas, were themselves genealogically senior, and were reputed to be brave in battle, tough, and generous.

Apart from their role in the division of the village’s immediate lands (which remained of secondary importance for subsistence until the late nineteenth century) the notables also defined and allocated plots on an-Nazla. It was they who divided the whole tract into summer and winter portions and then determined the size, aspect, and allocation of plots within these portions. These plots were allocated to the ‘ā’ilas which were then responsible for their cultivation. The ‘ā’ila, through its senior member, oversaw production and divided the produce according to the number and size of the dārs in it.

Although each ‘ā’ila was responsible for a particular allotment the distribution itself had been made by the clan (through the notables) and was liable to be changed each year or so. This was done in order to equalise differences in the productivity of the land itself. In order not to disadvantage a household allocated less productive land it would be given a more productive piece in the following re-allocation. This system thus had a tendency to reduce inequity. This is akin to the tendency of Sahlins’ (1972) Domestic Mode of Production to equalise the risk of productive failure between households. The influence of the clan over the land and the subsistence of households was considerable, even though it was the households which actually provided the labour for production. More importantly for us economic activity, from the major division of land to the cultivation of small plots, was articulated through units of kinship.

This situation began to change with the Ottoman reforms of the late nineteenth century which introduced some degree of individual ownership. However, the Turkish effort was haphazard and inefficient compared to the British surveys and reforms of the 1920s and 1930s.

### *Ottoman reforms and their implications*

As part of the movement towards the creation of a market in land the Ottomans introduced three waves of laws in the late 1850s, the late 1860s, and the mid-1870s. The best known is that

of 1858 requiring the registration of land in the names of individual owners, where before it had been treated according to traditional forms of tenure (Khalidi 1988: 211; Schölch 1982: 21) such as I have described. Rather than encouraging a wider dissemination of titles to the peasants actually cultivating the land much was registered in the name of local notables, creating large properties (Schölch 1982: 22; Johnson 1982: 14). This did not happen within Tustas where land in the immediate area of the village was divided into many plots from clan holdings. However, the power of the clan notables was still strong. When the clans divided their lands and apportioned them to the households this too was done by the notables. The apportioned holdings did, however, then become the property of the household, as did the produce of the land. This follows the pattern of the hill areas where individual ownership was more common in the late nineteenth century (Graham-Brown 1982: 108-109).

The division of the 1860s affected the organisation of work and labour relations. In the days before the division the members of a clan worked co-operatively, especially in the harvest. However, after the division each household ploughed, cultivated, and maintained its own land. From that time “everyone started to work for himself alone” and the tendency of the previous system to reduce inequity was superseded by one in which there was less co-operation, and greater freedom, but also a greater responsibility on the shoulders of the individual as cultivator. Not surprisingly, the division also affected productivity.

An economic organisation which emphasises the household as its productive unit subjects the community so organised to specific consequences. To the extent that production is centred on domestic units it is established on a fragile and vulnerable base. The household labour force is usually small and in the face of circumstances a percentage of households must chronically fail to provide their own customary livelihood, or subsistence (Sahlins 1972: 74). Control over the disposition of property, such as a title conveys, strengthens the household’s devotion to its own interests. In a system with this base the household itself tends to become the unit charged with production, the deployment and use of labour power, and the determination of economic objectives. From this, the internal relations of the household become the principal relations of production in society (Sahlins 1972: 76-77). Such an emphasis on households thus emphasises more individualistic labour relations over more communal ones. It thus also increases the risk of productive failure within the community, from the inter-household or communal point of view.

Within the productive household co-operative relations are likely to be maintained. Living in

a household which is a productive unit demands a pooling of goods and services to place at the disposition of members what is indispensable to them (Sahlins 1972: 94). This is happened in Tustas. Households cultivated and harvested their crops co-operatively between their members. The fruits of the harvest were held in common in the household, as were the seeds produced, which were used to plant the crop for the following year, and the store of food. Brothers would work together throughout the year. They worked in complement, some with the household's livestock, the remainder tending the land. This was organised by the brothers who then shared equally in the produce. Livestock too was held in common in the household. Each household had a pair of cattle which were used mainly for ploughing, and also kept flocks of sheep and goats for their milk products, the meat being eaten only occasionally. During this phase of domestic production the relation between brothers became central to economic relations. It is not surprising that relation should provide a model for co-operation within the household once the latter became the primary productive unit. The logic of relatedness worked via connection through a common male ancestor. The relation between brothers is the closest of such relations as the common ancestor is only one generation removed from the protagonists.

