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# The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey

M. ASIM KARAÖMERLİOĞLU

'Only one peasant stronghold remained in or around the neighbourhood of Europe and the Middle East –Turkey,' wrote historian Eric Hobsbawm, 'where the peasantry declined, but in the mid-1980s, still remained an absolute majority.'<sup>1</sup> One can argue that Hobsbawm made a mistake or exaggerated a little. Statistics, however, confirm the historian's point.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, until recently Turkey remained a 'peasant country', and the consequences of this fact, usually unnoticed, have had great impact on the social and intellectual life of the country.

The structural reasons behind the predominance of a peasant economy and society in Turkey have been investigated to a great extent, owing largely to the extensive development of the fields of economic history and political economy. However, the subjective factors such as ideas and culture that helped shape and reproduce this phenomenon have not been studied adequately. The role and impact of ideas are essential, for they are the factors which affect the *specific* ways of historical development, especially when they inspire political movements or become institutionalized as part of a state policy. This paper argues that, as far as the intellectual level is concerned, the lack of a consistent, well-devised, serious and prolonged urban and industrial policy and the predominance of a peasantist outlook among the ruling circles of the single-party regime contributed to the persistence of a predominantly peasant society for much of the twentieth century in Turkey. In other words, the ambiguities and eclecticism of the ruling circles, hesitantly pretending to embrace an urban and industrial outlook on the one hand, and embracing a peasantist one on the other, most probably helped sustain a huge peasant mass. In order to substantiate this argument, we shall analyse the peasantist ideology, whose significance in Turkish intellectual history is underestimated, although it gained widespread currency among the intelligentsia of the 1930s. We shall focus on the People's Houses since this institution was directly founded for the purpose of disseminating the propaganda of the governing People's Republican Party (RPP) and mobilized in its activities the prominent

intellectuals and officials of the time. In this respect, we examine first the establishment of the People's Houses and then its peasantist activities and ideology.

In 1932 the Republican People's Party established the People's Houses as adult education centres to conduct cultural, sporting and educative activities.<sup>3</sup> In general, the Houses were expected to propagate the principles of the ruling RPP. Among the extraordinary indigenous developments that foreshadowed the founding of the People's Houses was the surprising success of the new opposition party, the Free Party [Serbest Fırka], in 1930 which unexpectedly appealed to a significant number of people.<sup>4</sup> This multi-party experience strengthened the culture of fear, a deeply rooted mentality in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic, that times were volatile and that the enemies of the Kemalist régime were consolidating their power for their 'separatist' goals.<sup>5</sup> This attitude of the ruling circles shaped the mood of the Third Republican People's Party Congress of 1931, in which a series of new politico-ideological measures were taken, among them the founding of People's Houses. These measures mostly involved redefining the relationship between the Party and the state. For instance, governors of cities also became Party leaders of the cities. The Party-state control of any non-state institution allowed to continue in existence was strengthened. The rhetoric was 'unifying the forces' and it increasingly shaped the attitudes of the ruling elite for the coming two decades. For the sake of 'unifying the forces', many institutions which were outside absolute governmental control were forced to 'join' the state-controlled institutions such as the People's Houses.<sup>6</sup>

In the light of this mentality that the activities of the People's Houses can be better understood. The People's Houses embodied the project of replacing any autonomous pre-existing intellectual and political associations. One of the most important of these organizations at the time was the Turkish Hearths [*Türk Ocakları*], founded in 1912 to spread Turkish nationalism.<sup>7</sup> This institution, like the Free Party, was perceived to be a political threat, or at least an alternative to the Kemalist leadership. That the People's Houses even used all the former buildings of Turkish Hearths, which were forced to shut down, reveals the extent of the replacement.<sup>8</sup> Hamdullah S. Tanrıöver, the director of the Hearths, later accused the RPP of resorting to totalitarian tactics in closing his institution. He claimed that the purpose of the People's Houses resembled the totalitarian practices prevailing in Germany and Soviet Russia.<sup>9</sup>

The mass support given to the Free Party alarmed the Republican People's Party, for it indicated that the Kemalist Revolution had not reached the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the RPP established the People's Houses as propaganda institutions in order to spread the principles

of Kemalism,<sup>11</sup> which were barely supported by the average people. This was especially true as far as the rural population, which made up almost 80 per cent of Turkey's population, was concerned.<sup>12</sup> It is within this context that the People's Houses increasingly resorted to utilizing a peasantist ideology.

This is also the context within which we can understand why the People's Houses were perceived as adult education centres. Not only in Turkey, but also in many European countries of the 1930s, adult education centres flourished. The German and Central European experiences especially exemplified the success of adult education centres and influenced the Turkish intelligentsia.<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, in the early 1930s the state sent several intellectuals and officials to Europe in order to examine institutions of adult education in Europe.<sup>14</sup> The result was that in many of the writings of the ruling elite of the early 1930s we see an emphasis on the necessity of adult education. In the speech with which he opened the People's Houses in 1932, Kemal Atatürk pointed out that an education system not supported and complemented by adult education could never achieve nationalist goals.<sup>15</sup> According to the RPP elite, the People's Houses were supposed to create a mass society which in turn would serve to create the true nation.<sup>16</sup>

To motivate and transform ordinary people were not the only goals of the People's Houses. Also important was to mobilize the intelligentsia, who could in turn be used for educating ordinary people. The problem was not that Turkey lacked intellectuals who could spread the ideology of the new regime, but that the Turkish intelligentsia, according to many contemporaries, was unwilling to take on the task of serving the principles of the revolution.<sup>17</sup> The contemporaries pointed out the loss of enthusiasm among the Turkish intelligentsia and the upper classes for the Kemalist reforms. The complaints of two prominent Kemalist writers in this regard demonstrate the apathy among the intelligentsia of the early 1930s. Writing in 1933, Falih Rıfkı Atay claimed that nothing since 1914 had occupied the attention of ruling circles so much as beauty contests. According to him, the word 'revolution' had recently become tiresome to the people. 'The words of revolution and regime,' continued Atay, 'were met by the question "still?" by the journalists.'<sup>18</sup> Likewise, in 1934 Y. Kadri Karaosmanoğlu noted that he had seen the most enthusiastic gathering of the previous ten years in the famous Ankara Palas Hotel, where a French fashion exhibition was taking place.<sup>19</sup> As these examples show, by the early 1930s the state desperately needed to extend its influence among the intelligentsia. Many official speeches made it clear that intellectuals should join the people in the cause of totally transforming the country.<sup>20</sup> Intellectuals should communicate with the people in ways that ordinary people could

understand.<sup>21</sup> In this respect, the People's Houses were regarded as places where intellectuals and ordinary people should meet and bridge the gap that had widened between them, and between the urban and rural population.<sup>22</sup> The peasantist ideology and activities in the People's Houses were perceived as the key to bridge these gaps.

The People's Houses gave a special role and significance to its Peasantist Divisions [Köycülük Kolları] which was one of the nine divisions necessary to establish a People's House.<sup>23</sup> The basic duty of the Peasantist Divisions was 'the development of social, medical and aesthetic aspects of villages while establishing mutual respect and solidarity with the city dwellers'. In order to do so, the members of the Peasantist Divisions should go to the villages, give theatrical performances there and do anything that could 'enlighten' the peasants. Some villages were chosen as models for the nearby villages. The overall aim of all these, it was claimed, was to create prosperous and educated Turkish peasants.<sup>24</sup>

The cultural advancement of peasants remained an outstanding concern for the Peasantist Divisions of the People's Houses. Such an attitude is reminiscent of the habit of many intellectuals in developing countries to emphasize culture in general and ideology in particular. They believe that the right ideology will solve their country's problems. Similarly, the People's Houses, more than anything else, focused on raising the cultural level of the people. For this reason, the aim of defining the intellectual basis of the peasantist ideology was given priority.<sup>25</sup> Owing to the need to establish an ethos, in its first issue *Ülkü*, the official organ of the Ankara People's House, announced what kind of articles it aimed to publish as far as the peasants were concerned. The articles had to focus on 'interpreting the significance of the peasantist ideas for the sake of the future of the country', 'showing youth the honour of working for the villages', 'improving the cultural and material life of peasants', and 'reforming village life on the basis of local conditions.'<sup>26</sup>

The Peasantist Divisions of the People's Houses were the most active. In their inaugural year, the divisions had 2,908 members nationwide, and by 1940 there were 154,000. In the same year, their members visited over two thousand villages all over the country.<sup>27</sup> Visiting villages was the most important activity of the Peasantist Divisions. *Ülkü* depicted a typical village visit as follows:

