

alienation-tenancy by their reliance on the landlords as their political base within the nationalist movement. Only the steep increases of food prices during WWII seemed to have finally broken this cycle of indebtedness (Warriner, 1948:62).

The complexity of sharecropping arrangements, however, appears immediately when one attempts to discover what kinds of land tenure patterns and ecological systems tend to favour the presence of sharetenancy, as opposed to owner-operated farms and wage labour. A recent village study suggests that, during the Mandate, cash rentals prevailed in the coastal terrain where the monetarization of the economy had advanced rapidly, while sharecropping was dominant in the hilly region (Ammons, 1978: 116-117). However, Granott cites the Valley of Esdraelon, the Maritime Plains, as well as the Coastal Plain as locations for metayage (sharetenancy) during the same period (Granott, 1952:294ff.; 302). In fact, one of the earlier sources of clashes between Palestinians and Zionists involved the eviction of thousands of share-tenants from the Marj Ibn Amer, (one of the major plains), after the sale of vast tracts by absentee Arab landlords to the Jewish National Fund (Ruedy, 1971:131). Rather than attempting to establish a regional distribution of sharetenancies, it might be more useful to examine how land tenure systems accommodated different forms of labour arrangements in response to particular economic demands.

In order to establish a secure tenure on the land during both the late Ottoman period and the Mandate, it was not sufficient for the peasant to establish legal ownership on the land, or even de facto possession (in the case of communal (musha') lands), but he also needed access to credit. Since the peasant small holder was almost invariably indebted