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War, State Economic Policies, and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey, 1939–1945

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Agriculture has always been considered a sector of the economy with special importance and vulnerability during wartime. For a number of reasons, wartime conditions create special difficulties for agricultural production and more generally for the food supply. For one thing, during peacetime, most countries rely on imports for at least part of their food needs. The disruption of imports of both food and such agricultural needs as fertilizers and agricultural machinery is bound to affect production adversely. Also the wartime conscription of males and requisitioning of draft animals by the military often create difficulties. Even though women assume a greater agricultural burden, acreage under cultivation and levels of output often decline. At the same time demand for food may actually increase to feed a larger army (Milward 1977, chap. 8; Hardach 1987, chap. 5) Clearly, wartime conditions are likely to create imbalances between supply and demand that may lead to shortages and sharp increases in food prices.

In this respect, the wartime experiences of developed economies differs qualitatively from that of underdeveloped economies. Typically, developed economies show greater flexibility and greater ability to maintain levels of food production close to peacetime levels. Since their agriculture uses a variety of inputs, the reduction in the availability of one or more of them need not affect the levels of output severely. Other inputs can be substituted for the scarce input. For example, if labor becomes scarce, a developed economy substitutes machinery or fertilizers to maintain the earlier levels of production.

This flexibility is usually not available to less developed economies, whose structures of production are much more rigid. Where agricultural techniques of production are rather primitive, machinery can not be easily substituted for labor or draft animals.

Similarly, in developed economies, diet is often more diversified, allowing a greater degree of substitution in consumption, from luxuries to necessities. For example, rather than relying on meat and butter—both of which use more resources to provide a given level of nutrition—more cereals and milk can be used for human consumption. Again, the less diversified and simpler diets in underdeveloped countries do not allow for such substitutions. In addition, less developed economies are unlikely to have developed transportation networks that are so essential for linking the areas with food surpluses to the areas with food deficits during wartime. As a result, underdeveloped economies are less flexible and much more vulnerable to wartime disruptions (Antsiferov et al. 1930; Prest 1948; Lloyd 1956).

Shortages of food and hunger during wartime are not always the result of a decline in food availability, however. As Amartya Sen (1981) has argued, even though total availability of food may remain unchanged or decline only slightly, hunger and famine will result if some groups in society lose their ability to command food. For example, wartime conditions may drive food prices beyond the reach of the urban poor or landless agricultural workers. Food shortages and hunger depend, then, not only on total food availability but also on distribution of the food available.

In short, with or without a decline in total food availability, inequities may emerge in the distribution and consumption of food among different groups in society that would seriously affect the war effort. For this reason, securing the food supply of the urban population and the military and distributing the available food equitably are two of the most important problems facing governments during wartime.

Governments' wartime food supply policies often cover an area ranging from direct intervention in production to the transportation and distribution of food in urban areas to measures aimed at limiting demand and ensuring a more equitable pattern of consumption, such as rationing. In this paper I will focus on only one aspect of this broad picture: government measures to obtain cereals from rural producers, that is, procurement policies and their impact on agricultural producers during World War II. Although Turkey did not participate in that war, full mobilization was in effect there for the entire period. Securing the food supply of the urban areas remained an important and at times critical problem.

My theoretical interests are broader, however. The example of Turkey provides a good case study for looking at the interaction between the formulation and implementation of state economic policies and rural class structure. Equally importantly, it provides insights into the behavior of rural producers in response to market opportunities and economic demands by the state.

In the theoretical framework adopted here, peasant producers attempt to maximize their economic interests subject to social and economic constraints. Subject to these constraints, they attempt to take advantage of whatever market opportunities present themselves. I argue further that the interaction between state economic policies and rural producers can be best understood if the latter are treated not as a homogeneous mass but as differentiated producers who may have diverging interests and who may be affected differently by government policies and market opportunities.

