

(in the Gaza, district, Jericho and the lower part of the Jordan Valley). It also created tenuous conditions of sharetenancy highly unfavourable to the cropper (in the upper Jordan Valley, and the East Ghor basin).

On the other hand, the considerable migration of peasant-workers from the hilly regions seeking work opportunities in Israel or abroad did not result in any significant degree of land transfers or consolidations, aside from the areas referred to in the Jordan Valley, (Sa'ati, 1980). Here we observe the migrant peasants, or rather the remaining members of their households, maintaining legal control over their lands, and farming them out to sharecroppers under favourable terms to the latter.

The fact that each of these trends corresponded ecologically to the plain and mountainous terrains respectively was not, of course, an accident. The seasonal character of olive (and olive oil) production, and its bi-annual yield cycles, created a continual surplus labour force which was, and is, highly responsive to wage labour attraction external to the village, while the irrigated vegetable crops of the Jordan Valley provided for year-round intensive farming, with double-(and sometimes triple-) cropping seasons that required a stable agricultural force. In the Jenin-Tulkarem region, where the tail-end of the fertile Marj Inb Amer plains intrude into the olive orchards of the Nablus mountains, we witness a combination of several forms of sharetenancy (simple cropping, joint farming, partnership compacts, etc.). Only the mugharasa compacts seem to be on the decline, probably due to the depletion of surplus cultivable plots and the rise in the real estate value of land.

The increased demand for food items (especially in vegetables and fruits) in the Gulf states, and the improvement of marketing procedures, have enhanced the role of the landlord-financiers in sharetenancy contracts.