

implicit dualist approach of the worst kind. It is the inverse of that form of dualism that dealt with the European “economy” while ignoring the Palestinian Arabs as discussed in Chapter 1.

A specific example that directly weakens their argument concerning the impact of population growth on the size of the holding was their omission of the role of European settlers in worsening the land/man ratio by their appropriation of some of the most fertile land and holding it for their exclusive use. This was certainly a peculiar omission given the importance of population growth in their argument. Nonetheless, although undoubtedly population growth and partible inheritance, under certain conditions, may play a role in reducing the average size of a holding and perhaps in causing landlessness or near landlessness, in itself is an insufficient explanation, and it does not necessarily have to lead to that. Although we have no data on Palestine to illustrate this, studies on other parts of the world have bore this out. For example, a study on Japanese villages “found that the proportion of landless households was highest in the villages with the best overall land/man ratios. Thus, . . . it is important to distinguish the effects of absolute resource scarcity (‘pressure of people on resources’) from the effects of differential access to those resources (‘pressure of people on people’).”³⁴

As Kay, writing in 1975, and paraphrasing Marx, put it:

It is the social composition of a population rather than its size which is important. . . . Thus China with the largest population in the

³⁴Benjamin White, “Population, Involution and Employment in Rural Java,” ed. Harriss, 303.