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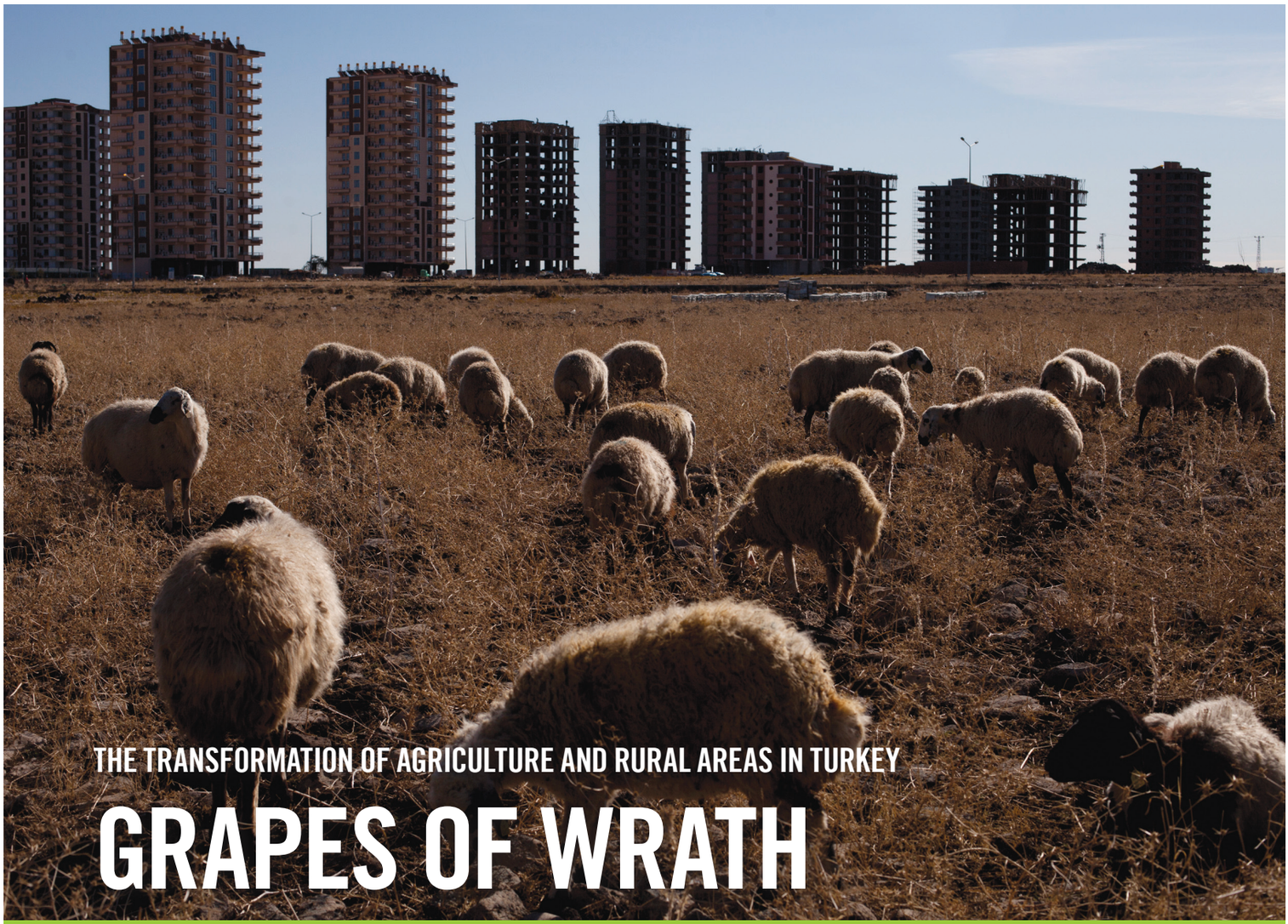
PERSPECTIVES

Political analysis and commentary from Turkey



THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AREAS IN TURKEY

GRAPES OF WRATH

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
TURKEY REPRESENTATION

Contents

Heinrich Böll Stiftung - Turkey Represantation

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung, associated with the German Green Party, is a legally autonomous and intellectually open political foundation. Our foremost task is civic education in Germany and abroad with the aim of promoting informed democratic opinion, socio-political commitment and mutual understanding. In addition, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung supports artistic and cultural as well as scholarly projects, and co-operation in the development field. The political values of ecology, democracy, gender democracy, solidarity and nonviolence are our chief points of reference. Heinrich Böll's belief in and promotion of citizen participation in politics is the model for the foundation's work . Editor in chief: **Dr. Ulrike Dufner**; editorial team: **Özgür Gürbüz, Semahat Sevim, Umud Dalgıç, Yonca Verdioğlu**; contributors **Banu Yayla, Saynur Gürçay** Heinrich Böll Stiftung Turkey Representation, İnönü Cad. Hacı Hanım Sok. No. 10/12, Gümüşsuyu İstanbul; Telephone: **+90-212-249 15 54** Fax: **+90-212-245 04 30**
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Editorial

Three months passed since the protests exploded allover Turkey. Many people from within and outsideof Turkey are keen to get more information about further developments, the consequences of the protests and the results. In the July issue of Perspectives (No 5-2013) we presented the Gezi protests as a milestone towards democracy. In this issue, we want to analyze the protests from different angles, among others, from a Kurdish perspective and from the perspective of a representative of the Republican People Party, two important streams in Turkey's politics. Although we could observe intensive debates inside the ruling AKP party about the government's stance during the protests, the leadership of the party did not respond positively towards internal critics and maintained its harsh position, splitting society into two camps: adversaries or supporters of the government - a policy which has been conducted since the referendum on the constitution in 2010. Even in his speech about the newly announced democratization package, Prime Minister Erdogan repeated such a stance: "we conducted our politics in spite of a very big resistance". Interestingly enough, Erdogan distinguished between the "always criticizing opposition" and the "people/society (halk)". The opposition, Gezi park protests and other protests in Turkey, therefore, are accordingly not considered as a component of the "people" and, therefore, can be ignored according to AKP's understanding. It is visible that the "majoritarian" approach to democracy still prevails over a "pluralistic" understanding of democracy.

The dramaturgy around the latest democratization package itself strengthened the authoritarian character of the system, an almighty Prime Minister, who makes a gift to his followers by presenting a democratization package. A democratic reform package from above, without debating it beforehand with the public and political parties, is in itself an expression of a problematic understanding of society-government relations."The society is not yet ready for further reforms", was the main argument of Prime Minister Erdogan when he personall presented the package to press. As the package was only presented two days before Perspectives goes to the printing house, its details will be dealt with in the next issue. In the meantime, a special web dossier on the Kurdish issue will be published in German language at the website of Heinrich Böll Stiftung (www.boell.de).

In this issue of Perspectives, we would like to draw your attention towards the ongoing structural reforms on rural development and agriculture of Turkey which is leading to social, economic hardship especially for small farmers. Furthermore, the effect of international politics and especially European Union agricultural politics are discussed. In this context, Gökhan Günaydın's article titled " Europe's Rural Policies a la Carte: The Right Choice for Turkey?" deserves an attentive reading. Do please permit me to commit a "spoiler" and quote the final part of Günaydın's article: "A correction of injustices in land ownership, the prevention of increasingly widespread misuse of rural and agricultural areas, and solving the problems of scattered rural areas that do not have adequate access to public services remain as matters of importance although they do not even qualify as "optional" in the EU's selection of rural policies. Obviously, for a better Europe and a better Turkey, a better political understanding and a better set of policies are possible."

A related subject matter to be highlighted is the case of land grabbing which not only affect the poor and the fragile segments of the society but pose a threat to producing healthy food, as Sibel Çaşkurlu examines in detail in her article. And, for an over all picture, Murat Öztürk's "The Dynamics of Agricultural and Rural Transformation in post-1980 Turkey" and Abdullah Aysu's "The Liberalization of Turkish Agriculture and the Dissolution of Small Peasantry" are a must read if you allow me to make such a recommendation.

And the last but not the least: As Turkey Representation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung we are working together with civil society actors in rural areas in order to address their problems, discuss alternative approaches of rural development and enable the exchange of ideas.

On behalf of the Perspectives team
Ulrike Dufner

The Dynamics of Agricultural and Rural Transformation in post-1980 Turkey

Murat Öztürk

Currently a lecturer at Kadir Has University, Öztürk completed his doctoral studies in Economic Development and International Economics at Marmara University. In 2012, he completed a research project based on a field study on transformation in agriculture and rural structure. He has written several books and many articles on agriculture, rural life and poverty.

The dynamics that changed Turkey's history, economy, and social structure effected Turkey's agriculture and rural life are the same. The transformation of rural structure, which includes a number of intertwined conflicts, shows the joint effects of historical trend, modern technologies and lifestyles, as well as the neoliberal policies of the last three decades. The main drivers of this transformation process were increased agricultural and rural commodification and financialization due to deepening capitalist relationships that were strengthened by neoliberal policies. Technological and social developments forced social structures and settlement patterns to shift and also set the rural population into action to protect agriculture and ensure its own survival. Within the framework of these dynamics, this essay outlines the agricultural and rural changes and the new situation that followed. Agricultural structure is both influenced by and influences the rural population and its structures.

In a narrow sense, agricultural structure includes the structure, scale and type of agricultural enterprises and its products. In a larger sense, it also includes technology, characteristics of inputs and land, employment, producers' organizations, agricultural markets' structure, agriculture-based industries and the financing of agriculture. Agricultural structure is mainly determined by agricultural assets; in particular, by the land. Today's agricultural land ownership structure in Turkey was shaped largely by Ottoman legacy, by the 1926 legal framework for private agricultural property and by subsequent legislation.

Turkey's agricultural structure consists of peasant-type production on small plots as well as a limited number of large-scale properties covering only a small portion of the overall land mass. Large-scale land ownership is mostly limited to a number of farms created during the Ottoman era and properties controlled by a landlord known as an *ağa*. This land ownership structure has survived largely intact to this day as a result of contradictory tendencies including limited land reform, migration, increased numbers of landless peasants, the consolidation of some lands under a single owner, and the division of other lands. Small-scale enterprises still constitute the majority of agricultural enterprises today.

At the inception of the Republic of Turkey, agriculture accounted for a large portion of GDP. Early Republic governments pursued various policies to increase agricultural production and productivity, to establish national markets and to enhance trade. In the earliest stages, the objective was to support small-scale agriculture. Public lands and lands owned by ağas were distributed to private owners, and land was provided for Muslims brought into Turkey from abroad with the population exchange. Agriculture, which was to meet food demands, provide raw material to industry and to generate export revenues, was enhanced in the 1920s when the state implemented modern agricultural production methods. The state also established support institutions that purchased and processed agricultural produce and gave loans through the state agricultural bank, Ziraat Bankası, to cultivators of export-oriented products like tobacco, cotton, hazelnuts, and figs. The early years of the Republic also saw the beginning of tea cultivation in Rize province, the breeding of more robust and productive horse and cattle, and, in 1925, the abolishment of the Ottoman agricultural tax called *aşar*. The state continued its efforts to enhance the agricultural sector in the 1930s, too, by introducing a single unit of measurement and currency for all markets, establishing commodity exchanges in 1924 and then the grain board, the *Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi* (TMO), to protect farmers against price fluctuations and to engage support in the purchasing of agricultural products.

The IMF and the World Bank were vastly influential to economic and agricultural policies in Turkey in the wake of the Second World War. A development report under the chairmanship of James Baker made agriculture a priority in economic policy in the post-war years; the Marshall Plan financed the purchase of great numbers of tractors so much so that the numbers of tractors in Turkey increased 12-fold in the 1950s as new land became opened to agriculture. Between 1950 and 1953, the area of cultivated land increased from 14.5 million to 18.8 million hectares; in 1960, Turkey was cultivating the limit of its lands. The "Green Revolution" which promoted the use of fertilizers, high-yield seeds and pesticides, as well as irrigation, triggered the adoption of intensive agricultural technology. Throughout the 1960s, the state supported the purchase of agricultural inputs to protect Turkey's agricultural from foreign competition. In the 1970s, the state expressed

its intentions to enhance rural infrastructure in its Development Plans.

The 1980s ushered in a period of neoliberal policies. The state abandoned its protective policies and its role in creating markets, discontinuing all subsidies except those for fertilizers and pesticides and privatizing a number of state agricultural agencies. The impact of adverse climate conditions added to the 1980s being a period of agricultural decline. As a result, the agricultural terms of trade fell from 100 in 1976-79 to 53 in 1988. In 1987, when Turkey applied for full membership in the European Union, the EU's agricultural policies started

> There are several different opinions on the prospects of peasants and rural settlements: The coming of the demise of the peasantry, the appearance of a "new peasantry" based on solidarity and resistance against destructive market effects or a process of "counter-urbanization", the distinction between rural and urban becomes more ambiguous.

to influence domestic policies. When it signed the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture in 1994, which took effect in 1995, Turkey committed itself to lowering customs duties by 10% on each product, and by 24% on agricultural products overall in ten years. The economic crisis that began in 1999 was followed by agreements and stability programs with the IMF and the World Bank, bodies that started to play an increasingly decisive role in Turkey's agricultural policy. At the same time, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms initiated a shift from agricultural support for specific products towards support policies that were focused on criteria like rural development, food security, animal health, and welfare. In its 1999 Letter of Intention to the IMF, the government committed itself to a transition to the Direct Income Support System (DGD), the repeal of support purchases of grain, tobacco, and sugar beet, legislation to establish an autonomous structure in Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Unions (TSKB), and to the progressive removal of credit subsidies.

Far from being unique to Turkey, these trends run parallel to the worldwide liberalization of foreign and domestic trade in agricultural products, the key factor affecting agriculture over the last thirty to forty years. This was also a period of globalizing tendencies in agriculture, including agricultural debates inside the WTO, forward contracts for agricultural products and speculation, the increased clout of a handful of corporations in agricultural markets, the rising market share of international retail chains in the south, the rise of nutrition-related health problems, famine, and malnutrition, the production of bio-fuels from agricultural produce, increased international transport of agricultural products and food, as well as discussions on intellectual property rights, biotechnologies, and bio-piracy.[1]

Before discussing the effects of these policies on agricultural structure, we must comprehensively analyze rural structures and population. Changes in rural structures are shaped by agricultural developments, rural development policies and general domestic socio-economic developments. Just like the neoliberal agricultural policies of the post-1980 era, rural developments are parallel with developments in other parts of the world. Today, there are several different opinions on the prospects of peasants and rural settlements: The coming of the demise of the peasantry (E. Hobsbawm), the appearance of a "new peasantry" based on solidarity and resistance against destructive market effects (J.V. Ploeg), a process of "counter-urbanization" due to migration from cities and villages with increased interaction between rural and urban settlements and the blurring of their boundaries (D. Brown.) As the distinction between rural and urban becomes more ambiguous, it will become necessary to discuss space from a wider perspective that goes beyond a rural-urban divide (Öztürk and Jongerden.)

