

- a) It was the mechanism by which an undercapitalized peasantry acquired credit and stock from local landlords and urban financiers, often losing title deeds in the process of accumulated debts and low productivity.
- b) Sharetenancy performed the reverse of this process also. It provided a mechanism for the acquisition of land by the land-hungry peasantry through the rejuvenation of "dead" lands. The peasant here becomes a proprietor, or expands his holdings by becoming an active partner to the "passive" landlord. (This process contributed no doubt to rectifying the impact of land fragmentation due to the prevalence of an egalitarian inheritance system -- and acted in general as a safety valve for relieving the demographic pressure on the land).
- c) A "feudal" function of sharetenancy involved the combined intercession of local potentates on behalf of the peasants to reduce or alleviate the impact of state taxes (tithe, wergo, etc.), as well as advance credit for stock and other items in return for a share of the crop and compulsory labour in the landlord's holdings (awneh). This third feature of sharetenancy lost its "feudal" (i.e. both the intercessionary and corvée aspects) towards the end of British colonial rule, while retaining its patronage dimension.

Firestone's conception of sharetenancy as a devolutionary mechanism

Ya'cov Firestone's two essays on the agrarian economy of Mandatory Palestine constitute a significant theoretical contribution on the regulatory nature of the sharecropping contract in the relationship between