

population relative to the area cultivated with wheat and *durra* increased substantially. Although figures for the 1920-1924 period are not available, the area cultivated with wheat and *durra* was probably not substantially less than later periods given the average production figure for that period of 104,106 metric tons, which compared well with the later periods.

However, the increased density of population to the area cultivated with wheat and *durra* can be clearly established when comparing the 1931-1934 to the 1940-1944 periods. The annual average Arab population¹¹¹ for the periods 1931-1934 and 1940-1944 were 893,488 and 1,142,514, respectively, a 28 percent increase. On the other hand, the annual average area cultivated with wheat and *durra* “increased” from 2,914,873 to 3,086,087 between the periods 1931-1934 and 1940-1944, respectively, an increase of only 6 percent. However, what seems like a neo-Malthusian trap, belies a more fundamental dynamic rooted in government policy, the settler “economy” and the worsening conditions of most of the Palestinian Arab peasants as this study tries to show.

The output of wheat and *durra* also depended on the system of rotation, but more importantly on the annual variation in the amount of rain and its distribution over the season.¹¹² For example, in 1931, the area cultivated with wheat was 2,358,103 *dunums*, which yielded 79,650 metric tons when the average rainfall for

¹¹¹The figures used are the official government estimates of the total population minus the European Jewish population.

¹¹²Himadeh, “Natural Resources,” 46.