Turkey's Long-Term Development Strategy covering 2001 to 2023 includes policies for rural development. According to the Strategy, rural development will contribute to national development, diminishing regional differences as well as those between rural and urban areas, and regulate migration. Other goals include the reduction of socio-economic and environmental issues due to agricultural restructuring, as well as the protection, enhancement, and sustainable exploitation of the environment and natural resources, economic and social convergence, and the harmonization of legislation with EU regulations. As we shall see in our discussion of rural statistics, reality has nothing to do with policies that look good on paper.

A changing agricultural structure

The penetration of capitalist relationships manifested as commodification and financialization is the main cause of change in agricultural structure. Commodification corresponds to the farming households' provision of agricultural input, products, means of livelihood from the market, and their production for the market. The commodification of the means of livelihoods can be observed in the table below, which shows the percentage of food items produced domestically or purchased from the market. Durable consumer goods and vehicles such as automobiles are also largely available to Turkey's rural households; these, too are provided by the market. Widely consumed agricultural inputs such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and fuel are purchased from the market. The labor power of the individuals in households are also a part of this commodification process; 38 percent of all households include at least one member employed in non-agricultural wage labor.[2]

Agricultural products: Homemade vs. Market-bought (%)

Product	Homemade	Market	Both
Bread	53	26	21
Cheese/butter	49	45	6
Eggs	51	42	7
Milk	55	41	4
Pickles	71	25	4
Tomato paste	52	44	5
Tarhana	52	46	2
Bulgur wheat	48	50	2
Meat (white, red, processed)	13	82	5
Vegetable and fruits	28	60	12
Honey	6	93	1

Source: Öztürk, 2012.

> The penetration of capitalist relationships manifested as commodification and financialization is the main cause of change in agricultural structure. Commodification corresponds to the provision of agricultural input, products, means of livelihood from the market, and their production for the market. Financialization is manifested in the taking out of loans and the channeling of these into agricultural or non-agricultural investments.

Financialization is manifested in the taking out of loans and the channeling of these and other agricultural savings into agricultural or non-agricultural investments. This trend has grown stronger with the neoliberal policies of the last thirty years. Undoubtedly, capitalism would have penetrated agriculture and the countryside even in the absence of neoliberal policies; however, the intensity of the process would have been different. The dimensions of financialization in agricultural production are shown in the table below, which shows how households finance their investments and whether they take out loans or borrow money. The data reveals that around 38% of all farmers depend on loans and borrowing to sustain their agricultural activity, and that the majority of these take out bank loans.

Loan use and borrowing for agricultural activities (%)

	Percentage
Loan use	27.8
Borrowing	9.4
None	65.4
Total	**102.5**

Source: Öztürk, 2012.

Past and projected uses of savings indicate that farmers are highly sensitive to daily economic developments, and alternative investment opportunities.

Destinations of savings (%)

Investments	Previous investment	Current investment
Foreign currency, gold, bank deposits	13.9	15.2
Urban real estate	1.3	8.6
Investment in commercial activity	6.6	5.3
Tractors and other equipment	23.2	19.2
Livestock	12.6	23.2
Constructing a house in the village	8.6	13.9
Automobiles	4.6	8.6
Commerce in agricultural products and livestock	1.3	2.6
No savings	40.4	28.5
Other	17.9	17.2
Total	**130.5**	**142.7**

Source: Öztürk, 2012.

With the development of capitalism, the share of agricultural production is expected to decline relative to services and manufacturing. The share of agriculture in Turkey's GDP has fallen from 43.1% in 1923 to 9.2% in 2010 and continues to fall. The fact that agriculture's share is falling despite an overall rise in agricultural production indicates that agricultural development is lagging behind general economic development. From 1968-2010, agricultural growth comprised just 30% of overall economic growth; the share of agriculture in total employment has also fallen, from 90% in 1923 to around 35% in 2010. Agriculture's share in employment is thus more than triple its share in the economy.

GDP Growth Rates

Period	GDP	Agriculture	Agriculture / GDP
1968 - 1980	60%	18%	29%
1980 - 1990	66%	12%	18%
1990 - 2000	42%	14%	33%
2000 - 2006	31%	9%	30%
2006 - 2010	9%	3%	35%

Source: Calculated from GDP data by the national statistical institute, TÜİK.

The number of agricultural enterprises in Turkey did not vary significantly between 1963 and 2001. However, whereas the number and total cultivated land area of small enterprises shrank, those of large-scale enterprises continued to grow. The number of medium scale enterprises has been relatively stable. Across Turkey, the average land area of agricultural enterprises is 93 decares (TÜİK 2006-Betam.) 57.7% of all agricultural enterprises measure 50 decares or less, and 78.9% measure 100 decares or less, and can

be defined as small-scale. The crucial transformation apparent here is the shrinking of small-scale enterprises' cultivation area; albeit not as a very strong tendency, the polarization of land ownership is present in Turkish agriculture. There is no significant change in the total number of enterprises because the division of large-scale enterprises through inheritance leads to an increased number of total enterprises, while on the other hand, only a small number of small-scale enterprises lose their lands. Nevertheless, the percentage of land cultivated through lease contracts is 28.6% and rising. Agricultural businesses expand their land size through leasing new land. Government policies encourage large-scale farming: The grain board's TMO (Soil Products Office) established a product purchases base level -gradually the office will only buy products above a certain volume- and land limits have been lowered to encourage the formation of large-scale enterprises. In the near future, many small-scale farmers will not be able to avoid being affected by such measures.

Breakdown of agricultural businesses by size, 1963-2006 (%)

	1963		2006
Size (decares)	**Number**	**Area**	**Number**
0 - 100	86.9	47.1	78.9
100 - 500	12.6	39.8	19.3
500 +	0.5	13.1	1.8
Number of businesses	2 527 800	2 800 000 (2008-ÇKS)	3 021 196 (2001)
Average business size (decares)	77		93

Source: GTS results, 1963 and 2001.
*TÜİK, 2006 Farming structure survey.
** BETAM, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi. Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Araştırmalar Merkezi, Research Paper 24. The figures are weighted averages calculated according to the median values of each sub-group.

Share of lands cultivated by lease contracts (%)

1991	2006
10.7	28.6

The size of small enterprises, considered by neoliberal pundits to be an underlying reason for low agricultural productivity, is actually a controversial issue as the share of grains in total agricultural production is at 36% and falling. The remaining 64% consists of vegetables and fruits, where the optimum cultivation area is smaller than that of grains. It is also not accurate to associate small-scale with low productivity. Scale should not be confined to the measure of land; we should take into account the importance of animal husbandry and the cultivation of non-grain agricultural products, which together make a certain synergy. Undoubtedly, there are downsides to the fragmentation of land and smaller scale farming, however the issue cannot simply be reduced to land size. Unfortunately, in academic studies and in political discourse, small land cultivation is seemingly viewed as some sort of disease.

Most farmers in Turkey (72.1%) are engaged in both agricultural production and animal husbandry; 24.4% are engaged only in agricultural production and 3.4% only in animal husbandry. Such versatile production practices have not changed considerably in recent years, although the breakdown of products and of cultivated land has varied significantly as the total value of marketable livestock and other animal products have exceeded that of agricultural products. Furthermore, to the detriment of grain production, the share of vegetable and fruits in overall production is on the rise. These crops have relatively high value added and are less dependent on the forces of nature since they are mainly cultivated on irrigated lands. Farmers are encouraged to cultivate such products by their predictability and by the ability to foresee risks other than price fluctuations. The cultivation of feed crops is also on the rise due to the rapid expansion of animal husbandry and the fact that animals are increasingly raised in closed or semi-closed facilities, which are favored both by farmers and prospective agricultural investors. Contract farming is also on the rise due to market chain and food industry demands for regular and standard agricultural products. The contract farming system tends to transform traditionally independent farmers into company workers.

Water resources certainly have in impact on agriculture in Turkey, which is considered water-poor. In 2009, out of a total of 21.4 million hectares of cultivated land, only 8.5 million hectares were irrigable. Of this, just 5.4 million hectares of land (63%) was irrigated. As irrigation systems spread, there is a parallel rise in the cultivation of vegetables, fruits and products destined for industry.

The rise of production of vegetables, fruits, and animals has also been affected by other factors such as high-yield seeds some of which are genetically modified the increasing use of chemicals and fertilizers, and the breeding of animal species with higher milk and meat yields. Despite a fall in the number of animals and the total area of cultivated land, total agricultural and animal production has risen because of increased productivity. This might seem like a favorable development, but changes in agricultural input markets and the internal

Agriculture and animal husbandry (1995-2010,%)

	Agricultural production *				Animal husbandry *			
Year	**Total**	**Grains and Other Agricultural Products**	**Vegetables**	**Fruits, Beverage Herbs and Spices**	**Total**	**Livestock**	**Animal products**	**Animal husbandry/ vegetal production**
1995	**100**	**54**	**21**	**26**	**100**	**59**	**41**	**86**
2010	**100**	**36**	**33**	**31**	**100**	**55**	**45**	**106**

Source: TÜİK.

balance of agricultural production suggest otherwise. The domination of international monopolies in agricultural markets caused problems in food sustainability and safety. A striking example of the disruption of the internal balance of Turkey's agricultural production was in 2012-2013 when Turkey had to import hay for the first time. There was a drought in the summer of 2012 which resulted in low domestic grain yields, but certainly this was not the first summer drought in Turkey's history. The real reason behind the hay import was the increased demand for feed crops and the simple fact that domestic hay supplied cannot meet the current animal feed demands.

Input, product and loan markets

The neoliberal policies pursued in the last three decades triggered radical change in agricultural markets. In the 1980s, the private sector came to dominate seed production in Turkey; most of all seeds today are produced by 400 companies. A number of worldwide monopolies dominate the domestic market for certain seed species.[3] This trend also has made the prices of agricultural inputs rise faster than those of agricultural products, and through this price differential, agriculture has continued to transfer resources to other industries.

The neoliberal policies pursued in the last three decades triggered radical change in agricultural markets. In the 1980s, the private sector came to dominate seed production in Turkey; most of all seeds today are produced by 400 companies.

Although Turkey lags behind Western nations in terms of fertilizer use per hectare (100kg versus 207kg in France, 195kg in Germany, 185kg in Italy and 171kg in the USA), fertilizer use is nevertheless widespread.[4] The same can be said of pesticide use. In Turkey, 80% of the active ingredients in pesticides are imported. Although the consumption of fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and other inputs depend on their cost and a farmer's capital, their use is obligatory to some extent in certain products in order to obtain a significant yield. Another key agricultural input is agricultural instruments and machines. From 2001 to 2011, the number of tractors rose by 40%, a trend also seen in other agricultural instruments and machines. About half of all enterprises have tractors although in areas where tractors are appropriate for the land, almost all enterprises use owned or leased tractors to plough the land. As a result of mechanization, working hours in agriculture have tended to shrink and more and more people have moved towards full- or part-time non-agricultural work. The expansion of transportation and communication opportunities has led to more and more people living outside the village starting to engage in agricultural activities. Mechanization and technological advancement affect agricultural structure through such channels.

Other key inputs in animal husbandry are imported breeders or sperm used to fertilize animals. Likewise, medication used in the care and treatment of animals are imported. Perhaps most significantly, certain raw materials used in producing animal feed are also imported. As such, animal husbandry tends to transfer a significant amount of resources to the sectors producing key inputs.

Another result of neoliberal policies is the decline in state loans to support agriculture. Ziraat Bankası and state agricultural cooperatives such as Tarım ve Kredi Kooperatifleri (TKK) and Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri (not to mention other public and private banks) now offer loans at market interest rates. Likewise, in 2011, the agricultural support scheme has transitioned to the Direct Income Support (DGD) system, which was then rolled back in certain areas, but not in diesel and fertilizer support.

The adoption of neoliberal policies coincides with policies of the EU, World Bank and IMF. Agricultural policies of post-1980 Turkey, in particular 2004's Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP), have been designed to increase productivity and competitiveness.[5] Nevertheless, implementation of these policies has led to more price fluctuation in agricultural products and a drop in farmer income. This in turn has forced many farmers to abandon agriculture and to migrate, or to engage in non-agricultural employment to generate additional income. Many small farmers have leased rather than cultivate their plots; still others simply leave their fields fallow.

Turkey is a net exporter of vegetables and fruits and a net importer of oily seeds. Exports exceed imports in foodstuffs whereas imports exceed exports in raw materials. Organic products' cultivation has risen rapidly, and these products are almost entirely exported, domestic demand being low due to their high price. In the absence of state agencies that used to purchase, process, and market agricultural products, farmers are obliged to interface with merchants, industrialists, and market chains directly. In this market structure, price formation does not favor farmers since there are too many sellers on the supply side and much less demand on the buyers' side. Therefore, farmers prefer to sell their products themselves whenever possible, through local markets, neighborhood market days and Turkey's nascent alternative food networks, all spaces where producers and consumers meet without middlemen.

Neoliberal policies took their toll on farmers' organizations, too. The agricultural sales cooperatives Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri Birlikleri (TSKB), which used to play a key role in the marketing of agricultural products and the financing of agriculture, used to operate without paying any attention to fluxes in productivity due to political concerns. Thus it became unable to generate its own resources, and soon had to be financed out of the public budget. As it transitioned to liberal policies in agriculture, Turkey signed the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project with the World Bank to restructure agricultural sales cooperatives and unions so as to ensure their autonomous operation under market conditions. As a result of this restructuring, these cooperatives have indeed become more autonomous, which means more dependence on outside financing and inability to meet their debt obligations.

Changes in rural settlement and population

Until the 1980s, the rural population increased in absolute terms while losing relative weight in the overall

population; in the 2000s, it started to fall in absolute terms, too. The rural population is becoming older as the youth migrate to urban areas and the elderly migrate back to the countryside after they retire, be it seasonally or permanently. Pensioners are more and more numerous inside this older population, and are frequently active in agriculture. As the younger population migrates and urban areas engulf nearby villages, villages disappear and the countryside becomes less populated. Nevertheless, between 2002 and 2008, around 10% of villages registered a rise in population higher than that of cities. It must be noted, though, that these villages are very different than villages of the past; these villages are mainly residential areas with little agricultural production. Mobility between villages and cities is complex and diverse.