With the household as the prime productive unit kinship was still implicated in the economic realm, and provided structures through which economic activity could be organised and expressed. Also, as the household began to separate from the wider kin structures of clan and constituent family ('ā'ila) maximal reciprocity came to be focussed on it. As an expression of kinship distance and generalised reciprocity (cf. Sahlins 1972: 196-204) brotherhood co-ordinated with the new productive unit very well: for the actors it was 'natural.'

Ottoman reforms had begun a process of individuation that was to continue through the twentieth century until its present culmination in the rural proletarianisation of the villagers and the reduction of the household to a unit of consumption. In the late nineteenth century, however, the individual was still dependent on the household for subsistence in a way that is not the case in industrial economies. Although movement away from the wider kin structures had begun, full transformation was yet to occur. This is the context in which the villagers lost an -Nazla, on which they had hitherto depended for their subsistence.

## Generation of the Crisis

### *The loss of an-Nazla*

The most important property held in common by the villagers in former times was the piece of land on the plain. Its name, 'an-Nazla,' derives from the verb *nazala* meaning to go down or descend. The property consisted of approximately 10,000 dunums and was held under *mushā'* (common) ownership whereby the land was not distributed to individuals, but was administered by the clans. Being flat and open country it was better suited to broad field cultivation than the rugged and very rocky land surrounding the village itself. By and large, the land immediately surrounding the village was uncultivated, but where used was mainly under olives. An-Nazla was used on seasonal rotation between summer and winter sections to provide the bulk of the villagers' food and virtually all the village's grain supplies. Although common it was controlled by the small clique of village notables. Because of the crucial role of an-Nazla in providing the subsistence of the villagers its loss in the late nineteenth century had dramatic consequences for the village which were felt over decades.

In the previous section we saw how kin relations were the basis of labour relations during the Ottoman period. The fundamental nature of kin relations in economic matters at this time is further illustrated by the manner in which the village received the land in the first place, the economic organisation of the land under village ownership, and the manner in which the village lost the land.

Tustas acquired an-Nazla through a marriage relationship enjoyed by one of the ancient Muslim families of the village, which was in residence before the advent of dār Ishāq. That relationship was with a family of one 'Arab Abū Qisheikh, who was an emir and held very extensive lands. In return for taking a woman from this Tustasi family as a bride for one of their number, the grandfather of the groom gave a piece of land to the village as a *nuqut*, or wedding present; that land was an-Nazla. It was given knowing that the land surrounding the village was little, and what there was waste, and was given to the whole village as a common gift.

The actual events are quite ancient, preceding the arrival of dār Ishāq which itself came about 400 years before my field work. I am not here attempting to reconstruct the events of that distant time. What is important, however, is that the land was a *nuqut* and that it was received because of a marriage relationship between a family in the village and that of the emir. These



are the most significant features of this story. Locally a groom is required to give gifts to both his bride and her family. Bridewealth, dowries, and other forms of exchange on marriage are widely recognised in anthropology as forms of reciprocity which cement the link constituted socially through marriage between two notionally separate kin groups. This too is the logic of the *nuqt*. In this case, however, the *nuqt* was the transfer of an economically important resource (land) to a village with unproductive property. It therefore also expresses the basis of economic relations in kinship terms. This was appropriate at that time given the relation between kinship and land in the Ottoman period, discussed above.

Once received by the village work on an-Nazla was organised on the following basis. Each 'ā'ila received a *lajna* (literally this means committee or commission, but here refers to the land for which the family was given responsibility), which it tended. Although the land was divided into these *lajnas* it remained in *mushā'* ownership. Generally, each 'ā'ila was responsible for its *lajna* and worked on it with some independence. Labour relations were thus centred on the 'ā'ilas, and so based on kinship relations. Again, labour was essentially co-operative with the different households making up the 'ā'ila cultivating the land and harvesting its produce. That produce was then distributed to the households within the 'ā'ila in a process overseen by genealogically senior members of the 'ā'ila. The clan notables could be called to adjudicate in cases of strong dispute over the distribution.

