

elaborated on this point further, stating that:

...[I]n Asia...(where the state stands over ..
(the direct producers) as their landlord and
simultaneously as sovereign, then rent and taxes
coincide, or rather there exists no tax which
differs from this form of ground-rent (labour rent
converted into tributary relationship). Sovereignty
here consists in the ownership of land concentrated
on a national scale. (Marx, 1962 (Capital III):771-772)

The overall structure of the "Asiatic mode of production" and the isolated self-sufficient character of its "peasantry" are believed to be the major reasons for the stagnation and immobility of these societies. In this approach, "Asian" societies are described as "without history" prior to colonialism, without social development and incapable of generating any change from within (Marx and Engels, 1972:32-37).

It was against this background characterization of the peasantry as immobile, stagnant and changeless that the need for an external force was seen to be pre-eminent in the production of change within these societies. Capitalism imposed through colonialism is presented as the only force capable of breaking the "isolation," "resistance" and "stagnation" of 'Asiatic' or 'Oriental' peasants.

With the above general characteristics of the AMP model in mind, I would now like to examine how the concept is used in studying the political economy of the Ottoman Empire in general (Saed, 1975; Amer, 1958) and the socio-economic structure of Palestine (Gozansky, 1986 Saed, 1985) in particular.

Palestine: In Light of the AMP

The basic assumption of adherents to the AMP model is the claim that in extreme contradiction to the West, private individual ownership in land was absent in all societies under the Ottoman rule