

(tax farmers), although not always successfully, and allowing for a more direct access to the immediate producers. It also encourages the formation of large landed estates with the hope of developing agricultural capitalism. Hence the significance of land registration.

An immediate result of the reform in Palestine was the decline in rural autonomy (Stirling, 1970:156). This was a consequence of a series of administrative decrees (beginning with the Land Code of 1858) aimed at the regulation of land ownership, which facilitated the dissolution of the communal (musha') ownership of village lands by the peasants and the rise of absentee landlordism (Ruedy, 1971:123-124). But since the reform aimed at increasing agricultural productivity it succeeded in having other stabilizing results. Those included the establishment of security in the countryside from nomadic pillage, a substantial growth in the urban population, and the integration of the region in a network of transportation routes and a railroad system.

Rauf describes two responses of the peasant to the mounting pressures he was facing from increased taxation and indebtedness as the cash economy penetrated his world. One was to surrender his share in the musha' system--now in the process of de-communalization--to the landlord, who relieved him from his debts and taxes. The other was the same act done collectively patronage par excellence. This is the system known as taldjia ('refuge'):

A single peasant or a whole village crushed relentlessly under despotic taxes and debts placed themselves, together with their lands, under the protection of the town notable, who then interposed himself between his dependents and the tax collectors or creditors, and he looked after their taxes and court cases. (Rauf, 1973:10)

Both these processes were accelerated by the tanzimat and contributed to the dissolution of the patriarchal mode of land ownership and encouraged absentee landlordism and share-cropping. But the process of the disintegration of the musha' system was prolonged and uneven and was not carried fully