An-Nazla remained common until it was *sold* to one Abū Saif, a rich and powerful man from the neighbouring village of Dair Gusna, who oppressed the people. He took it into his head to take an-Nazla by force. The people of Tustas struggled against him and managed to defeat him in that. However, finally it was to no avail. He prevented the people from using the land so that finally it was sold in the early 1880s to this same Abū Saif and a friend of his nicknamed the Bey, who lived in Jerusalem and was a scion of the Husseini family. The land was not sold by the people, but by the six village notables, without the knowledge of the general village population.

That the land was sold by the *village notables* indicates the power of this group whose position depended on the link between kin and economic relations. So long as economic relations were based in kinship the notables, as the senior kin figures of the primary kin unit (the clan), could maintain their control over the disposition of land and labour. It is because of this kinship-economy link that during my field work the politically active villagers, whatever their allegiance, denounced the sale as indicative of 'feudalism' (*iqṭā'īya*). Adding to the sense of

betrayal, the clique of notables sold the land to the Husseini family which subsequently sold it to Jews. “Those feudal families were middlemen for the transfer of the land to the Jews. So you see how the land was lost,” the implication being ‘how it was taken from us by our own people’<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, the loss of an-Nazla is connected to the loss of the Palestinian plain to the extent that the first is interpreted as indicative of the reasons for the second: because the people lacked national consciousness (*wā’i qaumi*) and were dominated by an elite of notables in contrast to the Jews’ nationalism and organisation<sup>7</sup>.

The loss of land helps create a sense of unity in dispossession and provides a symbol for political reflection, criticism, and mobilisation, demonstrated in the importance of ‘Land Day’ in the Palestinian national calendar. The political and social importance of the loss of land also allows the local story of an-Nazla to be phrased in terms of modern Palestinian *national* politics. It is in distinction (sometimes implicit and at others explicit) to that *national* politics that the story gains power as a criticism of ‘feudalism’ and familism. All age groups and members of both of the religious communities of the village as a serious betrayal of their interests. It is particularly taken by the politically active youth, especially PPP activists, to indicate the corrupting effects of the system of familism which betrayed the Palestinians by involving them in counterproductive and politically unconscious strife between the two main ‘great families’ of the pre-1948 period, the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. The Jews, to whom the Palestinians were betrayed, had, on the other hand, a developed *national* consciousness at the beginning of the current century. Even today, in the view of PPP supporters, a concerted effort is needed to eliminate forever the influence of familism and to develop a true national political consciousness, one of the hallmarks of which is that the people will think of themselves, first and foremost, as Palestinians, rather than in terms of kin, regional, or even class loyalties. For all groups, however, the influence of the great families and of ‘feudalism’ is central in explaining how the Jews “broke us,” that is to say, how they created divisions among the Palestinians so that some worked against the long-term interests of their own people and thus how Israelis could gain control of the land. This idea is current even among those who do not speak of the need for a modern political consciousness, but view the loss of the land simply in terms of betrayal by the traditional leadership.

There is a further point to be made, however. It is true that the traditional logic of the economic system is demonstrated by this event. On the other hand, the fact that the land was *sold* by the village notables indicates that the traditional economic system was, in fact, articulated with a more modern structure: that of the money economy. The Ottoman land

reforms discussed earlier acted to encourage the commercialisation of land, as indeed was their intention. Titles were saleable. While not as thorough as the British reforms of the 1920s and 1930s<sup>8</sup> the Ottoman reforms began the process and developed it to the extent that trans-Palestine land sales occurred as early as the 1870s (Schölch 1982: 22). The sale of an-Nazla is one example of this. In its nature as *sold*, but by village *notables*, it indicates the transitional status of the economic organisation of that time.

While the sale of an-Nazla can thus be seen as a consequence of Ottoman reforms, as an historical event it had further consequences itself. The most immediate of these were to throw the people into hunger, to create a need to rehabilitate the lands in and around the village itself, and to clarify the field system therein. An-Nazla had been used for most of the agricultural production of the village, being flat and more easily cultivable than the hills on which the village stands and which had, therefore, been neglected. The land around the village had been neglected because of its low productivity in comparison with an-Nazla, and the loss of the latter put great pressure on the productive capacities of the village. Furthermore, this loss occurred at the same time as the land reforms of the 1860s promoted a movement towards household production so that when the lands were rehabilitated it was as family, rather than clan or common, plots. As mentioned before domestic production necessarily carries greater risk of productive failure for individual households than a collective system. The combination of this more fragmented economic organisation with the loss of an-Nazla and the need to rehabilitate village lands which had been neglected for a considerable period meant that a decline in productivity was almost certain.