First the flag is hoisted while the people are singing the national anthem. After this ceremony, the high officials and members of the People's Houses mix with the people. They donate books and journals to the peasants and doctors take care of the diseased peasants. Then, everybody listens to authentic music sung by local youth, and watches

sporting activities. Usually some members of the Dramatics Divisions of the People's Houses perform a theatrical show and at the end of the day the visitors return to the cities.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most important aims of these village visits was to bridge the gap between the city intellectuals and the people. The visits were intended to allow both the intellectuals and the peasants to become better acquainted, as previously they had been separated culturally and geographically.<sup>29</sup> The village visits also offered both parties practical guidance. Experts in several fields gave advice to the peasants on topics such as how to increase agricultural productivity, how to market products, how to establish producer co-operatives and the like. The members of the People's Houses led the commemoration of national festivals including the newly inaugurated 'Land Festival'. Medical care of the peasants was always a significant task of the visits. The Divisions not only worked in the villages, but also organized groups to help peasants visiting cities. Especially when peasants had any demands from or problems with the officials, the members of the divisions supported them in their dealings with officialdom. Furthermore, the collection of authentic, folkloric data from different regions became an important task, and this constituted one of the most important and lasting effects of these village visits.<sup>30</sup> The national culture was enhanced by the anthropological, linguistic and musical information which was gathered. For instance, the famous Hungarian composer Bela Bartok was invited by the People's Houses to help collect Anatolian folk songs in villages.

In addition to the People's Houses, the government established the People's Rooms [*Halkodaları*] in 1939. These small versions of the People's Houses established in the villages so enabled the members of the Peasantist Divisions to visit irrespective of the weather conditions and the lack of transportation facilities. The project of the People's Rooms then aimed to extend the activities of the People's Houses to the entire year and control the villages from within.<sup>31</sup> The People's Rooms were also expected to resolve local difficulties and prevent cases being brought before the city courts, thereby saving time and energy for both the courts and the peasants.<sup>32</sup> Needless to say, as in the People's Houses, only RPP members or state officials could be directors of the Rooms; and their activities, like those of the People's Houses, were strictly controlled by the RPP.<sup>33</sup>

Neither the Peasantist Divisions nor the People's Rooms succeeded in transforming the Turkish countryside. In the first place, the structure of villages in Anatolia made such an attempt incredibly difficult. The size of an average village in Turkey was small, and villages were so widely dispersed throughout the country that it was quite impossible to reach all of them. In other words, there were material impediments to reaching the

diversely settled Anatolian peasants. More importantly, however, the mentality that prevailed in the People's Houses became an obstacle in achieving the goal of allowing intellectuals to mix with the peasants. First, the bureaucratic nature of these activities impeded progress towards transforming the countryside. For example, the villages to be visited were notified officially beforehand so that the peasants could make the necessary preparations. The state and Party were so concerned to control any autonomous and creative activity that local initiative was stifled by bureaucratic pressure. It should have been obvious from the outset that such an approach would hardly win the hearts and minds of the peasants.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the members of the People's Houses looked on the peasants as objects of social engineering. This attitude, however, only increased the rural population's distrust of the intellectuals and city-dwellers, which, in the eyes of the peasants, was deep rooted.<sup>35</sup>

The village visits of the People's Houses ended in a fiasco. Fay Kirby characterizes the people who participated in these village visits as 'foreign tourists or travelers who try to discover the dark corners of Africa'.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, as Cavit Tütengil contends, the village visits did not go beyond the 'picnics' of intellectuals in summertime. Even the goals that the Peasantist Divisions set for themselves were not realized, except for a few collections of anthropological and cultural information about the countryside of Turkey.<sup>37</sup> Even if they had been able to achieve their goals, the nature and extent of their aims were such that the real problems of the peasants would not have been solved. The focus of peasantist activities of the People's Houses was mostly limited to the cultural sphere. It was argued that raising the consciousness of Turkey's peasants would solve all their problems. While a change in social and economic relations was required, the People's Houses were content merely with changing the peasants' outlook. It was obvious that these endeavours were doomed to fail from the outset.

Life in rural Turkey remained largely unchanged by the People's Houses because they failed to transform the rural structure. This fact should not lead us to downplay the significance of peasantist ideas. Ironically, the impact of these ideas was more on the intellectuals than on the peasants. For this reason, we must examine in detail the cultivation of the peasantist ideology among the intelligentsia.

Before focusing on the 1930s, we should note the existence of peasantist activities in the late Ottoman Empire. During this period, the emergence of peasantist leanings went hand in hand with the emergence of Turkish nationalism. The concern for the peasants started during the Second Constitutional Period (1908–18),<sup>38</sup> especially in the pages of the influential journal *Türk Yurdu*. In this journal, Yusuf Akçura and particularly Helpfand-

Parvus,<sup>39</sup> time and again emphasized the significance of the peasant support for the nationalist ideology and movement.<sup>40</sup> We see the first peasantist movement after the First World War. After the War, 15 medical doctors established the Peasantist Association [Köycüler Cemiyeti] and decided to go 'to the people' in order to educate the peasants in their struggle against the hardships of the village environment and offered them medical assistance. They also helped organize an anti-resistance movement in this region until 1920, when the growing foreign invasion of the Empire made it impossible for them to continue their activities.<sup>41</sup> Among them was Dr Reşit Galip, the later Minister of Education in the early 1930s, who assumed the leadership of this organization. Although these young and idealistic doctors worked among the peasants in Western Anatolia like religious missionaries, nothing significant remained from their experience. After the foundation of the Republic in 1923 until the early 1930s intellectual and practical concerns of the new regime about the peasants did not go beyond simple words such as the peasant as 'the real master of the nation'.<sup>42</sup>

It was in the 1930s that the peasantist ideas began spreading among the Turkish intelligentsia, especially among those who wrote in *Ülkü*. A study of peasantist thought in this period should focus on *Ülkü* for it represented the dominant views among the ruling and intellectual circles. The names of the *Ülkü* contributors reveal the significance of the journal since many leading RPP and state officials, famous intellectuals and academics, wrote in this semi-official journal.<sup>43</sup> However, *Ülkü* was not an ideologically strict and theoretically monolithic journal. This was partly due to the fact that Kemalism as an ideology neither intended to be monolithic, nor was it so in reality. In other words, the ambiguity of Kemalism was reflected in the pages of this journal as well.<sup>44</sup>

Around 1932 the interest in developing the villages gained momentum in Turkey. As a matter of fact, this was a world-wide phenomenon between the two world wars, in part due to the Great Depression, which was seen as a result of urbanization and industrialization, and in part because of the catastrophic drought of the early 1930s which made the problem of agricultural production extremely crucial. Historian Ö. Lütfi Barkan reveals the changing ideological orientation of the times in 1935:

Today even the most leading industrialized countries take all kinds of precautions by jealously preserving peasant life against the proletariat, which shows the internationalist and revolutionary trends, and against the political currents which desire to pull the peasants into the cities and evacuate the countryside. In order to do so, they consider villages and village life the abundant and clear resource of national life and the instrument for social stability.<sup>45</sup>



Turkey surely was not an exception. Much evidence can be cited for the interest in villages and villagers during this time. Official speeches, including Kemal Atatürk's, started paying more attention to the development of the countryside arguing that Turkey's most crucial task lay in developing the villages; the members of the People's Houses considered the peasantist activities as supremely important and attempted to mobilize their forces about this issue; students and teachers were encouraged to go to villages in the summer; and, last but not least, the Ministry of Education started devising projects on improving education in villages.<sup>46</sup>

Although the peasantist ideology became quite influential in the early Republican Turkey, the characteristics of this ideology still await an in-depth analysis. This essay will endeavour to highlight the main characteristics of this ideology: its anti-urbanist and anti-industrialist bias, the exaltation of villages and peasants, its attitude toward Westernization, and finally its perception of education as the motor of rural transformation. These characteristics can be seen in peasantists such as N. Köymen, who had formed peasantist principles and who presented this ideology in detail. Although this peasantist worldview differed somewhat from the official perceptions of the peasantry, it is important to note that their similarities exceeded their differences, so this discussion of the characteristics of peasantist ideology transcends the pure, full-fledged peasantists and helps us to understand the ideological orientation of many of the ruling elites of the time.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the peasantist ideology in Turkey was its denunciation of urbanization. Other peasantist ideologies, such as that under the Third Reich in Germany, also had anti-urban biases, but in this and other examples the consequences of industrialization and the fear of the growing working class consciousness and activities occupied a more central role. In Turkey the crucial question was not being for or against industry, notwithstanding the fact that many of the peasantists had critical attitudes towards it. They all agreed on the necessity for a national industry but their concern was the formation of an industry which would favour the peasants. Interestingly enough, they were for *industry* but against *industrialization*, a term they used to refer to the historical experience of Western Europe. These intellectuals envisaged an industrial development which would not dislocate the bulk of the population in the countryside and would not dissolve the traditional relations of production while improving the technological structure.<sup>47</sup>