On the basis of landownership, I distinguish three strata of rural producers—large landowners, middle peasants, and small peasants. Large landowners are those who own enough land to avoid direct labor. In Turkey during the period under study, few large-scale agricultural enterprises used year-round wage labor. Most large landowners rented their holdings to sharecropping tenants, although some fixed-rent tenancy was also observed. Middle peasants are owner-producers who, while relying primarily on family labor, cultivate enough land to produce a marketable surplus. I define small peasants as tenant farmers and owner-producers with smaller amounts of land. Wage-laborers constituted only a small fraction of the rural population in Turkey during the interwar period.

Agricultural Production during Wartime

Turkey's economy remained mostly agricultural during the 1930s despite the beginnings of state-led industrialization in response to the Great Depression. Agriculture accounted for 40 to 50 percent of the annual GNP and close to 90 percent of the country's exports. Approximately 80 percent of the country's population continued to live in rural areas as total population increased from 14 million to 17 million.[1]

During the early part of the 1930s, Anatolian agriculture was adversely affected by two developments.[2] Unfavorable weather conditions led to declines in output, particularly in cereals, which accounted for more than half of agricultural production. Equally important were the adverse movements in relative prices brought about by the Great Depression. The intersectoral terms

of trade turned sharply against agricultural commodities. Not surprisingly under these circumstances, the impact of the depression was felt most severely by the market-oriented producers.

Recognizing the difficulties faced by cereals producers, the government initiated in 1932 a program of wheat purchases through the state-owned agricultural bank designed to support the price of that leading crop. In 1938, the program was taken over by an independent agency established for this purpose, Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi (Ofis hereafter). Support purchases of wheat remained limited, however. Not only did the intersectoral terms of trade remain against agriculture, but within agriculture, cereal prices continued to fare more poorly than the prices of leading cash crops until the end of the decade.[3] By allowing the relative prices to penalize agriculture, the state helped create more favorable conditions for industrial accumulation in urban areas.

Despite the adverse price trends, however, the second half of the 1930s witnessed a strong expansion in the levels of agricultural production. According to official statistics, output of noncereal crops during 1937–39 was more than 50 percent higher than a decade earlier. Even more remarkable was the increase in the output of wheat and other cereals. According to official figures, cereal production during 1937–39 averaged 100 percent above 1927–29 levels.[4]

It is difficult to find a single explanation for these trends in production. The demographic recovery following a decade of war (1914–22), the steady expansion of acreage under cultivation, more favorable weather conditions, extension of the railroad network by the Republican regime into the central and eastern regions of the country, and the long-term effects on supply of the abolition of the much despised tithe in 1925 appear to have played their part (Shorter 1985). Whatever the explanation, one thing is clear: the increases in agricultural production were not a statistical artifact. On the eve of World War II, Turkey had become not only self-sufficient but a small net exporter in cereals. Exports of wheat averaged 70,000 tons or about 2 percent of total production during 1937–39.[5]

Although Turkey did not participate in World War II, a number of factors combined to bring about substantial decreases in the output of cereals and, apparently to a lesser extent, of other crops during this period. According to official statistics, the decline in the output of noncereal crops was limited. Even in the poorest harvest year of 1945, levels of noncereal output were only 15 percent below averages for 1937–39. On the other hand, official statistics indicate that a dramatic decline in cereals production occurred during the war

years. Whether these figures provide a reliable picture regarding the timing and magnitude of the decline is not clear. Because official statistics are at variance with other, indirect evidence on cereals production levels for two of the war years, 1942 and 1945, they need to be used in conjunction with other evidence in assessing production trends in cereals. What follows is a preliminary discussion based on incomplete evidence.

