

tax load. In a communique sent in 1930 by the government of Syria, the following was reported about the conditions of merchants in Jaffa:

The people of Jaffa alone have lost P.L. 300,000 in the orange industry and 100,000 in cereal. Poverty and misery in Palestine is more intense than in Syria and Lebanon.. The Banks are so strict that they force the merchants to declare bankruptcy..In spite of the fact that the value of the immovable property of the debtors is twice the value of their debts, yet the Banks do not trust the debtors and are afraid of losing their credits.
(54)

The only governmental source of credit available to the rural population was Barclays Bank. However, since loans could be issued only if security on back payments, such as the presence of immovable property, was available, the Bank was useless to the majority of the rural population. Both the merchants and the peasants themselves were well aware of the government's failure to provide them with a source of credit. In one instance they state: "In the circumstances the Government shows no concern whether debtors are ruined or not..". (55)

For the majority of small-scale producers, such as those in the grain and olive production, taxation ultimately led to their ruin through the loss of their only means of subsistence. The following is an account of how a peasant might lose his land:

Wherever you go in Palestine, the Fallah tells you: I sell my land and property because the Government compels me to pay taxes and tithes at a time when I do not possess the necessary means of subsistence for my self and my family. In the circumstance I am forced to appeal to a rich person for a loan which I undertake to refund together with an interest of 50 percent after a month or two. When payment falls due, I find that I am still penniless and eventually compelled to renew the bill, double the amount and refund it after a month or two. And so I keep renewing the bill and doubling the debt until after a year or two the loan, I took from that rich man, amounts to ten times more, i.e., if I take a loan of P.L. 10, two years later, the debt will amount to P.L.100, which forcibly leads me to sell