In these circumstances hunger and hardship might be expected. It comes as little surprise then that villagers at that time lived in abject circumstances. Implicated in the hunger and hardship, however, is the productive crisis which created the hunger and developed the hardship by imposing a need for Tustasis to intensify their labour in order to increase production.

The theoretical orientation of this study takes 'economy' as a category of culture. This implies that the threshold of productive pressure and the character of the response to it are not purely determined by the means of production but are relative to the society under consideration<sup>9</sup>. Pressure on land is a function of the producers' access to sufficient means of livelihood. What constitutes that sufficient means is a specification of the cultural system: relations of production and property, land tenure, relations between communal groups and so forth. The loss of an-Nazla occurred in a context in which rules of land tenure and economic relations were being

transformed. Land was becoming an alienable commodity, and there was a greater productive emphasis on the household which was coming to be constituted around the *title*-holder.

The Turks also introduced a tax regime. As it affected Tustas that regime was rapacious and irregular. Taxes, importantly, were paid in kind. Thus, the requirement to pay taxes made increased production necessary, more so once an-Nazla was lost and basic survival was threatened. The methods available to the villagers to increase their production were limited. The technology of agriculture offered little improvement, and at this stage (the 1880s) emigration was difficult because a communications infrastructure was almost absent. Intensification of labour is the main alternative to technological improvement. Population growth is a means to intensify labour on the land. This became the main response in Tustas. The populace needed to rehabilitate the land surrounding the village. Given the circumstances just mentioned increasing the population would ease that rehabilitation. Furthermore, given the structural disposition of households with relatively few workers to falter economically, and that Tustas had begun to emphasise the household prior to the loss of an-Nazla, increasing the number of workers per household would (with luck) reduce each household's risk of economic failure. In this context such economic failure meant hunger.

Thus the Tustasis were caught in a vicious circle in that they could not use any but traditional materials in their cultivation so that if they wanted to farm the lands of the village to their full extent they needed to raise more children as labour. Any such increase in fertility would put severe pressure on a family's subsistence, however, and further deepen hardship. In spite of this there was considerable population growth in Tustas. The growth was so great that it forced an expansion of the village in the 1890s. Over the past hundred years Tustas has seen a considerable expansion of its built-up area. This was caused by two developments: greater security obtaining in the area, particularly following the expansion of central authority to rural districts as occurred under the British, as well as a greatly increasing population.

Prior to this movement all the families lived in what is now the central part of the village, recognisable by the predominance of *dār* enclosures in which groups of related families lived. In this old part of the village there were no areas identified with any particular religious or kin group. While the families within each *dār* enclosure were related, the neighbouring compound might be occupied by people from another clan. Indeed, there was no territorial exclusivity between the confessions: a Muslim's neighbours in the next compound might well be Christians. Judging by the style of buildings and their age there had been no expansion for a considerable

period before the late nineteenth century.

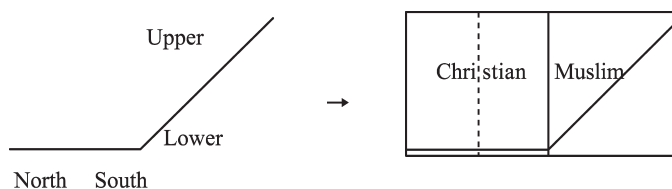
Conditions in these houses became exceedingly crowded with two or more nuclear families having to share single rooms. With no space available in that part of the village on which new houses might be built, expansion was necessary. The first movements out occurred in the 1890s. Three families, two Christian and one Muslim, moved out. The Muslim family, of dār Ishāq, moved into what is now the Muslim quarter. This was in 1890<sup>10</sup>. Two years later (according to the dates displayed in the wall of the house concerned) a household from the Faras built a house near the mosque. At the same time a house was built between the mosque and the new house of those Christians for other members of the Faras.

