

vast areas of the territories and transferring them to Jewish settlement zones. By the end of 1979, the Ministry of Defense issued the following estimates of land ownership categories for the West Bank:

Table II:1

Land Ownership Categories in the West Bank

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Area (dunums)</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Private land	3,200,000	55
State land <sup>*</sup>	696,000	12
Absentee land <sup>**</sup>	430,000	7
Non-registered land	1,530,000	26

Source: Ha'aretz, November 1, 1979/Harris, 1980, Appendix.

(\*) Includes 80,000 purchased by the Jewish Agency from Arab owners (1.4% of the total land area of the West Bank), but excludes the much larger area of land confiscated and/or fenced off.

(\*\*) This figure refers to 30,000 dunums constituting Jewish land purchases in the West Bank before 1948.

The two problematic categories in Table II:1 are 'state lands' (12% of the total) and 'non-registered land' (26% of the total). The Military Government subsumed, under state land, categories such as mawat and matrukah lands, roughly equivalent to community or public land by traditional standards (Shehadeh, 1981:pt. 5). 'Non-registered land' is officially referred to under the curious title of 'lands with ownership unclear' (Harris, 1980:Appendix). Since these lands include large tracts of cultivated plots, for which holders have tax payment receipts (but not tapu title deeds), acts of requisitioning them in favour of Jewish settlements brought Palestinian farmers into a series of legal battles before military courts. With very few exceptions (such as the Alon Moreh case), these litigations were lost by the villagers. By 1982, an