As shown in table 7.1, the first drop in the levels of agricultural production came in 1941 when wheat and total cereals production fell approximately 15 percent below their 1937–39 levels. In official statistics, 1942 appears as a year of recovery when cereal and noncereal production exceeded prewar levels. However, the twelve months following the 1942 harvest turned out to be the most critical period of the war in Turkey as severe shortages of cereals developed in the urban areas. Press coverage in Turkey also indicates that the 1943 and 1944 cereal harvests were larger than that of 1942. In fact, the urban food supply situation considerably improved after the harvest of 1943. This evidence suggests that the official estimates for 1942 presented in table 7.1 need to be revised downward. It is also possible, however, that official estimates of cereals production in 1942 were not so much in error but that withholding by peasant producers (discussed below) was much larger during that year.[6]

According to the same official estimates, the wheat and overall cereal harvests for 1945 were disastrous. These estimates put the wheat crop at 46

Table 7.1.
Official Estimates of Wartime Cereals Production

Year	Wheat (mill. tons)	Wheat (1937–39 = 100)	Total cereals (1937–39 = 100)
1927–29 (avg.)	1.88	46	48
1937–39 (avg.)	4.06	100	100
1940	4.07	100	103
1941	3.48	86	85
1942	4.26	105	106
1943	3.51	86	88
1944	3.15	78	75
1945	2.19	54	50
1946–48 (avg.)	3.92	97	93

Source: Bulutay, Tezel, and Yıldırım, 1974.

Note: In their national income study, Bulutay et al. argue that the official figures overestimate the actual quantities. Consequently, they deflate the official wheat production figures given here by 10 percent. For the purposes of the present discussion, however, the key issue is not the absolute level of production, but the extent and timing of the year-to-year fluctuations during the war.

percent and the overall cereal production at 50 percent below their 1937–39 levels. Although the 1945 harvest was certainly a poor one, the food supply problems of that year were less severe than those of 1942 and early 1943, so it is not clear at this stage whether production levels in fact declined so dramatically in 1945.

The reasons behind the decline in cereal production are easy to identify. First, there was the shortage of labor in rural areas. Even during the interwar period, labor had been a scarce factor of production in agriculture. During the war years, the government maintained an army of more than one million out of a total population of around 18 million. Most of this burden fell on rural areas where close to 80 percent of the population lived. Many young peasant producers and potential producers ended up spending as many as four years in the military during this period.

Second, the availability of draft animals declined. According to official statistics, the number of oxen in the country declined by about 10 percent during the war.[7] If true, this decline reflects the difficulties associated with feeding livestock at a time of cereal shortages. In addition, according to another estimate, 20 percent of all draft oxen and 40 percent of draft horses were taken by the military during the war years (PRO, FO 371/33357; report cited in note 6). Decreases in the availability of other inputs such as fertilizers were not as critical since they were not an important part of Anatolian agriculture at the time.[8]

A third potential reason for the observed decline in cereal production was government policies. The government pursued policies of in-kind taxation and forced purchases from producers at below-market prices during the war years. Some producers who were in a position to produce cereals for the market may have responded by reducing their acreage or shifting to other crops.

It should be reiterated that the poor quality of the available estimates on cereals output present problems. In the absence of reliable production figures, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the urban cereal shortages of 1942–43 resulted from decreases in production or from hoarding by merchants and middlemen and withholding by peasant producers in response to government policies.

As Amartya Sen (1981) has suggested, however, outbreaks of famines are not necessarily related to decreases in the overall availability of food. Rather, starvation and famines occur when the available food is distributed unevenly and some social and economic groups cannot establish command over the available supply. Although the food supply problems experienced during World War II did not lead to famine levels in Turkey, this conceptual framework is still useful for analyzing where and why shortages occurred.

One important feature of rural Anatolia during this period was that the numbers of landless wage workers remained limited. An overwhelming majority of the rural population cultivated their own land or others' plots either as fixed-rent or more often as sharecropping tenants. Moreover, while the degree of specialization in noncereal cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, hazelnuts, opium, raisins, and figs varied from one region to another, virtually all rural areas in every region of the country were self-sufficient in foodstuffs. It is not surprising, therefore, that rural areas were affected much less than cities by the cereal shortage during the war.

Wartime cereal shortages were experienced most severely in the three largest urban centers, Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, and in the urban centers of the Black Sea coast such as Zonguldak and Trabzon, as that whole region was not self-sufficient in cereals. In these urban centers the government adopted rationing in the distribution of bread and flour and adjusted the daily allowances sharply downward as the available supply of cereals dwindled during 1942–43.

