

tremendous fiscal pressures on the treasury of the Ottoman state. This era, most scholars agree, marked the beginning of the decline and collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Barakat,1985; Owen,1981).

The Ottoman state's failure to generate sufficient surplus revenue to cover its expenses intensified its economic and political vulnerability to Western imperialist interests which, in turn, had already begun to expand towards the Ottoman Empire. At the international level, the Ottoman state dealt with its decline by resorting to both governmental and individual capitalists for financial aid, accumulating substantial indebtedness in the process.

At the local or national level, the state response to these economic and political pressures was manifested in yet further state intervention in the prevailing land tenure system. New legal and political measures, aimed at increasing the extraction of surplus revenue from the direct producers, were implemented. Most notable amongst such measures were the 1856 "Ottoman Land Code" and the 1876 "Ottoman Land Law" which will be analysed in the next chapter. The second half of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the process of capitalist transformation in various parts of the Empire. This era recalls Marx's discussion of "so-called primitive accumulation" used in understanding the historical genesis of capitalist development in England (Marx, 1977).

In the "So-Called Primitive Accumulation," Marx lays out the various mechanisms involved in this process. He draws attention especially to "...the fraudulent alienation of the state domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism." All these, according to Marx,