

about 64.4 per cent of all agricultural land with less than one per cent of this class owning about one third of all agricultural land. On the other hand, about 75 per cent of the Egyptian Fallaheen (peasants) were propertiless (Barakat,1985: 140). Similarly striking was the distribution of landed property within the Iraqi economic structure, where one per cent of the class of landowners owned over 55 per cent of Iraq's agricultural land, leaving over 80 per cent of the Fallaheen landless (Barakat, 1985:12).

The late nineteenth century economic structure of the Ottoman state in general, and of Palestine in particular, saw the emergence of various processes which developed simultaneously and which affected each other deeply. A proper understanding of the socio-economic changes in the first half of the twentieth century requires a careful examination of its late nineteenth century history.

The phenomenon of private ownership of land in Palestine emerged amidst a variety of changes sweeping the Ottoman Empire. Chapter Two will deal with these changes in greater length. For the time being, however, it is sufficient to mention that at the local or national levels peasant and other uprisings began to manifest themselves in various forms. Among the various movements recorded in this period are the various Druze and other peasant uprisings in Lebanon (Baer,1964), and the strengthening of the economic and political role of local Palestinian chiefs (Heads of Hamulas) after the Egyptian control over parts of Syria. This latter movement which was led by Muhammed Ali in 1840 (Baer,1969). This was accompanied by changes at the international (external) level, such as the Ottoman military involvement in the Crimean wars in the 1860s (Scholch,1982). All these changes placed