

stage was neither "feudal" nor "Asiatic" but rather an economy already undergoing internal and external changes. These changes were occurring simultaneously at the international, national and the local/village level. By analysing the dynamics of pre-capitalist Palestine this chapter demonstrated that Palestine was not an 'Asiatic Arab backward' society as Shlomo Avineri would like us to believe (Avineri,1972) nor were the 'natives of Palestine without genuine culture or nationality of their own' as Ber Borochov claimed (Ber Borochov,1937).

Instead, this chapter has shown that the differentiation within the Hamula which began in the second half of the 19th century has begun to pave the way for its polarization. The heads of Hamulas who in the process began to accumulate land, began to gradually assert themselves as the new class of local landlords. Differences in wealth and socio-political status began to give way to class differentiation within the peasantry. It was these changes -both real and potential- within the socio-economic structure of pre-capitalist Palestine which served as the basis for the destruction of Palestine's rural economy and the transformation of its rural classes under British and Zionist colonialism. This theme will be discussed in the next chapter.