**Land as the Object of Postwar Development**

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In 1951, the Economic Cooperation Administration of the United States government and the University of Wisconsin at Madison organized a conference that brought together more than one hundred international scholars and administrators to scrutinize the relationship between land tenure and development. The tone of the proceedings was cautiously optimistic: while participants had reservations as to whether or not American arrangements could be replicated elsewhere, they seemed to agree on the conclusion that “economic development is at once an essential prerequisite to land reform and a partial consequence of it.”[[1]](#footnote-1) While land reform was expected to cultivate a stronger sense of citizenship, “human dignity, and the privilege of exercising one’s own will,” participants were divided over the specific form it should take and the purpose it should fulfill.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Wolf Ladejinksy, who served as the agricultural attaché to the US embassy in Tokyo at the time and was credited as the successful architect of Japan’s postwar land reform, assured his colleagues that landownership alone was the key to “cutting the political ground from under the feet of the Communists.”[[3]](#footnote-3) For Afif Tannous, who was the head of the Middle East Division at the US Department of Agriculture, absentee ownership was the primary problem holding back economic development and grassroots democracy alike. Writing in the wake of President Truman’s declaration of the Point Four Program, Tannous insisted that land reform had to be distinguished from technical assistance: “the crying need of the Middle East cannot be filled through technical aid, capital investment, and economic development alone. The overwhelming problem of the region cannot be solved fundamentally and permanently by the erection of dams, the expansion of irrigation, the development of industry, and the increased flow of oil. The solution lies in economic development that is conceived and achieved for one sole purpose: *the emancipation and welfare of the people.*”[[4]](#footnote-4) Tannous’ vision rested on the redistribution of land, the transformation of dependent peasants into free landowners.

Other participants, however, argued that mere landownership, without access to markets and adequate credit would not suffice. Any land reform had to be complemented by the “use of modern science and technology…expanded and redirected educational programs, and the enactment of necessary legislation for an organization setup suitable to carry on land development programs, including essential public works for land reclamation, roads, and public facilities.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Purely redistributionist schemes, it was argued, had “propaganda appeal,” and would quickly lead to “harsh production quotas and delivery deadlines” without improving the status of the agricultural worker.[[6]](#footnote-6) The articulation of land reform in technical terms was explicitly intended to deracinate it from political projects it might otherwise be linked to.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, US military planners and agricultural experts took with them the notion that land reform would curb a revolutionary peasantry and replace it with an entrepreneurial class of landowners across the “Asian defense perimeter,” to Japan, Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and ultimately Vietnam.[[7]](#footnote-7) Yet, it was increasingly the “technical” model of land reform, rather than the redistributionist one, that prevailed in the projects of policymakers and experts. While American agencies and private organizations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, were at first tolerant observers of programs like the *ejido* system in interwar Mexico, which seized private estates and distributed them to millions of landless peasants, they increasingly pushed for an industrialized version of agricultural reform.[[8]](#footnote-8) The Ford Foundation’s community development projects in India were replaced with Green Revolution technologies, as rural programs concentrated on seed types, yields, mechanization, and increasing rates of agricultural productivity.[[9]](#footnote-9) The consolidation of land became the rule, as fragmentation was identified as an obstacle to efficiency. The visions of Tannous’ and others’, which had linked landownership with political development were deemed incompatible with “emerging US strategy for the Middle East.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Instead, massive projects, such as hydroelectric power, TVA-style development became the rule in Afghanistan, Iran, Jordan, among others, while land reform in Vietnam amounted to resettlement and the Strategic Hamlet Program of 1962.[[11]](#footnote-11)

By the time a roster of agricultural experts, officials, and social scientists convened in 1964 at the Center for International Studies (CENIS) at MIT for a six-week conference funded by USAID, however, a defeatist tone had come to characterize the proceedings: “ten years ago it was widely believed that one or another single technique (community development is an example) could solve the organizational problems of bringing new technology to millions of individual problems.”[[12]](#footnote-12) The editors now warned of looming food crises and population explosions, and charged agriculture with “acting as a brake on economic growth.”[[13]](#footnote-13) Ladejinsky was among the invitees, and presented a gallant defense of land reform, adopting the behavioralist language championed by the residents of CENIS: “It is a means of elevating the human condition. We may arrange for all the material supplies of water, seeds, fertilizers, implements, and credit. But we cannot give the peasant the psychological incentives he needs unless he is secure on the land, particularly on land that belongs to him, for uncertainty in this regard is one of the great disincentives under which a farmer labors.”[[14]](#footnote-14) It is hard to tell if Ladejinsky was able to sway his audience, who insisted that the measure of agricultural success for “different ecological regions” was productivity: he had by then been removed from his post at the embassy in Japan for “security reasons.”

The story of American-supported land reform played out somewhat differently in Turkey when the country became a beneficiary of Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan funds. The European Recovery Program mostly displaced a proposed Land Reform Bill of 1945, which was to eliminate landlessness among the peasantry by redistributing the properties of absentee landlords to the tenants and sharecroppers who worked on them. Instead, the Marshall Plan allocated agricultural machinery and built highways across the country, which ultimately benefited large landowners. While this law was never fully implemented, it contained the infamous Article 17, which would have eliminated all landless peasantry by targeting absentee landlords and redistributing their land to the tenants and sharecroppers working on them. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, the technologically driven vision of rural development would further displace the redistributionist model with the arrival of the Rockefeller Foundation-supported Green Revolution in the country.

Still, I argue in this paper, the technical approach to rural development, which was increasingly popularized across the global south throughout the 1950s and 60s, was not necessarily imposed on blank states devoid of political economic projects of their own. The rural land question was one site through which American scholars, experts, and policymakers encountered alternative conceptions of development, nation, and statecraft. In Turkey, land reform debates were enmeshed with preexisting projects that had diametrically opposed understandings of what rural development should entail. In the following sections, I detail these competing visions, starting with the Republican People’s Party (CHP), which reigned between 1923 and 1950, and viewed agricultural output as providing the necessary surplus for state-led industrialization oriented around heavy industry and railroad. But while it was CHP that proposed the redistributionist land reform law of 1945, by 1948 it had already begun transitioning towards the model proposed by American advisors, who encouraged increased agricultural productivity less out of a concern with Turkey’s industrialization plans than with postwar European recovery. The comprehensive adoption of the American model, with its preference for consolidated farms, agricultural machinery and credits, and the extension of roads would be undertaken by the Democratic Party (DP), which came to power with the implementation of multiparty politics for the first time in 1950 and ruled until 1960. But instead of simply adopting American “knowhow,” the DP’s embrace of the American model reflected its own priorities, and those of the large landowners, commercial farmers, small merchants, and urban petty bourgeoisie that it represented. Competing visions of national development, rooted in the country’s political economy and class configurations, provided both the alternative to and part of the motivation for “adopting” the technical approach urged by American experts.

After a coup displaced DP from power, the military government proposed land reform in 1961, only to see the attempt halted by another center-right party after the resumption of multiparty politics within a year. Throughout the 1960s, the Turkish Workers’ Party ran a campaign that emphasized the importance of land reform, but internal debates among leftist Turkish intellectuals and political activists as to the character of Turkish agriculture was interrupted by yet another military intervention in 1971.[[15]](#footnote-15) A similar story played out in the aftermath of this coup, when the republicans undertook modest redistribution in eastern provinces before they were ousted by a center-right coalition. Both attempts were consistent with a longstanding identification of small landownership with nationalist sentiment. The republican policymakers and intellectuals argued that appropriating land from Kurdish landlords would dissolve feudal relations of production and eradicate the economic base of Kurdish identity. Land reform projects were often entangled with resettlement policies and were thus emblematic of the Republican desire to limit or at least manage mobility in rural areas.