It was the cities, especially the big cities, the Turkish peasantists claimed, which symbolized the worst of all possible worlds. Cities embodied cosmopolitanism, class struggle, unemployment, economic depressions, workers' strikes, insecurities of all kinds, less social control

and degeneration of all sorts<sup>48</sup> According to Köymen, for example, it was urbanization, not industrialization, which was the root cause of all social problems since urbanization preceded industrialization. Although he accepts that social problems related to urbanization rose to unprecedented levels with the rise of industrialization, their origins still lay in the formation of cities, not in industrialization *per se*. In the cities, even before industrialization, Köymen argued, one saw social problems such as class struggles, which should be avoided by all means.<sup>49</sup>

According to the peasantist ideology, one of the most important concerns was to prevent migration to the cities. This was, of course, a corollary of the anti-urban bias of peasantist ideology. For this reason, attaching the peasants to the countryside became a major concern of the peasantists. They accordingly argued that it was essential to develop the villages in order to bond the peasants to them; otherwise the peasant might attempt to seek in the city the rights and comfort he lacked in the village.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that the peasantists were also against small and dispersed villages, as much as they opposed big cities. There were two reasons: on the one hand, small villages scattered randomly throughout the nation were quite difficult to incorporate into national life because of economic infeasibility. In other words, such a village structure could not benefit from economies of scale. Secondly, it was difficult to establish state authority in these smaller villages.<sup>51</sup>

The critical attitude of the peasantists towards urbanization went hand in hand with their resentment of the city dwellers. Many articles written from a peasantist outlook and many surveys and reports from villages identified the peasants' deep hostility towards the urban population.<sup>52</sup> It should be noted, however, that the target of this hostility was not distinct social groups, but the abstract city dweller. So an imagined contradiction was presented between the city and rural population.

The peasantists resented the uneven development of the city and the countryside. They claimed that cities and villages should benefit from the same rights and privileges but in reality the situation was quite to the disadvantage of villages. In a sense, the peasantists argued that what was needed was an equalization between the living and learning conditions of the villages and cities. They believed that the peasants were discriminated against. For example, the taxes taken from the peasants, they contended, were spent for public works in cities. For these reasons, what was necessary was bending the stick to the other side, since for centuries cities had been thriving at the expense of villages. Although village life was superior to city life, so they argued, owing to the power of the cities the villages had been exploited by the cities.<sup>53</sup> According to Köymen, the 'unproductive' cities had the economic, cultural, administrative and civilizational power which made

it possible for the city dwellers to exploit the 'productive' peasants even though the wealth and power of the cities depended on the sacrifices of the villagers.<sup>54</sup> A similar mentality in the West, the argument went, led to one of the most important mistakes of human history by creating the division of labour unfavourable to villages.<sup>55</sup>

The dominance of cities and city people over the countryside, according to the peasantists, led to the misconception that villages were simple extensions and complements of cities. In other words, the mistake that many intellectuals made was to regard villages as small entities dependent on cities. In reality, they argued, cities were the ones which were dependent on the villages and it was a great mistake to relate the development of villages to urban development. Cities, in fact, were just the complements of villages, which offered them market places for agricultural products and functioned as centres of public works for villages, but not centres in themselves. In this respect, many argued, a city was nothing more than a big village.<sup>56</sup>

The peasantists' strong hostility towards urbanization coexisted with the glorification of village life and peasants. The peasantists portrayed a utopian and unrealistic village life and economy to foster their cause. Peasants were the pure, unspoiled, noble, intelligent, flexibly thinking people who made up the roots of the Turkish nation and the motor of national development.<sup>57</sup> In this respect, they always harshly criticized the Ottoman Empire for favouring cities at the expense of villages. According to them, this attitude was the consequence of the anti-nationalist and anti-peasantist character of the Ottoman Empire. They saw a correlation between urbanism and anti-nationalism. During the Ottoman Empire, their argument went, the national identity and national culture were lost (as if they had really existed!) since Ottoman intellectuals were individualistic and did not have the sense of community consciousness, and were perceived to be antithetical to the peasantist ideology. According to them, the Ottoman intellectuals achieved no more than ornamental writings about the peasants.<sup>58</sup>

Although numerous factors were cited for the superiority of village life, such as the fact that villages had good weather for child rearing and were less vulnerable than cities for national defence,<sup>59</sup> three areas of purported superiority of village life and people enable a better understanding of peasantist ideology: finding the 'true' Turkish culture and race in villages, the eminence of the peasant economy, and the conservatism of the peasants.

In the 1930s many peasantists emphasized that villages were the places where the 'pure' culture of the nation was preserved intact.<sup>60</sup> As a matter of fact, although the peasantist extensively used the notion of superiority, the perception that villages contained the origins of national culture cannot be attributed exclusively to peasantist ideology. The idea of 'pure cultural traits preserved in the countryside' had a long history in nationalist rhetoric all

over the world, including the Turkish one. The outstanding Young Turk ideologue, Ziya Gökalp, for one, stressed such a notion of pure cultural traits that could be found among the villagers as early as the 1900s.<sup>61</sup> Many nationalist movements, regardless of whether they had a peasantist orientation or not, believed in finding the roots of national culture and identity in villages. This is understandable from a nationalist perspective since cities embodied cosmopolitanism with their ethnically, culturally and economically mixed nature.

Another presumably superior feature of villages was their preservation of the Turkish race. It is beyond the aims of this paper to discuss whether the peasantists, in particular the People's Houses, engaged in racist activities and endorsed a racist outlook, or to what extent its activities and publications evinced racism.<sup>62</sup> There were certainly racist elements, such as biological and anthropological research in search of the Turkish race, the use of the concept *ırk* with reference to blood,<sup>63</sup> discussions on how the Turkish language and race are superior to others and the like. Apparently, the peasantist ideologues frequently used a racist rhetoric to make their cases.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, their perception of race also included respecting other races and cultures.<sup>65</sup> The peasantist rhetoric on this issue was much less aggressive and exclusive than the German *Blut und Boden* ideology in the same peasantist context.<sup>66</sup>

The second merit of villages and peasants, according to the peasantists, stemmed from the supposed superiority of the agricultural economy over the urban and industrial economies. They worshipped the petty production characteristics of the agrarian economy, for this made it possible to use the household as the basic unit of production. The household economy of rural life enabled the peasants to stay away from the harsh alienation in the workplace, a negative phenomenon characteristic of industrial production.<sup>67</sup> Since the producers owned their own land, they were more motivated and interested, economically and psychologically, in their work. This in turn enabled the survival of a more harmonious society due to the fact that household production did not necessitate wage labour, a category perceived to corrupt not only the workplace but also the society as a whole.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the peasantists glorified the countryside for the absence of a working class.<sup>69</sup>

It was small agrarian production, Köymen argued, which fed the world throughout the ages. Yet, it was not 'money' but 'joy' that was at the centre of this production, unlike the industrial commercialized economies. The agrarian economies relied on 'honesty' and 'trust', unlike the corrupt economic transactions in the cities, which once more indicated the superior feature of rural to urban production.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, there was a more important characteristic of small agrarian production: its tendency to self-

sufficiency. According to the peasantist rhetoric, self-sufficiency was a crucial feature of the Turkish agrarian economy. Indeed, did not the Great Depression once more vindicate the extraordinary necessity and advantage of self-sufficiency?<sup>71</sup>

The third merit of the peasants was that they did not make up a restless and an internationalist class like the urban working class; rather they were characterized by conservatism. According to Köymen, this conservatism was the 'social insurance' against the moral deterioration of the cities.<sup>72</sup> For one thing, most peasants had at least a small amount of property, which made them in some sense entrepreneurs and prevented their turning into a 'proletariat'.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, industrialization in the cities, according to Köymen, created a division of labour in which humans were reduced to mere extensions of machines.<sup>74</sup> Like many peasantists around the world, the Turkish advocates of this ideology thought that workers were subject to lose their personal character due to the harsh division of labour brought about by industrialization.<sup>75</sup>

Given the hostility toward urbanization and industrialization together with the glorification of the village life and people, it is no surprise that the peasantists developed a hostile rhetoric toward Westernization. This is because Western Europe historically embodied many characteristics that were antithetical to the peasantist ideology. The peasantists advocated the predominance of agriculture in the economy and argued that the path Turkey should take had to be determined by its own historical conditions.<sup>76</sup> Besides, peasantists such as Köymen held a critical theoretical position towards Westernization since the discrepancy between cities and villages, first and foremost, was a phenomenon of the West. Furthermore, Köymen insisted repeatedly that the Great Depression was the product of the urban and industrial Western civilization, which was going through a deep crisis.<sup>77</sup> What the peasantists inferred from this historical experience was that the West should not be an example for the future development of Turkey. As a matter of fact, peasantist ideology and its principles were apparently at odds with the two major historical developments that took place in the West, namely urbanization and industrialization. We should, of course, note that the world of the 1930s was one of the best periods for such critiques of Westernization to flourish. After all, the Great Depression, perceived to be an inherently Western and urban phenomenon with its horrible consequences, made it quite difficult to be an ardent supporter of Westernization.

