

are families who previously cultivated, and have since lost their land. This is a matter which should be ascertained in the course of the Census which is to take place next year.”<sup>92</sup> More important, however, is that, in this context, neither Stein nor Hope-Simpson specifies what they mean by “previously”; did they mean a few years before 1930, but since the mandate, before European Jewish land acquisition which started in the 1880s, or even before the latter? Although Stein did refer to Ottoman times, it was in the context of asserting that it was “customary . . . to have laborers work without owning land,” and thus, to him, landlessness does not necessarily mean having ever owned land. Stein does not qualify his assertion of customary agricultural laborers in terms of how far back this was the case, and more importantly, to what extent did it prevail, which will be dealt with below.

Second, Stein is only partially accurate in maintaining that “The Johnson-Crosbie Report never equated the laboring class with a landless condition,” for they did not also say that they were landed either. So, who were these families classified by the Johnson-Crosbie Report as “laborers” and representing 29.4 percent of total families or households? Stein’s argument could be interpreted in one of two ways: Either they owned land and did not cultivate it, or they “previously” never cultivated land of their own. As for the first interpretation, it could mean either that the land is too small to afford a living or that the earner chose to work as a laborer because the latter path generates more income. In either

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<sup>92</sup>Hope-Simpson Report, 142.