Each vision of agricultural reform was spatialized in distinct terms, and treated land as the site for national, developmental, anticommunist or anticapitalist formations. These different understandings were interweaved with the reworking of the figure of the peasant from regional, linguistic, and geographic other to the symbol of the modern nation envisioned in liberal, unified, and marketized terms. That reworking proceeded in tandem with a series of modernizing imaginaries; civilizational, territorial, and commercial visions grafted onto one another through land’s distribution, consolidation or unification through highways. In the end, officials and academics came to champion technical models of agricultural development, intimating a different configuration of the relationship between the state, land, and the people than the one envisioned by the periodically proposed redistributionist plans. The uneven distributions of roads, machinery, and green revolution technologies reflected and reinforced the inequality in landholding, revealing the hollowness of both the universalizing claims of international developmental agencies and the homogenizing attempts of the Turkish nation-state.

*A people who live in harmony*

In 1945, the Turkish Parliament served as the stage for heated debates about how to parcel and organize rural land. The topic of discussion was the Law for Providing Land to Farmers (LPLF), which sought to distribute land to landless and small farmers. The majority of the land to be transferred was owned by the state or waqfs (religious endowments), but private holdings in excess of 500 hectares (1235.5 acres) could also be expropriated and in areas with scarce estates, the size of land to be seized could be as low as 495 acres. This measure, along with other controversial parts of the law, such as Article 17, which would have enabled agricultural workers and sharecroppers to claim the land they worked on, were not actually implemented. Article 17 was annulled in 1950.[[16]](#footnote-16)

The historical context for LPLF was CHP’s long-standing mistreatment of rural populations, which had been particularly pronounced throughout the 1930s. The decade was distinct for its five-year developmental plans, often drawn up by Soviet experts, and saw state-led attempts at industrialization, premised on the “extraction of agricultural surplus.”[[17]](#footnote-17) During those years, a well-developed railway network functioned as an “infrastructural element for the Etatist economic program.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Railroads connected cereal growing areas of central Anatolia to the ports of Istanbul and Izmir, but the agricultural sector was not favored in terms of government investment or extension of credits.[[19]](#footnote-19) The Second World War saw further stagnation of agricultural prices, conscripts from the agricultural labor force, and ensuing disillusionment with the government on the part of the peasantry. The Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi (Office of Soil Products), which had originally been established in 1938 with the aim of giving peasants fair minimum prices, became the wartime institution through which the government imposed production quotas while setting below market prices for wheat.[[20]](#footnote-20) Sharecropping became prevalent through the end of the war, as a result of the relative abundance of land, itself a product of the population exchange, confiscation and genocide policies that marked earlier decades of nation-building.[[21]](#footnote-21) Despite attempts at the redistribution of state-owned land in 1927 and 1929 (both in response to Kurdish uprisings), it was not until 1945 that a land reform law would be on the Parliament floor.[[22]](#footnote-22)

The law can also be situated in a longer history in the regulation of movement by Ottoman and Republican elites. During the early decades of the Ottoman Empire, mobility was alternately encouraged and restricted, depending on the need for labor, settlement, and control over newly acquired territories. By the end of the 19th century, demographic engineering projects involved policies such as deportation, involuntary displacement, and forced migration. Meanwhile, population exchanges following the loss of territory across the Balkans and the Caucuses, as well as the persistence of recalcitrant nomadic groups, led to sedentarization through land grants and tax exemptions.[[23]](#footnote-23) As Muslim and Turkish muhajirs (immigrants) and nomadic Kurdish tribes were resettled across Anatolia, they were granted the expropriated possessions and agricultural lands of Armenian and Greek subjects who had been deposed or exterminated.[[24]](#footnote-24) The spatial redistribution of populations coincided with the construction of railroads, for which labor was provided by the remaining immigrants who had not been settled on fertile land by the state.[[25]](#footnote-25) The railway network was built both to ensure security and administration, and to integrate the Empire into the world economy. Along with the railway network, landholding and commercialization had also started during 19th century Ottoman empire, but export orientation in Anatolia consisted primarily of small production rather than large commercial estates.

During Parliamentary debates in the postwar period, the proponents of the 1945 law extolled the psychological, social, and material benefits of land reform, while opponents called into question its implications for democracy, national identity, and the role that the state should play in the economy. Raşit Hatipoğlu, the Minister of Agriculture, explicitly linked economic development with the development of the peasantry, which was predicated on landownership.[[26]](#footnote-26) In a similar vein to American officials, such as Afif Tannous, who mistakenly blamed rural inequality on the failures of Ottoman Land Tenure, Hatipoğlu argued that it was now incumbent on the Republic to fix the problem by facing the villager with more than had ever been offered in the history of the nation.[[27]](#footnote-27) Among the defenders of the law, Feyzullah Uslu proudly declared that he was the son of farmers and recounted that not having to rely on sharecroppers or tenants had always been conducive to his family’s productivity.

For Uslu, landownership also meant independence: “Friends, my heart does not allow the Turkish farmer to be subject and slave to this or that (şunun bunun kulu, kölesi). What I want is that the Turkish farmer be subject and slave to his own land, his own labor, his own hand and arm.”[[28]](#footnote-28) In response to detractors of the law, he argued that it would distribute land to those who truly cherished and loved it: “the peasant who smells the land, inhales its clear air, has vigor and strength, protects the nation, increases the population, and raises patriotic, brave offspring [is] the source of power, might, and life for this nation.” Uslu’s corporeal depiction was complemented with the psychic and sentimental elements of Sadi Irmak’s assessment, according to which sharecropping created a spirit of dependency and psychological defects.[[29]](#footnote-29) Ownership of the land, Irmak insisted, would amount to ownership of the nation, and engender “a mass of people who are as far from disagreement as possible, a people who live in harmony, love and embrace each other.”

Finally, Tahsin Banguoğlu articulated a defense of the law that was very much aligned with CHP anxieties about rural migration to cities. Banguoğlu argued that LPLF would especially assist the masses who had lost their land and drifted into cities: “some of those who come to the city have advanced rapidly. There are those who became intellectuals, entered civil service. Those who did not advance are now working in public services, as unskilled workers, porters, grocers. In cities, this population is not working fully productively, and is thus becoming parasitic. This parasitism results in many internal dangers. If we give land to this population, give them capital and land, if we turn them towards rural life again, the nation will benefit from this.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

Overall, the members of Parliament were concerned with questions of dependency, self-sufficiency, and order, but beyond garnering support for the regime from rural areas, they also hoped to imbue the residents with a sense of national belonging. In this respect, LPLF was consistent with the Village Institutes, which were founded in 1940 with the aim of modernizing the peasantry and propagating Turkish identity and Kemalist ideology across rural areas.[[31]](#footnote-31) This identification of landownership with nationalist sentiment conformed with the pattern set out during earlier attempts at land reform in the 1930s, when the relationship between land reform and national unity had been rehearsed in the circles of the socialist *Kadro* journal, which insisted that Kurdish identity “was a question of class rather than ethnicity, with its roots in the feudal relations of production that prevailed in the region. Appropriating land from the feudal landlords and distributing it to the peasants would dissolve these feudal relations of production, thereby wiping out the economic and social bases of Kurdish nationalism.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

The association between rootedness in land and national identity was most pronounced in the farmer homestead (çiftçi ocakları) clause which was excised from the law shortly before it was voted in Parliament. This particular clause aimed to create independent farmer families who would be required to cultivate the land they received for twenty five years without the ability to sell it or hire sharecroppers. In the event of non-cultivation by the one designated member of the family who was allowed to inherit the land by law, the state would be able to reclaim it and transfer to another family member. The clause on farmer homesteads is emblematic of CHP’s desire to limit, or at least manage mobility in rural areas, and perhaps to create “conservative peasant social fabric in the Turkish countryside,” anticipating positions that were taken by land reformers like Ladejinsky.[[33]](#footnote-33) This governmental investment in sedentarization was also consistent with earlier resettlement laws from the 1920s and 1930s, which designated separate settlement zones for immigrants who were “of Turkish culture” (Muslim and Turkic immigrants from the Balkans) and those who were to “adopt Turkish culture,” meaning primarily Kurdish populations. The latter were not allowed to immigrate into the country due to their lack of “blood ties,” but Kurds who already lived in Turkey were nonetheless relocated internally for purposes of “assimilation, sanitation, and security.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

