

I. Introduction

This chapter is a historical review of Palestinian proletarianization in the context of Jewish colonial settlement in Palestine.

Proletarianization is often defined as the separation of producers from their means of production, specifically, land. If so, then one would expect that land colonization by Jewish settlers and the proletarianization of the native Palestinian population went hand-in-hand. This definition of proletarianization is, however, inadequate and such correlation between settlers' colonization and natives' proletarianization has not been the case in Palestine, probably owing to peculiar objective and subjective conditions that this chapter will deal with.

It is not only the expropriation of producers from their land that constitutes the proletarianization process; but it is only in the context of capitalist relations that expropriation from the land constitutes an aspect of proletarianization.¹

The imperative of separating the producers from their own land and/or other means of subsistence is peculiar to capitalist relations. As Karl Marx and Frederick Engels write:

"In the Middle Ages it was not the expropriation of the people from, but on the contrary, their appropriation to the land which became the source of feudal oppression.... It was only at the dawn of modern times, towards the end of the fifteenth century, that the expropriation of the peasantry on a large scale laid the foundation of the modern class of wage-workers who possess nothing but their labor power and can live only by selling that labor power to others. But if the expropriation from the land brought this class into existence, it was the development of capitalist production, of modern industry and agriculture on a large scale which perpetrated it, increased it and shaped it into a distinct class with distinct interests and a distinct historical mission." 2

It is this transformation of pre-capitalist producers into a modern