If the current trend persists, some villages are expected to be abandoned as "new" villages spread further.[6] The drop in the rural young population and immigration also change the structure of settlements in the countryside. The rapid fall in population has rendered certain villages all but empty. The population of 38% of villages is below 200, below 400 in 64%. Thirty-one thousand villages do not even have schools due to lack of pupils.[7] The social class and group character of the village population also tend to change with the shift to non-agricultural activities and income, including pensions. Currently, villagers have a dual character due to their place in the production process, income generation and surplus extraction; village populations are undergoing radical change.

High unemployment and relatively low and fluctuating incomes have pushed the rural population to seek stable and higher incomes, as well as more consistent living standards. In order to sustain their livelihood and agricultural activities, farmers have tended to take up non-agricultural professions. In the last two decades, the share of non-agricultural employment in total rural employment rose from 22.7% to 38%.

Retirement has become a key strategy for subsistence; currently, 38% of all farmer households include pensioners.[8] As a result of employment and the pursuit of income in non-agricultural areas, all resources, including animals, fields and agricultural instruments, are increasingly used as capital in non-agricultural work. A farmer's production and investment decisions are affected by the profitability of alternatives, with a rising number of farmers diversifying their activities and becoming capitalists. With an aging population without a younger population to transfer know-how to, and with a rise in market-oriented production to generate cash, farming households produce less and less of their own inputs, buying them from the market instead and causing rapid changes in the rural social structure. Rural social classes now tend to blend farming activities with wage-earning work and non-agricultural activities. Pensioner-farmers have also appeared as a new group, with pensions bringing in key income.

Rural employment: Agricultural and non-agricultural (thousands, aged 15+)

Year	Total	Agricultural	Non-agricultural DIŞI	Share %
2000	10471	7338	3139	30.00%
2011	8603	5360	3243	38

Source: Calculated from the non-agricultural employment data presented in TÜİK's Household Employment Surveys.
Notes: 1) The figures may not add up due to rounding.
2) Sample sizes of less than two thousand people are not deemed sufficient for extrapolation.
3) The ISCO-88 occupational codes are in use since 2011.
(*) The post-2004 TÜİK data were revised according to the NACE Rev-2.

Breakdown of rural social classes / groups

Classes / Groups	SHARE %
Pensioner	2.3
Retired small farmer	12.9
Traditional farmer	24.6
Entrepreneurial/capitalist farmers	17
Small farmers	21.1
Agricultural workers	4.1
Farmers who also serve as non-agricultural professionals, merchants, artisans, public servants, etc.	10.3
Wage workers	6.7
Farmers living on assistance	0.9
TOTAL	100

Breakdown of rural social classes / groups

The countryside also serves as a refuge for the disadvantaged and the poor. The percentage of disabled and elderly people living in rural areas is higher than in the cities. As was the case in the economic crises of 2001 and 2008, those struggling to survive in the cities return to rural areas. In the countryside, easier access to food and housing, and the ongoing if weaker presence of

Breakdown of villages by size, 1980-2008 (%)

Village size (population)		1980		1990		2000		2008	
		Number of Villages	Population	Number of Villages	Population	Number of Villages	Population	Number of Villages	Population
0 -	200	15%	3%	23%	5%	32%	6%	39%	8%
201 -	400	29%	13%	29%	16%	27%	12%	26%	15%
401 -	2000	52%	63%	47%	67%	35%	40%	31%	48%
2000+		4%	22%	2%	11%	6%	41%	4%	27%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 General Population Censuses, 2008 ADNKS.

family, kin and peasant solidarity allows for survival.

Conclusion

Because of the existence of such problems as climate change, price fluctuation and rising input costs and because of concerns such as natural protection and the provision of sustainable, high quality and accessible food, energy demands, employment, and a healthier environment, agriculture and farming cannot simply be abandoned to their fate.

A case in point is the continuation of neoliberal agricultural policies in Western countries and in Turkey. Through a discourse of productivity and efficiency, neoliberal policies reorient agriculture in its entirety towards profit seeking. An obvious result of this trend is traditional capitalist farmers and domestic and foreign capitalist enterprises increasing their agricultural clout; in some areas, traditional farmers become capitalist entrepreneurs. At the same time, a larger mass of farmers voice their individual and collective opposition in solidarity against the neoliberal onslaught, struggling to continue their agricultural activities by not selling their land, by increasing their income with non-agricultural employment, and by diversifying their produce. They also defend the natural environment through organizations such as Çiftçi-Sen, by opposing cyanide-based gold mining in Bergama, through the Derelerimizi Koruyalım (Protect our Streams) movement which opposes damming streams and creeks, and the resistance movement against nuclear and coal-fired power plants.

> If the current trend persists, some villages are expected to be abandoned as "new" villages spread further. The social class and group character of the village population also tend to change with the shift to non-agricultural activities and income, including pensions.

While some rural areas lose their population and their villages due to urban migration, others lose their young populations or are engulfed by larger urban areas. Increased mobility between rural and urban areas allows some pensioners to take up residence in rural areas and create new rural-suburban settlements - non-agricultural villages - where they spend their summers and holidays, or even villages that are populated entirely be pensioners. For people who could not survive in the city, the countryside still offers a safe and easier environment where they can find employment and survive.

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Europe's ruralpolicies a la carte: The Right choice for Turkey?

There are two determining factors in the transformation of rural/agricultural policies, be they from the European Economic Community or the European Union: The economic and political alignment of Europe with the changing global capitalist system, and the EU enlargement processes. The need for taking a new position due to these two determinants is also reflecting in the EEC's rural/agricultural policies.

As to the first determinant, the fact that world capitalism evolved into a neoliberal period as a result of the bottlenecks in the Keynesian Welfare State practices has showed its effects in all spheres of politics. Common Agricultural Policy, the first set of supranational policies developed within the EEC has always kept the topic of rural development alive and managed this area with policy instruments designed in accordance with the needs of the time. The concept of rural development, which was initially designed to solve the EEC's rural/agricultural infrastructure problems, started to display its different aspects as "classical problems" were solved, and even became a tool utilized to help mitigate different type of problems.

From 1958 to 1987, classical rural development policies were configured and implemented to complement agricultural policies, and they yielded positive results for the capitalist agriculture system of the EEC by providing a relatively better welfare level within the scope of the application of the Keynesian Welfare State for not only those who remained in the agriculture sector but also for those who were transferred to other sectors.

Today it is hard to tell that basic rural problems such as insufficient rural roads and telecommunication networks, irrigation, weak field development services, the need for modernization within the agricultural holdings, and so on, still fifteen EEC members, with a few exceptions. Such problems were largely overcome during the days of establishing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and in the times of Keynesian developmental agricultural policies.

The new paradigm

Until the major transformation of 1992, the EEC had been allocating 1 to 5 percent of the total agriculture funds to rural development policies as measures complementary to agriculture. In 1992, the EEC specifically designed a rural development policy with a budget of 5 to 15 percent of the total agriculture budget. After the 1987 period, when new rural development policies were implemented, the connection between rural development and agriculture weakened and the policy became a subjective one in terms of location and social structure.

Emerging step by step was a new paradigm: The necessity for CAP to shift to a more market-oriented platform and new enlargement policies were reshaped following the fall of the Berlin Wall. It was important for the concept of rural development to be aligned with this new paradigm and its theory be restructured and disseminated to outer circles via policy transfer. Rural development was first converted into the second pillar of CAP; intervention policies to harmonize agricultural policies with the neoliberal structure were abandoned and trade-friendly support policies guided by the market rules were revitalized with the help of rural development policies.

In parallel with this, policies based on intensive use of resources were replaced with Pillar II rural development policies and interventionist agricultural policies of the Pillar I were repealed. As a result, the transfer of funds from Brussels was minimized. This so-called new European agricultural model was introduced to the new circles of enlargement.

Environmental sustainability, the vitality of rural economy, food quality, standards on animal health and welfare are all fundamental issues justifying the new policy. Liberal tendencies appearing during agriculture negotiations conducted within the World Trade Organization, as well as the high level of expenditures to be made by Brussels, made the enlargement process welcome with the existing CAP rules and constituted the real reason behind this policy change. The March 1999 reform, also known as Agenda 2000, and the June 2003 reform are milestones representing diversion from classical rural development policies. The final rural development policies of 2007-2013 appear to have maintained this trend.

Multi-speed – a la carte EEC

The peripheral reflections of this central change in the EU rural development policies require an analysis not only working outside the EEC, but also an analysis of its inner workings. With its last wave of enlargement, the EEC reached 28 members and a multi-speed or a la carte character.

Today, 80 percent of the EU territories consist of rural areas that accommodate 25 percent of the total

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population. The revolutionary characteristic of the industrial age that quickly destroyed the feudal order and archaic relationships brought significant changes in the rural-urban relations within the European continent in spatial, economical and social aspects. The problems and opportunities pertaining to the rural structures of the European Union were also shaped and multiplied by the differences between countries.

In an effort to categorize the countries of the EU-15 based on the characteristics of their rural areas, bearing in mind that these countries have relatively similar levels of development, one can see that the central EU countries (Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg), northern countries (the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark), Ireland and Mediterranean countries (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece) all have highly different features, thus highly different problems, both within the group and between the groups.

Eight of the ten countries which joined the EU in 2004 are from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Setting aside the island countries, Malta and Southern Cyprus, the other CEE countries share common rural characteristics from their socialist pasts. These countries can also be regrouped within themselves based on their geographical and ecologic conditions. The Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, are small countries where a significant amount of land is forested. The Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Poland and Hungary, countries that have been shared the same geography and culture for centuries, naturally have similar structures and problems related to rural development. Croatia, which having joining the EEC in 2013, is the newest member of the Community. As sea-bound countries, the problems and priorities of Southern Cyprus and Malta are very different than those of the other countries.

Bulgaria and Romania joined the EEC in 2007. These nations clearly have different rural development structures, in terms of both quality and quantity, compared to previous members. The first question we should address then is this: In a Europe of 28 countries with such different rural development structures, is it possible to talk about a relationship between the center and the periphery? And furthermore, would it be possible, for instance, to implement the same policy instruments and financial capacity that work in Portugal and Greece, in Bulgaria and Romania as well?

This brings us to the question of what the political purpose of a 21st century Europe is in transferring void agricultural policies to its new members in the EEC, members that are currently facing the problems other members from central Europe overcame in 1950s and 1960s thanks to a rural development policy interwoven within strong agricultural policies. In transferring "improved rural development policies" including repair mechanisms to countries that suffered, does the EEC recommend a slower speed than the one applied in the center? Needless to say, this question also needs to be answered by Turkey, the chronic candidate.

Turkey at the internal periphery of the EU

Turkey, with its population of 76 million and surface area of 780 thousand square kilometers, is the second biggest country among EU member and candidate countries after Germany. 24 million hectares of the 41.5 million hectares of agricultural land is cultivated. The ratio of the agriculture lands to the total surface area is 53.5 percent.

In Turkey, 23.8 million people reside in around 81 thousand rural settlements, and 95 percent of villages have a population less than 2000. General literacy rate in rural areas is 82 percent overall and 73 percent in women. 48 percent of the women in rural areas do not receive any medical treatment before giving birth. The vast majority of farmers/ producers are not covered by social security.

Agriculture is the main livelihood in rural areas in Turkey. As of 2012, agriculture contributed 8.4% to the national income and 25% to employment. Turkey faces various problems such as a serious lack of social and economic infrastructure in rural areas, fast degradation in agriculture, deepening rural poverty, tensions over agriculture and forest areas due to ever increasing financial interests, environmental pollution, the risk of biodiversity, an ageing rural population with a low education level, and so on. Due to the recession in the agriculture sector, prices are going down, the country is losing its capacity to be self-sufficient and a new wave of migration from villages to cities have begun.

Additionally, there is striking injustice in the way agricultural land ownership is distributed in Turkey's rural areas. This structure allows for a semi-feudal order that still exists in some parts of the country. On the other hand, capitalism dominates land ownership wherever it can and new types of relations have emerged after the entry of multinational in the field.

Rural problems in Turkey are quite different than those in the central countries of the EU, however they also have similarities with the problems in other countries that are considered to be the "internal periphery" of the EU.

National Rural Development Plan and Strategy

Having signed the Ankara Treaty with the EEC in 1963, joined the Customs Union in 1995 and started EU membership negotiations in 2005, Turkey now faces increasingly difficult agricultural and rural problems.

In the last decade, 3 million hectares of land - or one-seventh of the total cultivated land - has been abandoned by farmers as internal trade limits have turned against the farmers. This constitutes 1/7 of the total cultivated land. Small scale farming is fading away, but producers moving away from rural areas and farms cannot be employed with the current pace of development in the industrial or services sectors. The rural landscape is destined to deteriorate under the pressure of urbanization and financial interest.This is the atmosphere in which Turkey has to make its choice from the EU's rural development menu developed.

In order to ensure the proper implementation of the selected policies, the first thing to do is to

establish the management and financing structures required by the accession instruments of EU's enlargement process. A National Rural Development Plan and Strategy must be prepared to help internalize the rural development policies of the EU. Projects will be implemented in selected fields, by using a co-financing structure, with effective co-operation between the private sector, non-governmental organizations, local players and local administrations.

The SAPARD program was implemented in EEC countries, whereas for the last enlargement cycle that also includes Turkey, the program is called IPARD. But the problem does not only lie within the capacity of this set of policies to provide suitable solutions for Turkey's rural problems, but also within the fact that the resources that can be made available for Turkey are far from meeting the needs of this large country whose surface area and population are close to the total of the ten countries that joined the Union in 2004 combined.

More interestingly, throughout these 40 years of planning history, many rural problems have been diagnosed and solutions for these problems have been recommended in the Five Year Development Plans, which show no similarity to what is now written in the National Rural Development Strategy. Not surprisingly, the strategic goals and priorities referred to in the National Rural Development Strategy are very similar to the IPARD program's goals and strategies.

Detachment of rural sphere from agriculture

It is worth mentioning in conclusion that two main issues require further thinking. First is the effect of the EU rural and agricultural policies on the EEC itself, second is the effect of these policies on the periphery.

The EU is encountering new food and environment related problems within the capitalist agricultural order it itself rationalized. Conventional production and rural neighborhoods have been replaced with cost–yield calculations as agriculture became incorporated and small farming was abandoned. We have moved from a model of mixed cropping to a more dominating model of monotype production whereby the number of basic products has been reduced to fewer than ten. This situation puts more pressure on soil and water resources and leads to serious problems regarding the sustainable use of resources. Food scandals, the products of this system, continue to threaten life.

Anatolia is an important treasure in terms of bio-diversity and the existence of endemic plant and animal species. The fact that the local seeds of Anatolia, a region which can be considered a gene bank, can only be found by coincidence in remote villages is a mere result of the ongoing agricultural model of the country. Transposing Europe's seed regulations to Turkey will most likely increase risks for the genetic potential of the country.

