

This government action raises several issues. The distribution of the machinery was clearly biased in favor of the European settlers. Whether this bias was deliberate, the unavoidable result of previous government inaction, or had to do with the differences in the nature of the organization of Arab and European farming is debatable. Kamen points out that “Jewish agriculture was much more mechanized than Arab farming before the war, and [its] organization made it easier to demonstrate that machinery could be effectively used.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, the deep plowing of tractors required irrigation that, in turn, was only doable on large holdings or if small landholders cooperated. Kamen gives the example of villages in the Huleh area in the 1940s that, with government support, were able to make use of tractors but who also “had access to surface water that could be diverted to fields relatively expensively.”<sup>6</sup> This raises the question of why these government efforts were not carried out at an earlier date when it was needed most by Arab peasants.

No conjectural answer will be attempted, but it is nonetheless obvious that the Huleh example shows that it could have been done and that Arab villagers were willing to cooperate to improve their conditions. The Huleh example is not unique: The ability of Arab peasants to cooperate successfully can be seen from the example of the credit cooperatives that were established in some areas. In spite of the meager government support, members of these societies, unlike other peasants,

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<sup>5</sup>Kamen, 216.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.