

to eviction upon notice. Despite the abundance of other problems of survival, including high water salinity, and constant breakage of the water irrigation system, the modification of tenure conditions, especially the explicit promise of accession to land, seems to have been the key factor in the eventual success of Marj Na'je as a project. Since 1955, the majority of the 30 families that had resided there remained there until the war of 1967.

As elsewhere in the Valley, however, stabilization of title deed status did not solve the problem of the peasants' operating capital. As might be expected, UNRWA's notion of a self-sufficient peasant household, tilling his 20 dunums with his bullock and plough, milking his cow and selling his surplus tomatoes on the side to supplement the household income did not fit with the radical transformation of market relations actually taking place in the Jordan Valley. Several Marj Na'je farmers unable to raise the sufficient funds to keep up with the increased expenses of cultivation simply quit and requested their return to refugee camps preferring to live on rations. In one illustrative case 5 households chose to leave their plots and become share-croppers to a neighbouring landlord (UNRWA, 1956:187). They farmed 100 dunums in common. They received 75% of the crop against the provision of their labour, seeds, fuel for pumping irrigation water and wages for the mechanic to fix the pump. In return the landlord supplied the land and the pump, receiving 25% of the yield.

Thus, these two alternatives to the cooperative settlements, share-cropping or return to camp ration card subsistence, seemed at the time, for many Marj Na'je farmers, as more viable than the direct cropping of their government leased land -- even at the nominal rent they were paying. Only when the 1955 community was able to establish links with commission agents from Nablus to provide credit and marketing outlets for their crops