The rule of deregulated market conditions results in the failure of small farmers farming an average of 6 hectares of land, to receive adequate compensation for their work. Producers who try to carry out agricultural activities with monopolized input markets and rising input costs are oppressed in the output markets and lose their means of production. Bankrupt small farmers are becoming the new norm in Anatolia. One solution could be the development of common market organizations, but the EU does not seem eager to transfer these tools, which they are prepared to abandon in the set of agricultural policies, to Turkey.

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Turkey's rural population is moving to the cities at great speed with only the elderly population remaining in the villages. Rural populations heading to the city in hopes of finding a job further aggravates the problems of the city. Any agricultural/rural policy which eliminates small scale farming is obviously not going to contribute to the alleviation of these problems

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the rural areas of Turkey. A rural area policy detached from agriculture can only have a limited capacity to benefit the country. Therefore, a priority policy goal should be the completion of the investments in rural infrastructure, including irrigation on 4 million hectares of land and the consolidation of 12 million hectares of land. Nevertheless, it is clear that shares allocated from IPARD or from the country's central and local budget are far behind the amount that these investments necessitate.

A correction of injustices in land ownership, the prevention of increasingly widespread misuse of rural and agricultural areas, and solving the problems of scattered rural areas that do not have adequate access to public services remain as matters of importance although they do not even qualify as "optional" in the EU's selection of rural policies.

Obviously, for a better Europe and a better Turkey, a better political understanding and a better set of policies are possible.

Endnotes

1 For further information on the transformation of EU rural and agricultural policies in tandem with the changes in central capitalism, please see; Günaydın, Gökhan: Tarım ve Kırsallıkta Dönüşüm/Politika Transfer Süreci/AB ve Türkiye (Transformation in Agriculture and Rurality/Policy Transfer Period/EU and Turkey), Tan Publications, Ankara, 2010.

The Liberalization of Turkish agriculture and the dissolution of small peasantry

Abdullah Aysu

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The 1973-1979 Tokyo Round of GATT was a milestone on the road that led Turkey to the military coup of September 12, 1980. Almost a year after having refused to do so in the Tokyo Round, Turkey became one of the first countries to open agriculture up to the free market. Early in 1980, then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel (whose team included future Prime Minister Turgut Özal) introduced the so-called January 24 economic program, but faced with strong social opposition, his government could not put the program into action. The September 12 military coup came later that very same year.

Turgut Özal built upon the atmosphere created by the September 12 military junta to begin working in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to implement neoliberal policies. Now, the January 24 Program could be implemented, liberalizing the agricultural sector - after having refused to do so in the Tokyo Round- and ushering in a new era that would be disastrous not only for farmers, but also for wage workers, civil servants, and the youth of Turkey. The IMF and WB controlled Turkey's economy with free market forces taking over agriculture. The military junta, who came to power with promises to "stop the fratricide," "prevent civil war," "secure law and order" and "ensure the indivisibility of state and nation," revealed its first and most important priority: Turning Turkey's economy over to free market forces just as multi-national companies wanted.

Phases of dissolution

The January 24 program initiated the restructuring of Turkey's economy and agriculture under the supervision of the WB, destroying agriculture and dissolving the peasantry to the point of replacing their practices with corporate agricultural practices. This process started with five general adjustment loans from the WB in 1980. In the first phase in 1982, the seed market was liberalized; in 1984, the importation of seeds was legalized. This set the stage for the Turkey Agricultural Sector Adjustment Loan (Agricultural SECAL) which would comprehensively liberalize the agriculture sector. The Agricultural SECAL restructured the management of the entire sector, from product planning to the loan system, from input procurement to the organization of public enterprises.[1] As the first step in the WB's strategy to restructure the whole of Turkey's economy - in other words, to initiate the era of privatizations - by deepening sector-specific loan policies, SECAL was followed by similar loan agreements designed to transform other economic sectors.[2] With the Agricultural SECAL, from 1984 on prices were reset in US dollars, with full price liberalization in place by 1986. In this period, agreements targeted the Agricultural Equipment Agency of Turkey (TZDK) and the General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises (TİGEM). The TZDK was closed down and liquidated, and TİGEMs are currently being transferred from the public to the private sector piecemeal, under lease contracts.

The WB's 1984 Agricultural Extension and Applied Research Loan culled research activities and, later, the Agricultural Research Project in 1992.[3] Under the pretext of extending the scope and depth of research in agriculture and forestry, these loans helped upend the Ministry of Agriculture's budget and planning system, eradicated the public aegis over agricultural research, and rendered research institutions defunct.

Another condition of the WB loans was the liberalization of interest rates for agricultural loans. To a large extent, this measure crippled the state's mechanisms for subsidizing agriculture. Two loan agreements in 1983 and 1989 diminished the role of the state agricultural bank Ziraat Bankası in Agricultural Loan Cooperatives (TKK), and, eventually, the bank was largely shut out from the agricultural system.[4]

The Agricultural SECAL agreement, designed to do away with the state's control and influence over agriculture in a systematic fashion, also took on the State Water Works (DSİ) and the General Directorate of Village Services (KHGM), the two state-owned agricultural institutions with the most extensive organization across the country. Loans for irrigation and drainage opened the way to their liquidation.[5] These loans transferred irrigation activities previously carried out by the state to the Irrigation Unions, and agricultural irrigation came to be governed and organized by commercial principles. The 1997 project Participatory Privatization of Irrigation Management and Investment laid the infrastructure for the privatization of water, a policy implemented by the WB across the world.

The new process, initiated with five agricultural loans from 1980 to 1985, entered a new phase with the signing of the Economic Reform Loan Agreement in 2000, covering industries such as finance, digital security, telecoms and energy.[6] The 600 million dollar Agricultural Reform Implementation

Loan, which set out how the agreement would be implemented, was signed in 2001.[7] Turkey's authorizing body was not, however, the Ministry of Agriculture but the Undersecretariat of the Treasury, which was under the heavy influence of the IMF and the WB.

A total of 17 loan agreements were signed, ten in the 1980s and seven in the 1990s. Each loan required the government to make certain concessions, pushing agriculture towards free market economics and turning Turkey into an open market for goods produced by agriculture, food and pharmaceutical companies of developed nations. For our purposes, it might suffice to say that these loans functioned like an artillery barrage, destroying the last benefits enjoyed by small agricultural producers. The loans were issued with the following conditions: a) Termination of all agricultural support programs. b) Transition to the direct income transfer system. c) Ending of all state activities in agricultural production and industry. d) Privatization or liquidation of all the remnants of state agencies such as TZDK, the public tea company ÇAY-KUR, the public tobacco and alcohol company TEKEL, and the public sugar factories Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş (TŞFAŞ). e) Reorganization of the Union of Agricultural Sales Cooperatives (TSKB) in accordance with WB guidelines.

As a result, not only was the country's pattern of agricultural production overhauled, but the state's (and the Ministry of Agriculture's) pioneering, protecting and regulating role in domestic agriculture (albeit riddled as it was with its own problem) was eradicated. Agriculture was steered towards a course to support the profits of global companies, rather than fulfill the country's needs.

Laying the groundwork

IMF, WB, WTO and EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)-approved policies implemented from 1980 onwards required the liquidation of all Turkey's state agricultural institutions established during the Great Depression and World War II, which, although they had mainly served the interests of large landowners and commercial bourgeoisie, nevertheless provided a degree of protection and assurance to the peasants.

Up until the free market era of the 1980s, an agricultural chain linked the state, farmers and consumers and more or less served the "common good." Although it had numerous deficiencies and suffered numerous interventions and sabotages by an alliance of landowners and usurer merchant capitalists from the very beginning, the state's role in this chain was to protect both the producer and consumer. [8] What followed was a global effort to transfer this chain to the control of large-scale agriculture, food and pharmaceutical corporations, an effort that brought about the destruction of agriculture in Turkey.

The bond between the state and the farmer had to be severed in order to draw agriculture into the free market. To accomplish this, the IMF and WB "ordered" a) the gradual eradication of subsidies for agricultural input, b) raising the interest rates of agricultural loans, c) the privatization of agricultural State Economic Enterprises (SEEs), and d) the privatization or liquidation of enterprises engaged in agricultural support purchases.

The mandate of restructuring the economy as imposed by capitalist centers was put into practice by the Motherland Party (ANAP) government that came to power in 1983 after the September 12 military coup had "cleaned the slate." ANAP remained in power until 1991, with Turgut Özal, one of the architects of the January 24 Program, serving as Prime Minister for six years. Özal began by amending laws blocking the privatization of SEEs and shutting down the following agencies to severe the ties between the farmer and the state:

- General Directorate of Aquaculture, which used to play a key role in ensuring the correct and efficient exploitation of various products in the three seas surrounding Turkey, its lakes and rivers – an agency which ought to have been expanded.

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- General Directorate of Food Quality and Control, which tested and monitored food for quality and hygiene.

- General Directorate of Veterinary Services, which helped farmers raise healthy animals and consumers enjoy healthy animal products.

- General Directorate of Agricultural Affairs, which introduced villagers to new advancements in technology.

- General Directorate of Agricultural Pest Control and Quarantine, which offered valuable technical support for the protection of plant health and pest control

- General Directorate of Soil and Water, which ensured that agricultural lands were not used for other purposes.

After the ANAP government closed these general directorates, the void was filled by the private sector as agricultural land was opened to for-profit residential or industrial development. The pesticide and fertilizer markets were abandoned to the private sector's ambulant salesmen, who needed to increase sales to earn higher bonuses.

Upon the request of the WB, the Özal government also started dismantling state monopolies in agriculture and the global corporations it represented, a measure that opened the door to the dissolution of the social texture of Turkey's countryside. This process started with tea production; later, opposition political parties that had opposed Özal's economic

policies would liquidate state monopolies in tobacco and sugar.

Tea cultivation law: Tea cultivation, mainly undertaken by small-scale family enterprises, had great economic, social and political significance in Turkey's Black Sea region. Since locals were intensively engaged in tea cultivation and the tea industry, they had advanced skills and experience. Tea cultivation and the tea industry had become an important source of employment for the regional population. The state monopoly in the tea industry and cultivation, an important sub-sector of the food industry as it was mainly controlled by small-scale family enterprises, was abandoned after 44 years by law number 3092, dated December 4, 1984. This began the liberalization of the cultivation, processing and sale of tea.

Sugar cultivation law: The initiatives of the ANAP government were continued by a coalition government of the Social Democrat Party (DSP), the National Movement Party (MHP) and the ANAP which lasted from May 1999 until November 2002. Upon the request of the IMF and WB, this government passed law number 4634, the Law on Sugar Cultivation, on April 4, 2001. Sugar beets are an important cash crop allowing farmers to combine vegetal production with animal husbandry. The byproducts of the sugar beet, such as its crown, leaves, molasses and pulp constitute the cheapest form of animal fodder. One decare of sugar beet yields such animal fodder equivalent to 500 kilogram of barley. In other words, a peasant who cultivates one decare of sugar beet also gains a bonus equivalent to two decares of barley for his animals. Sugar beet is also unique in that it increases the yield of the subsequent crop by 20%, and if its crown and leaves are left on the ground, adds 5 kilograms of pure phosphorus and 15 kilograms of potassium to each decare of soil. In Turkey, sugar beets used to be cultivated by 450 thousand families across 65 provinces and 7,200 settlements. These conditions were a barrier to the sugar beet market until the commercialization of agriculture since the cultivation of 1 decare of sugar beet yielded the same income with the cultivation of 4-5 decares of wheat. As it sustained agricultural activity in this manner, the sugar beet allowed the natural coexistence of vegetal production and animal husbandry and ensured the continuation of small-scale family farming. Another important aspect of the sugar beet is its generation of employment; hired laborers do 40% of the total labor in sugar beet fields. The sugar beet creates 18 times more employment than wheat and 4.4 times more employment than sunflowers, and incentivizes dairy farming and animal husbandry through its byproducts.[9]

As a result of the Law on Sugar Cultivation: a) Sugar beet producers stopped cultivating beets in around 2 million decares of land. b)175 thousand producers abandoned beet production. c) 200 thousand cattle can no longer be provided with fodder in the form of wet pulp. d) Workers in sugar factories started losing their work and livelihoods. e) Sugar beet production started falling from its peak of 18 million tons. f) The fall in sugar beet cultivation also had a negative impact on the ecological system, as one decare of beet yields as much oxygen as three decares of pine forests.[10] g) The 10% quota imposed on sugar beet cultivation caused much poverty and unemployment. The new law granted the Council of Ministers the power to increase or drop starch based sugar (SBS) quotas by 50%. Since then, the Council of Ministers has continued to increase the quota by 50%, leading to the following:[11] f) SBS production expanded by 117 thousand tons, whereas sugar beet production fell by the exact same amount. g) Since sugar beet yields 12 TL of added value per kg, its replacement with SBS yielded to a loss of 11.5 TL of added value in return for a profit of 50 kuruş (cents), thus leading to an annual loss in added value of 1,345,500 TL. h) Sugar beet cultivation fell by 850 thousand tons to 1 million tons. i) 60 thousand peasant families had to abandon sugar beet cultivation. j) Animal fodder equivalent to 400 thousand decares of barley was lost, and the work volume of the transportation sector fell by 2 million tons. k) If the SBS quota had not been increased by 50%, five SBS producing companies would have lost 150 million TL in profits. Instead, Turkey's thousand of peasants lost 250 million TL in added value.

Tobacco and alcohol production laws: The DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition also issued the Law on Tobacco, legislation that destroyed tobacco farming, provide advantages to corporate agriculturalists, and had a deep impact on grape cultivators.

Tobacco is traditionally cultivated by small-scale family farms: A family of tobacco farmers work the soil 3-4 times in a span of 14 months. This intensive and meticulous labor yields a product with high economic value. Tobacco can be cultivated by poor peasant families who do not own a tobacco processing machine or even a tractor.

When the law was signed, cigarette consumption in Turkey stood at 168 thousand tons, which corresponded to 8.4 billion cigarette packages. Assuming average price of a single pack to be 1TL, the total value of the cigarette market was 8.4 billion TL, of which 6 billion corresponded to taxes. This vast market was very appealing to international tobacco and cigarette corporations. As of 2000, tobacco production in Turkey stood at an annual 200-220 thousand tons, and consumption at 170 thousand tons. Added to 110 thousand tons of exported product, the overall demand for tobacco reached 280 thousand tons.[12] Once they gained power, parties that used to object to the privatization of the state-owned tobacco company Tekel while in opposition started campaigning for its privatization, arguing, "Turkey cultivates too much tobacco that we're forced toburn some of it."

