

guidepost for the more central issue of the extent of changes in the social relations of production among the Palestinian Arabs in the rural areas.

The study includes the following specific questions. First, what were the changes introduced by the colonial government in taxation and land policy, and what impact did they have on the Palestinian Arab peasantry? Second, in what ways did European settlement affect rural areas, and how did their acquisition of land impact the Arab peasantry? Third, what was the nature and extent of growth in agricultural production? How did that differ between the Jewish European settlers and Palestinian Arabs, and within the latter? What were the consequences of the government's trade policies on the Arab peasantry? Fourth, what was the extent of new techniques of production and by whom were they introduced? What was their impact? Fifth, was there a process of differentiation among the Palestinian Arab peasantry and how extensive was it? To what degree was this process accompanied by capitalist development in agriculture?

### 1.2 Background of the Study

A major underlying theme of this study is the fast pace of the social and economic transformation of Palestine during the Mandate period. Within this process of transformation, one of the most pronounced elements was the fast process of the dispossession and pauperization of the peasantry. This section provides background information that highlights some major indicators of the process of transformation, which places the dispossession of the peasantry in a wider context. However, we start with some brief notes on geography and the