

of assessing internal, i.e. village based, options open to the peasants (Ammons, 1979:242-243). I have also criticized Rosenfeld for considering social differentiation among peasants as a negligible factor in explaining rural social change, especially when he undertook to explain the meaning of sharetenancy in Palestine (Rosenfeld, 1970:154; Carmi and Rosenfeld, 1974:475). But the author can hardly be faulted, as Ammons seems to be suggesting, for not explaining the changed circumstances of contemporary Palestinian peasants in a thesis whose generality was clearly confined to Mandatory Palestine, (but cf. Rosenfeld, 1979). Nevertheless, the explanatory power of the notion of a "non-viable peasantry" does begin to meet its limitations when one of its main assumptions, absence of meaningful investment in agriculture is challenged by the evidence. This happened in the emergence of share-cropping contracts among landless peasantry and small holders who, in part, re-cycled their wage income during the thirties and forties to acquire vine-yards and orange groves in central Palestine (Firestone, 1975b; see also chapter 5 on sharetenancy).

The Political (Colonial) Dimension of Peasant-Proletarianization

Since the impact of the manufacturing sector and agricultural capitalism was minimal in the occupational transformation of Palestinian peasants into workers, the explanation of the phenomenon may be better sought in its political setting (that is, the administrative employment policies of the state). Such policies were crucial during both peaks of peasant employment during the British Mandate and currently under Israeli rule - but with different consequences.

In a comprehensive study of labour recruitment patterns under the British Mandate in Palestine Taqqu distinguished two distinct modes of such recruitment (Taqqu, 1977 and 1980). In the first mode, characteris-