The emergence of cereal shortages inevitably led to dramatic increases in prices of foodstuffs, especially of cereals. Prices of cereals—wheat, barley, corn, and others—rose much faster than other agricultural and nonagricultural prices during the war years.[9] It did not mean, however, that all producers with a surplus of cereals benefited from wartime conditions. The distributional consequences of cereals shortages and high cereal prices on rural producers depended on the policies followed by the government in securing the food supply for urban areas. Since the government demanded deliveries of a large part of the cereal output at prices substantially below those prevailing in the open market, not all agricultural producers were in a position to take advantage of rising market prices. In other words, the unusually high market prices for cereals were relevant only to those agricultural producers who were allowed to keep part of their surplus or who could successfully evade government actions. To understand the nature of the urban shortages in cereals and the impact of wartime conditions on peasant producers of different strata, it will be necessary, therefore, to examine the procurement policies pursued by the government.

Government Procurement Policies, Their Differential Impact, and Resistance by Producers

Whether a country actively participates in a war or opts for armed neutrality under full-scale mobilization, two basic approaches to the food supply prob-

lem are available to the government. In one, the government relies on the market mechanism to secure the basic foodstuffs. By avoiding controls and other forms of intervention in the agricultural commodity markets, it hopes that producers are willing and able to increase production in response to price increases. In the other, the government intervenes actively in the commodity markets and attempts to control both the production and trade of cereals and other foodstuffs. It demands deliveries from the producers at below-market prices. As agricultural producers and merchants try to evade these measures, scarcities, black markets, and profiteering will spread.

In either case, the securing of foodstuffs from agricultural producers constitutes only one stage in dealing with the problem of food supply. The distribution of these commodities to the urban and possibly rural consumer presents the government with another set of policy alternatives ranging from no intervention in the market to price controls and, finally, rationing. (See, for example, Milward [1977, chap. 8]; this latter issue will not be directly examined here.)

As for the problem of securing foodstuffs from agricultural producers, governments in Turkey during World War II, as in most underdeveloped countries facing similar circumstances, adopted the second approach of forced purchases at below-market prices. While these policies remained in effect from 1941 until the end of the war, their specific forms changed depending on the severity of the food supply problems in the urban areas and the nature and extent of peasant resistance. For this reason, it will be useful to examine government policies, peasant response, and the actual outcomes in four distinct stages.

Stage 1 (September 1939–February 1941): Reliance on Existing Stocks

When war broke out state agencies and private merchants held considerable stocks in cereals. During the following year and a half, the government actively pursued interventionist policies in most nonagricultural markets, attempting to prevent price increases and relieve shortages by administrative fiat. In markets for cereals, however, the abundant harvests of 1939 and 1940 kept prices relatively low. Because of the optimism created by existing stocks and large harvests, producers were left free to sell their crops either to the state purchasing agency, Ofis, or to private merchants. Since Ofis offered prices higher than the prevailing market prices in most localities, however, it had no difficulty purchasing wheat during 1939 and most of 1940. These stocks together with cereals purchased by the merchants were then sold to

bakeries in the urban areas. Exportation of modest amounts of wheat and other cereals continued during this early period. During 1940, for example, 60,000 tons of wheat or approximately 1.5 percent of the country's total output was exported to Greece, Belgium, and Germany.[10]

Stage 2 (February 1941–July 1942): Forced Purchases by the Government

By fall 1940, it became clear that cereal prices were edging upward as a result of hoarding by merchants and that at the prices it offered, the Ofis would not be able to purchase enough of the 1940 crop. In October the government issued a decree enabling it to purchase at its own prices all cereal stocks in the hands of merchants and middlemen. In February 1941, it initiated the policy of requiring all producers to sell their entire cereal crop, after allowances were made for household subsistence, seed, and animal feed, to the Ofis at predetermined below-market prices.

The policy was first implemented in the seventeen leading cereal-producing provinces. By the spring of 1942 it was extended to all sixty-three provinces. In each village, every producer was asked to make a written declaration regarding his output of cereals. Allowances were then made for subsistence, seed, and animal feed, and the producer was expected to deliver the rest to the Ofis (*Resmi Gazete*, May 15, 1942).

