

The use of Matruka land was governed by the laws of the commune or village. It is from this form of usage of this particular type of land that the term Musha'a (i.e., common use) developed. Until the introduction of the "1856 Ottoman Land Code", Matruka or Musha'a users were exempted from tax payments (al-Murr, 1924:51).

To claim that most of Palestine's land was Musha'a or Matruka, as most Israeli writers do (Kimmerling, 1983; Flapan, 1979; Baer, 1975), amounts to the same thing as saying that Palestine's land was mostly uncultivated, or for that matter, that Palestine was a social vacuum. Further discussion of the Musha'a will follow later in the chapter.

#### **Muwat Land**

This category refers to 'dead' or uncultivable land. The 1858 Land Code defined Muwat land as that which was at least 1.5 miles or 1/2 hour of ordinary walking distance from a residential area (al-Murr, 1924:61). It is not known how much of this 'dead' land was actually under cultivation. In official references, desert is usually placed in this category. (3)

In contrast to Amiri and Mulk forms of land tenure, known to have been in existence throughout the period of Ottoman rule, the Matruka and Muwat categories were introduced during the second half of the 19th century, a time when changes in production relations were beginning to emerge.

#### **The Pre-Capitalist Social Relations of Production**

As mentioned earlier, most cultivable land in Palestine was cultivated under two major categories, Amiri and Mulk, with the former predominating. Corresponding to these forms of land tenure, two forms of social relations of production emerged.