The hostile rhetoric of the peasantists towards Westernization also reflects their assumptions about the world-wide division of labour. They developed a theory of exploitation of the rural world by the industrialized West. The latter developed its wealth at the expense of the former. In this

way, the Turkish peasantists carried the logic of the urban versus rural dichotomy inside Turkey to the world scale. They developed a theory of division of labour in the world between the urban/industrial and rural/agricultural countries. Since the West exemplified the first, it is no surprise that they developed a critical attitude toward Westernization.<sup>78</sup>

We should note, in passing, that it was not only the peasantists, but other small groups as well who had a similar attitude toward Westernization in the 1930s. One group consisted of the intellectuals grouped around the famous journal *Kadro*. This journal, like the peasantists, championed a different developmental path for Turkey, although one remarkably different from that endorsed by the peasantists. The *Kadro* writers offered a 'third' way different from both liberalism and socialism, but their vision was mostly an urban and industrial one. They harshly condemned the West for its imperialism, liberalism, democracy and individualism. They were particularly critical of the French Revolution and its individualistic and liberal principles. According to the *Kadro* contributors, it was justifiable to adopt Western methods and techniques since they belonged to the entire humanity. The fact that at the time these methods and techniques were found only in the West, those intellectuals thought, stemmed from Western exploitation of the world. In other words, the non-Western countries also had a share in the formation of Western methods and techniques. They also saw no problem in adopting Western social theories insofar as they were useful for their own goals. *Kadro* frequently criticized pro-Western journals and newspapers and condemned the inferiority complex towards the West which prevailed among many Turkish intellectuals.<sup>79</sup>

How should one explain the juxtaposition of a critical attitude toward Westernization seen above and the rampant Westernization of the times in social life, as many academics have so long pointed out?<sup>80</sup> It is probably owing to the fact that there was a great discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality. For instance, although no endorsement of full-fledged Westernization appears in the pages of *Ülkü*, if one carefully reads the accounts of the activities of the People's Houses, even among the peasantists, it is possible to locate quite a significant number of cases in which ambitious Westernization was pursued. Just to give an example, the only sport performed in Adana People's House was tennis, which even today is regarded as an elite sport in this region.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Anıl Çeçen, who wrote a book on the People's Houses and who was extremely sympathetic to them, could not help but confess that the People's Houses ended up contributing to the formation of a 'bourgeois' (read Western) life and cultural style in Turkey.<sup>82</sup> Despite this evidence, barely did anyone use the term Westernization. The preferred term to describe these phenomena was 'progress towards the level of contemporary civilization'['muasır

medeniyetler seviyesine yükselmek’],<sup>83</sup> but obviously this meant Westernization since, even according to many peasantists, the West still embodied contemporary high civilization. On the whole, it is fair to say that the peasantist rhetoric on the issue of Westernization also contributed to the ambiguous and contradictory nature of the single-party regime.

So far three basic characteristics of peasantist ideology have been discussed. It is now important to see the way and manner in which the peasantists wanted to accomplish their goals. To highlight this, we need to take into account their emphasis on education and human will.

The peasantists saw education as the most important factor in transforming Turkey’s countryside. This was because, for most peasantists, the root cause of economic and social backwardness in villages rested on the lack of education rather than on social structure and relations. They ignored the eminence of social relations and struggle, and instead focused on the struggle against the hardships of nature and the ignorance of the peasants. For this reason, they believed in educating the peasants to achieve their goals.

Their belief in education for social transformation notwithstanding, they rejected mainstream education and advocated a distinct style for educating the peasantry from the city dwellers. In the first place, peasants had to be educated in villages, not in cities. The educational system for villages should be based on the necessities of rural life. In this respect, they opposed the system of general education as had been applied in cities. The peasantists demanded a village education system completely different from that of the cities, one based on vocational training.<sup>84</sup>

The most crucial role in the achievement of a successful educational reform should rest with a new and different generation of village teachers. The peasantists, together with many others, agreed on the vital role expected of village teachers.<sup>85</sup> These teachers should be recruited from the peasant population since, their argument continued, teachers of city origin tended to return to cities at the first opportunity. Those teachers were unwilling to bear the difficulties of village life.<sup>86</sup> For this reason, not only should teachers be educated in such a way that they would not leave the villages, but also granted some economic privileges in the villages.<sup>87</sup> These ideas about village education became the core values for the Village Institute experiment that started in 1937.

We should note that expecting a social transformation from education was related to another significant characteristic of the peasantist ideology, namely its emphasis on voluntarism. Peasantists expected too much from subjective factors such as education. As the first director of the People’s Houses pointed out, there was nothing that the power of human agency could not achieve.<sup>88</sup> A peasantist, S. Aydoslu, who contributed articles on

economics to *Ülkü*, denied all existence of historical necessity, and argued that human voluntarism was enough to accomplish any social change.<sup>89</sup> Likewise in his article regarding voluntarism, Köymen noted that it was with an anti-urbanist and peasantist perspective that people should intervene in their own lives and should not allow their lives to be determined by the course of events and history.<sup>90</sup> The peasantists rightly anticipated that even if they could not divert the historical development of Turkey toward urbanization and industrialization, by using state power these processes could somehow be controlled. After all, as Köymen pointed out, was the Turkish Revolution not a direct product of idealism and voluntarism?<sup>91</sup>

After 1936 these general characteristics of peasantist ideology gave way to a different interpretation advocated by senior state officials. While the ruling circles were extensively using and adopting some of the tenets of this ideology, the ideology itself was reinterpreted according to the pragmatic necessities of governmental policies. In order to understand the further development of peasantist ideology, one must examine the changes that took place in the mid-1930s.

Starting in late 1935, some self-criticisms appeared in *Ülkü*. A realistic and sound one by S. Kandemir in his article entitled 'Our Peasantist Ideology' [Köycülüğümüz] signalled the coming of other critiques. According to Kandemir, the development of villages and peasants could only be possible with the full-fledged assistance of the state. Institutions such as the People's Houses and personal initiatives were not enough to handle this enormous task. The People's Houses could be helpful only insofar as they conducted activities complementary to those of the state. In other words, the expectations of the People's Houses were too immense and unrealistic.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Kandemir pointed out that the theoretical search for peasantist ideology failed to go beyond presenting the problem itself. What had to be done was to create theoretical projects that could be applicable to practical situations. He admitted that the peasantists' ideas in Turkey were still passing through its 'romantic' phase.<sup>93</sup>

Early 1936, however, constituted a turning point for discussions on peasantist ideology. The Prime Minister of the time, Celal Bayar, wrote an influential article in *Ülkü* discussing some of the repercussions of peasantist ideology. In addition, in the same year some peasantists such as Köymen questioned the viability of their project in the pages of *Ülkü*. Both of these developments marked a change in the way in which the peasant question had been discussed. Shortly after this incident, the number of articles in *Ülkü* advocating a peasantist agenda decreased dramatically. This does not mean, however, that discussion of and interest in the question of the peasantry slowed down in Turkey; as a matter of fact, the concern with village issues, especially on the part of the official elites, continued and even increased.



Celal Bayar, in his *Ülkü* article of March 1936, discussed whether Turkey should be predominantly an industrial or an agrarian country. He strongly criticized the idea that agriculture ought to take priority in the development of Turkey. According to him, to be successful and prosperous even at the level of agricultural production, the country needed a sound industrial base.<sup>94</sup> This does not mean that he favoured a full-fledged industrialization, but he made it clear that industrial concerns should have priority among state concerns. In the next issue of *Ülkü*, Köymen replied to Bayar's views on industry and agriculture. Instead of an industry-versus-agriculture duality, Köymen devised the term *köycü endüstri* [peasantist industry], meaning that Turkey should be industrialized, provided that the peasants, first and foremost, benefit from this development and the horrible consequences of industrialization be avoided. In this sense, his priority apparently lay with the interests of the rural classes.