Aside from its vast market volume and contribution to the state budget, Oriental tobacco can be cultivated in less fertile lands and plots on slopes, making it harder for the tobacco farmer to replace it with other products. If these lands are left uncultivated, they become prone to rain and wind erosion, lose the layer of relatively fertile soil, and turn into barren rock. The soil becomes unproductive and its natural condition is destroyed. Although these were all widely-known facts, politicians, encouraged

by foreign companies, turned a deaf ear. At the time the law was signed, tobacco was cultivated in 5001 villages by a total of 575,796 families.[13] Most of these families had to abandon tobacco cultivation and migrate to the cities. Once the farmers stopped cultivation, tobacco factory workers lost their jobs, too.

The government also turned a blind eye to the fact that foreign cigarette companies' products included harmful and lethal ingredients which increased consumers' addiction to nicotine, and that these products would easily dominate the market. Fully aware that it would damage the national economy, its soil and natural state, tobacco farmers and factory workers and human health, the government passed this law to serve the interests of international cigarette companies. As a result of the Law on Tobacco: a) International companies dominated the domestic tobacco and cigarette market. b) Tekel stopped its support purchases from farmers at advantageous prices. Grape processing factories owned by Tekel no longer purchased grapes from peasants. c) The number of tobacco producers fell from approximately 583 thousand to 50,685 in the 2010s.[14] d) Land used for tobacco cultivation shrunk form 234 thousand hectares in 2000 to 40-50 thousand hectares in 2011.[15] e) Tobacco production fell from 208 thousand tons in 2000 to 53,018 tons in 2010.[16] f) If Tekel had continued to purchase tobacco, the average price per kilogram would not be less than 40TL, whereas now it barely reaches 12,5 TL.[17]

These policies severed the ties between the farmers and the state, and then they severed farmers' ties to their organizations.

Severing farmers' ties with their organizations

Upon the request of the IMF and WB, the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition passed Law no. 4572 on Agricultural Sales Cooperatives and Unions (TSKB) paving the way for the domination of corporations.[18] The law introduced the following measures: a) Restructuring Boards (YYK) were established with powers superior to union boards' powers. YYK played a key role in the sales of the cooperatives' lands, the dismissal of workers, and the transformation of integrated plants into companies. b) Factories owned by cooperatives were put on a timeline to be turned into companies in three years, thus paving the way to their privatization. The transformation of cooperatives established on the basis of specific agricultural products and their integrated plants into companies brought these products under the domination of private corporations. c) The unions were prevented from receiving financial support from the state, other public financial agencies and state banks. d) The unions were banned from establishing banks.

As such, the law succeeded in creating a rupture between producers and their unions. Now it was the time to "force farmers to abandon farming."

First however, a step back in time: We have seen how all political movements and parties except the socialist left and the Kurdish movement came to power and played a role in implementing the policies of economic destruction. The liquidation of animal husbandry was to be carried out by the coalition of True Path Party (DYP) and Social Democratic People's Party (SHP, later the CHP.)

Destruction of livestock

The DYP-SHP coalitions, first under the premiership of Süleyman Demirel, and following his transition to the Presidency, under Tansu Çiller (May 1991-October 1995), carried out the destruction of public agencies regulating animal husbandry. To this end, the Meat and Fish Company (EBK), Animal Feed Industry (YEMSAN) and Dairy Industry Company (SEK) were privatized. The new owners raised the prices of animal feed and lowered the price of milk. Consequently, peasants raising livestock were obliged to sell off their animals. Once they were deprived of their animals, peasants had to turn to banks for credit; farmers no longer had any animals to sell in times of economic hardship and thus had to withdraw money from credit cards. Since they did not have regular incomes, they were not able to make regular repayments and their debts snowballed with excessive interest rates. First, their tractors were confiscated, then they lost their lands. The destruction of agriculture was geared up with privatizations in the animal husbandry sector to the ruination of peasant families.

> The government issued a law to establish thirteen new metropolitan areas. According to this law, nearly 20 thousand villages will lose their status. In other words, 47% of all villages will lose their status, without any consultation with their inhabitants. As a result, 75% of the entire population of Turkey (56 million people) will be declared urbanites.

After the privatization of EBK, SEK and YEMSAN, the number of farm animals fell from 87 million in 1980[19] to 37.7 million in 2009.[20] Turkey went from a net exporter to net importer of animal products. In the past, small family farms used to combine vegetal production with animal husbandry, thus feeding their animals with agricultural byproducts, mixing organic fertilizer to the soil to prevent ecological degradation, and protecting themselves against the encroachment of corporate agriculture. Privatizations in animal husbandry, however, broke the resistance of small family farms against companies producing and marketing agricultural inputs. Chemical products deprived the soil of nutrients. Pesticide traces started to constitute a health hazard.

Farmers abandon farming

The seed is naturally the starting point of agriculture and food production. Agriculture started with the discovery of the function of the seed. Agriculture and food cannot exist without seeds. The land will yield some produce even if you don't mix in fertilizers (organic or chemical) or use pesticides, but it won't

yield anything without seeds. Accordingly, seed is naturally synonymous with life in the eyes of peasants and consumers.

The biggest dream of agricultural corporations is to take seeds under their control to render peasants and farmers dependent. With the Law on Seeds no. 5553 issued by the AKP government in 2006, the state abandoned seed production, banned farmers from selling the seeds they produced, allowing them only to barter for them.[21] As a result, seed companies were free to do as they wished. The law was passed largely under the influence of the IMF, WB and EU.

With the Law on Seeds: a) Trade was allowed only in a number of specified seed species and thus farmers were banned from selling the seeds they produce; seeds can only be bartered.
b) The state abandoned the regulation of seed production and private companies were now authorized to certify, trade in and control the seeds.
c) Not the state, but the Union of Seed Producers formed by seed companies is authorized in settling the disputes between companies and farmers.

The law obliges farmers to buy seeds from companies. However, a farmer, by definition, is someone who can set aside some of his end-produce as seed. The Law on Seeds however, severed farmers' ties to farming. On top of the IMF-WB straitjacket and WTO norms already imposed upon agriculture, as of October 3, 2003, CAP negotiations were added, too, after Turkey became an official candidate to the European Union.

Companies dominate agriculture

With their foreign imposed, pro-corporate policies, governments made significant progress in the liquidation of farmers. To ensure the domination of companies in agriculture and food production, the following laws were passed:

Law on Agricultural Producers' Unions:[20] This law was passed to create the illusion that the state wanted farmers to organize to protect their interests against companies. In fact, the law prevented farmers from organizing effectively due to the following reasons: a) The law impedes union members from producing in a collectively. b) The law allows members to join the unions as partners, but impeded them from establishing industrial plants to process their produce
c) The law prevents unions to purchase wholesale various inputs (pesticide, fertilizer, etc.) from domestic or overseas markets and distribute these to their members. d) The law does not establish a direct relationship between producers and consumers bypassing middlemen. e) The law allows unions to sign separate agreements on behalf of individual farmers, but not a collective agreement on behalf of all the members. f) The law bans unions from distributing profit to their members.
g) The law obliges farmers to accept and implement all international agreements on agriculture.
It was evident that the law was passed to create obstacles to farmers' unions.

Law on Agricultural Warehouse Licensin:[21] This law was inspired by the US example, but the version in Turkey differs largely from the US practice: The US mechanism for licensed warehousing is designed to resolve the problems of farmers and agricultural companies and to benefit the farmers, supporting warehousing services with loans with near-zero interest rates and providing for farmers to pay no rent for the warehouse. The Law on Agricultural Warehouse Licensing by the AKP government, however, is designed not to resolve the farmers' problems, but simply to help companies make more money. The farmers are not supported by cheap loans and are obliged to pay rent for their warehousing. This law benefits companies as well as large landowners who have the economic power to leave their produce in the warehouse for a longer period, but acts to the detriment of small- and medium-scale farmers.

Law on Organic Agriculture:[24] Just as an organic agriculture certificate testifies to the organic character of a product, the Law on Organic Agriculture testifies to the transfer of control over agriculture to private corporations. It grants the authority of issuing organic agriculture licenses not to state agencies but to private companies serving the farmers in return for a fee.

Law on Agricultural Insurance:[25] The Law on Agricultural Insurance was worded to benefit not farmers but insurance companies, and to help them earn more. The law stipulates that 50% of the insurance premium of farmers will be paid by the state; however, after the law was passed, the insurance companies increased insurance premiums precisely by the amount to be covered by the state.

Law on Agriculture:[26] The law was revised to limit state subsidies to farmers to 1% of GDP, and from the first year onwards, subsidies to farmers remained below that threshold.[27]

Law on Agricultural Chambers:[28] The law gave agricultural chambers a little leeway by granting them certain new powers such as increasing membership fees. Farmers suggest that as a result, these chambers remained as the AKP government issued other laws to benefit for-profit companies. The Law on Agricultural Chambers further aggravated the already sour relations between farmers and agricultural chambers.

Law on Soil Protection and Land Use:[29] This law's main function was to grant amnesty to industrialists who had built plants over first class agricultural land.

Law on Agricultural Marketplaces:[30] Both the old and new laws on agricultural marketplaces ensure the domination of not farmers but corporations. The valuable products grown by farmers with meticulous effort are bought in the marketplaces at very low prices. This law prevents farmers from benefiting from legislation on added value. The regulations do not increase the rate of added value on farmers' produce. They only help middlemen make more money.

The new law also grants municipalities the right to sell or privatize agricultural marketplaces. If these markets are privatized, the price of the product will be set not by the producer/farmer but by the buyer, that is the company involved. The law also suggests that municipalities should organize a marketplace where farmers can sell their produce; however, this is

not an obligatory clause. From this point onwards, not well-known middlemen but large agriculture and food companies came to dominate the market, allowing peasants to place their stalls on only 20% of the market area.

Law on National Biosecurity:[31] Companies wanted this law. Although the Law on National Biosecurity is supposed to function like a constitution for the protection of nature, this law allows for the importation of GMO animal feed. It is difficult to keep farmers from using the feed grains, GMO corn, for example, as seed. Also, inevitably, some of the GMO animal feed will contaminate the soil in the form of manure. The law also legalizes the production of food with GMO products, with the exception of baby formula.

Law on New Metropolitan Areas:[32] The government issued this law to establish thirteen new metropolitan areas. According to this law, 16,200 villages will be turned into neighborhoods, and 1591 districts will cease to exist. Districts, though, can be considered villages due to their social, economic and cultural character; as such, all in all, a total of nearly 20 thousand villages will lose their status. The total number of villages in Turkey stands at 34,500. In other words, 47% of all villages will lose their status, without any consultation with their inhabitants. As a result, 75% of the entire population of Turkey (56 million people) will be declared urbanites.

The law's preamble refers to "an efficient, active, citizen-oriented, participatory, transparent and local management perspective." In actual fact, the law translates into practice the EU's mandate to lower rural population to around 8-10% and opens up the countryside to rent-seeking and capital accumulation. The law centralizes the authority to build power plants in the countryside (hydroelectric power plants, coal-fueled plants, wind power plants and solar plants), thus circumventing the rule of law and bypassing the political opposition. Once the law takes effect, the number of villages in Turkey will be halved and peasants will lose their economic, social, political, cultural rights and most significantly, their right to produce:

-Currently, villagers engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry use water for free and enjoy tax exemptions. However, once villages are absorbed into urban municipalities, the villagers will lose such advantages and life will become much more expensive. According to the law, animal husbandry will be banned in these areas and these individuals will see their economic opportunities shrink and their cultural life degrade.

-To ensure corporations' domination in agriculture and food, small- and medium-sized farmers have to be liquidated. The EU also demands Turkey lower its peasant population to below 10%. This law thus destroys the productive peasantry and responds to the demands of global agriculture and food companies.

-Village lands that will be assumed by urban administrations will gain in value; however, the rent generated will not benefit the peasants. Furthermore, villagers will be driven out of their villages to other areas by the state that will expropriate their lands, and thus they will lose their say over their own living space.

-It is undemocratic to revise the legal status of settlements such as districts and villages without consulting the local population beforehand. AKP's Deputy President in charge of Local Government, Menderes Türel states that, "We have only recently started taking steps to meet the conditions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government signed in 1989 at the European Commission." Turkey is indeed a signatory of this charter; however the charter is based on the principle that services should be provided by the unit of administration closest to the population concerned. Villages and districts are the best such units to facilitate the population's access to and participation in government. It is erroneous to eradicate district municipalities and prevent the local population from participating in their administration; instead these units ought to be reinforced in administrative and fiscal terms. Furthermore, the most democratic and reasonable method is to ensure that people living inside the limits of a certain settlement decide how to resolve their common problems.

> There are 172 completed hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs). 2380 HEPPs are in the planning stage. HEPPs are being built under the pretext that the country needs more energy. This does not correspond to the reality, as the HEPPs to be constructed will meet only 2.5% of Turkey's demand for electricity. In fact, these projects will allow companies to take control of Turkey's water resources, and start reselling water back to peasants and the rest of the population.

In social terms, this law will have a destructive effect on peasants and especially small producers. In political terms, peasants, workers, civil servants, small producers and small shopkeepers will be alienated from politics, whereas international and national large capitalists and renters will gain even more clout. In brief, this law proposes not a democratic but a profit-oriented and antidemocratic model of management. It is set to destroy farming activities and ensure corporate domination over agriculture and food in Turkey.

The "basin" model in support purchases

The government announced the transition starting in 2010 to the "basin model of production and support" which will transfer the dwindling state support to large landowners and capitalist farms. According to this model, Turkey will be divided into thirty basins or regions according to criteria such as climate, topography and soil type. The plan is to liquidate the small- and medium-sized peasantry from these basins of ecologically similar regions.

Although farmers in Turkey face real problems like high input prices which raise their costs, this

model neither subsidizes such inputs (fertilizer, seed, pesticide, water, diesel), nor does it even lower the taxes on such inputs. According to this model, farmers with lands smaller than the specified area and with less than a certain number of animals will not receive support; that is, all the state support is conspicuously transferred to companies and large landowners.

Regulations

When laws are not enough, the government issues regulations to provide support to corporations. The Regulation on Grain Purchase and Sales by the Turkish Grain Board (TMO) is a striking case in point.[33] The AKP government issues such regulations like this one to prevent small farmers from selling their produce to the TMO, and forcing them to sell it on the market. According to this regulation, the minimum purchase limits on bread wheat, barley, rye, triticale, oat and maize will be incrementally raised from 2009 until 2018. Farmers who produce less than 3 tons in 2010, 5 tons in 2011, 10 tons in 2012, 15 tons in 2013, 25 tons in 2014, 40 tons in 2015, 60 tons in 2016, and 80 tons in 2017-2018 of bread wheat, barley, rye, oat and maize will not be able to sell it to TMO. Similar minimum limits will soon be imposed on pasta wheat and rice/paddy.

