

the Arab and Jewish societies was large, both in terms of membership and money raised. By March 1945, 125 of the 135 Arab societies had a membership of 6,500, and total funds of £P 26,870, and outstanding loans of £P 141,000.⁵³ The money to start these societies was borrowed from Barclays Bank with no direct assistance from the government. On the other hand, rural and urban Jewish societies had a membership of 355,000 people, about £P 10,000,000 available funds, and total operating capital of £P 33,000,000.⁵⁴

Thus, the numbers cited on debt and loans clearly attest to the enormous inadequacy of government efforts and of the severe lack of Arab financial resources, and consequently, the continued depressed state of Arab agriculture during the 1930s.

During WWII, there was a considerable increase in agricultural production and in prices. Moreover, many peasants supplemented their income by working in military establishments and public works.⁵⁵ This may have resulted in the reduction of total debt for Arab peasants. However, given the general increase in prices, and thus the increased cost of living for the peasants to the different extent of the need for market purchases, and the fact that for the Arab peasant the increased production was primarily confined to vegetable growing (to be discussed later), an option that was, obviously, not available to all dry-farming cereal small

⁵³Ibid., 360.

⁵⁴Ibid., 361.

⁵⁵Ibid., 365-6.