

[was] not large enough to balance or outweigh [the wages received] on account of hiring out.”²⁸

As already noted, the 1931 Census accounted for 25 percent of all earners in “pasture and agriculture” as “farm servants, field laborers, and watchers” (i.e., agricultural laborers) but represented 29.4 percent of those engaged in extensive cereal cultivation. Amazingly, the 1929 survey of 104 villages also found that of those engaged in extensive cereal cultivation, 29.4 percent were laborers. After 1930, the number of wage laborers as measured in man-days must have increased because of the relatively substantial increase in cash crops. Up to 1939, the same may be said about a relative increase in agricultural wage labor. However, whether agricultural wage labor increased relative to the other strata involved in agriculture is uncertain for the period 1940-1945. This is because a large number of poor peasants and formerly agricultural laborers were now employed in nonagricultural wage labor during WWII. In 1944, a government committee estimated that the Arab agricultural workforce was reduced by 47,000 males since 1939.²⁹ We do not know how many of those were employed as agricultural wage laborers before 1939.

Nonetheless, many of those villagers were now primarily or solely dependent on wage labor and could not be “reabsorbed” in agriculture. Many had lost their land while others who still owned a small piece of land could not subsist

²⁸Patnaik, *Class Differentiation*, A85.

²⁹Taqqu, 265.