The article on farmer homesteads was also the type of clause that opponents of LPLF, in particular large landowners like Cavit Oral, Emin Sazak, and Adnan Menderes would seize on during Parliamentary debates. Menderes was the most vocal and significant member of the opposition, and it was while debating the LPLF that a permanent rift within the CHP opened up, with Menderes, alongside Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan, and Fuad Köprülü splitting and founding the Democratic Party (DP), with “permission” from Ataturk’s successor, President Inonu.[[35]](#footnote-35) Menderes would serve as Prime Minister the entire time that DP stayed in power between 1950 and 1960, when a military coup ended its rule, along with the lives of Menderes and three other DP Ministers.[[36]](#footnote-36)

As Yahya Tezel has pointed out, Menderes’ speeches during the land reform debates were the harbingers of the agricultural policies he would adopt during his decade in power.[[37]](#footnote-37) His main objection was that the law imported foreign ideologies, shaped by the socioeconomic and political conditions of other countries and was inapplicable to the Turkish setting. Menderes’ most controversial example on this point was the comparison he drew between the homestead clause and Nazi Germany’s Erbhof Law, which was a settlement and land law that restricted the mobility of farmers.[[38]](#footnote-38) Menderes argued that such laws were intended to sever the connections between urban residents and rural areas, a plan to “erect[]insurmountable barriers between the village and the city” that would only “perpetuate the backwardness of our nation.” Removing the walls between urban and rural settings would become a central component of Menderes’ liberalization policies and the academic and official accolades for the highway network across the Atlantic.[[39]](#footnote-39)

According to Menderes, the problem in rural development was not the scarcity of land, which had “always been a commodity that everyone, small or big, has been able to buy and sell. The problem we have is not lack of land, but the capital, labor, information, and equipment required to make the land valuable.”[[40]](#footnote-40) While Menderes identified the problem as “economic,” rather than “political or social,” he did not refrain from citing other countries’ rural management models during another Parliamentary session.[[41]](#footnote-41) At a time when agriculture was becoming industrialized and production methods changing so rapidly, he argued, “to break up land and distribute it to conventional management units, and to call this act agricultural reform is to embark on a path that is being abandoned across the world today.” It was consolidation of land, rather than its fragmentation, that would enable both bulk production and reduction of costs. In his concluding remarks, Menderes called into question the law’s democratic legitimacy, using the hasty inclusion of Article 17 as an example of CHP’s authoritarian tendencies, and offering his own narrative of progress instead: “Any land reform we adopt should not be based on emotion but on the assessment and measurement of the reality of our nation; the law has to be forward looking, it has to take into account the future prospects and growth of our agriculture and economy.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

Despite Menderes’ fiery rhetoric, LPLF passed in Parliament. The CHP, however, was wary of a coalescing opposition and immediately began to make concessions, and appointed Cavit Oral, a large landowner who had condemned the bill as a dangerous “extremity” and criticized the government for its interest in agricultural intervention and expropriation, as the Minister of Agriculture in 1948.[[43]](#footnote-43) President Inonu’s approval of Oral’s appointment was in stark contrast with his initial enthusiasm for the bill, when he had denounced the Members of Parliament who opposed it as “not his own.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Aside from CHP’s domestic troubles, drastic changes were unfolding in the broader political and economic context, changes that would ultimately complicate any sustained commitment to a project of redistributive land reform. In July 1947, *Foreign Affairs* published George Kennan’s ‘X article,’ whose vision for containing the Soviet Union would soon be instituted in the Truman Doctrine. A beneficiary of the Doctrine, Turkey also entered the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the precursor to the World Bank), and applied to be a part of the Marshall Plan in 1947. This year the CHP prepared an economic development plan that both contained elements of continuity with earlier policies, such as setting aside a larger budget for railroads rather than highways, but also set out to secure Marshall Plan funds by signaling a shift towards emphasizing agricultural growth and foreign aid and loans, rather than previous decades’ emphasis on state-led industrialization and the redistribution of agricultural land.[[45]](#footnote-45) When DP came to power with a similar policy agenda in 1950, it would take the rural development plan to its logical conclusion.[[46]](#footnote-46)

*The Uneven Logics of Highway Construction*

In 1952, Russell Dorr, who acted as Chief of the Economic Cooperation Administration Mission and oversaw the allocation of Marshall Plan funds, delivered a triumphant speech marking his departure from the country. Dorr’s panoramic account entreated his audience to visualize “Turkish wheat being loaded abroad foreign ships” in Istanbul and Iskenderun, “ships passing through the Bosphorus carrying coal from Zonguldak and to France and copper from Hopa to many countries,” as well as the large-scale assistance projects he had overseen during his term.[[47]](#footnote-47) For Dorr, the transformation of the country was first to be envisioned at a general, bird’s eye view level: “It works something like the dropping of a stone in a pool. Wave after wave spreads out from the point of impact getting even larger and moving even further.” Dorr’s narrative then zoomed in through a microscopic lens, and summed up the effects of the “expanding economy” in the “hypothetical case of a peasant in Central Anatolia”:

For the first time a year-round highway has penetrated his region. Three years ago it would have taken him days of difficult travel to reach a city. That made the idea of selling food to the city a little remote, if not impossible, for him. Therefore there was no incentive for him to raise more than his own needs and those of his immediate community. Now he can get to the city or he can send his crops there more easily. He can get money in exchange for his crops. With the money he can buy household utensils, tools, furniture—any of the things that put together add up to a higher standard of living for himself and his family. Therefore he has the incentive to grow more, to open up new fields if necessary or to try to raise the yield of his present land. Along with the incentive, he now has the means to grow more—the agricultural tools provided through the agricultural banks at low interest rates… raises [his] standard of living.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In Dorr’s account, the nameless Central Anatolian peasant is at once a testament to the palpable success of the American aid program and an indispensable contributor to postwar European recovery. The narrative is predicated on the assumption that the peasant owns the land he tills, but more vital for the purposes of the story are his newfound capacity for incentive, investment, and mobility. All-weather roads enlarge the scope of movement not only for his crop, but also the goods he has acquired, goods that will mean higher standards of living upon his return to the village. Though the acquisition of agricultural tools and furniture is primarily intended for his family, the peasant’s face is also turned outward, whereby the barriers between him and the rest of the nation are seemingly surmounted. The unprecedented sense of mobility occasions the emergence of a new type of farmer, marked by the changes in the tools he acquires and uses.

The emergence of Dorr’s hypothetical peasant was occasioned by the period of unprecedented exchange between Turkey and the United States. The aid agreement reached between the two countries after promulgation of the Truman Doctrine addressed the need for “the movement of agricultural, mineral, and other products to domestic markets and to Turkish ports for export to countries in urgent need of such Turkish surpluses as food and coal.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Turkey was given a particular role in postwar economic reconstruction as a source of agricultural goods for Europe, necessitating the transfer of agricultural machinery and expertise through Marshall Plan funds. By the time the European Recovery Program was extended to Turkey, it was expected to fulfill its role “along the envisaged division of labor in the world market.”[[50]](#footnote-50) As Dorr disclosed in internal correspondence, the Turkish economy is our business and when it comes down to questions of priorities, ours must be the last word.”[[51]](#footnote-51)

During this period, American experts were summoned to prepare reports on Turkey, among them Max Thornburg, the oil magnate, and representatives from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Their reports, which were quite influential in the new economic policies that were being devised, identified shortcomings in infrastructure and capital as the chief obstacle interfering with rural development. Thornburg, for instance, noted disapprovingly that the “Turks were under the spell of the Soviet passion for magnificent planning and construction of heavy industries,” and recommended encouraging foreign capital, specializing in agricultural commodities, and importing manufactured goods instead.[[52]](#footnote-52) His brief discussion of the land reform law of 1945 was dismissive (“the execution of this law has been impeded by political considerations”), compared with his harsh indictment of existing industrial projects, such as the Karabük steel plant, which he deemed an “economic monstrosity” and a wasteful investment: “Largely because of the demand of the Karabuk steel mill for coal and ore, in 1946 thousands of tons of cereals had to be left rotting in the central plateau, served only by the same railway which carried the industrial materials….Such heavy costs of mistaken planning appear on no balance sheets at Karabuk or Ankara.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

