

social, economic and political structure of the Ottoman state. Late nineteenth century Palestine increasingly felt the presence of independent landed propertied classes not only from the urban areas, but also from within the rural structure.

Before discussing the issue of land ownership it must be stressed that there is very little, if any, basis to the assertion that "...the Arab Fallah, unlike the feudal peasant, was not attached to the land he held as a member of the commune, and therefore... he could freely leave the land...without a landlord forcing him to go back..." (Saed, 1985;Gozansky,1986:18). This statement is historically inaccurate in so far as the Palestinian case is concerned.

Arab peasants or Fallaheen, not unlike their counterparts in most other Third World societies, were not free. Arab Marxists generally agree that while the East might not have known the "...slave mode of production...", it was not free of slaves and enslavement (al-Attar,1965; Saleh, 1979; Barakat, 1977; Abdel-Fadil,1988).

In the East, slaves were used for various forms of labour, including domestic work, military service and productive labour. In Southern Iraq and some areas of the Maghreb "...slaves were often used in the production process..." (Abdel-Fadil,1988:52). Moreover, peasants in general, whether in the East or in the West, were never economically free. A relationship of economic bondage has always been present in the shape of the rent extracted from them, in kind, in labour, in cash, or in a combination of these.

Moreover, economic bondage in most Third World social formations was also accompanied by social, political and personal bondage to the overlord, whether the latter took the form of the Indian "Zamindar," the Egyptian "Muqata'aji," the Syrian "Multazim" or the Palestinian