The hunger and hardship of the period did not only lead to a population explosion (however paradoxical such an explosion may appear in our comfortable circumstances). They also provided impetus and a logic for emigration which similarly exploded in the British period. Rehabilitation of the village lands was not sufficient and work outside the village was necessary to supplement the meagre agricultural production that these hill-dwellers were forced to rely on. Agriculture was not sufficient to provide subsistence. People emigrated in order to have enough to eat. Those who left did so because “they wanted to eat and to earn money”; “they wanted bread for the children to eat”; “the land was not enough”. People left in order to provide the most basic necessities, not to have better food or consumer goods, but to have food. Thus the elderly Muslim Abū Walid, old enough to remember the Turkish period, said, by way of personal illustration, “I had five children. My land will not support five people. It just isn’t possible. This is the principal reason we all had to go: the land does not produce enough to support everybody.”

The failure of subsistence in the late Turkish period, growing population, and the household as the (vulnerable) productive base of the community formed a set of circumstances which established a disposition to emigration. These circumstances in conjunction with the Mandatory Power’s systematic introduction of land titles and taxes together with the building of a national communications infrastructure led to a burst of emigration early in the Mandate period. This continued after 1948 until opportunities abroad were severely limited in the 1980s. By this later date, however, the Palestinian plain was again open to the villagers for employment. They now ‘emigrate’ to work in Israel, though resident on the West Bank. The logic remains the same as that established in this productive crisis of the late Ottoman period: that the villagers are unable to reproduce themselves economically through production in the village

alone.

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- 1 An overview of these reforms and their effects and the integration of the area into the world economy may be found in Owen (1981; 1982). Doumani (1995) examines the processes of Ottoman reform and European expansion and their local effects by examining in detail the case of Nāblus and in so doing gives useful insights into the way those forces played themselves out locally and how they were dealt with by the inhabitants. More general historical background on Ottoman rule in Palestine may be found in Cohen (1973) and Cohen and Lewis (1978). On the changes brought about by the incorporation of peasants into the wider economy during the Mandate period see Taqqu (1980). Stein (1980) discusses the forces contributing to the commoditisation of land under the Mandate.
  - 2 and able to proclaim themselves a single clan.
  - 3 This, of course, itself derives from the historical development of those ideologies in opposition to the pre-existing familism and factionalism which so dominated Palestinian politics until the collapse of Palestinian society in 1948. Muslih (1988) provides a useful account of the effects of Palestinian familism on the development of a generalised modern Palestinian nationalism. Significantly, the strong influence of the great 'national' notable families (rather than local ones such as those in Tustas) was itself tied to the Ottoman reforms, European penetration and the related economic development in Palestine in the late nineteenth century. These all served to enhance the economic, social, and political position of those national notable families. Sahliye (1988) argues that such elite dominance of politics, even down to the local level, was not overcome until after 1967. This is not to say, however, that the notables could not use nationalist politics for their own ends. Indeed, as Khalaf (1991) has demonstrated, on the national level such notables were at the forefront of the nationalist and anti-colonialist movement under the Mandate. Nevertheless, such kin-based factionalism on the national level was, as Tustasis themselves feel, integral to the disintegration of Palestinian society and politics in 1948.
  - 4 On this, and the subsequent effects this strength of the notables had on Palestinian politics see Khalaf (1991).
  - 5 See diagram. Two axes in complex relation are involved here: north/south and upper/lower. The transformation may be represented as follows:



- 6 Cf. Atran (1986). On land classification, registration, ownership and rental and the role of notables in late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine more generally, see also Stein (1984).
- 7 Muslih (1988) provides a useful account of the politics of Palestinian notable families, including the Husseinis and Nashashibis, and their effects on the development of a modern Palestinian nationalism. The social and political position of such families was enhanced by Ottoman reforms and economic developments related to the expansion of Europe and the integration of Palestine

into the world economy. This has been further explored by Khalaf (1991) in his examination of the role of kin relations and loyalties in promoting political factionalism among Palestinians until 1948.

8 On the commoditisation of land under the Mandate see Stein (1980).

9 Cf. Sahlins 1972: 49 n. 5.

10 Houses in the area have their dates of construction recorded on their walls or ceilings. I was thus able to date each house.

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