Köymen's concept of *köycü endüstri* has quite interesting peculiarities. Industries should be established in the countryside only, which would make it possible for workers to be able to retain their own land. Citing the example of German factories' granting land to their workers, Köymen argued that this was a significant way of preventing the formation of a 'proletariat'.<sup>95</sup> Constructing industries outside of the cities,<sup>96</sup> he believed, would have prevented many of the ills that cities had created, such as class struggle, shanty towns, the existence of two different realms of life in the cities and the villages, social corruption and the like.<sup>97</sup>

Compared to urban industries, Köymen's *köycü endüstri* would:

benefit from the low prices of land, wages and raw materials; be more resistant against negative effects such as strikes, fire, theft, and disasters in the countryside; be better protected from air bombardment; be less costly in times of temporary closure; employ fewer permanent workers who will be easier to replace when demand was high; benefit from the availability of a direct consumption market which has no intermediaries; be part of the culture of the region, which will foster the interest of the workers in their jobs and make them culturally more sophisticated; can survive even in times of depression since the workers can easily switch to working on their lands.<sup>98</sup>

Köymen's *köycü endüstri* would consist of small-scale factories. He criticized the fetish of establishing large factories,<sup>99</sup> which would benefit from economies of scale on the basis of their declining productivity. He was probably scared that workers in large factories would organize and achieve class consciousness. He argued that large-scale factories carried the risk of being idle from time to time and of accumulating excess inventory. Even in

the stronghold of big factories, the United States, Köymen pointed out, recalling the 'flexible specialization' discussions in the world political economy of the 1980s, large-scale had started giving way to flexible, small-scale factories.<sup>100</sup>

To what extent this elaborate theory, presented as the peasantist answer to Bayar, was realistic is difficult to judge. It is possible to find in the history of Republican Turkey some evidence to support such a theory. For instance, we know that most governmental policies discouraged the separation of workers from their villages,<sup>101</sup> and that the state-owned enterprises in Turkey were situated in such a way that workers would be 'largely isolated in widely separated state plants'.<sup>102</sup>

This endeavour to redress peasantist ideology while retaining its core ideas was followed by another interesting and fanciful *Ülkü* article by Köymen which contained significant self-criticism. He first confessed that the peasantists did not really know the peasants. Any reform, he argued, if not coming from below of necessity, could never be understood and supported by the peasants. Yet the peasants were unaware of their real interests because of their low intellectual capacity. For this reason, his argument went, the reforms that had begun in villages could not be successfully finished.<sup>103</sup> He declared that the peasantists had to give up working in villages since not much could be gained from these activities. Not only was the peasant insensitive to any reform, but the dispersed nature of Turkish villages also made it virtually impossible to accomplish any nationwide success.<sup>104</sup> He came up with the 'only way' to solve the peasant question without ever going to the villages: Peasant lodges [*Köylü Hanı*]. By establishing peasant lodges and recruiting clever peasants when they came to cities, things could be done for the peasants in the cities. This, however, was a very paradoxical theory, since it was on the cities, which the peasantists in theory were against, that the fortune and prosperity of villages depended once again.

After 1936 one can scarcely find in *Ülkü* a peasantist rhetoric as pure as it was, the characteristics of which have been presented above. But, ironically, the state's involvement in village and peasant issues gained momentum around the same time.<sup>105</sup> Especially after 1937, the state-sponsored peasantist rhetoric using many of the themes and viewpoints of the ideology (even if it were not as pure as depicted above) reached its apogee with the launching of the idea of land reform, and the Village Institutes, a rural educational programme aiming to transform the Turkish countryside, both of which aroused immense controversies in Turkish history and politics.<sup>106</sup>

The peasantist activities of the People's Houses can hardly be considered a success. This perhaps stemmed from the mentality of 'for the people,

despite the people'. According to this mentality which has been quite strong among Ottoman/Turkish politicians and intellectuals, the elites had the right to think and decide instead of the people themselves and implement policies regardless of whether the people would approve or like them. The ordinary people of the cities and peasants of the countryside never became actively involved in the activities of the People's Houses. The members of these institutions were usually officials of the central government, intellectuals, landlords and 'prominent citizens' of the region.<sup>107</sup> Dr İlhan Başgöz, who himself worked in the Ankara People's House between 1941 and 1946, for instance, points out that he never saw any person of working-class origin in Ankara People's House.<sup>108</sup> These facts are certainly at odds with the original intentions of the People's Houses. As Kemal Karpat rightly argues, 'the gap between government and people, something which the Houses were originally intended to eliminate', deepened. 'The rigorous power of the bureaucracy and its arbitrary use of the Houses, especially in small towns, coupled with *their disdain of the common people*', writes Karpat, 'gradually turned the latter away from these institutions and left them without support'.<sup>109</sup> The success of the People's Houses would have necessitated allowing the ordinary people greater initiative, but the People's Houses failed to go beyond functioning like an official institution. The state and the Party were exempt from criticism. When criticisms were raised once in a while, they found harsh responses from the Party and state officials.<sup>110</sup>

Though the peasantist activities of the People's Houses did not transform the rural people and their environment, the peasantist ideology certainly influenced the intelligentsia and the official ruling circles. Many intellectuals who later worked in the Village Institutes, for instance, subscribed to the peasantist ideology. Although this ideology had a considerable impact on the world-views of the governing elite, they often contradicted them with a purely peasantist outlook. For instance, whereas most ardent supporters of this ideology conceptualized the nation as equivalent to the peasants, most leading bureaucrats such as Recep Peker opposed this idea. According to him, the nation meant the people, an abstract concept defined on a legal basis that included everybody who enjoyed equality before the law. Peker carefully and insistently differentiated his concept of *Halkçılık* from the concept of Populism.<sup>111</sup> It seems that government policies represented ambiguities and eclecticism that encompassed many different viewpoints. This situation can be seen clearly in the existence of different complaints and expectations from the governmental policies. For instance, peasantists such as Köymen always hoped to see more peasantists policies,<sup>112</sup> while intellectuals of opposite viewpoints, such as contributors to *Kadro*, accused the state of not paying enough attention to *étatist* industrialization.<sup>113</sup>

Mainstream Turkish historiography has so long presented the history of Republican intellectual life as an unfolding of an 'industrialist idea' and vision. The dominance of approaches focusing on 'modernization' and 'industrialization' have obscured divergences from those ideals, as well as the ambiguities of the time and the eclectic nature of the ruling elite's ideology. The extent of the Turkish elite's hostile peasantist attitude towards industrialization and urbanization has usually been underestimated. In fact, the peasantist rhetoric of the single-party era should be seen as contributing to the creation of very ambiguous and eclectic state policies for issues vital to Turkey, especially with regard to plotting a consistent path for the country's development. This can be seen in many cases: As late as 1936, Prime Minister Celal Bayar could talk about the lack of consensus as to whether Turkey should be a predominantly agricultural or an industrial country.<sup>114</sup> Given all these facts, it should by now be no surprise that industrialization did not constitute a significant part of the programmes of the 14 governments formed during the 1920s.<sup>115</sup> Nor is it just a coincidence that two of the prominent senior officials, Dr Reşit Galip and Mehmet Saffet (Arıkan), both of whom had several important official posts including that of Minister of Education in the 1930s, were known for their peasantist leanings. Likewise, even in the heyday of 'democracy' in the early 1940s, M. Esendal, who became the general-secretary of the RPP, a post dealing mainly with indoctrination, was known as the 'enemy of industry and industrialized civilization'.<sup>116</sup> More examples can be cited, but suffice it to say that it is now impossible to accept the claim that industrialization was one of the main tenets of ruling ideology.<sup>117</sup>

Even when favourable conditions to industrialize emerged in the 1930s, and even the intention to industrialize gained strength among the intelligentsia and the officials, their conservative, peasantist outlook and their great fear of the social and political consequences of industrialization and urbanization restricted the depth and scope of all their attempts. They feared the formation of a dynamic, organized society, and the growth of working-class political activity, all of which could threaten the ruling elite's monopoly of political power. There was virtual consensus on preventing the dissolution of the rural social structure. Even the attempts at land reform that began around 1934 and gained momentum after 1937 aimed, first and foremost, to return to the idealized Ottoman land tenure system rather than to transform rural social relations. The corollary of this was that the state was unable to provide any well-thought-out or consistent policies toward either industrialization or rural transformation. The ruling circles wanted to see industries flourishing, yet at the same time feared the consequences. They were anxious to transform the rural structure without destroying the traditional fabric of the countryside. All of these concerns, in fact, prevented

the application of any kind of radical policy, which would have paved the way for Turkey to be urbanized and industrialized much earlier. In addition to the structural limitations of early Republican Turkey, the ambiguities and eclecticism of state ideology contributed to the peasantry's preponderance in Turkey even into the 1980s.