In 1940, total purchases of wheat by the Ofis amounted to 157,000 tons or about 4 percent of estimated total production, with one-third of these purchases occurring after the October decree. During 1941, with official prices only slightly below market prices, the Ofis increased the volume of its purchases to 491,000 tons of wheat and 137,000 tons of barley, or 14 and 8 percent, respectively, of the total output of these two crops (Araz n.d.).

Just before the start of the harvest in May 1942, in anticipation of underreporting by producers, the government dissolved the self-declaration system and instituted a new system of assessment. In every village, a committee of two, a government representative (*subaşı* or *kolcu*) and the headman (*muhtar*), supported by the gendarmes, was to inspect the crops of each producer before or during the harvest, determine the allowances for subsistence, seed, and animal feed, and either seize the rest or demand that the producer surrender the rest to the Ofis (*Resmi Gazete*, May 15, 1942).

However, as the difference between the market prices and the official prices paid by the Ofis began to widen during 1942, it became clear that this policy would face considerable resistance from all strata of peasantry. Peasants tried to surrender as little of their crop as possible. They attempted to smuggle the

harvest from the field and hide it. They tried to bribe the local official to underestimate their obligations. They tried to deliver less than the assessed amount. They tried to deliver grains of lower quality.

How successful a peasant producer was in these attempts depended on the power balances between the village and the local government or the representative of the local government and on how the individual producer fit into village social and political structures. Powerful peasants, large landowners, and politically prominent members of the village such as the headman or local representatives of the Republican People's party, the single party in power, received preferential treatment. Obviously, if the government representative was hosted by a landlord or the headman during his stay in the village, he would be sensitive to their suggestions on how to assess their harvests and harvests of others.

As is the case with other more common forms of peasant resistance, little documentation about withholding by agricultural producers exists. Despite close wartime censorship, occasional references to hoarding by peasants appeared in the press.[11] By far the most important macrolevel evidence for the extent of peasant avoidance, however, was the volume of cereal purchases by the Ofis, which remained substantially below government targets. The official government target for purchases of wheat from the 1942 harvest was 800,000 tons, approximately 25 percent of the crop. Considering that 20 percent of the country's population lived in urban areas, such a volume of purchase would have been sufficient to meet urban and military demand. It appears that despite all efforts, government purchases of wheat in 1942 remained below 500,000 tons, less than 15 percent of the total production (Araz n.d.).

What is uncertain and may never be established is the extent to which crops that were not surrendered to the representatives of the government were sold to private merchants and found their way to the black market. Since official policy was to purchase the entire surplus, it was illegal for any amount of cereal to appear in the market-place outside government channels. There was, as a result, considerable risk and it may be that only landowners with large marketable surpluses were willing to sell their crops to private merchants. The rest of the crops not surrendered to the Ofis were probably consumed in the countryside after being bartered among the rural population.

Stage 3 (July 1942–June 1943): The 25 Percent Rule; Coercion of the Small and Market for the Large

As purchases by the Ofis remained substantially below target levels, the food supply situation in urban areas continued to deteriorate. In January 1942,

bread rationing was initiated in the three largest urban centers, Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and in Zonguldak. When Prime Minister Refik Saydam died in the summer of 1942, there emerged a good opportunity to modify the procurement policy. The new government of Sukru Saracoglu announced that producers would be allowed to keep part of their harvest for sale to private merchants. The share of the cereal crop to be delivered to the government was defined as 25 percent for the first 50 tons, 35 percent for the next 50 tons, and 50 percent of the output above 100 tons (*Resmi Gazete*, August 1, 1942).

When first announced, the new policy was hailed in the press as a move toward the relaxation of government controls in cereal markets.[12] In retrospect, however, why this should be the case is not clear. For one thing, the government maintained a wide margin between the official purchase price and the market price. In 1942 the government paid 20 kuruş per kilo for the wheat it purchased while the market price approached 40 kuruş. The price differential increased considerably during the following year as the government insisted on the same price while inflation and, more importantly, cereal shortages had pushed the market price above 100 kuruş in April 1943. Purchases by the government had indeed become seizures. Clearly, the new policy provided little incentive to producers to surrender their crops to the state.

