

nature of that relationship in his Agro-Economic Aspects of Tenancy in the East Jordan Valley. A survey of landlords in the Eastern Valley revealed that 37.3 percent of them resided outside the Valley (the highest being in the northern Ghors - that is, the area where land reform was carried most intensely) (Sharab, 1975:16-17). Characteristically, those were the landlords with bigger size farms (those in excess of 50 dunums). In addition, Sharab found a significant proportion of rentier landlordism (15 percent of total). Those were mainly merchants, government bureaucrats and women landlords, who had acquired the plots through inheritance. Among tenants the study revealed that two-thirds were refugees originating from Palestine with the vast majority of them (88 percent) being otherwise landless (ibid.: 22).

The most striking aspect about landlordism in the Valley is not the prevalence of absenteeism but the relative insignificance absentee landlordism. This judgement is not based on the small proportion of parasitic landlords (i.e., rentiers), but on a certain understanding of the term "absentee". A majority of landlords in the Valley live in the immediate vicinity of their farms or in the nearby highland towns. Most of them are in a commuting distance from their plots. Furthermore, a majority play an active role in basic decisions determining the choice of crops, use of fertilizers, date of harvesting and sales of yields. Sharab reported, in his sample, that 50.8 percent of the landlords visit their sharecropped farms on a daily basis, and a further 22.2 percent on a weekly basis (Sharab, 1975:53, Table II-22). That is, about three-quarter of the landlords, who appear in the statistical data as absentee, exercise direct supervision of their farms. This is a situation qualitatively different from the semifeudal and parasitic agrarian relations prevalent in coastal