#### NOTES

1. E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York, 1994), p.291.
2. See, for instance, The World Bank, *Workers in an Integrating World, World Development Report 1995* (New York, 1995), pp.222–3 and pp.147–148, a database compiled by the World Bank for the post-Second World War period.
3. Throughout the 1930s, 379 People's Houses were established in most of the major cities and towns of Turkey, and this number increased to 455 by 1946 in addition to 4,066 People's Rooms (village version of the Houses). İlhan Başgöz, *Türkiye'nin Eğitim Çıkması ve Atatürk* (Ankara, 1995), p.198.
4. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam* Vol.I (Istanbul, 1968), p.403.
5. Aydemir, *İkinci Adam* Vol. I, p.403.
6. The rhetoric of 'unifying the forces' can be seen all through the official publications of the 1930s such as *Ülkü*. See for example, Necip Ali, 'İsmet Paşa ve Halkevleri', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.18 (1934), p.403. Istanbul Teacher's Union 'terminated' its existence by criticizing itself for its particularistic activities and decided to join the People's Houses. See a news item that appeared in *Ülkü*, Vol.6, No.36 (1936), pp.462–3. In the same vein, the Women's Association was closed. The reason for closing this association was that because the state had officially granted women the right to votes, there was no need for such an organization to exist! Ç. Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi* (Istanbul, 1983), p.86.
7. More information on *Türk Ocakları* can be found in Y. Akçuraoglu, *Türkçülük* (Istanbul, 1990), pp.176–81; M. Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era* (Leiden, 1992), pp.71–5; İ. Karaer, *Türk Ocakları: 1912–1931* (Ankara, 1992); and F. Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları, 1912–1931* (Istanbul, 1997).
8. D. E. Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1939), p.186; K. H. Karpat, 'The People's Houses in Turkey, Establishment and Growth', *Middle East Journal*, Vol.17 (1963), p.59.
9. Hamdullah Suphi Tannöver quoted in S. Aydın, 'Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri', *Kebikeç*, Vol.2, No.3 (1996), p.109.
10. For a very good story of the mood among the ruling circles of the time see A. H. Başar's *Atatürk'le Üç Ay ve 1930'dan Sonra Türkiye* (Ankara, 1981).
11. For the propagandistic expectations from the People's Houses see A. A. Kolesnikov, *Narodnye Doma v Obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i Kulturnoi Zhizni Turetskoi Respubliki* (Moscow, 1984), pp. 76–9; and Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk*, pp.186–96.
12. The official statements regarding the primary role of the People's Houses in reaching the hearts and minds of people can be found in many articles in *Ülkü*. See, for instance, İsmet İnönü, 'Halkevleri Yıl Dönümünde', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.2 (1933), p.100; Atatürk quoted in Nafi Kansu, 'Halkevlerimiz', *Ülkü*, Vol.12, No.68 (1938), p.213; B. K. Çağlar, 'Halkevlerinde Göze Çarpan Çalışmalar ve Beliren Değerler', *Ülkü*, Vol.10, No.60 (1938), p.550; A. Çeçen, *Halkevleri* (Ankara, 1990), p.107 for clear examples of the intention to spread the ideology of the regime to the masses. As Tütengil and many intellectuals who wrote in the publications of the People's Houses pointed out the peasantist activities of the People's Houses was an attempt to reach the people. C. O. Tütengil, *Kırsal Türkiye'nin Yapısı ve Sorunları* (Istanbul, 1983), p.87.

13. Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.91; Aydın, 'Türk Tarih Tezi...', pp.108-9.
14. Selim Sırrı Tarcan was sent to Sweden and Vildan Savaşır to Central Europe to examine adult education. Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.95. According to Başgöz and Howard 'it was alleged that the formation of *Halkevleri* program was strongly influenced by both the Soviet and Fascist (Italian) practices.' İ. Başgöz and H. E. Wilson, *Educational Problems in Turkey, 1920-1940* (Bloomington, 1968), p.152.
15. Tütengil, *Kırsal Türkiye'nin ...*, p.87. The emphasis on the necessity of adult education continued all through the 1930s. See N. A. Kansu, 'Halk Terbiyesi ve Halkevleri', *Ülkü*, Vol.17, No.97 (1941), p.3; N. Köymen, 'Halk Seferberliğine Doğru', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.5 (1933), p.358; N. Köymen, *Halkçılık ve Köycülük* (Ankara, 1934), p.18.
16. See, for example, Recep Peker, the general secretary of the RPP in the first issue of *Ülkü*. R. Peker, 'Halkevleri Açılma Nutku (Parçalar)', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.1 (1933), p.6.
17. Peker, 'Halkevleri Açılma Nutku', p.7.
18. Atay quoted in K. Alemdar, 'Basında Kadro Dergisi ve Kadro Hareketi ile İlgili Bazı Görüşler', published in the reprint of *Kadro*, Vol.1 (1932), p.26.
19. Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu), 'Moda ve Sakarya', *Kadro*, No.28 (1934), p.103.
20. B. K. Çağlar, 'Halkevlerinde Göze Çarpan Çalışmalar ve Beliren Değerler', *Ülkü*, Vol.10, No.57 (1937), p.282; B. K. Çağlar, 'Halkevlerinde Göze Çarpan Çalışmalar ve Beliren Değerler', *Ülkü*, Vol.11, No.65 (1938), p.469.
21. Hâmit Zübeyir, 'Halk Terbiyesi Vasıtaları', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.2 (1933), p.159.
22. Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.123.
23. In order to found a People's House in a city or town, at least three of the nine divisions had to exist. These included 1) Language, Literature, and History, 2) Fine Arts, 3) Dramatics, 4) Sports, 5) Social Assistance, 6) Folk Schools and Courses, 7) Library and Publishing, 8) Peasantism, and 9) Museums and Exhibits. K. Ünal, 'Halkodaları', *Ülkü*, Vol.14, No.79 (1939), p.13.
24. Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.127.
25. 'Köycüler Bölümü', No author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.2, No.7 (1933), p.63.
26. 'Ülkü'nün Yazı Bölümleri', No author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.1 (1933), p.93.
27. N. Ali, 'Halkevleri Yıldönümünde', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.2 (1933), p.113; '1940 Yılı Halkevleri ve Halkodaları Çalışmaları', No author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.17, No.97 (1941), p.71 and Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.195.
28. B. K. Çağlar, 'Halkevlerinde Göze Çarpan Çalışmalar ve Beliren Değerler', *Ülkü*, Vol.11, No.66 (1938), p.558.
29. Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.123 and p.162.
30. C. O. Tütengil, *Türkiye'de Köy Sorunu* (Istanbul, 1969), pp.11-12.
31. Kolesnikov, *Narodnye Doma v Obshchestvenno-politicheskoi ...*, pp.124-8.
32. Ünal, 'Halkodaları', p.15; Çeçen, *Halkevleri*, p.179.
33. Ünal, 'Halkodaları', pp.13-15; 'Halkevleri Postası', No author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.14, No.79 (1939), p.78.
34. Başgöz recalls that many of the projects initiated during the village visits were consciously ignored by the peasants after the visitors left the village. Interview with Dr İlhan Başgöz, Bloomington, Indiana, 4 May 1997.
35. 'I have found it impossible to form any impression regarding this division's work... If there is a question as to the value of these efforts to the village people, there is no doubt that it is good for city and town dwellers who serve in the Village Welfare Division. They cannot make excursions into the country without learning a few things of value to their social and political thinking... Whenever I talked with Party and *Halkevi* officials I asked about the success of this element of the program: always the replies were anything but informing.' Webster, *The Turkey of Atatürk*, p.191.
36. Fay Kirby, *Türkiye'de Köy Enstitüleri* (Ankara, 1962), p.60.
37. Tütengil, *Türkiye'de Köy Sorunu*, p.93.
38. See H. R. Buxton, *Turkey in Revolution* (London, 1909), p.36, p.56 for the interest of Committee of Union and Progress in peasants.
39. Parvus or Alexander Helphand actively participated as one of the leaders in the activities of both the Russian and German Social Democratic Party. He lived in Istanbul from 1910