Second, while appearing to shift the burden toward large landowners, the new policy actually increased the burden of poor peasants. Although the earlier policy had provided allowances for subsistence, seed, and animal feed, the 25 percent rule did not include such a clause. As a result, peasant households that produced barely enough for their own needs were being asked to deliver a quarter of their gross output to the state. In fact, the following simple calculation reveals that 25 percent actually represented the entire marketable surplus and often more for the large majority of peasant producers.

(1) In the late 1930s and early 1940s, average wheat and barley yields in the country were around 0.8 tons per hectare. In other words, all producers who cultivated up to sixty hectares—which included more than 95 percent of all peasant households—were being asked to surrender 25 percent of their cereal output.

(2) In the dry-farming lands where most of the cereal production was undertaken, seed-yield ratios were about one to five. In other words, most peasant producers had to set aside 20 percent of their gross output for seed or a total of 45 percent for seed and the state share.

(3) An average peasant household of five or six consumed close to two tons of cereals a year. Assuming average yields in dry-farming areas, then, a peasant household that cultivated about five hectares of land and obtained an average of four tons of cereals would be left with barely enough cereals for

self-consumption after the state share and the seed was set aside. All tenant farmers and those small peasants cultivating up to five hectares of their own land were in this category. These two groups probably made up more than half of all rural households, although detailed data on patterns of landownership and tenancy are not available for this period.

In other words, the new policy left marketable surplus only in the hands of households that owned and cultivated much more than five hectares of dry-farming land. Middle peasants who cultivated up to eight or ten hectares of dry-farming land while relying primarily on family labor, and who produced a marketable surplus under normal circumstances, may not have been forced to reduce their consumption of cereals. However, the 25 percent rule sharply reduced the amounts they could sell at the market. It was primarily the large landowners, therefore, who could take advantage of the extraordinarily high cereal prices in the marketplace. For them, the new policy had the additional advantage of legalizing all cereals sales to private merchants.

It is often said that wartime benefits farmers, but it was certainly not the case in the episode examined here. The policies adopted in the summer of 1942 and continued until the end of the war distributed the burdens and opportunities of wartime conditions unevenly. Small and middle peasants producing cereals witnessed a sharp decrease in their consumption and real income levels during these years, while large landowners took advantage of the rapidly rising cereal prices in the marketplace. At the same time, incentives for avoiding government demands remained high for all producers, large and small.

In retrospect, the period December 1941–June 1943 emerges as the most difficult and critical of the war in terms of the so-called food supply problem. At least four factors contributed to the cereals shortages of the urban areas during this period.

First, the shortcomings of the transportation network and, more importantly, shortages in storage space made it difficult to distribute cereals around the country from regions and pockets with surpluses to those with deficits, especially the leading urban centers. Second, merchants and middlemen practiced a good deal of hoarding. These speculators did not reduce the total availability of cereals to urban consumers, but by keeping prices higher for extended periods of time, they probably intensified the crisis. Third, cereals production declined particularly in 1942, to an extent that remains unclear. Finally, there is macrolevel evidence that withholding by producers was considerable and played some important role in the emergence of urban shortages. We know, for example, that the actual amounts of cereals the Ofis

purchased remained well below initial government targets. We also know that, in the case of wheat, even if the actual 1942 crop was well below official estimates, the share of Ofis purchases in total production remained well below 25 percent, the minimum target established by government policy. In any case, additional evidence regarding the actual volume of the 1942 crop would be helpful in assessing the respective contributions of the last two factors to the urban shortages.

Stage 4 (June 1943–End of the War): The Return of the Tithe

In May 1943, just before the start of the harvest, the government decided to modify the 25 percent rule. Government shares were redefined as 20 percent of the first six tons, 30 percent of the next nine tons, and 50 percent of all cereal production above fifteen tons. This change lowered slightly the burden of poor peasants and increased the level of government demands from large landowners who produced more than twelve tons. In another decision, similar measures were extended to pulses with a flat 25 percent government share for all producers (*Resmi Gazete*, May 15, 1943).

