

In the Ghor al-Far'a region, in which my village survey took place (Chapter 11), the main tribal gathering was the Masa'eed tribe, originally from the Arabian Peninsula. When the Land Settlement began to take place the tribe succeeded, in 1932, in registering 15,000 dunums to their name as private property (al-Damin, 1980). Much of this land was later sold to Nablus merchants during the 1932 - 1948 period. The remaining part, about 8,000 dunums, were exploited directly by owner-cultivators from the tribe, or leased on a share-cropping basis to farmers from Beit Foreek and Beit Dajan (Nablus District).

Until World War II tenancy was a minor phenomenon in the Valley. The relative scarcity of the population and the political dominance of semi-nomadic tribes resulted in methods of farming which were extensive and based, mainly, on family labour and the retainers of the big tribal landlords. Due to the lack of irrigation, considerable tracts of land were uncultivated and continued to be so until the fifties, as evidenced from Table 10:1, above. Cultivated land was left fallow for three or 4 years after each cropping year (Government of Jordan, 1961:137).

The influx of Palestinian refugees after the war radically transformed land tenure relations in the Valley. In the southern valley, around Jericho and the Auja areas, capitalist relations in agriculture became prevalent in citrus plantations, with the refugee camps of Ain al-Sultan and Aqbat Jaber acting as a reservoir source of cheap labour. The proximity of the city of Jericho facilitated the development of citrus cultivation by providing an infrastructure for irrigation, marketing, and acting as a center for labour recruitment. The availability of an abundant supply of skilled agricultural labour spurred a wave of land purchases among rich peasants and landlords from the highlands (especially from the Nablus and Irbid regions). Many of those farmers, living in close proximity to their