

a coherent view of the modes of production which were present in a given social formation'(Turner, 1978:50). However, the task of forming a coherent view of the modes of production applicable to the various social formations and economic structures within the Middle East must not sacrifice Marx's principal approach of Historical and dialectical materialism for static and a-historic concepts. So far, I must add that attempts at constructing the concepts of modes of production within the context of the Middle East, have largely been problematic.

Calls on the part of some serious Middle Eastern scholars to find an alternative approach to both, the pre-dominant Orientalist mode of analysis and the "linear" or "five stages" development approach (Turner,1978; Zureik,1981; al-Naqib, 1985), we maintain, have largely sacrificed historical materialism for concepts that are largely static and a-historic.

Turner's tripartite formula of modes of production which establishes that the Arab World was composed of "pastoral nomadism", "prebendalism" and "feudalism" as three basic distinguishing modes of production forms the corner stone for these calls (Turner, 1978). Adopted by various authors (Zureik,1981; al-Naqib, 1985), this formula, it is maintained, poses more theoretical and historical questions than it tries to solve. On the one hand, this approach which lumps together all Arab societies as "one society" or "one state" ignores regional and local specificities characteristic of different states and different social formations within the 'Arab world'.

Nonetheless, a major problematic posed by this formula is the status it ascribes to concepts like "Pastoralism" and "Prebendalism". One must differentiate between various forms of 'pastoral' life which