

were those inflicted on the Palestinian peasantry by the collaboration between Arab feudal lords and the Zionist movement. By 1928, most of the Jewish land holdings (90 percent) had been purchased from absentee landlords, leaving 30 percent of the Palestinian peasants landless. Between 1921-1925, the Sarsaq land-holding family, for example, had sold 200,000 donams on which had existed twenty-two Arab villages with 8,780 inhabitants, all of whom were evicted, becoming wanderers all around the country.⁴⁹ With the help of absentee Arab landlords, Arab villages were removed, to be replaced by Jewish settlements. By 1900, there were already nineteen Jewish settlements erected in Palestine, reaching thirty in the summer of 1912 and occupying 280,000 donams of land. On the eve of World War I, the number of Jewish settlements reached fifty-nine, inhabited by 12,000 settlers, while 70,000 dwelled in existing urban centers; and already in 1927, there were ninety-six new settlements.⁵⁰ Later on, between 1933-1936, 62.7 percent of the land purchased by Jewish capital was from Palestinian feudal lords, as compared with only 14.9 percent from absentee land-holders, and 22.5 percent from Palestinian small peasants.⁵¹

Ghassan Kanafani indicates that during the August, 1929, and the 1936 mass insurrections in Palestine many small peasants sold their land to Palestinian feudal lords in order to buy with cash weapons for waging their armed struggle against British and Zionist colonialism, and often these landlords, in turn, sold the purchased land to the Zionist movement.⁵²

The latter is most indicative of the reactionary role played by Palestine's big land-holding class with regard to the Palestinian masses. If Zionism had only crushed this class, it would have played a crucially progressive role in Palestinian history, but the very lust for land gave the