

substantial presence of indigenous and migrant workers (from Syria and Egypt) seeking work opportunities in the coastal areas, and the relative absence in those plantations of bonds of patronage.

Patronage goes a long way (when set in the context of stable and relatively immobile peasantry) on the other hand, to explain the peculiar role of sharetenancy (especially in its mughârasa form) in the central and plains regions of Palestine. It will be recalled here that feudal relations had an exceptionally strong hold in the Nablus-Jenin-Tulkarem region throughout the 19th century and during most of the mandatory period in Palestine. Unlike coastal Palestine or the Jerusalem area, we observe there a resident landlord class with strong patrimonial relations to its peasant base. Factional alignments divided central (and later on, most of the hilly regions) of Palestine along vertical coalitions in the course of 19th century peasant wars, in which major landlords mobilized whole villages which were tied to them by bonds of reciprocity. Such bonds, included, during various intervals: intercession on behalf of the village to alleviate the tax burden to the state; provision of corvé labour to the landlord (ʿawné); provision of stock, land and consumption loans by the landlord; extension of protection to the village holdings from beduin raids, etc.

The objectives of these alignments differed with the transformation of agrarian Palestine through its increasing incorporation into the world market economy. Initially, the competition for tax farming posts gave way to the scramble over the more influential regional administrative offices, judgeships and other official posts, and then to the utilization of peasant factions for augmentation of the landlord's holdings. At a later stage, these alignments became crucial in the mobilization of peasant factions for and against the Palestine Revolt in its later years (1938-39)