

(Amer,1958; Gozansky,1986). The Ottoman state, it is claimed, was "...the sole owner of land, while peasantry had only the right of usufruct over this land..." (Gozansky, 1986:13).

By virtue of being the sole owner of all land, the state, Tamar Gozansky argues, exercised absolute rights over the production process as well as over the direct producers. In her words, the state had the "...last word over all matters concerning the economic and the political life of the country..." (1986:13-14). As the sole owner of land, the state was also the sole appropriator of surplus from the direct producers (Fallahen) (1) and, as such, it functioned as the only exploiter of the masses of Palestinian peasantry (Gozansky,1986:18).

Local economies under the Ottoman rule are described as "natural" in that they are based on "self-sufficiency." The Fallahen, it is maintained, drew their livelihood by being members of the village/commune. Terms used to describe the actual nature of each village/commune vary from one region to the other. Within the context of Palestine, the term "Musha'a" (i.e., communal mode of land distribution) is used to describe what was believed to be the predominant form of land tenure and of production. This term, as this study will show, was arbitrarily used in almost all of the literature on Palestine, including the "modernization," the "development" and other approaches (Gozansky,1986; Saed,1985; Firestone,1975; Carmel,1975; Ohana, 1981; Kimmerling, 1983).

An elaborate account of the term "Musha'a" and its place in Palestine's agrarian social structure will be dealt with in the next chapter. It is sufficient to mention here that this communal