

nature of cereal cultivation, the peasants' lack of resources and thus inability to improve their conditions, the unequal distribution of landholdings, and the insufficiency of government efforts to alleviate the conditions of the peasants. He recognizes the effect of Jewish land acquisitions on reducing, especially for the future, the land available for Arab cultivators. He concludes:

Although their political and symbolic significance was great, Jewish purchases of Arab lands were not a major factor in the transformation of Arab rural society. The concentration of Jewish purchasing efforts in an attempt to create contiguous holdings, their growing preference for tracts whose acquisition did not require displacement of Arab cultivators, their emphasis on buying land along the coast and in the Galilee, and their chronic shortage of funds to buy additional territory meant that large areas of Palestine were unaffected by local Jewish land purchases.¹¹⁴

However, Kamen gives a prominent place in his explanation of “changes in patterns of Arab landholding” to population increase, which doubled during the Mandate, and thus the pressure on the land and reduction in the size of holdings for the majority of peasants.¹¹⁵ He also employs the concept of “surplus rural population.”¹¹⁶

Kamen uses Boserup's¹¹⁷ argument of how increased population density leads to the adoption of intensive methods of cultivation. In the case of Palestine, peasants did not have the resources to alter their “cropping system,” although

¹¹⁴Ibid., 192.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 191.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 45-6.

¹¹⁷E. Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965).