provided by the commission agent to the credit hungry peasant, the structure of their relationship is essentially exploitative. Against the provision of supplies and credit the commission agent: (1) sets his own, usually inflated, prices for seeds and fertilizers, and (2) controls the marketing avenues for the peasants. Currently in the Western Valley this means that sharecroppers and most owner-cultivators cannot make full use of Jordanian market demands for winter vegetables when prices across the river are higher than those prevalent in the Israeli and West Bank markets.

In the Southern Ghors, with different ecological conditions, share-tenants are similarly disadvantaged, especially when the commission agent is himself the landlord. There, failure to repay the subsistence advance by the end of the season usually ends in compelling the peasant to sign a second year's contract which carries within its terms the cumulative debts, including interest (Dajani, 1979:16). In cases where the landowner and the commission agent are not the same person, the net yield in the Southern Ghors region is divided into three equal shares between owner, commission agent and the tenant. This is not the case in Zbeidat where the commission agent receives only his 7 percent, plus whatever interest is due on delinquent payment. The latter could amount to as much as 30 percent on the principal loan per annum.[2]

In both cases the consequences for the peasant and share-tenant is similar. Their dependence on the landlord/commission agent for the supply of equipment and for the marketing of produce increases considerably. Farmers owning plots less than 30 dunums per household (these constitute the majority in the Western Valley and 78 percent of the holdings in the East Jordan Valley)[3] and using traditional furrow irrigation, could hardly break even at the end of the season. Dajani, for example, calculated that for farmers in the Southern Ghors with holdings of less than 40 dunums,