In February 1948, Harold Hilts, the Deputy Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) visited Turkey and penned another report, recommending the implementation of a new administrative unit that would oversee the extension of highways, which would enable farm-to-market transportation, door-to-door delivery and faster haulage relative to railroads.[[54]](#footnote-54) Two months after the submission of Hilts’ report, the Ministry of Public Works in Turkey and the Aid Commission from the US signed a treaty, allowing for the arrival of American machinery, funding, and a mission of BPR engineers who would stay in the country as late as 1959.[[55]](#footnote-55)

The allocation of Marshall Plan funds for road construction was anomalous compared with other recipients, such as Austria, France, Germany, and Italy where counterpart funds were primarily spent for railway construction.[[56]](#footnote-56) Still, advisors like Thornburg argued that road construction was necessary for “every possible advance in Turkey, whether for development of agriculture and industry or for improvement of health, education and other social and political goods,” but also a “test of Turkey’s real intentions about economic development”: “A modern motor highway between Istanbul and Ankara might not for years carry enough traffic to pay for its construction, but a simple all-weather road, adequately maintained, between a fruit and sugar growing area and a preserving and shipping point might in one season return more foreign exchange than would be needed to pay the whole cost of the road and the vehicles which used it.”[[57]](#footnote-57) The World Bank report concurred, arguing that highways would encourage agricultural productivity and “reduce the psychological barriers to the spread of scientific knowledge and modern ideas, thereby facilitating economic growth as well as cultural and political development.”[[58]](#footnote-58) A basic agreement thus existed between American experts and DP politicians as to what rural development should encompass: “a road network designed to facilitate the marketization of agricultural products. The government invested in infrastructure, and the motor car was to integrate the national market.”[[59]](#footnote-59) When Menderes came to power in 1950, he invited Max Thornburg back as his special economic advisor.

During his decade in power, Menderes courted the rural vote through agricultural credits and price support programs, as well as Cabinet programs that prioritized improvements in infrastructure and transportation for rural areas throughout the 1950s.[[60]](#footnote-60) Proudly attuned to the “ideological and economic aspirations in the countryside,” and in particular, the rich and middle strata of the peasantry, the DP often faulted its predecessor for having failed to fulfill the promise of the Kemalist maxim, “the peasant is the master of the country.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Since tractors were sold on credit, the middle peasantry continued to grow, and with it the popularity of the DP’s with a rural electoral base that was increasingly integrated into the national market. Unlike the CHP, which “never allowed the nascent bourgeoisie a free hand,” Menderes’ party “promised to aid the birth of a similar class of capitalists in agriculture.”[[62]](#footnote-62) As the DP’s program of rural development took on a marketized mold, their brand of land reform increasingly became interchangeable with the construction of highways, and further entangled with technical conceptions of development and nation-making.

The modernizing thrust of roads was deemed crucial for providing outreach to rural populations, particularly those secluded in the less developed outposts of the country. In addition to breaching the gap between urban and rural settings, Turkish and American modernization theorists argued, highways were to “bring the isolated rural villages and provincial towns into direct contact with the national or ‘great’ society.”[[63]](#footnote-63) It was the “breakthrough” in transportation that would generate the “final change from one thousand Turkeys to one,” liberating these “severed cells” from the remote lives they were otherwise doomed to lead.[[64]](#footnote-64) Providing access to land that had previously been isolated or fragmented at best, roads would now facilitate their possession, categorization, and regulation.

The highway project can thus be seen as consistent with the Turkish state’s longstanding spatial approach to the “Kurdish issue,” which included policies of forced migration, resettlement, and territorial colonization.[[65]](#footnote-65) Transportation and communication infrastructures were not merely metaphors of subjugation, but had long been central components of a militarized Turkification project. Where land reform had once been equipped with the task of assimilation, it was now roads that were expected to serve as an infrastructural investment in the creation of a new Turkey: “the road has a remarkable role in eliminating the spirit of resignation, scant living, separatist differences, backwardness, and sectionalism, in short, our social and economic contrasts.”[[66]](#footnote-66) It was for this reason that the Directorate of Highways should set an example to other “government agencies” in the country: “From the laborers to the high ranking engineers, all the members of this organization share an enthusiasm that comes from the knowledge of working with modern techniques, and they have a work ethic that conquers Anatolia again.”[[67]](#footnote-67)

As the engineers, too, reconciled themselves with the task of assimilating wayward portions of the country, the kinship between their task and military conquest came to characterize depictions of new highway projects, such as the road between Rize and İspir along the northeastern coast: “In our national struggle, we were saved from enemy servitude. In this new struggle, the great men of the highways have introduced the automobile from Rize to İspir and have gained a new victory. In this great war with mountains, we move closer to our target each day, thanks to our compressors which sound like rifles.”[[68]](#footnote-68) Highway building, especially in the Eastern provinces of the nation, was explicitly framed in terms of forays into foreign territory; an imagery that was also confirmed by American observers, such as journalist Robert Hartmann, who often reported about Turkish-American military cooperation during the Korean War, and readily offered up points of comparison: “A road linking the eastern border provinces with the open Mediterranean ports of Mersin and Iskenderun would, for example, be of great value by either yardstick. East Turkey is, like the old American West, a pioneer region less developed than the rest of the country.”[[69]](#footnote-69) The analogy of the frontier, where “peopled space met empty space,” was predicated on the possibility of movement, making order out of chaos and modernity out of wilderness.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Although the Democrats tried to differentiate themselves from the Republican Party’s paternalism, Menderes started his own campaign of uplift in Kurdish areas: “as long as roads are extended, electricity and water are delivered to villages, as long as tractors and other machines enter the villager’s life, these people will no longer get carried away with superstition.”[[71]](#footnote-71) DP’s 1951-54 cabinet program identified rural roads and schools, especially in Eastern Turkey, as the government’s “locus of action,” in order to “[mobilize] our youth around the ideal of ‘Nation.’”[[72]](#footnote-72) Between 1950 and 1953, the government committed to spending more than 55 million liras in three highway administrative units and in 2,451 kilometers of roads in the region.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Still, the extension of roads remained circumscribed in regionally differentiated terms, since priority was in fact accorded to areas of economic activity in western and central Anatolia.[[74]](#footnote-74) Most state investments in eastern Turkey during this period was in the agriculture and energy sectors: “The role of the East in the regional division of labor in Turkey was to provide energy and agricultural products while being a market to the industry intensified in the West of Turkey.”[[75]](#footnote-75) As for agricultural credits and machinery, their main beneficiaries were feudal landowners who moved to Western cities, became absentee landlords, and began to engage in commercial activities that brought them closer to urban capitalists, as Ismail Beşikçi has shown.[[76]](#footnote-76) Although some members of the Kurdish elite did join DP during the 1950s, the coalition began to break towards the end of the decade, culminating in the arrest of fifty two Kurds, among them university students and members of Parliament in 1959.[[77]](#footnote-77) The military government that came to power in the 1960 coup arrested an additional 485 prominent Kurds and detained them without trial for nine months in a concentration camp in central Turkey. A Forced Settlement Law came into force the next year, deporting the most influential of the detainees to Western Turkey, and stipulating that its mission was to “demolish the order of the Middle Ages that exist in Turkey and eliminate bodies such as aghas and sheikdoms.”[[78]](#footnote-78) Populist democrats, republican elites, and the military all intervened, at one point or another, in the movement of what they perceived to be unruly populations. Their attempts to achieve control over these populations’ mobility were interlinked with different approaches to land reform: a technological vision that rested on the construction of highways and the distribution of agricultural machinery and that ended up benefiting large landowners versus a redistributionist vision, which was mostly framed in terms of breaking the large landowning formations in Kurdish areas—itself a legacy of Ottoman officials’ alliances with local elites in their efforts to subjugate nomadic groups.[[79]](#footnote-79) These competing approaches would inform both the splintering leftist politics and the US-supported right coalitions during the next two decades.

