

region. A similar movement emerged in Palestine; heads of big Hamulas largely stimulated by the Egyptian invasion of parts of Palestine in the 1840s also began to acquire power and form their own armies to fight the Turkish troops sent to control their areas (Mao'z, 1968).

An additional force for the decentralization of the power of the Ottoman state was the "Iltizam" or tax farm system whereby the state attempted to centralize power in its hands by assigning land to its military and other administrative officials. The state sought to gain more control over the production process throughout the empire while at the same time using land as a form of payment for these officials.

The success of this system and its effects on the peasants varied among the various countries and even among regions of the same country. While, for example, in Egypt the Iltizam was widespread throughout the 19th and the early 20th century (Barakat, 1975; Saleh, 1979), its presence was observed less in Greater Syria and particularly in Palestine.

In Palestine and Lebanon, one historian observed, the Iltizam was not successfully applied because of the serious resistance the Multazims (tax farmers) encountered from the local chiefs or heads of Hamulas (Mao'z, 1968). However, this did not prevent the emergence of this system in at least one region in Palestine, namely the Jerusalem and Nablus hills. In this case, neither the state military nor direct administrators, but rather local heads of Hamulas held the role of Multazims and functioned as the direct tax collectors in villages within their district. The major Hamulas which emerged as powerful landed proprietors during the Iltizam were the Hussaynis and Abdelhadis (Firestone, 1975; Abu-Manneh, 1986).

The significance of the Iltizam was not in its intended role of