

of interviewers, including the present writer, were arrested by IDF soldiers on two successive occasions (once with all the completed questionnaires confiscated). Surprisingly, the smoothest survey was carried out in Zbeidat, in an area with one of the highest security restrictions in the West Bank. In both cases, the failure and success of the survey depended overwhelmingly on the degree of cooperation received from the mukhtar and village residents, especially the elders.

Finally, the choice of villages was determined by the peculiar history of this study. In 1974, I began a household survey in the village of Natufa. My objective was to examine the process of rural proletarianization in a peasant community which has reached the nadir in the peripheralization of its agriculture, and to examine the factors involved in that peripheralization. Consequently, I decided to incorporate the material obtained from that survey in a broader study of agrarian transition. Ras el-Tin was added (1979) because patterns of proletarianization which were detectable for the West Bank rural sector as a whole were not verified in Natufa. The fieldwork in the Jordan Valley (the villages of Zbeidat and Marj Na'je) was conducted in the spring and summer of 1980 to supplement the survey on dry farming areas with material on a community characterized by intensive (irrigated) agriculture. This necessitated the modification of the agricultural section in the questionnaire to incorporate the more complex details of Valley farming (see Appendix A). However, quantitative data aside, the richest and most reliable material derived from those surveys was acquired through intensive and highly spontaneous interviews that I was fortunate to have with remarkable residents (farmers, landlords and elders) of those four villages.

As it transpired, the four villages selected displayed a wide range of socio-economics attributed within each ecological zone enabling us to