*Mexican Wheat and Land Consolidation*

Between the passage of the land reform law of 1945 and the 1960 coup, which deposed the DP government, levels of land redistribution remained low.[[80]](#footnote-80) The military regime stayed in power for eighteen months and put in place a more liberal Constitution, which allowed for rights of unionization and collective bargaining, and proposed ceilings on land holding size and farm cooperatives, though the agricultural measures were once again not implemented, given “opposition from politically powerful landowners, including cabinet members, nullified these efforts.”[[81]](#footnote-81) Despite its ouster from power by the coup, DP’s populist coalition resurfaced in various forms over the years, such as the Justice Party (JP), which resisted “even the most elementary laws and regulations concerning minimum wage, child labor, workers’ safety and right to strike, let alone the consideration of larger issues such as land reform and directive economic planning.”[[82]](#footnote-82) The modest land redistribution that had continued throughout the 1950s came to a complete halt in 1967 when JP came to power.[[83]](#footnote-83) JP’s pursuit of conservative land policy was embodied in the person of their leader, Suleyman Demirel who had spent a year in the United States as an Eisenhower fellow and was employed by the American engineering firm Morrison-Knudsen, famous for its grand dam projects across Afghanistan, Iran, and Vietnam, among others. Dubbed “Morrison Suleyman” by his critics, Demirel nonetheless served as Prime Minister five times before being elected President in 1993. His foremost legacy would be the Southeastern Anatolia Project, a massive irrigation and electrification project that resulted in the dislocation and regulation of thousands of Kurds. An additional legacy of the JP government was the consolidation of Topraksu, the soil-water general directorate, which prepared many detailed reports on agricultural irrigation, soil conservation, and land reclamation between 1967 and 1971. Topraksu’s meticulous collection of spatial soil information were important in the efforts to ease land consolidation.

Land reform debates among the country’s ruling elite did not take place in the absence of international interlocutors. In 1962, USAID funded the Rural Development Research Project, which listed a dream team of modernization theorists as its consultants: Daniel Lerner, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Sloan Wayland, Herbert Hyman, with political scientist Frederick Frey acting as the main rapporteur. Frey wrote a series of reports, in which policy considerations remained paramount, with particular emphasis on the factors that would contribute to the induction and dissemination of social change, be it mass media, local innovators or elite leadership.[[84]](#footnote-84) While Frey found communications, literacy, mobility, and the propensity to innovate to be directly correlated with modernization, he insisted that landownership had no perceivable effect on developmental prospects.

Frey had participated in the 1964 conference at MIT’s Center for International Studies, which marked the shift towards the productivity-oriented model of land reform, and findings from the Rural Development Research project in Turkey corroborated some of the conference’s discussions. Frey insisted that, although their survey was not “primarily, nor even secondarily, focused on the land ownership problem,” peasants who did own more land did not appear “more innovative, more involved with the community, or more generally ‘modern’ than other peasant farmers.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Citing Ladejinsky’s report from the conference proceedings, Frey conceded that land tenure was central to economic progress and national stability, but he much preferred a “fundamentally communications oriented theory of development. The relation between geography—relative isolation—and rural community development is quite manifest.”[[86]](#footnote-86) It was not landownership that would improve the lives of rural communities, but their exposure to different lifestyles through mass media, travel (primarily through the newly constructed highway network), and interpersonal communication.

When policymakers and businessmen convened for a seminar on “Land Reform and Economic Development” in Istanbul in 1971, presenters included representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).[[87]](#footnote-87) USAID representatives explained that their work in Turkish rural development aimed to avoid what they deemed to be the limitations of “the ‘Marshall Plan’ approach.” The consensus among rural development circles was that the mechanical technological phase of modernization had been completed with the Marshall Plan-funded arrival of agricultural machinery. It was now the time for a chemical and biological phase.[[88]](#footnote-88) One AID-commissioned report from 1964 outlined an alternative strategy that would take advantage of new opportunities, such as the establishment of a Ministry of Rural Affairs, and encourage private enterprise rather than rely on agricultural loans and counterpart funds.[[89]](#footnote-89) The report urged the creation of a new administrative unit to oversee the marketing, supply, storage, and distribution of agricultural commodities and requisites, such as fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides. As for land reform, the rapporteurs counseled support for policies that would combine methods of fragmentation with consolidation, and limiting redistribution to state, rather than private, land holdings.

The year 1965 marked a new phase in agricultural development techniques with the import of Mexican wheat to Turkey for the first time.[[90]](#footnote-90) This initiative had its roots in the Rockefeller Foundation’s Mexican Agricultural Program (MAP) dating back to 1943. Norman Borlaug, who in 1970 became the recipient of a Nobel peace prize for his innovations in plant breeding, believed that Mexican soil was lacking in organic and mineral nutrients, and after many years of experimentation, he eventually succeeded in breeding semi-dwarf wheats that would allow farmers to use high levels of nitrogen fertilizer. The Mexican wheat seeds were much celebrated and were in circulation across the global South by the early 1960s, most famously in India. The popularization of Norman Borlaug’s breeding techniques and the international circulation of these seeds across Latin America, South Asia and the Middle East was overseen by the International Maize and Improvement Center (CIMMYT).[[91]](#footnote-91)

In 1965, the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture succeeded in obtaining 20,000 tons of Mexican seeds. While USAID refused to finance the procurement under PL 480 and encouraged the Turkish government to use its own foreign exchange sources and to negotiate an off-setting agricultural development loan later, the agency did provide extension agents for the project with assistance from Oregon State University. These agents offered training for the adoption of the new seeds, which arrived alongside new supplies of nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers, which were imported and distributed through a new agricultural supply agency.

The arrival of the new material also led to the signing of a mutual cooperation agreement between the Government of Turkey and the Rockefeller Foundation on April 28, 1969, resulting in the establishment of a wheat research and training project centered in Ankara in 1970. According to official RF publications, the timing of the Turkish government’s interest in wheat research was serendipitous, since the Foundation’s plans to establish a regional program based in Lebanon had just been cancelled due to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.[[92]](#footnote-92) As Mexican wheat rapidly spread across coastal Turkey, Bill Wright, an RF agronomist was appointed as the co-director of the Ankara project along with Ahmet Demirlicakmak, a local wheat scientist. In 1971, Wright was joined by plant pathologist Michael Prescott, plant breeder Arthur Klatt, Oregon State University agronomist Floyd Bolton and finally, by economist Charles Mann, who had a joint appointment with the economics department at Middle East Technical University in Ankara.