- through 1915 and wrote in several Young Turk journals and newspapers on the peasantry, imperialism, and the fiscal problems of the Ottoman state. For more information on Parvus see Z.A.B. Zeman and S.B. Winfried, *The Merchant of Revolution; the Life of Alexander Israel Helphand (Parvus) 1867-1924* (New York, 1965) and O. F. Solov'ev, 'Parvus: Politicheskii Portret', *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*, No.1 (1991), pp.162-85.
40. See the following articles related to the Ottoman peasantry by Parvus: 'Köylüler ve Devlet', *Türk Yurdu*, Vol.1, No.9 (1912), pp.264-5; 'Köylü ve Devlet', *Türk Yurdu*, Vol.4, No.10 (1913), pp.1158-62; 'İş İsten Geçmeden Gözünüzü Açınız', *Türk Yurdu*, Vol.3, No.12 (1913), pp.363-4; 'Devlet ve Millet', *Türk Yurdu*, Vol.3, No.3 (1913), p.85; 'Esaret-i Maliyeden Kurtulmanın Yolu', *Türk Yurdu*, II, no 7, 1328, p.587 (all in Ottoman Turkish).
  41. See Ş. Elman, *Dr. Reşit Galip* (Ankara, 1953), pages 12-15, 19, 21, 28, 37-38, 48-50, 109, 133, 187-8 for Galip's life, career and peasant activities. See also Halide Edip Adıvar, *Türkün Ateşle İmtihamı* (Istanbul, 1973), p.15; and U. İğdemir, *Yılların İçinden* (Ankara, 1976), pp.292-3 for the Peasantist Association.
  42. Ömer Lütfi Barkan's assessment of the issue regarding the early Republican era is interesting: 'In our country, leave aside the practical side of the matter, even theoretically as an idea or problem, land issues had not occupied significant a place as they deserved among intellectuals and academics.' Ö. Lütfi Barkan, 'Balkan Memleketlerinin Zirai Reform Tecrübeleri,' in Ö.L. Barkan (ed.), *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi, Toplu Eserler I* (Istanbul, 1980), p.377.
  43. Just to give an idea of the writers, the leading statesmen included K. Atatürk, İ. İnönü, Ş. Kaya, R. Peker, C. Bayar, A. Çetinkaya, academics included F. Köprülü, N. Berkes, İ. Uzunçarşılı, Ö. L. Barkan, P. Boratav, Ş. Kansu, N. Kansu, P. Wittek, V. V. Bartold. Needless to say, the prominent peasants N. Köymen, İ. H. Tonguç, M. Saffet, S. Aydoslu and the like contributed to the journal.
  44. In an article in *Kadro* evaluating *Ülkü*, the *Kadro* contributors argued that what *Ülkü* was lacking was the ideological consistency and the authority of 'Ziya Gökalp.' By this, they meant the lack of homogeneity of the journal. See 'Mecmualarımız', no author given, *Kadro*, No.26 (1934), p.47. Unlike *Ülkü*, the famous periodical *Kadro* which was published at around the same time with *Ülkü* but forced to terminate itself in late 1934 had a strictly homogeneous theoretical and ideological position.
  45. Barkan, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, p.26.
  46. For the emerging interest in villages of the time see Köymen, 'Halk Seferberliğine Doğru', p.361; N. Köymen, 'Bir Köycülük Projesi', *Ülkü*, Vol.2, No.8 (1933), p.57; N. Köymen, 'Köylü Hanı', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.16 (1934), p.319; N. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları* (Ankara, 1934), p.6 and p.19.
  47. Aydoslu Sait, 'Köycülük Esasları', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.22 (1934), p.300.
  48. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları*, pp.19-20.
  49. N. Köymen, 'Sanayide Yayıncılık', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.39 (1936), p.175.
  50. A. Ziya, 'Köy Mimarisi', *Ülkü*, Vol.2, No.7 (1933), p.38. One of the characteristics that *Ülkü* announced as a criteria for publication was that they had to show the damages of immigration into the cities. 'Ülkü'nün Yazı Bölümleri', no author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.13 (1934), p.79.
  51. S. Aydoslu, 'Ökonomik Devridaim III', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.23 (1935), p.356.
  52. B. R. Dülger, 'Köyün Gücü', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.37 (1936), p.53; A. S. İşgör, 'Giresun Zihar Köyü', *Ülkü*, Vol.8, No.48 (1937), p.451.
  53. For an example supporting the existence of such a discriminatory exploitation of the rural people, see F. Madaralı, *Tonguç Işığı*, No further information, p.107.
  54. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları*, p.13.
  55. Köymen, 'Halk Seferberliğine Doğru', p.355.
  56. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları*, p.23; Dr M. Celâl Duru, 'Halkevleri ve Halkodaları Çalışmaları', *Ülkü*, Vol.17, No.102 (1941), pp.541-543.
  57. H. A. Malik, 'Kışla ve Köy Terbiyesi', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.3 (1933), p.237; M. Saffet, 'Köycülük Nedir?', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.6 (1933), p.424; Elman, *Dr. Reşit Galip*, p.15; M. C. Duru, *Sağlık Bakımından Köy ve Köycülük* (Ankara, 1940), p.7; Duru, 'Halkevleri ve

Halkodaları Çalışmaları', p.541.

58. Ali, 'Halkevleri Yıldönümünde', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.2 (1933), pp.108-9; Kadri Kemal, 'Anadolu'nun Doğusunda Dil Meselesi', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.5 (1933), p.406; Ziya, 'Köy Mimarisi', p.37; 'İnkılap Kürsüsünde İsmet Paşanın Dersi', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.14 (1934), p.83; Tütengil, *Kırsal Türkiye'nin ...*, p.78.
59. H. Raşit, 'Köy Muhihi ve Çocuk Terbiyesi', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.20 (1934), p.154; and Aydoslu, 'Ökonomik Devridaim III', p.358.
60. M. Saffet, 'Kültür İnkılabımız', *Ülkü*, Vol.1, No.5 (1933), p.352; H.R. Öymen, 'Köy İçin Yüksek Halk Okulları', *Ülkü*, Vol.5, No.25 (1935), p.18.
61. Georgeon, Francios, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri, Yusuf Akçura, 1876-1935* (Ankara, 1986), p.193. Although this romantic perception of the countryside as the reserve of the national flavor permeated in the contemporary writings of the intelligentsia, those same people also viewed the peasants as the least 'nationalized' group of the people. This, in fact, was very much the real case since the national project was more of an urban phenomenon. Given the necessity to spread the nationalist ideology to the countryside, the same Köymen writes: 'There are some villages in which a foreign language is spoken although they are often racially Turkish and have been living in this country for centuries; and there are even some villages in which people speak Turkish but do not adhere to Turkism sufficiently.' N. Köymen, *Köycülük Programına Giriş* (Ankara, 1935), p.20.
62. A discussion of racism in the People's Houses can be found in Aydın, 'Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri', pp.107-30.
63. See for instance Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's speech for the argument that the noble Turkish blood could be found only in villages. Ali, 'İsmet Paşa ...', p.403.
64. F. Kerim, 'Milli Nüfus Siyasetinde (Eugenique) Meselesinin Mahiyeti', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.15 (1934), pp.206-212; and Duru, *Sağlık Bakımından Köy*, pp.7-8.
65. Necip Ali, 'Halkevleri Yıldönümü Nutku', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.13 (1934), p.8.
66. According to the Nazis, the peasants represented freedom, loyalty, hard work, pure race, healthy upbringing and the like. According to them, for the peasant, 'land is more than a means with which to earn a living; it has all the sentimental overtones of *Heimat*, to which the peasant feels himself far more closely connected than the white collar worker with his office or the industrial worker with his shop.' Likewise, the famous Agricultural Minister Darré saw 'a causal relationship between German 'peasantness' and Germany's national survival and creative capacity.' Were it not for the contact with the urban and mercantile lifestyles, German peasants could be much better off. According to him, the peasants were the only people to supply the 'best blood' which had been declining due to warfare and lower-birth rates. For these views see Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Walter Darré and Hitler's Green Party* (Buckinghamshire, 1985), p.8, p.62, p.68 and p.203; Barrington Moore, Jr, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, 1967), pp.449-50.
67. According to Aydoslu, there was nothing inherently superior in industrial production. He argued that productivity of an industrial worker was not more than that of an artisan. Aydoslu, 'Ökonomik Devridaim III', p.357.
68. S. Aydoslu, 'Köylü ve Köylü Ekonomisi', *Ülkü*, Vol.5, No.27 (1935), p.176.
69. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları*, p.25.
70. K. Aydın, 'Yurdumuzun Agaçlandırılması ve Zirai Hapishaneler', *Ülkü*, Vol.10, No.57 (1937), p.267.
71. Köymen, *Köycülük Esasları*, p.23.
72. Ibid., p.30. This is reminiscent of Nazi rhetoric. See the striking similarity of even the phrasing: Hitler in *Mein Kampf* saw the rural population as the 'best defence against the social diseases that afflict us'. See Gustavo Corni, *Hitler and the Peasants: Agrarian Policy of the Third Reich, 1930-1939*, translated by David Kerr (New York, 1990), p.19. For the official Nazi attitude toward the peasantry and a similar rhetoric see R. W. Darré, *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse* (Munich, 1929); A. Hitler, 'Parteiamtliche Kundgebung über die Stellung der NSDAP zum Landvolk und zur Landwirtschaft', *Völkischer Beobachter*, 6 Mar. 1930, and R.W. Darré, 'Landstand und Staat', *Völkischer Beobachter*, 19-21 April 1931.



