

by two additional factors: (1) upper ceiling on holdings is not regulated by law since the redistribution acts initiated in the East Bank were not applied until after 1967; and, (2) the decisive factor affecting land (and water) use in the Western Valley has been the confiscation of land in the Valley for the benefit of civilian Jewish settlements. That subject will be treated later in this chapter and, in the case study of Zbeidat, the next chapter.

The Conditions of Tenancy: Landlords, Tenants & Sharecroppers

The intensification of capitalist relations in agriculture in the Jordan Valley retained many traditional forms of tenancy, but transformed the content of that relationship due to the uneven roles of peasants and landlord in the introduction of intermediate and high level technology which was beyond the investment capacity of most farmers.

In the Central and Northern Valley sharecropping contracts of the muhasasa variety were dominant, on both sides of the river. The most common form of muhasasa was the practice of leasing land and water by the landlord to the peasant, while the latter provided his household labour and any extra hired labour needed during the harvest. All expenses used (ploughing, fertilizers, etc.) were shared, and the landlord would receive one-half of the net marketed yield. This is the pattern known as the fifty: fifty share system, which prevails today.

Landlord-peasant relationships and the share of the latter in the muhasasa contract varied greatly, and continue to vary depending on the availability of labour, scarcity of land, and amount of investment required by the crop. Immediately following the 1948 war, for example, the landlord's share in the Valley was 18 percent of the crop. But as the competition for land grew more intense and capital investment in irrigated agri-