The writings of the members of the Wheat Training and Research Project chronicle both the successes (such as the very high yield in both 1975 and 1976, likely aided by good weather) and the difficulties encountered on the field.[[93]](#footnote-93) One outcome of the program was the training of wheat scientists abroad, with joint funding from RF, USAID, and the FAO. Twenty-two scientists received graduate degrees in American universities (especially Oregon State University) and another twenty-eight received training at CIMMYT’s nine-month in-service course in Mexico. By the end of 1975, the Wheat Training and Research Project operated at twelve different locations across Turkey, working on creating high-yield, disease-resistant types of wheats.[[94]](#footnote-94) While Rockefeller scientists were leaving the country by 1975, the Turkish scientists who were returning from their training abroad were preparing to take over at the operations. Among the difficulties that the project encountered in Turkey were farmers’ resistance to adopting the new seeds and technologies, as well as the fact that the Mexican varieties were not strongly resistant to Turkish strains of two fungus diseases, septoria leaf blotch and stripe rust. One CIMMYT report noted that many farmers continued to plant a field of native durum types to eat, while growing the Mexican bread wheats to sell.[[95]](#footnote-95) Newspapers also reported that many farmers regretted swapping their cotton or tobacco fields for the new seeds, which yielded little in years of low rainfall.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Still, various Turkish governments offered cooperation through regulations that helped the efforts of the wheat research and training project. In 1975, for instance, teams of RF researchers and extensions agents set up farmer demonstration plots in Ankara provinces. The demonstrations displayed the “package” of “best” practices for tillage implements, herbicides, fertilizers, and seeding dates, based on complex experiments which were conducted at the research laboratory in Ankara. Among their recommendations were improved tillage to conserve soil moisture through the fallow season and the use of fertilizer-responsive and disease-resistant varieties of seeds. When Charles Mann, the economist, compared the costs and returns of traditional methods and those on display at the demonstrations, he concluded that “the recommended practices cost only 25 percent more than usual farmer’s practices, but output increased so much that the ratio of increased benefits to increased costs averaged over 5 to 1.”[[97]](#footnote-97) Elsewhere, Mann and other RF researchers contemplated the relationship between farm size and the beneficiaries of “improved technology,” and concluded that agro-climatic realities overshadowed farm size as the criterion of who receives the benefits from improved technology.[[98]](#footnote-98) The evaluation of new production practices in relation to “alternative enterprises in farming systems of the country” had in fact been an early rationale for the wheat research and training program.[[99]](#footnote-99)

The wheat researchers had one steadfast collaborator in Ankara who shared their interest in improved technology and alternative enterprises in farming systems of the country. This was Resat Aktan, an Ankara University agricultural economist, who conducted a field survey on 1250 farmers for the Rockefeller Foundation in 1973. The resulting study linked the adoption of the Mexican dwarf wheats with questions about land tenure status, size and fragmentation of farms, as well as questions about seeding, harvesting, fertilizing, and irrigation.[[100]](#footnote-100) Among the conclusions of the survey was that while members of farmers’ associations and cooperatives had less difficulty acquiring fertilizers, credit, and information on new farming techniques than other farmers, differences in farm size had little influence on the adoption of new varieties. The report also found and celebrated, as with other Foundation conclusions, that commercial sized farm operations were increasingly prevalent across the Anatolian plateau.

Undisclosed in this study was the fact that as with the Marshall Plan-funded machinery, the new technologies, which included pulverizers, seeds, and fertilizers were unevenly distributed. While regional variations in terms of climate soil and quality were important, members of farmers’ associations and cooperatives, which tended to be bigger farm units, were in fact more likely to acquire credit for fertilizers and information on new farming techniques than small landowning farmers.[[101]](#footnote-101) In other words, as had been the case in Mexico and India, the distribution of green revolution technologies ended up privileging commercial growers and resulted in an overall shift from subsistence agriculture to the standardization of seed types, yields, and productivity.[[102]](#footnote-102)

In a curious twist that reveals just how closely American agencies were involved with plans for land reform in Turkey during this period, Resat Aktan’s name actually does not appear on the resulting Rockefeller report, because its publication coincided with his brief stint as Minister of Agriculture in 1974, a development that the Foundation staff greeted with enthusiasm.[[103]](#footnote-103) The reason for RF’s personnel’s excitement about Aktan’s ministerial position was that the 1970s were in fact a time of turmoil and instability both in Turkish domestic politics and in Turkish-American relations. In one example, Bill Wright, the co-director of the project, complained that he dealt with 8 ministers of agriculture in the five years he spent in the country. He wrote: “it seems that just as you get one educated to the point where he can be useful, off he goes and in comes a new one who doesn’t know wheat from bananas.”[[104]](#footnote-104) Still, when USAID prepared to leave the country in 1975 in the context of the civil war between leftists and fascists, Charles Mann commented that it looked like RF’s role as a non-political institution “taking a long view” might be strengthened.[[105]](#footnote-105) As for rumors of a new military coup, Mann commented, it “could get the wheat program moving but would raise more fundamental questions.”

As for Aktan, he had long been a vocal participant in seminars on ‘land reform and economic development’ that brought together the country’s policymakers and businessmen, as well as representatives of various American agencies. Aktan’s various assessments of land reform laws and proposals (for instance, at least 11 such draft laws had been brought to Parliament between 1960 and 1971) frequently appeared in the country’s primary political science and economics journals.[[106]](#footnote-106) Aktan had in fact been involved with many of the draft laws but his evaluation tended to favor the Republican approach. While he praised the 1945 law for its attempts at “making the family farms the foundation of Turkish agriculture” and “creating a healthier society which could more easily resist economic and political tremors by satisfying the land-hungry crowds,” for instance, he criticized JP’s slogan, “we need an agricultural reform, not a land reform,” and their emphasis on the “productive management of land,” which, Aktan pointed out, prioritized “private ownership and individualistic capitalist mentality” rather than “social justice in ownership and in income distribution.”[[107]](#footnote-107) Echoing Ladejinky’s approach, Aktan was himself a firm believer in land reform as an important strategy for staving off communism, but thought that it should entail the consolidation of land rather than its fragmentation, and that the distribution of land, if any, should consist of state owned lands. Although he never mentioned his work with the Rockefeller Foundation in these articles and tried to keep separate questions about the adoption of seed types from his view about proper types of land reform, the concealment of his affiliations once again suggest the entanglements of the technological and political approaches to land reform.

*Conclusion*

In 1970, Edwin Cohn, an economic advisor to USAID and to the Turkish State Planning Organization (1961-63) as well as a member of the Mutual Security Agency’s special mission in Ankara and a lecturer at the Middle East Technical University (1963-67), wrote a report on land reform for USAID and lamented the fact that the agency and its predecessors had neglected the issue in Turkey, focusing merely on land tenure and consolidation. While Cohn attributed the reason to “the political nature of land reform,” and the “preoccupation of US advisers with raising productivity,” as well as their preference for working with large landowners, he worried that whatever the cause US advisers’ lack of interest in land reform strengthened the position of the opponents of reform, and contributed to “official inertia.”[[108]](#footnote-108) Cohn was aware that it was not land redistribution that had contributed to the recent transformation of rural Turkey, but the creation of the highway system, as well as the spread of farm machinery, irrigation techniques, the rapid use of fertilizers and specialty crops.[[109]](#footnote-109) But according to him, such solutions did little to alleviate the problem of absentee landlords in eastern Turkey, which the Justice Party—the successor to the DP—chose to ignore, and the Turkish Workers’ Party (TIP), “unrealistically” and “opportunistically” hoped to replace with collectivization.

TIP was founded by union leaders in 1961 and succeeded in securing 15 seats in Parliament during the 1965 elections, having embraced a land reform programme, as well as the Kurdish minority’s radical elements. In Aktan’s assessment, TIP’s 1966 proposal that distribution start with expropriation from private landowners was unacceptable and dangerous—a mirror image of the JP proposals from the other end of the political spectrum.[[110]](#footnote-110) By the end of the 1960s, the question of agrarian reform became a contentious point within leftist circles, as it was entangled with debates about the appropriate strategy for revolutionary politics. TIP and affiliated intellectuals, such as Korkut Boratav, believed that the Turkish economy, including in the countryside, had been sufficiently penetrated by capitalism, thereby making socialist revolution a distinct possibility. An alternative group, led by Mihri Belli (who had been the leader of the illegal communist party) and Muzaffer Erdost, believed that “in the absence of any significant land reform, the position of large semi-feudal landowners” prevailed at the expense of “the small peasant: Under these circumstances, any refusal to consider an attack on large landownership through land reform and other measures—on the grounds that large semi-feudal landownership is fading away of its own accord—constitutes a reactionary position.”[[111]](#footnote-111) The latter coalesced around the possibility of a “National Democratic Revolution,” one that would form a coalition between the proletariat, the intelligentsia, the small bourgeoisie, and bureaucratic and military personnel they deemed revolutionary in order to dismantle “the compradors and aghas backed by American imperialists.”[[112]](#footnote-112) But this particular national bloc was not to materialize. When villagers staged land occupations in Eastern Anatolia, as well as in western and central provinces in Izmir, Silivri, and Ankara, their efforts were brutally suppressed by the gendarmerie and various emergency laws declared by the military regimes that once again staged coups in 1971 and 1980.[[113]](#footnote-113)