73. N. Köymen, 'Sanayileşmemiz Üzerinde Düşünceler', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.37 (1936), p.22.
74. S. Hüsnü, T. Tola and İ. Hakkı, *Köycülüğümüzün Temelleri* (Istanbul, 1935), p.6. Ö. Lütüfi Barkan also called attention to the double effects of industrialization in 1935. On the one hand, it created a world polarized within metropolises and colonies and on the other hand, it led to unfavorable working conditions for the growing number of working classes. See Barkan, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, p.27.
75. Köymen, *Halkçılık ve Köycülük*, p.18.
76. Ö. Lütüfi Barkan pointed out similar views regarding the difference in understanding agrarian societies and industrial societies. Barkan, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, p.24.
77. Köymen, 'Halk Seferberliğine Doğru', p.355.
78. For an interesting example in this regard, see Hüsnü, *Köycülüğümüzün Temelleri*, p.8.
79. With regard to Westernization the following articles should be cited from *Kadro*: Şevket Süreyya, 'Biz Avrupalının Hayranı Değil, Mirascısıyız!', *Kadro*, No.29 (1934), pp.43-6; Yakup Kadri, 'Eskiler Almayalım!', *Kadro*, No.4 (1932), pp.44-5; Yakup Kadri, 'Samimiyete Davet', *Kadro*, No.16 (1933), pp.29-30; 'Mecmualarımız,' No author given, *Kadro*, No.27 (1934), pp.52-3; Vedat Nedim, 'Devletin Yapıcılık ve İdarecilik Kudretine İnanmak Gerekir', *Kadro*, No.15 (1933), pp.13-14.
80. See for instance Şerif Mardin, 'Religion and Secularism in Turkey,' in A. Kazancığil and E. Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (London, 1981).
81. 'Halkevleri Postası', no author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.14, No.79 (1939), p.77.
82. Çeçen, *Halkevleri* (Ankara, 1990), p.387.
83. See, for example, Saffet, 'Kültür İnkılabımız', p.352.
84. Öymen, 'Köy İçin Yüksek Halk Okulları', p.19; İ. H. Tonguç, 'Köy Eğitimi Meselesi', *Ülkü*, Vol.11, No.65 (1938), p.442; T. Hayrettin, 'İnkılap ve Köy', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.20 (1933), p.33; Köymen, *Köycülük Programına Giriş*, pp.42-3.
85. Saffet, 'Köycülük Nedir?', p.428; Elman, *Dr. Reşit Galip*, p.49.
86. H. R. Öymen, 'Tek Dersaneli Okullar', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.41 (1936), p.353; Tütengil, *Kırsal Türkiye'nin ...*, p.87.
87. C.H.P İzmir Halkevi Köycülük Kolu Neşriyatı: 7. *Umumi Mecliste 937 Yılı Toplantısında Kabul Edilen İzmir İli Köylerinin Kültür Bakımından Beşyıllık Kalkınma Programı* (İzmir, 1937), p.2 and pp.12-13; 'Köy Öğretmen ve Eğitmeni Yetiştirme İş'i', No author given, *Ülkü*, Vol.8, No.46 (1936), pp.262-3.
88. Ali, 'Halkevleri Yıldönümünde', p.106.
89. Sait, 'Köycülük Esasları', p.298.
90. N. Kemal, 'İradencilik ve Köycülük', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.21 (1934), p.236. See Köymen, *Köycülük Programına Giriş*, p.10 for Köymen's critique of historical materialism.
91. N. Kemal, 'İnkılap İdeolojisinde Halkçılık', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.13 (1934), p.44
92. S. Kandemir, 'Köycülüğümüz', *Ülkü*, Vol.6, No.31 (1935), pp.32, 34.
93. Ibid., p.33.
94. C. Bayar, 'C. Bayar'ın Endüstri Planımız Üzerinde Söylevi', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.37 (1936), pp.9-11.
95. Köymen, 'Sanayileşmemiz Üzerinde Düşünceler', p.22.
96. Another Köymen article emphasizing the diffusion of industries in different places rather than concentrating on certain regions see N. Köymen, 'Parti Programında Köycülük', *Ülkü*, Vol.5, No.29 (1935), p.396.
97. Köymen, 'Sanayileşmemiz Üzerinde Düşünceler', p.21.
98. Ibid., p.22.
99. 'Gigantomania' at the time was a fetish especially in the former USSR and, to a lesser extent, in the USA.
100. N. Köymen, 'Sanayileşmemiz Üzerinde Düşünceler', p.21.
101. Ahmet Insel and Cengiz Aktar, "'Devletin Bekası" İçin Yürütülen Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinin Toplumsal Sorunları', *Toplum ve Bilim*, No.31/39 (Fall 1985-Spring 1987), p.40.
102. Max W. Thornburg, *Turkey, An Economic Appraisal* (New York, 1949), p.130.
103. N. Köymen, 'Köy Çalışmalarında Tek Müsbet Yol: Köylü Hanı', *Ülkü*, Vol.7, No.40 (1936), pp.299-300.
104. For a discussion of why villages in Anatolia was historically so dispersed see Barkan, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, pp.483-4.

105. Ş. S. Aydemir, *İkinci Adam* Vol.II (Istanbul, 1968), p.326.
106. For a comprehensive analysis of the Village Institutes in Turkey see M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, 'The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey', *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.25, No.1 (1998), pp.47-73.
107. Karpas, 'The People's Houses in Turkey...', p.65.
108. Başgöz, *Educational Problems in Turkey*, p.157.
109. Karpas, 'The People's Houses in Turkey...', p.66 [Italics mine]. Karpas also thinks that 'the differences in mentality stemming from the new secularist-modernist indoctrination of the cities and industrialization through the exploitation of agriculture pushed the village further into its traditional isolation and poverty.' See p.61.
110. An interesting case in point is an article that appeared in May 1934 issue of *Ülkü* complaining about the ways officials behaved toward the people. The complaints included bad treatment of peasants in city hospitals, unfair credit practice in the *Ziraat Bankası* (Bank of Agriculture), and the ignorance of the village teacher. In November of the same year, the governor of Bursa rigorously denied the complaints. See Refik and Ziya, 'Bursa'nın Keleş Köyü, Köy Anketi', *Ülkü*, Vol.3, No.15 (1934), pp.234-40; and for the reply see 'Keleş Köyüne Dair Bursa Valiliğinin Bir Tavzihi', *Ülkü*, Vol.4, No.21 (1934), pp.238-40.
111. Recep Peker, 'Partinin Yeni Programı için Kurultayda R. Pekerin Söylevi', *Ülkü*, Vol.5, No.28 (1935), p.249.
112. Köymen, 'Büyük Kurultaydan ...', p.226.
113. Vedat Nedim, 'Niçin ve Nasıl Sanayileşmemiz Lazım', *Kadro*, No.6 (1932), p.16, p.18; Aydemir, *İkinci Adam* Vol.I, p.411, p.424.
114. Bayar, 'C. Bayar'ın Endüstri Planımız Üzerinde Söylevi', p.9. For some leading officials, the ambiguities and eclecticism meant flexibility in the principles of the Party. N. Ali Küçük, 'Parti Kurultayı', *Ülkü*, Vol.5, No.27 (1935), p.164.
115. Orhan Kurmuş, 'Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Sanayiın Korunması Sorunu ve Ticaret Sermayesinin Tavrı', in *TMMOB Tarihsel Gelişimi İçinde Türkiye Sanayii* (Ankara, 1977), p.13.
116. Ş. S. Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam* (Istanbul, 1995), p.464.
117. 'But at that time the word industrialization, though every so often pronounced, was a disbelieved and dubious term. The phrase 'the use of domestic goods' became a matter of ridicule.' Ibid., Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, p.453.