

average debt for all Palestine calculated for the same period in the Johnson and Crosbie Report (Government of Palestine, 1930:20). Thus, of the total households in Natufa, 115 families (63% of the total) were found to own less than the 112 dunums then seen as the minimum holding for "viability" (Hope-Simpson, 1930:ibid.). Unlike Ras el-Tin, however, Natufa was situated within a short distance of the Nablus-Jerusalem highway and was within direct transport reach to the district centre and marketing town of Ramallah. With a considerable number of its villagers educated (i.e., literate), Natufa's sons had access to urban jobs, further education, and -- most important -- migration to the Americas. Emigration in turn enhanced the financial position of several rich peasants in the village and Natufa became a lending centre for peasants in the local villages. A substantial proportion of Ras el-Tin's own holdings were eventually alienated, through pawning, to Natufa's landlords (Husam, 1979:inter.).

The war of 1948 had two dramatic consequences for Natufa. It brought a large number of refugees from the coastal areas, many of whom settled within the village, in an area which later came to be known as Saqayef ("The Shacks"). Today, fully one-fourth of the total village population (25.1%), or 64 households, are refugees households. The war also brought to an end the employment of Natufa villagers in the Jaffa and Ramleh citrus plantations. The chief response to this loss was the beginning of a new wave of emigration to the Arab world (especially the Gulf) in search of new jobs and the augmenting of the earlier emigrations to the Americas. The presence of the Saqayef refugees, and the nearby refugee camp of Jalazun (Population, 1967:5,013; 1968:3,071 -- Ben Porath and Marx, 1971: 75), permitted the migrant families to lease their land to refugee share tenants under the supervision of their remaining relatives, and, often, wives.