If regulations don't get the job done, an executive order will

Aside from laws and regulations, executive orders with the force of law (KHK) are also used to issue fast-track legislation that could draw the anger of peasants as well as the general public by circumventing its discussion in parliament or by society at large.

The powers of the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning,[34] Ministry of Forestry and Water Works[35] and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Animal Husbandry[36] have been redefined by means of such executive orders with capitalists being given free rein to exploit natural areas as they see fit.

Previously, professional chambers and NGOs had been successful in protecting sites of cultural and natural heritage through litigation; now, in reaction to that success, the government has issued executive orders to authorize the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning to manage these sites. In this way, the government has given itself the opportunity to make behind-closed-doors decisions on issues which might spark heated public debates.[37]

The Ministry of Agriculture and Village Affairs has been renamed with "Village Affairs" has been replaced with "Food and Animal Husbandry."[38]

Agriculture couples vegetal production with animal husbandry; however, the new name of the ministry conspicuously does away with the word animal husbandry, pointing to the corporatization of agriculture. The combination of vegetal production and animal husbandry allows these two activities to benefit from each other's inputs, thus protecting farmers from being dependent on companies for inputs. The rupture of these two activities allowed companies to step in as suppliers of these inputs. Farmers and nature have both been exposed to ruthless exploitation by companies. Food has not only lost its nutritional value, but some has even started posing a risk to human health due to the use of unhealthy ingredients.

There is yet another problem: This law will also open the way to the privatization of activities such as agricultural research and publication, training, education, innovation, as well as production and control. These areas normally fall under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, which has been de facto abandoned for many years as the IMF and WB wanted. The Ministry is thus only active in managing, auditing and facilitating private companies' import and export transactions. Those who voice their opposition are criminalized by the media, arrested, deterred and suppressed by the police and military. Executive orders with the force of law opened up agricultural lands and meadows a source of free and healthy animal feed for animal breeders to capitalist plunder.

Current legislation drafts such as the Law on Tea Cultivation, the Law on Villages, and the Law on Protection of Plants and Biodiversity will also benefit companies but hurt farmers, consumers, and nature.

Destroying the environment for capital accumulation

After the dissolution of the peasantry came the destruction of nature itself by surrendering rivers and surrounding lands to corporations. The Law on Urgent Expropriation has opened up the commonwealth of peasants to the plunder of private companies.

In Turkey, there are 172 completed hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs). 148 more HEPPs are under construction and 2380 HEPPs are in the planning stage. Aside from these, over 4000 micro HEPPs are planned. Altogether, the total number of HEPPs will exceed 6000. These figures spell a horrible catastrophe.

HEPPs are being built under the pretext that the country needs more energy. This does not correspond to the reality, however, as the over 2700 HEPPs to be constructed will meet only 2.5% of Turkey's demand for electricity. In fact, these projects will allow companies to take control of Turkey's water resources, and start reselling water back to peasants and the rest of the population. If the companies wish, the state will even also expropriate surrounding pieces of land on their behalf!

To generate electricity, the companies will make the creeks and rivers flow through pipelines and tunnels, thus severing the water's bonds with insects and other wildlife. Without access to water, insects and animals will have to migrate to other regions, and agriculture will be severed from wildlife. Once the water is trapped inside the pipeline, the farmers will enjoy only one harvest instead of two. Precipitation and productivity levels will fall. The ecological equilibrium will be disrupted as both nature and peasantry will be left impoverished.

Big agriculture, food and pharmaceutical companies have the clout to control the economy and politics. They are ferociously attacking agriculture and nature in nothing short of an all-out war against peasants and nature. The plunder is not carried out

by only industrial agriculture companies, but also by mining companies, large dams, giant distribution companies, polluting industrial enterprises, land grabbers who try to confiscate land and water, and water companies who hold water hostage like pirates. Companies need the support of governments to carry out this pillage, and governments have indeed created the necessary legal framework through urgent expropriations and other legislative reforms. Under the name of "urgent expropriation," companies have started confiscating individuals' lands and other real estate. Companies have succeeded in building HEPPs, coal-fueled plants, nuclear power plants, mines, other enterprises and establishing power transmission lines. Urgent expropriation, cited as an exceptional method in the Law on Expropriation, has allowed Energy Market Regulation Authority to confiscate individuals' living space and livelihood.[39]

The agriculture, food, energy and pharmaceutical companies' attacks on nature and life exploits farmers, upends ecological systems, and jeopardizes health, and their offenses have triggered a backlash. In rural areas, capitalists and poor peasants are now pitted against each other; the class struggle has spread to ecological issues. Peasants, lawyers, scientists, environmentalists and ecologist groups have joined forces in a struggle to defend life against companies and the government. The villagers' relentless struggle against the coalition of capital and the government has gained fresh momentum as Turkey's countryside now witnesses a significant, new conflict.

Footnotes

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35 Resmi Gazete: July 4, 2011 no. 27984 (bis)
36 Resmi Gazete: August 27, 2011 no. 28038
37 AKP'nin "Hülle" KHK'si, Meralar ve Tarım Arazilerini Yok Edecek! Tarım ve Mühendislik Dergisi, no. 96/2011, TMMOB Ziraat Mühendisleri Odası Yayın Organı
38 The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Animal Husbandry was established with the executive order with the force of law dated March, 6, 2011 and no. 639.
39 EMRA is authorized to carry out confiscations under the provision dated September 14, 2004, which reads "Article 27 of the Law no. 2942 on Expropriation is applicable in all expropriation transactions by EMRA in the electricity, natural gas and oil markets".

Agriculture: Strategic documents and reality

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Born in Tunceli in 1965, Yıldırım graduated from Ege University's Department of Journalism and Public Relations. In 1996, he began working as a columnist for Dünya newspaper writing on agricultural issues. He is currently the editorial director of Dört Mevsim Tarım (Four Seasons of Agriculture) magazine published by Dünya newspaper. Yıldırım also makes programs for Dünya Ekonomi TV as well as writing on agriculture.

Turkey rejected the idea of being an "agricultural country" for many years. Especially in the 1980s people in Turkey perceived the disadvantages of being an agricultural country: "Are we going to be the gardener of Europe?" or "Are we Europe's shepherd?" The misconception that there was no country that sustains itself through agriculture was a fabrication. Being called an agricultural country was shameful.

The argument that snubs agriculture says that sustainability can only be realized through industrialization; it is more logical to produce automobiles instead of planting potatoes or working the olive groves that had been yielding crops for thousands of years. Best to replace these with tourist facilities. Huge industrial facilities were built over fertile agriculture lands and meadows were transformed into industrial sites and residential areas. Holiday villages and tourist facilities replaced ancient olive groves. The aim was obvious: Turkey wanted to get rid of its peasantry. At each election cycle, parties remembered these rural people were a bloc of votes, but when they were left to face their fate, agricultural production plans were naturally neglected. Instead of producing added-value agriculture by making use of Turkey's agricultural potential and increasing the welfare of rural people, Turkey seemed only to produce more and more problems.

Today, Turkey is incapable of planning what and how much it should produce and seems insensitive to the importance of agriculture. This is only emphasized through some documents laced with gilded terms like "strategy," "vision," and "strategic plan." These documents from desks in Ankara are completely disconnected from agricultural truths and are far from reflecting the viewpoints and needs of non-governmental organizations and people who live and work in rural areas.

Strategic Documents and Action Plans

In the last few years the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock prepared numerous documents: The Agricultural Vision 2008-2012, The Strategic Action Plan for 2006-2010, The Strategic Plan for 2010-2014 and The Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 are just a few of these reports. A closer look at these "strategy documents" and 'national action plans' on stockbreeding, organic agriculture and rural development reveals a veritable a cesspool of 'strategic plans' and "action plans" for Turkey's agriculture.

What these documents have in common is that, with the support of the media, they seemed to be engaged in showing that the Ministry is undertaking serious measures to influence the public. Once these documents and their effective subsides shortly thereafter are announced, they are shelved and new ones are prepared. In The Strategic Plan for 2013-2017, they confess that the strategy for 2010-2014 was only utilized for two years. For the Ministry, these documents are little more than public relations projects.

It is a legal obligation for public establishments for these strategic plans to be prepared and published. The obligation for public establishments to prepare strategic plans was enforced through the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 of 2003. Within this legal framework, it would be beneficial to consider the Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 that will be on the agenda until a new plan is prepared.

Strategic Aims in Agriculture

The Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 aims to develop suitable methods and technologies that will increase yields and quality of production, protect agricultural and ecological resources, and ensure the security of supply for agricultural products and foodstuffs. The realization of these goals necessitates a competitive agricultural sector that is strengthened by an insurance system that determines risks, a manageable sector that provides a reliable supply of produce through accountability and sustainability in agriculture.

These latest strategic aims in agriculture can be summarized as the six headings in the Plan: 1) To provide food security and accessibility to quality agricultural products by protecting agricultural production resources. 2) To provide food reliability in accordance with international standards from production to consumption. 3) To increase plant production by protecting quality by ensuring environmentally-friendly and effective plant health. 4) To control and eradicate animal diseases and pests; to provide animal welfare. 5) To develop agricultural and social infrastructure services and to

increase the appeal of rural areas by providing rural development and welfare. 6) To provide corporate excellence and timely, effective, quality services.

Food Security

The Strategic Plan aims to ensure food security at international standards throughout production, manufacture, conservation, storage and marketing of substances and materials in contact with all foodstuffs and foods starting from the initial stage when raw materials are obtained, and to protect consumer health to the highest level.

The Plan also emphasizes undertakings towards plant health that would make plant production competitive and sustainable: "The development and popularization of integrated methods in internal and external quarantine services of plant production as well as the development of the control and auditing services for application equipment through plant protection products is targeted."

Animal Diseases

In the Strategic Plan, effective precautions for animal health are planned to aid development in stockbreeding and to produce animals and animal products in accordance with international hygiene regulations. The subject of agricultural and social infrastructure services and rural development are also mentioned: "Bettering the quality of life of individuals and communities in rural areas and make their livings from agriculture is a target, as well as increasing their incomes. Economic activities in rural areas will be diversified, land partitioning will be decreased, in-field development services and modern irrigation systems will be established, and irrigation output will be increased. The national and international funds allocated to support rural development will be utilized effectively. The non-agricultural use of farmlands will be prevented and environmentally-friendly practices will better protect and improve land and water resources. By developing the agricultural information system, data will be easily accessible by executives and consumers.

Market Regulation Mechanisms

The Strategic Plan explains the creation of market regulation mechanisms and the strengthening of managerial and technical capacities of regulatory institutions and corporations for better price stability in agricultural products, in particular meat and milk, and to avoid the negative effects of price fluctuations: "Licensed warehousing and leased production will be developed with the aim of establishing income stability for farmers through product supply. Our fundamental approach is to create a sufficient and secure food supply through policies that support supply security and agricultural production by making use of contemporary scientific and technological opportunities, channeling production, creating production and commercial policies at a macro level, turning biological diversity into an advantage in international markets, improving management structures, and increasing the standard of life and the level of welfare in rural areas."

Agricultural Infrastructure and Rural Development

One of the most important issues addressed in the Strategic Plan is rural development and agricultural infrastructure. An understanding of integrated rural development with precautions that increase yields for sustainable rural development is necessary to better the living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas and earning a living from the agricultural sector or from other rural income sources. The Stategic Plan summarizes its plan as follows: "The structure of the agricultural businesses in our country presents a challenge in competing with the rest of the world. The non-protection of economic management size is a threat to sustainable agriculture and weakens the competitive power of businesses. Moreover, this situation engenders the insufficient use of irrigation networks and transport, difficulties in production, increases the loss of work force, investment and losses in production and paves the way for boundary disagreements and social unrest. Eradicating problems in agricultural infrastructure and procure rural development and land arrangement in rural areas, enlarging the scale of businesses and aid the increase of production and yield, increasing the income and competitive power of businesses, providing integration between agriculture and industry, increasing employment opportunities, and precautions for the protection of rural surroundings have great importance."

> The fundamental problem is high input costs. Farmers who have no other option than using the most expensive diesel oil in the world are unable to cultivate some three million hectares of land. Conditions for sustainable production become more impossible day by day. In The Strategic Plan, there isn't a single line that addresses these problems.

Land collectivization and the importance of irrigation

The Plan states that legal and structural changes will be put into place to prevent the division of agricultural lands by inheritance. "The way will be opened for market-focused and competitive agricultural production. Land collectivization is an important tool for solving structural problems. Through collectivization the plots become larger, the number of plots decrease, every plot has access to irrigation canals and road networks, the distance between business centers and plots shrinks, the rate and output of irrigation increases, disagreements on borders are reduced and social peace is obtained. By speeding projects on collectivization in areas with arable farming, the collectivization of one million hectares of land can be completed each year."

The Strategic Plan further states that "irrigation is the driving force behind rural development. Every irrigation project is also a project of rural development."

Strengths and weaknesses in agricultural production

In The Strategic Plan, Turkey's strengths in agricultural production and supply security are as follows: "The production capacity of strategic products, rich genetic resources and bio-diversity; the constructive role of natural resources and climate in production diversity; agro-strategic location; projects on the integration between agriculture and industry; the effect of the agricultural support system in directing/channeling production; the capacity of Research and Development and the utilization of new information and technologies; the continuity of educational and publishing activities; the existence of an accumulation of data and information; the speeding up of land collectivization projects."

According to the Strategic Plan the weaknesses of agricultural production and supply security are the small and divided plots, insufficient development of marketing mechanisms, the low competitive power of businesses, the insufficient effectiveness of the research-publishing-producer chain, the lack of an integrated information system that would be the foundation of production planning.

Opportunities and threats

In the Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 the following are seen as threats in view of agricultural production and supply security: "Demands in view of the use of agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses; the continued division of agricultural lands; dependence on foreign sources for certain agricultural inputs and the costliness of production; the increased pollution of surface and underground waters due to the misuse of chemical manure and pesticides; misuse of irrigation; the increase of demand for bio-fuels; climate change; the decrease in the number of water sources and drought; the policies of the World Trade Organization, the EU, and other international institutions; changes in the foreign commerce policies of purchasing countries; and the increase in competitiveness. "

In spite of these threats, Turkey's advantages are: "The continuity of the market demand relating to the sector, the use of technology and the increase in consumer awareness, the increase of interest in agriculture by investors and the increase in finance facilities, the application of international standards in production and product manufacturing, the protection of land and water resources, the increase in awareness and sensibility for the environment, the increase in the utilization of modern irrigation systems, the inclination of the producer towards leased agriculture, advantages in view of agro-eco tourism, the development of the applications of organic agriculture and better agricultural practices, the existence of the capacity for developing technologies and varieties in products that are not indigenous to our country, the high potential for the exportation of agricultural products and the development of marketing opportunities."

How should the Strategic Plan be read?

The Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 took three years to prepare. These plans are like the Ministry's compasses. Bu this Plan is not equipped to solve the agriculture sector's problems.

The fundamental problem in the agriculture sector is high input costs. Farmers who have no other option than using the most expensive diesel oil in the world are unable to cultivate some three million hectares of land. For stockbreeders, the price of feed increases faster than the price of milk. Farms are forces to shut down. Conditions for sustainable production become more impossible day by day. In The Strategic Plan, there isn't a single line that addresses these problems.

The Plan outlines projects that do not address reality. They are prepared unilaterally by the government without seeking out the opinions or advice of non-governmental institutions and by only considering the viewpoint of the Ministry; even more to the point, they reflect the views of the political party in office. This latest Plan repeats Minister Mehdi Eker and other executives' favorite clichés in the gilded name of "strategy." We do not think that there will be any producer, entrepreneur, or for that matter any institution or corporation that will conduct its business or make decisions to invest by taking the five year strategy of the Ministry as a basis for action. In any case, the Ministry neither views nor applies this strategic plan as a road map; none of the targets determined in earlier strategic plans were realized. Many of the aims not realized in these plans harm the producer rather than provide any benefit.

In previous strategy and vision documents very important goals were put in place regarding stockbreeding. Just as none of these aims were realized, for the first time in its history Turkey imported sacrificial animals and hay. In the last three years Turkey imported three billion dollars worth of livestock and meat.

The US announces agricultural policy every five years, and every seven years in Europe. Just as it is in these countries, Turkey should also identify and apply its agricultural policies for at least a period of five years. The budget for agricultural support and fundamental principles should be announced for periods of five years. The farmers should know clearly how much support they will receive for which products until 2017. The EU budget was accepted recently. The farmers in the European Union decide upon their production with full knowledge of what support they will receive until 2020 and also knowing the target price of many products. In The Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 neither support nor future expectations are addressed.

Small farming is disappearing

One of the fundamental targets in the Strategic Plan is land collectivization, a topic that has been on the Turkey's agenda for many years. In almost every meeting regarding agriculture the same complaint comes up: The smallness of agricultural lands and businesses. The solution is always the same: The unification of businesses or the prevention of further business divisions. The first legal regulation was put into effect in 2005 as the Soil Protection and Land Use Law. Today, a new draft law that stipulates change in that law is on the agenda. The new draft

law will put a kind of land reform in place, but it is hardly what we think of when we think of land reform. Instead of permitting villagers to obtain land who do not own any land, the land of small farmers will be marketed to large investors.

The draft aims to re-classify agricultural businesses and agricultural lands and to prevent the division of lands and businesses by setting minimum sizes. The minimum plot size determined for absolute agricultural lands, marginal agricultural lands and special product lands is approximately 18,400 square meters, approximately 4,600 square meters for sown agricultural lands, and for greenhouse cultivation approximately 2,760 square meters. In accordance with today's regulations, the Ministry is given the authority to increase these lot sizes. If the Ministry deems it acceptable, smaller lots will be allowed in locations where special plants require certain climates and soils such as tea, hazelnuts and olives. For agricultural lands and businesses subject to inheritance the passage of title will be the basis. If inheritors reach an agreement, the conveyance will likely be completed within one year of the inheritance process starting. If the conveyance is not completed within one year, the title will be allowed to pass to third parties. The passage of title to a "competent inheritor" who has agriculture experience, produces food and makes a living from agricultural lands or businesses, is seen to prevent the division of lands. If the "competent inheritor" does not have the financial wherewithal, the state is to provide a long-term loan and provide support for interest. But what happens to the other inheritors? If one sibling of five living in a village is given the land how will the other four siblings earn a living? There are many people in the country who live from agriculture. If the land of a farmer who makes a living from agriculture is taken away he will either be forced to move to the city or become a worker of the person who bought the land he had. If he is not strong enough to work as a farm hand he will be abandoned to poverty and death. No one should be surprised if hostility between siblings or even blood feuds increases due to the passage of inheritance.

This regulation attempts to prevent the division of agricultural lands and businesses in order to better agricultural performance. However, reading between the lines, we can see that this draft law will gradually destroy small farming, family businesses and rural living and allow domestic and foreign investors to gain the land and invest their energies only in large enterprises and land owners.

The government enacted the Soil Protection and Land Use Law No. 5403 in 2005 to prevent the division of agricultural lands, but it didn't succeed. It seems very unlikely that the new draft law will work because Turkey does not have a healthy agricultural inventory. The cadastral work is incomplete, and the current soil and land classification does not serve any constructive purpose.

It surely is an important issue that agricultural lands are being divided and becoming smaller. However, what's much more important and urgent is the fundamental problem that all businesses in agriculture, whether large or small, have high input costs. Today, it doesn't matter if a farmer has five or five thousand cows because they are both losing income due to the cost of input prices. If a farmer with five decares of land or one with five thousand decares of land is failing to prosper because they have to use the most expensive diesel oil in the world, it is impossible for them to compete with their competitors.

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock's Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 is an obligatory report with measures that do not correlate with the reality of the sector and whose targets and aims are difficult to reach.

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGIES FOR 2013-2017

• Preserving and keeping a record of genetic resources and biological diversity. • Taking precautions in production to achieve quality and characteristics demanded by international markets. • Developing and popularizing varieties and species invulnerable to negative environmental conditions. • Incentivizing the utilization of environmentally-friendly production techniques. • The protection of soil and water resources and the popularization of modern irrigation systems for their rational use. • Taking precautions for the protection of surface and underground water sources against nitrate pollution caused by agricultural applications. • Opening pastures to private sector investments. • Establishing regulatory mechanisms for agricultural product markets, popularizing licensed warehousing services. • Popularizing leased production. • Collaborating with shareholders in the process of creating policies. • Making systems of certificated input use more effective. • Developing, diversifying and encouraging the manufacture of products that have high added-value and are needed by the industry. • Encouraging the use and development of domestic technological elements. • Conducting market research in order to increase the consumption and competitive power of products; taking precautions to extend the period of branding and production; supporting activities aimed at advertising and production. • Encouraging using traditional products for products with high-added value. • Supporting product storage and projects that will extend the shelf life of products. • Speeding up projects of land collectivization and taking precautions to prevent the division of agricultural lands. • Implementing production plans for strategic products. • Extending the context of agricultural insurance systems and popularizing them. • Taking precautions that will observe the balance between food requirements and the demand for bio-fuels. • Encouraging the increase of the capacity of livestock businesses. • Encouraging the popularization of ovine breeding. • Continuing EU projects. • Popularizing implementations of integrated, biological and bio-technical issues. • Procuring new varieties that are more resistant to disease and other harmful factors. • Popularizing the use of certificated seeds, saplings and seedlings. • Identifying and keeping records of animals. • Encouraging the domestic production of vaccines, biological substances and equipment used in diagnosis and treatment processes.

Land grabbing

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The inflation-adjusted prices of crops ten years ago were their lowest in fifty years. However, the FAO real food price index has risen gradually since 2000 and doubled in value over the same period. According to the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook for 2012, the price of agricultural products was projected to stay high until 2012 due to strong demand, high oil prices, the increasing demand of bio-fuels and a deceleration in production.[1] While demand for agricultural raw materials used in the production of bio-fuels indicates a critical contradiction between energy and food production, it also causes concern for the food security of the poorest and most disadvantaged. A United Nations Spokesperson described the contradiction between energy and food as "a crime against humanity."[2] Water and land are scarce resources, and considering the current global population growth and the subsequent increasing pressure to use these scarce resources for purposes other than food production - not to mention the effects of climate change - there is great concern that we might face a scarcity of food in the future.

The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook for 2012 emphasizes that previously, the increase of food prices has always been solved through an increase in production despite the severity of demand. That is, in the past, increased demand could be met by increasing agricultural production. However, decreasing performance in certain areas and the increase in costs such as energy and fertilizers, in addition to the scarcity of water and land, cause concern that it will be a struggle to meet future demand.[3]

The United Nations estimated in 2009 the world population would reach 9.1 billion people by 2050, an increase of 34%. According to FAO estimates, global agricultural production must increase 60% over the same period to meet the nutritional needs of urban populations who do not produce food themselves.[4] These estimates, however, do not include the increasing demand for agricultural raw materials by the growing bio-fuel industry. Considering that a portion of global agricultural production will not be consumed as food, production growth much increase to the point that it will also supply the needs of the bio-fuel industry.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, a glow wave of "land, water sources, and natural resources onset" has appeared. Clearly, the construction of hydroelectric, thermal, and power plants, as well as mining, fracking, as the production of bio-fuels are competing for land and water use with food producers. The situation has made land and water the most scarce and valuable resources, and exposes them to strong global competition.

What is "Land Grabbing"?

In developed countries, almost all land is used with high levels of performance. New investments are therefore directed at developing countries were a larger portion of land is not used. In many cases, land and natural resource investment agreements are signed between officials and investors behind closed doors, without seeking the approval or consent of local people who perhaps have lived in the area for generations. This is "land grabbing": residents are denied a say in these processes, and then suddenly find themselves stripped of their rights to the lands they live on.

According to GRAIN, an international NGO, "land grabbing" is defined as the purchasing or long-term leasing of productive lands in poor countries by rich countries and their corporations without consulting farmers or indigenous people but by making deals through legal government channels.[5] The Zoomers definition has a wider perspective and "land grabbing" is defined as the "foreignization" of space or land.[6] Mining, fracking, the construction of hydroelectric, thermal and power plants, land agreements made for tourism purposes or for food production for resource-poor rich countries, and speculation over the production of bio-fuels and land can also be considered land grabbing. These are just a few global examples of land grabbing: The creation of commercial "wildlife protection areas" in Africa; Patagonia, Argentina, with all its oil, gas, and water resources passing into private ownership of wealthy Americans; the transformation of agricultural lands into tourist attractions at the expense of dispossessed populations in Costa Rica, Cape Verde, and Cambodia, who were forced to relocate to make room for development.[7] Borras and Franco hold that global land grabbing by multi-national companies on the basis of food and bio-fuel production is only one side to the story.[8] Through land grabbing, multi-national companies do not only take charge of the land that belongs to indigenous populations, but they also seize public property, a large part of which is fertile agriculture land.[9] Africa bears many examples of this. In developing countries a large portion of the land is public property and this makes land grabbing a global issue of commodification.

Governments of developing countries that want

to tap into this new wave of investment change laws and offer lands that are designated "unsuitable for agriculture" to investors. According to the World Bank, official records reveal that those who undertake such land agreements are mostly local companies.[10] For example, 90% of the investors in Nigeria are local; over 50% of investors in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sudan are local. However, the same report also emphasizes that local investors might also be working for foreigners. I will argue in this article that, considering the interest of developed countries and multi-national companies in land investment, "land grabbing" is a new method of "seizing" resources of developing countries employed largely by developed countries in a fashion that recalls colonialism. Grabbed lands have already witnessed rebellion, suppression, and death. In a report prepared by Global Witness, an international NGO, it states that in 2011 alone, at least 106 people were murdered; this number is almost double that of 2009.[11] Moreover, the same report by Global Witness highlights the paradox that the most indispensable resources for the global economy are located in the poorest countries.

Two Major Reasons for Land Grabbing

Two options compete with each other regarding the use of land and water in land investments. Either the resources will be used for agriculture or they will be used in the construction of power plants, or in fracking or mining. Even the use of land and water for agriculture faces competition from its two alternatives: Producing food for consumers or producing raw materials for bio-fuels.

Land Grabbing for Agriculture

The large-scale expansion of arable land is not a new phenomenon. According to the World Bank, land zoned for farming expanded by an average of 1.9 million hectares annually from 1990 to 2007. In developing countries alone the expansion was 5.5 million hectares annually.[12] Considering increasing population, income, urbanization, demand for seed oils, livestock products and related feed and industrial products, the World Bank estimates that the expansion of arable land will not abate. According to even cautious estimations, 6 million hectares of land will be opened to production in developing countries every year until 2030 and two thirds of this expansion will be in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America.[13] These areas are very attractive to investors because they are cheap and fertile and also because current performance is very low compared to developed countries.[14]

Investors' first choice is high-value areas that are relatively more fertile and that have better (or closer to industry standard) irrigation and infrastructure potentials. These lands that are now opening up for quick sale are mostly owned by small landholders; concerns are that local life and food security will be threatened by investors' activities.[15]

Multi-national companies like Monsanto, Cargill, Syngenta, and Yara have formed partnerships with African nations like Tanzania, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Burkino Faso, and Ivory Coast.[16] Although the stated goal of the alliance is to channel private equity investment to African agriculture, there is great cause for concern that in reality, these multi-nationals are setting themselves up to access African resources with great privileges.[17] African governments are tasked with "reforms" in seeds, fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, land tenure, and water resources, which will then pave the way for investors.[18] For example, the agreements require he enforcement of the regulation to use seeds sold by companies and not those from small producers. Various farmers unions in Africa, local communities, environmentalists, and NGOs have labeled this a "new wave of colonialism."[19]

Another issue is the grabbing of arable land for the production of raw materials for bio-fuel production. The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook estimates that agricultural production, with an annual growth of 2.6% between 2002 and 2011, will grow by 1.7% annually in the 2012-2021 period.[20] In the same report, production growth is forecast to exceed population growth despite the decline in the speed of growth of agricultural production; this will result in output per capita increasing by 0.7% annually. However, the fact that a gradually increasing portion of agricultural production will be used as bio-fuel inputs means we must question the reliability of the data on output per capita in view of food security.

> The United Nations estimated in 2009 the world population would reach 9.1 billion people by 2050, an increase of 34%. According to FAO estimates, global agricultural production must increase 60% over the same period to meet the nutritional needs of urban populations who do not produce food themselves.

Global ethanol production doubled between 2005 and 2012 while the production of bio-diesel has risen five-fold. It is estimated that by 2021 both the production of ethanol and bio-diesel will have doubled.[21] The total production of bio-fuels inputs is also increasing, with estimated 33% of the increase in world grain production and 15% of the sugar cane production increase to be used in the production of ethanol.[22] Clearly, strong demand for bio-fuel inputs causes a significant transformation in the utilization of arable lands. The World Bank estimates that by 2030 between 18 and 44 million hectares will be used to produce raw materials used in bio-fuel production.[23] The FAO similarily states that land designated for the production of bio-fuel inputs will increase more than double between 2007 and 2030 to about 3-4.5% of total arable land use. In simpler terms, this means that a percentage of land currently used for food production will be changed to industrial production and that areas of forest and currently unutilized land will be rezoned.[24] In 2030, 5% of fuel used on the roads will be liquid bio-fuels.