Still, in an example of the unexpected consequences of the attempts to control mobility, Kurdish migration to western cities, which were enabled by the highway network, presented an opportunity for “interaction with fellow Kurds and different social groups in an urban context, sharing and reproducing common memories about state practices in the Kurdish regions.” As Azat Zana Gündoğan has argued, these encounters paved the way for the Eastern meetings of 1967, where Kurdish contenders clamored for roads and factories rather than police stations and gendarmerie in rallies across major Eastern cities.[[114]](#footnote-114) When the participants demanded infrastructural development, they did so in their own terms, and held the state accountable for regional underdevelopment, which they associated not with primordial ‘backwardness’ but the unequal distribution of resources and services. TIP was the only party present at the Eastern meetings, and grappled with questions as to why large landowners in the west, some of whom were influential businessmen and politicians, never figured in debates about land reform. As one Kurdish activist put it: “are the capitalist aghas in Istanbul any less agha than Kurdish ones?”[[115]](#footnote-115)

The politics of land reform had long been intermingled with population control through forced displacement and resettlement policies, as well as the uneven distribution of mechanical and chemical technologies that favored rural capitalists. Still, resilient subjects refused the simultaneously assimilationist and differentiating politics of the infrastructural state and its collusions with international developmental agencies. Upon its formation, the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) would propose alternative visions of redistribution, construction, and democratic autonomy. Such responses interfered with the efforts to organize land by dividing, consolidating or uniting it, derailing the efforts to render eastern regions more western, rural populations more urban, and the peasantry eager participants in market practices.

1. Dennis Fitzgerald, “Land Reform and Economic Development,” *Land Tenure: Proceedings of the International Conference on Land Tenure and Related Problems in World Agriculture held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1951,* eds. Kenneth Parsons, Raymond Penn, Philip Raup (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), p. 44 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kenneth Parsons, “Introduction: Land Reform and Agricultural Development,” *Land Tenure: Proceedings*, p. 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Wolf Ladejinsky, “Land Reform in Japan: A Comment,” *Land Tenure: Proceedings,* p. 225 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Afif Tannous, “Land Reform: Key to the Development and Stability of the Arab World” *Middle East Journal* 5 (1), Winter 1951, 1-20, p. 3. Emphasis in the original. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Fitzgerald, “Land Reform and Economic Development,” p. 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Williard Thorp, “Land and the Future,” p. 25 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cullather, *Hungry World,* chapter 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Ibid.,* p. 107. On the flaws of the earlier community development programs, see Nicole Sackley, “Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War” *Diplomatic History* 2013; Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Nathan Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (4), 2008, p. 584 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Nathan Citino, “The Ghosts of Development: The United States and Jordan’s East Ghor Canal” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16 (4), Fall 2014: 159-88; Nick Cullather, “Damming Afghanistan: Modernization in a Buffer State” *The Journal of American History* 89 (9), 2002: 512-37; Cyrus Schayegh, “Iran’s Karaj Dam Affair: Emerging Mass Consumerism, the Politics of Promise, and the Cold War in the Third World” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54 (3), 2012: 612-43; Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Land Reform and Social Change in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. David Hapgood and Max Millikan, *Policies for Promoting Agricultural Development: Report of a Conference on Productivity and Innovation in Agriculture in the Underdeveloped Countries* (MIT CENIS, January 1965), p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Ibid.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Wolf Ladejinksy, “Land Reform,” Hapgood and Millikan, eds., *Policies for Promoting Agricultural Development,* p. 321 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. David Seddon and Ronnie Marguiles, “The Politics of the Agrarian Question in Turkey: Review of a Debate” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (3), 1984: 28-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Keyder and Pamuk have pointed out that between 1947 and 1972, about eight percent of cultivated land had been redistributed, with only two thousandth of this having been private land. Çağlar Keyder and Şevket Pamuk, “1945 Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu Üzerine Tezler” (Theses on the 1945 Law for Providing Land to Farmers” *Yapıt* (Ocak 1984): 52-64. All translations from Turkish are mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Faruk Birtek and Çağlar Keyder, “Agriculture and the State: An Inquiry into Agricultural Differentiation and Political Alliances: The Case of Turkey” *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2), July 1975, p. 446. While this arrangement briefly benefied the wheat-growing middle farmers, the allliance between this sector and the government had come to a halt by 1936 (*ibid*., p. 457). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Faruk Birtek, “The Rise and Fall of Etatism in Turkey, 1932-1950: The Uncertain Road in the Restructuring of a Semiperipheral Economy” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 8 (3), 1985, p. 412 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Şevket Pamuk, “Agriculture and Economic Development in Turkey, 1870-2000” P. Lains and V. Pinilla, eds. *Agriculture and Economic Development in Europe since 1870* (Routledge, 2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. On peasant evasion of government targets during the war, see Şevket Pamuk, “War, State Economic Policies, and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey, 1939-45” Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury, eds. *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991). TMO was consistent with the overall state monopoly approach of the 1930s and its organization of wheat purchase and credits has been interpreted as a substitute for land reform during this era. For more, see William Hale, “Ideology and Economic Development in Turkey 1930-1945” *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 7 (2), 1980: 100-117, p. 109 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The confiscation and distribution of Armenian land in the provinces of Ankara and Diyarbakir predated the 1915 genocide. See Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property* (London and New York: Continuum Books, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Keyder and Pamuk report a 1936 speech by Ataturk: “it is imperative that every Turkish farmer family owns the land they live and work on. The sound foundation and improvement of our nation rest on this principle.” (“1945 Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu Üzerine Tezler,” p. 53) but this does not seem to have resulted in policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Kasaba explains that the resettlement of Muslim and Turkish communities became a way of limiting the mobility of others: “some of the new muhajir (immigrant) villages in central Anatolia were designed in a way that formed ribbon-like patterns around the lower reaches of the mountains, so that the migration routes of the local tribes would be blocked and the tribes would have to alter their nomadic lives” (Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Uğur Űmit Űngőr, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Fuat Dündar, *Ittihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları Iskan Politikası 1913-1919* (The Committee of Union and Progress’ Policy of Settling Muslims) (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001). Throughout the following decades, the names of villages, cities, and streets in these areas would also be changed from Kurdish, Armenian, Greek, and Arabic into “modern Turkish.” See Kerem Oktem, “The Nation’s Imprint: Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponymes in Republican Turkey.” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ilhan Tekeli, “Involuntary Displacement and the Problem of Resettlement in Turkey from the Ottoman Empire to the Present,” *Center for Migration Studies* 11 (4), 2012: 202-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları* (Parliamentary Records, Ankara), Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 14, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. On Tannous and interpretations of Ottoman land tenure, see Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 16, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 17, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 18, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25 (1), 1998 for an insightful account. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “Elite perceptions of land reform in early republican Turkey” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 27 (3), 2000, 115-141, p. 128 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Karaömerlioğlu, “Elite perceptions of land reform,” p. 130 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Soner Cağaptay, “Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8:2, 2002: 67-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See John Vanderlippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet Inonu and the Formation of the Multi-Party System, 1938-1950* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005) for a full account. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. For a fine-grained account of Menderes’ life and career, leading up to his hanging by the military junta in 1961, see Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Menderes’in Dramı, 1899-1960,* Menderes’ Drama (Istanbul: Remzi, 1960) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Yahya Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi* The Economic History of the Republican Era (Ankara: Yurt Yayıncılık, 1982), pp. 328-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 16, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 16, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, June 1, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Ibid.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *TBMM Meclis Tutanakları*, Dönem 7, Cilt 17, May 14, 1945 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See Yahya Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi*, pp. 327-31 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. According to the plan, nearly half of the financing would be achieved through foreign aid and loans and credits (which presented a remarkable break with the plans from the 1930s). Between 1948 and 1952 Turkey received 100 million dollars from Truman Doctrine funds, 349.02 million dollars from Marshall Plan funds, and an estimated 587 million dollars in military aid (some of which was used for highway construction). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Between 1948 and 1958, the number of tractors in the country increased from 1,750 to 40,000, and the length of all-weather roads from 9,264 kilometers to 22,000 kilometers. İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Savaş Sonrası Ortamında 1947 Türkiye İktisadi Kalkınma Planı* Turkey’s 1947 Economic Development Plan in the Postwar Context (Ankara: Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1974), pp. 24-5. Also see Ecehan Balta, “1945 Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu: Reform mu karşı reform mu?” “The 1945 Law for Providing Land to Farmers: Reform or Counter-reform?” *Praksis* (5) 2002: 277-98. Also imported through the Marshall Plan were thousands of tractor plows, grain drills, cultivators, mowers, and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Russell Dorr’s speech in the wake of his departure from Turkey, RG 469, Entry 1399, Box 41, Folder: Russell Dorr Speeches (RG 469, Records of US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, Mission to Turkey, National Archives, College Park, Maryland) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. United States Department of State, *Aid to Turkey: Agreement between the United States of America and Turkey*. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Çağlar Keyder, “The Cycle of Sharecropping and the Consolidation of Small Peasant Ownership in Turkey” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 10 (2-3), 1983: 130-45, p. 141 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Dorr to Dickinson, December 8, 1949. RG 469, Entry 1399, Box 25, Folder: Roads-1950. Records of US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Max Thornburg, *Turkey, An Economic Appraisal (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1949),* p. 109 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Ibid.,* pp. 66, 108, and 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Harold Hilts, *Türkiye’nin Yol Durumu*, Turkey’s Highway Situation, p. 26 (Report delivered to the Ministry of Public Works, February 1948, Ankara). The Records of the General Directorate of Highways, Ankara, Turkey (KGM Records hereafter) [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. A total of 43,101,226 million dollars in aid was spent for highway construction over the years. *TC Bayındırlık Bakanlığı ile Amerikan Yardım Heyeti Arasında 26 Nisan 1948 Tarihinde Yapılan Antlaşmanın Kopyası* Copy of the Agreement signed between the Turkish Ministry of Public Works and the American Aid Group on April 26, 1948 (Ankara: TC Bayındırlık Bakanlığı Şose ve Köprüler Reisliği). The agreement was signed between Harold Hilts of the BPR and Kasım Gülek, the Minister of Public Works (KGM Records). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Frank Schipper, “Changing the face of Europe: European road mobility during the Marshall Plan years” *The Journal of Transport History* 28 (2): 211-228, p. 215 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Thornburg, *Turkey, an Economic Appraisal*, pp. 76 and 86 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Barker et al., *The Economy of Turkey: An Analysis and Recommendations for a Development Program* (Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1951), p. 121 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class* *A Study in Capitalist Development* (London: Verso, 1987), pp. 127-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-34. See the Program announced for May 22, 1950 and March 8, 1951 cited in Faik Kırbaşlı, *1920-1972 Döneminde Kalkınmada Öncelikli Yörelere İlişkin Hükümet Programları* Government Programs Pertaining to Regions of Priority for Development between 1920 and 1972 (Ankara: TC Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973), p. 108 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Çağlar Keyder, “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy,” *New Left Review* (115), 1979, pp. 16-7. On Menderes’ populist democracy, see Reşat Kasaba, “Populism and Democracy in Turkey, 1949-1961” *Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law, and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993) and

