

Given that land owned by Jews could not be sold to non-Jews (private Jewish holders of land also adhered to this policy) or in the case of the Jewish National Fund lands could not even be sold to individual Jews requires a qualification of the concept of commoditization of land. Since land as a commodity has an exchange value that is sold freely on the market to whoever is willing to buy it, then, in our case, the one-time irreversible sale to Jews does not qualify the land as a “full-fledged” commodity.

Another noticeable change, besides the commoditization of non-Jewish (i.e., Arab) owned land was the introduction of wage labor. This was primarily agricultural wage labor employed in the production of cash crops mainly for exports. It included those Arabs hired as laborers on the land they had cultivated before being purchased by European settlers, and others working on Arab-owned farms to supplement the family income. However, it should be stressed that wage labor remained relatively few and mostly seasonal. The nonproliferation of wage labor also points to the fact that the great majority of peasants retained their control and access to land, with the exception of those evicted from lands acquired by the Jewish European settlers.

A third change was the increased monetization of the economy necessitated and indicated by the growth of the import and export trade, and of urban areas. Obviously, the increased monetization did not reflect a highly developed division of labor in Palestinian society. The great majority of the population still produced their subsistence needs, and barter was still a common practice in regional weekly