

Chapter Eight

De-peasantisation I: The Case of Ras el-Tin

We will examine here two concrete cases in which the peasants were marginalized by the impact of migration, but with considerably different consequences. By "marginalized" we refer to their decreased role in agricultural production - both as a share in the national economy and as a chief source of income in their livelihood (Shanin, 1978:17). In both cases however, marginalization did not lead either to the strengthening of capitalist relations in agriculture, nor to the disintegration of the villages evidenced in the Turkish cases discussed by Keydar.

We have chosen here two villages (both in the district of Ramallah) whose agrarian economics based similarly on dry farming, primarily olive cultivation. Both villages have today an equal area of cultivated land (Ras el-Tin: 6,395; Natufa: 6,355 dunums - about 1,600 acres each), although this was not the case of few decades ago when Natufa had considerably more land. The distribution of crops indicate a similar ecology as evidenced by the following table: