

Palestine were not totally externally imposed, rather, to a large extent these changes were generated internally in the course of the country's pre-modern colonial history. British colonial rule and European Jewish settlers' capital only intensified the process of depeasantization already being undergone by the Palestinian peasants, and caused further polarization among them.

Contrary to the belief, held commonly by Marxists and non-Marxists alike, the Palestinian agrarian structure was not resistant to private ownership of property nor to the development of new forms of production. Changes in forms of agricultural production, stimulated largely by international market demands, were already present in mid 19th century Palestine. This chapter will show that neither the Musha'a nor even the absolute ownership rights which the state claimed over the land, were obstacles to fundamental changes which occurred in production relations in the late 19th century. State and commune control/ownership of land represented but one part of a more complex structure, encompassing various forms of production.

In order to comprehend these changes, an elaborate analysis of Palestine's pre-capitalist form(s) of production will first be presented.

Forms of Land Tenure in Palestine

Throughout the period of Ottoman rule, Palestine was considered to be a part of Greater Syria. Palestine was not an independent economic unity. Instead, it maintained an interdependent social, economic and political relationship with Syria. Notwithstanding this, it is still possible to define its main pre-capitalist socio-economic features. Within this predominantly pre-capitalist agrarian social structure,