

area ranging between 27% to 64% of the total land area of the West Bank - depending on the criteria and sources used - was expropriated by the Israelis (Sahliyah, 1982:64; Benvenisti, 1982:24).

Despite large-scale confiscation of land by the Israelis, actual agricultural production has not declined. In the case of certain major crops, like olives, there has been a steady decline in output which can be seen despite the cyclical movements of the harvest (28,000 tons in 1967/68 to 8,900 in 1976/77 - Muslih, 1980:21). In most export crops, however, like citrus, vegetables and grapes, significant output gains have been made (Muslih, ibid.). Moreover, total area under cultivation has been maintained, recording relatively minor losses (Kahan, 1983:21-22; Muslih, 1980:17-18). The reason for this unanticipated continuity in levels of agricultural production lies in two main reasons: (1) Israeli settlements in the occupied territories have, in the main, been residential and not agricultural communities. The pattern of land confiscation, consequently, concentrated on areas which were seen either as strategically important, or suitable for commuting residential communities. In addition, agricultural areas with established title deeds were usually not included in order to avoid court litigation (Benvenisti, 1982:43-54; see also, Map p. ix ). The main exceptions to this pattern were the major appropriation of agricultural land in the Jordan Valley and the Gush Etzion area during the early years of Labour Party rule. (2) Significant capitalization of agricultural inputs, especially the use of tractors, chemical fertilizers, and hot-houses in the northern districts and the Jordan Valley, more than offset the decline in the marginalized crops of the highlands.

Similarly an examination of changes in the distribution of holdings size reveals a certain continuity between the pre-1967 period and after Israeli occupation (Table II:2).