Cereal shortages began to ease in June 1943 as it became clear that the 1943 crop would be abundant, but it did not deter the government from introducing a new in-kind tax in June 1943 that varied from 8 to 12 percent depending on the crop. In practice, this tax was not collected separately but was included in the earlier government shares. In other words, the government simply stopped paying for part of the crop the Ofis continued to demand under the 25 percent rule (*Resmi Gazete*, June 7, 1943). In April 1944 the rates on this new tax were changed to a uniform 10 percent for all crops, including cereals. As a result, the new tax began to be interpreted by the peasant producers as the return of the Ottoman tithe that had been abolished by the Republican regime.

Concluding Remarks

These coercive policies were discontinued with the end of the war in 1945. As the country began to move gradually toward a multiparty parliamentary regime, the leadership of the Republican Peoples party attempted to mend fences. In June 1945, a potentially radical land reform bill, including a clause enabling the government to redistribute any holding over five hectares to poor

and landless peasants, was passed by the parliament. The bill was supported by the top leadership of the party over the violent protests of deputies who represented large landed interests. Subsequent efforts by these deputies, however, prevented the redistribution of private land under the bill. As a result, this last-ditch attempt by the single-party regime failed to gain the support of poor peasants (Keyder and Pamuk 1984).

With the first free elections of the new political era in 1950, the peasantry acquired immediate importance for the first time in the country's politics. The newly established Democrat party won these elections. The discontent of large landowners with the urban-based, industrialization-oriented policies of the single party regime during the 1930s and the land reform bill after the war is well known. They responded readily to the Democrats' promise of greater emphasis on commercial agriculture. In fact, some of the leading members of this new party were large landowners. What is more striking and more difficult to explain regarding the 1950 elections was the support the Democrats received from small and middle peasants, although this examination suggests that it was, at least in part, a vote of protest against the wartime policies of the single-party regime.

Beyond the history and political economy of Turkey, this wartime episode has implications for the more general study of peasant economic behavior and for the study of the interaction between state economic policies and rural class structure. For example, in response to peasant resistance, why did the state move from policies of coercion aimed at all producers (from February 1941 to July 1942), attempting to purchase the entire surplus at below-market prices, to a combination of coercion aimed at small producers and market incentives for large landowners?

At least two explanations appear possible. First, it can be argued that large landowners were politically more powerful, with a good deal of influence in the parliament and in the higher echelons of the Republican Peoples party. It is not surprising, in this view, that the government developed a policy package that allowed them to take advantage of high cereal prices. This argument is not entirely convincing, however. It cannot explain, for example, why the government did not pursue this course as soon as the Ofis stocks began to decline and cereal shortages began to appear in the urban areas in 1941.

A more satisfactory argument would emphasize that with the outbreak of the war, the provisioning of urban areas became a matter of military and political survival for the state. Particularly during such crisis periods, state interests transcend those of individual groups or classes. In its policies toward rural producers during the war years, the government was concerned more

with extracting the maximum amount of cereals for urban areas and less with the distributional consequences of its actions in rural areas.

From this perspective, the small peasants were not expected to bring cereals to the market. Therefore, the government attempted to take away part of their output by force, even though it meant an absolute decline in the levels of consumption for most small producers. Large landowners, on the other hand, did have marketable surpluses. The measures adopted by the government after July 1942 can thus be interpreted as providing the highest market incentives to those producers most likely to bring cereals to the market. In other words, large landowners were the beneficiaries of these policies not so much because of their political power but because they had marketable surpluses and could successfully resist the government's coercive measures.

Finally, a few words about the implications of this episode on the study of peasant behavior. Until recently, a large part of the literature on peasant politics has focused on peasant rebellion.[13] Despite the importance of these rebellions, they tell us little about the struggles and conflicts of peasants and how they defend their interests under more ordinary circumstances. The resistance of Anatolian peasants of different strata to state economic policies, without any organization and without open protest, provides an important example of how peasants defend their interests most of the time. In the case examined here, macrolevel data indicate a considerable amount of withholding on the part of peasant producers.

