

arrangement, which was mistakenly generalized over all of Palestine's agrarian economy, was held responsible for the static quality of Palestinian history. It is believed (Gozansky,1986;Flapan,1979) that this system put the village/commune interest over that of the individual, thus hindering any attempt at improving agricultural productivity. This system, it is further argued, "...failed to encourage private property and deprived individual peasants from any incentive to improve their productivity..." (Warriner, 1948:1966; Gozansky,1986) (2).

It is argued that throughout the Ottoman rule, Palestinian peasants were stagnant, unable to "...change or improve their forces of production..." (Gozansky,1986:16). A major reason given to explain this stagnation was the so-called "...freedom of the Asiatic peasants." "Unlike peasants in Europe...", Gozansky writes, "...those under the Ottoman rule were dependent, but most importantly free..." (1986:14-15 [emphasis added]). They were dependent on the state because they did not own land; yet, they were "free," unfettered by any bonds, either to the land which, they never owned, nor to the feudal or land lord who never existed separately from the state. "The Fallaheen" she writes, "could always leave their village and move to another one if, for any reason conditions did not suit them" (Gozansky,1986:17). The "freedom of the Palestinian peasant" occupied a central position in Gozansky's approach. In contrasting the Palestinian peasant with the European one she wrote: "Unlike the free peasant in Oriental societies...in Europe, if the peasant escaped, the feudal lord could bring him back by force, punish him and enslave him again." (Gozansky,1986:18)

Within the context of the Asiatic Mode of Production model,