

my land in order to refund my debt of which I took only a meager sum.

In conclusion the peasant added:

I firmly believe that if the tithes for this year would not be abolished, many a fallah would die out of starvation. If Government however would not relieve the peasants this year, there will be no cultivators next year to cultivate the land. (56)

Methods of Tax Collection

The heavy consequences of taxation for the rural population were not confined to the effects of the increased tithe in its commuted form. In addition, new methods of tax collection were also introduced by the colonial state.

Until the late 1920s tithe collection was usually carried out by the Head of the village or the Head of the Hamula. This method, which involved a mediator, was deemed inefficient by the colonial government which was in need for revenues. To increase its income from taxation the government replaced the mediator with a more reliable officer. In 1930 the government appointed officials partly from within the village, referred to as Mukhtars, and partly from outside, for tax collection. The number of Mukhtars appointed greatly exceeded the number of villages. For an approximate number of 550 villages throughout Palestine, in 1932, the number of appointed Mukhtars was estimated at 1344, distributed as follows: 337 in the district of Jerusalem: 369 in the Southern District and 638 in the Northern District. (57) The large number of Mukhtars appointed to the Northern District was needed to control the densely populated land in the Marj and Beisan in which the peasants refused to pay taxes.(58) It must be added that this colonial device plays a significant role in dividing the colonized people. This, has been dealt with elsewhere. (59)