

land and his subsequent condition.⁸⁷ It has been pointed out that regardless of its quantitative dimension, the impact of evictions has to be evaluated in terms of its uprooting of whole communities (villages).⁸⁸ However, the essence of evictions can only be understood as the practical consequence of the forceful imposition of the modern Western legal notions of ownership and possession on a primarily agricultural society with its long history of traditions that specified different notions of ownership and use of land. The fact that compensation was sometimes offered and actually received by some is irrelevant given that the evictees had no choice in the manner of their separation from the means of production. Nor is the fact that some evictees found alternative sources of income any more relevant. Finally, and critically, was the role played by European acquisitions in the fast and intensive commoditization of land, to be discussed later.

3.3.3 Arab Landholding

No cadastral survey was ever undertaken during the mandate, and thus it is not possible to arrive at exact figures for landholdings and distribution. However, there were three surveys that clearly illustrate the general state of landholding and distribution, and shed more light on the worsening conditions of peasants in terms

⁸⁷As an example of the different estimates of a particular case (the acquisition of Sursock lands in Majbn Amer), see United Kingdom, *Palestine, Parliamentary Command Papers 3530, Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929*, Shaw Commission Report (London: HMG Publications, 1930), 118; Hope-Simpson Report, 51; *Survey I*, 295-308.

⁸⁸Zureik, *A Study*, 46.