The existence of widespread noncompliance, however, does not necessarily mean that peasant producers constitute an undifferentiated mass. For a variety of reasons, the burden of government measures may not fall equally or proportionately on peasants from all strata. For example, large landowners who are more influential and politically better connected will often be more successful in evading the tax collector. In comparison to poor peasants, they may end up surrendering a lower percentage of their crop to the government.

Moreover, agricultural producers belonging to different strata may evade government actions for different reasons. In the case studied here, poor peasants attempted to avoid government taxation in kind in order to maintain minimum standards of consumption for themselves. Middle peasants and large landowners, on the other hand, avoided government taxation and forced deliveries in order to take advantage of market opportunities and sell a larger part of their surplus. Widespread resistance to government measures will not necessarily mean, therefore, a unity of interests among producers belonging to different strata. Any assessment of the significance of peasant avoidance needs to emphasize these characteristics and limitations.

Notes

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1. See the national income study by Bulutay, Tezel, and Yıldırım (1974), which relies on the official statistics; these statistics are available from Turkey, İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *Tarım İstatistikleri*, Ankara and Turkey, and İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü *Dış Ticaret Yıllıkları*, Ankara, both annual publications.

2. Based on the price and production data available in Bulutay, Tezel, and Yıldırım (1974).

3. Boratav (1981) has recently underlined this point. For a conceptual framework emphasizing the alliances between the state and various strata of rural producers during the 1930s, see Birtek and Keyder (1975).

4. The official agricultural statistics of the period are available in summary form in Bulutay, Tezel, and Yıldırım, 1974. For an earlier study underlining the increases in total and per capita agricultural production, see Hirsch and Hirsch (1963).

5. Turkey, Istatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *Dış Ticaret Yıllıkları*, Ankara.

6. The British government followed the food supply situation in Turkey closely during 1942–43, not only because of its political and military implications but also because the Turkish government had requested to purchase wheat from the Middle East Supply Centre in Egypt in order to alleviate the urban shortages. Estimates of the 1942 cereal crop undertaken by nongovernment observers in Turkey and cited in the secret British reports of the period suggest that the 1942 cereal harvest was approximately 10 to 15 percent below 1941 levels, which themselves were below the prewar levels. These estimates also need to be treated with caution, however. See Great Britain, Public Records Office, FO 371/33357, Report by Bennett Sterndale in Ankara, December 4, 1942. See also Wilmington (1971, passim).

7. Turkey, İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *Hayvanat İstatistikleri*, Ankara.

8. One would expect that these declines in the availability of labor and draft animals resulted in the reduction of acreage under cultivation during the war years. However, the official statistics are not very clear on this issue. They indicate that the area under cereals cultivation increased by about 7 percent between 1939 and 1942 but then declined by 19 percent in 1943. It is possible that official statistics for 1943 were adjusted in response to the urban food shortages of 1942–43. According to the official estimates, acreage under cereals cultivation in 1945 was 10 percent below its 1939 levels. See İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *Tarım İstatistikleri*.

9. Detailed price data for crops and sectors are available in Bulutay, Tezel, and Yıldırım (1974).

10. Turkey, İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, *Dış Ticaret Yıllıkları*, Ankara. In the official foreign trade statistics, exports of wheat to Germany during the year 1940 are given under the category "other countries."

11. For example, "Köylüler Pasif Mukavemet Yapıyor" (The Peasants Are Showing Passive Resistance), *Tan Gazetesi*, July 17, 1942, Istanbul, and "Köylü Malını Saklıyor" (The Peasant Is Hiding His Crop), *Tan Gazetesi*, October 1, 1942, Istanbul.

12. See, for example, the oppositional *Tan Gazetesi* during July and August 1942.

13. For example, Moore (1966); Paige (1975), and Wolf (1969). For a perspective emphasizing more common forms of peasant resistance, see Scott (1984).

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