    Taner Timur, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş* The Transition to Multi-Party Life in Turkey (Istanbul: Iletişim, 1991) [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Keyder, “The Political Economy of Turkish Democracy,” p. 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Haluk Űlman and Frank Tachau, “Turkish Politics: The Attempt to Reconcile Rapid Modernization with Democracy”, p. 154 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Frederick Frey, “Political Development, Power, and Communications in Turkey” in Lucian Pye, ed. *Communications and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 319; Cavit Tütengil, *İçtimai ve İktisadi Bakımdan Türkiye’nin Karayolları*, p. 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Zeynep Gambetti and Joost Jongerden, *The Kurdish Issue in Turkey: A Spatial Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Joost Jongerden, *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds: An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Tütengil, *İçtimai ve İktisadi Bakımdan Türkiye’nin Karayolları*, p. 163. It is interesting to note that throughout the 1930s, Bill proposals regarding the extension of railways into Eastern territories also emphasized that it was through this mode of transportation that “the difference between eastern and western provinces [would] disappear.” Meeting on the Law Proposal for a Railway to Connect the Sivas-Erzurum Line with Malatya, Parliamentary Debate on May 20, 1933 cited in Bilsay Kuruç, *Belgelerle Türkiye İktisat Politikası 2. Cilt (1933-1935)* Turkey’s Political Economy with Documents (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1988), p. 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Tütengil, *İçtimai ve İktisadi Bakımdan Türkiye’nin Karayolları*, p. 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Lütfi Yeleşen, *Karayolları Bülteni* 4 (38), December 1953 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Robert Hartmann, “Turkish Production Boosted by ECA” in *Uncle Sam in Turkey* (New York: Turkish Information Office, 1951), p. 29 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Daniel Rodgers, “American Exceptionalism Revisited,” *Raritan* [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Menderes’ statement to the Press, December 21, 1952, cited in Ahmad and Ahmad, *Türkiye’de Çok Partili Politika*, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Kırbaşlı, *1920-1972 Döneminde Kalkınma*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. “Doğudaki İllerimizin Kalkındırılması İçin.” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Reports on early project completion dates included the road between Pendik, Gebze and Izmit, just outside of Istanbul or the road between Akhisar and Gördes, which would deliver the industrial and agricultural goods of Izmir and the Aegean region to Central Anatolia and back to the port of Izmir (*Karayollari Bülteni* Highway Bulletin 1(3), January 1951). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Gündoğan, “Space and state-making,” p. 403. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğuda Değişim ve Yapısal Sorunlar* Change and Structural Problems in the East (Ankara: Sevinç, 1969). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Kerem Yavaşça, “‘Sark Meselesi’nden ‘Doğu Sorunu’na: Ellili Yıllarda Kürt Sorunu,” From the Eastern Issue to the Eastern Problem: the Kurdish Problem during the 1950s in Mete Kaan Kaynar, ed. *Türkiye’nin 1950’li yılları*, Turkey’s 1950s Decade, (Istanbul: Iletişim, 2015), p. 585-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Kendal Nezan, “Kurdistan in Turkey” in *People without a Country,* p. 65 cited in Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, “The White Turkish Man’s Burden: Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey” in Guido Rings and Anne Ife (eds.), *Neo-colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): pp. 155-174. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Nilay Özok-Gündoğan, “Ruling the Periphery, Governing the Land: The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in Kurdistan, 1840-1870” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34 (1), 2014: 160-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. 1.8 million hectares were distributed to 370,000 peasants, which amounted to less than half the official target. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Edwin Cohn, *Land Reform in Turkey* (Washington: Agency for International Development, 1970), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Reşat Kasaba, “Populism and Democracy in Turkey, 1949-1961” *Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law, and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), p. 55 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. In 1950 the families that tilled their own land was 2.3 million, in 1963 it was 3.1 million. Ecehan Balta, “1945 Çiftçiyi Topraklandırma Kanunu” [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Frederick Frey and Leslie L. Roos, *Report No. 10: Social Structure and Community Development in Rural Turkey: Village and Elite Leadership Relations* (1967); Frey, *Report No. 4: Regional Variations in Rural Turkey* (1966); Frey, *Report No. 3: The Mass Media and Rural Development in Turkey* (1966); Frey and Roos, *Report No. 7: The Propensity to Innovate among Turkish Peasants* (1967); Frey and Noralou Roos, *Report No. 5: Age as a Factor in Turkey’s Rural Development* (1967). All reports were published by CENIS in Cambridge. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
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