The US and Brazil figure prominently in the global ethanol market, while the EU, the US,

Argentina, and Brazil figure prominently in the global bio-diesel market. In reality, however, the actual players in the production of bio-fuels are not nations but multi-national companies. New companies are investing in this sector, joining oil giants such as BP and Shell, and multi-nationals like Monsanto Cargill, and DuPont who produce agricultural products, agricultural chemicals, and seeds.[25] Companies active in different areas have formed strategic partnerships for bio-fuel production.

The growth capacity of arable land zoning is largely related to water sources.[26] Bio-fuel production is in competition with food production for both land and water; the production of one liter of bio-fuel uses the same amount of water needed to produce food for one person for one day.[27] The amount of water currently used in bio-fuel production amounts to 1-2% of the current total global irrigation water. If all existing bio-fuel production plans are implemented, this percentage will reach 5-10%.[28]

Land-Grabbing for Mining, Fracking, and Oil Extraction

The opportunities presented by new technology have allowed the mining, oil, and shale gas sectors to reach reserves that were not viable ten years ago. As such, these sectors have grown on a global scale with previously unseen speed and are one of the main

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reasons for land grabbing today. For example, in the last ten years, the mining of iron increased by 180%, cobalt by 165%, lithium by 125%, and coal by 44%.[29] Considering the numbers of licenses already granted, it is expected that the levels of mining, drilling, and fracking will sky rocket.

One of the important reasons behind this revival in extractive industries is that the decline in financial markets in 2008 directed hedge and retirement funds to primary goods indexes including metals, mining, oil, and gas. This strengthened the price propensity of these industries and encouraged expansion. Moreover, since the highest quality and largest reserves had already been extracted, investors had to direct their attention to new regions and less pure reserves.[30] New technology made it possible to reach these deposits, and resource-poor developed countries poor descended upon the last of them.

For example, in 2008 the European Union developed the Raw Materials Initiative, a strategy to support the access of companies and investors to raw materials in developing countries. The EU is more dependent on the importing of natural resources than any other region.[31] An average European consumes three times more than an Asian and four times more than an African. The EU is the largest natural resource market in the world, single-handedly importing 23% of the world's natural resources; 70% of its imports comprise of natural resources or intermediate goods.[32] The European Association of Metals (Eurometaux) stated the following on the Raw Materials Initiative: "There will be no future for the EU's economy and no capacity to finance other major EU policy objectives if one cannot guarantee secure and competitive access to raw materials needed by the EU manufacturing industry."[33]

With the Raw Materials Initiative, the EU is trying to fight against activities by developing countries (exporters of natural resources as accepted by the World Trade Organization) that "distort international trade," and to form bilateral trade agreements with Africa and South America, ex-colonies rich in natural resources.[34] In a related report prepared by various NGOs critical to the Initiative, attention is drawn to the fact that in many of the developing countries (producers of raw materials) imports are concentrated on a few primary commodities. The report states that the imports of the 46 African countries depend on one primary commodity and that the most necessary public expenditure of these poor countries is gained by the income they obtain from export taxes that "distort international trade" and by their restrictive investment rules.[35] On the other hand, it is well known that developed countries obtain compromises from countries that are developing by way of bilateral commerce agreements above and beyond the stipulations of the World Trade Organization.

The EU is not alone in the rush for natural resources; other developed countries such as the USA as well as developing countries such as China and India are directing their efforts towards land investments in regions rich in resources such as Africa and South America.

The Chinese mining industry showed a growth of one third between 2005 and 2010. The mining exports of Peru increased by one third in 2011 alone. An international investors' consortium applied to gain the rights to mine shale gas in South Africa, home to the world's fifth largest shale gas reserves. The extraction of shale gas there, where reserves cover 10% of the country's surface area will put an end to the sheep breeding currently active in the area. [36]

Mining activities are causing the gradual destruction of numerous rivers, indigenous lands, and ecosystems in South America, Asia, and Africa. The technique of "fracking" is used in the extraction of shale gas involves the injection of water and chemicals into rocks. These poisonous chemicals inevitably cause pollution by seeping into aquifers and local water systems.[37]

Global Awareness of the Risks

The World Bank, the FAO, the IFAD and other international organizations realized the risks of land grabbing from its beginnings in 2008, developing projects to determine ethical principles that would direct investments in land and natural resources. Seven fundamental principles were determined that would put a stop to the damage caused by international investments in land and natural

resources, and to make them sustainable and contribute to local development:
1. Respecting land and resource rights. Existing rights to land and associated natural resources are recognized and respected.
2. Ensuring food security.
3. Ensuring transparency, good governance and a proper enabling environment.
4. Consultation and participation. All those materially affected are consulted and the agreements from consultations are recorded and enforced.
5. Responsible agro-investing. Investors ensure that projects respect the rule of law, reflect industry best practice, are economically viable and result in durable shared value.
6. Social sustainability. Investments generate desirable social and distributional impacts and do not increase vulnerability.
7. Protecting environmental sustainability.

The international organizations involved in developing these principles remind countries which will draw investment of the risks they may face, and also attempt to make investors mindful of their responsibilities.[38] Unfortunately, a completely unequal power relationship between the countries invested in, with small farmers who have been using lands for generations, and the investing countries via their multi-national companies is evident. There is no mechanism in place that would block the weak from becoming oppressed and make the powerful party apply these ethical principles. While land-grabbing agreements are signed behind closed doors in all corners of the world, the humanistic and ecological dimensions of the subject are still waiting to get the public attention they deserve.

The Situation in Turkey

Turkey is setting the stage for land grabbing with a series of laws that permit the use of agricultural lands and pastures for non-agricultural activities, the rezoning of forest into land that is not zoned as forestland, and the passing of public lands into private property. In Turkey a similar gradual and accelerating process that we have observed globally has been developing over the last two years.

• With the Statutory Decree No. 648 published in the Official Gazette on August 17, 2011, areas such as agriculture lands and pastures are being opened for uses other than agriculture and stockbreeding.

• The "2B Law" (Law for the Supporting of the Sustainability of Forest Villagers, the Use of Land Taken Outside Forestry in the Name of Treasury and the Sale of All Agricultural Lands Belonging to the Treasury) was published in the Official Gazette in April 2012 with further amendments made in January 2013. Even if the aim of the law is explained as the sale of public property to locals, the fact is that the prices are to high and locals cannot afford to buy. The law was heavily criticized as it forced forest villagers to move off the lands they had been cultivating for generations and only served the interests of landlords and wealthy investors who wanted to invest in the land; the local villagers were not benefitted at all.[39]

• In June 2013 "the Draft Law for Land Protection and Land Use" was presented to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. This draft law was said to aim to prevent arable lands being fragmented between too many inheritors. It is criticized for "paving the way for corporate agriculture."[40]

> According to GRAIN, an international NGO, "land grabbing" is defined as the purchasing or long-term leasing of productive lands in poor countries by rich countries and their corporations without consulting farmers or indigenous people but by making deals through legal government channels.

• A problematic "Draft Law for Protecting Nature and Bio-Diversity" was presented to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in March 2013. The draft law was criticized for trying to open all protected sites to construction and removing all legal barriers to the widespread construction of hydroelectric power plants, which local communities and environmentalists have been protesting. Due to the Gezi Park events, which began out of environmental concerns, this draft law has lost the attention of the General Assembly. There are literally hundreds of hydroelectric power plant projects on Turkey's agenda right now. Despite courts' decisions to grant motions for a stay, the environmental damage caused by these power plants has reached worrying dimensions. In İkizdere, for example, a natural protected area, after the construction of four hydroelectric power plants - with 32 more planned to be built- many streams have dried up.[41]

On the other hand, in the newspapers on June 18, 2013, it was reported that the EIA report by the USA announced that great levels of shale gas and shale oil were found in the Turkey's Thrace region and the southeastern basins, as well as in many other regions.[42] This news surely means that land grabbing for the extraction these resources will feature prominently in Turkey's near future.

The political economist Korkut Boratav draws attention the villagers' and small producers' protests in the face of dispossession and liquidation - phenomena that always appear in the historical process of capitalist development. Historically, small producers are liquidated while on the other hand they are continuously able to reproduce themselves.[43] The peasantry continued its existence alongside the capitalist mode of production and, in fact, even in a manner that was dependent on it.[44] However, with global pressures, small producers gradually become even more dependent on monopolistic multi-national companies to obtain fundamental inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pharmaceutical products necessary for agricultural production, and to be able to sell their produce. The guaranteed price, storage, marketing, and opportunities for credit offered to small producers by the government are extremely tight. After the

harvest, they must sell the products they have produced with great hardship and which they cannot store then the monopolist buyer who buys at very low prices. Moreover, cultivatable lands and water sources have also begun to be seized. The processes of liquidation and dispossession for the peasantry are now implemented irrevocably and in a manner of rigor previously unseen.

On the other hand, the peasantry continues to struggle and resist liquidation and dispossession in all four corners of the world. Despite the fact that this resistance is mostly un-organized and scattered, there is a wide participation in the food sovereignty movement from small producers from both developing and developed countries, farmers unions, and numerous NGOs. This movement succeeded in deterring the finalization of Doha. The concept of "food sovereignty" was put forth for the first time in 1996 by the international farmers' federation Via Campesina: "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." [45] As this concept is much broader than that of "food security," defended by international organizations, and includes only the right to access to food, it also contains the struggle against multi-national food companies.

Considering the current state of affairs, the resistance of the peasantry has to be quickly objectified at a global scale within an axis of protecting available land and water sources against the onslaught of multi-national companies. Otherwise, the peasantry will be wiped from history and the nutrition of the entire world population will become uniform and artificial and manipulated by multi-nationals' interests. In the meanwhile, we, as hungry, destitute yet falsely satiated people who have lost their consciences, will have to search for the humanity we have lost on this planet. A planet that has become unrecognizable because of the ecological damage wrought by mankind.

Endnotes

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A real life “Grapes of Wrath”

The open-air markets on Sundays in Ankara’s Ayrancı district are organized into two sections: Sellers of organic products, and local villagers selling their produce. We heard that sellers of organic products got annoyed by the presence of the villagers and filed a complaint with the municipality. Their position is that although they are selling organic goods, market customers buy products from the villagers’ stalls. They believe that the villagers should have a separate market day. In response, the municipality has issued the decision that the villagers will sell their wares on Thursdays. Is this tension between villagers and organic food producers just a local incident?

Metin Özuğurlu**:** No. What happened in this local market can be seen as a micro-level reflection of a global process. Over the last twenty years as multinational capitalist groups penetrated directly into the production of agricultural goods, these goods have turned into commodities bought and sold in speculative markets. Such intense speculation on agricultural prices has never before been seen in earlier capitalist eras. Multinational capital’s penetration translates into capital-intensive agricultural production. New fertilizers and genetically modified seeds have raised productivity as lands yield more produce. Small producers have no chance against such high levels of agricultural productivity; many international observers predict the rapid dissolution of small producers in the coming years. Academia is divided on the prospects of small agricultural producers. Some argue that small producers are an intermediate category that will be eclipsed as capitalism advances. Others believe that small producers are different because they own certain non-commodified means, and therefore have a unique ability to adapt, allowing them to be articulated in the dominant mode of production. Recent discussions on agriculture turn around the nutrition and food regime, but analyses are mostly centered on markets. The main point of debate on food regimes is marketplaces and organizations. Today, there is a widely accepted view that small producers do not have much of a chance. Returning to the argument about the local open-air market, we should note that markets react to changes in the consumption habits of the more informed sections of society. Producing organic foods is costly, and also risky, as it does not involve fertilizers. Fields used for organic agriculture must be isolated from lands where fertilizers are used. Only large capitalist groups can take such risks, and certain firms organize the production of organic foods as a capitalist enterprise. Local, small lot farmers can be involved in this process in several ways. For example, through the relationship of contract farming, small farmers can produce goods for a subcontractor of multinational firms that organize the overall business. Traditionally, Anatolian peasant farmers take the produce from their orchards and gardens to the local town market, selling directly to consumers. This behavior is typical of a small producer as they participate in market relationships. Understandably, organic agriculture companies see them as a threat as small producers can sell at much lower prices.

On the other hand, it is debatable whether the so-called organic products are really organic. There is no way to measure fertilizers use in Anatolia, which is on a scale far beyond our wildest guesses. Some small producers in coastal regions seem to believe that producing agriculture without fertilizers is a survival strategy as the demand for organic products is every increasing. The prices of organic goods are immune to market fluctuations and yield significant return. Many small farmers are becoming subcontractors of organic food manufacturers. The reorganization of the small peasantry along these lines might well spread across Anatolia in the period ahead. In my field study, I set out to answer these questions: “Will small producers resist the current wave of dissolution? What is their capacity to resist and readapt?” Small peasants might be able to survive as producers of organic products. The critical issue here is this: the small producers will survive, however, to be able to do so, they will have accept the increasing penetration of capital into agriculture. It might seem paradoxical, but we can say that they will survive by behaving like employed workers.

Whose workers will they be?

These small producers increasingly become workers at local service companies. Many also seek employment in non-agricultural sectors. In the last decade, the rural population fell dramatically; some believe that it has fallen to 20% of the total population, but I believe it might be even lower. Many villages in Central and Eastern Anatolia are virtually empty. Villages inhabited mainly by small producers engaged in grain production in the 1990s, for example, no longer have any production units. In many regions in Anatolia, the village is no longer a unit for production as more and more villages are

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left to be populated only by the elderly. In regions of commercial agricultural production, on the other hand, small producers are shifting from more to less labor-intensive products. Cotton has been replaced by pomegranates, for instance. Small producer families allocate less of the household's labor power to agriculture as those younger than 30 seek better paying jobs outside the home. Those villagers still engaged in agriculture often say that their know-how will disappear when they pass away. For example, villagers no longer plant seeds to grow saplings, and tomato farmers do not plant their own seeds. Small producers purchase seedlings from seedbeds set up by multinationals. There are numerous recent pieces of legislation encouraging this system. For instance, it is forbidden for individual producers to barter seeds among themselves. All seeds must to be licensed, and even seed barters organized by local municipalities are open to prosecution. Licensed seeds are controlled by multinational firms, and cannot be replanted by the farmer. Capital penetrates agriculture via two channels: Seeds and fertilizers. Currently, farmers have no control over the seeds.

Before, peasants were faced with the difficult task of turning seeds into saplings. Now, they can purchase seedlings on the markets at cheap prices. Why does this work against the peasant in the long run?

Small producers have the two great capacities of resistance and adaptation to new conditions. They can use household labor to engage in agriculture in an autonomous area immune to the penetration of capital. Saying "small producers have the capacity to adapt" is tantamount to saying that there are areas where big capital has not penetrated yet. Peasants had labor power, a plot of land and the necessary production equipment. Now, they have lost all of these. Small producers turn into production units trapped by capital. This was the main observation of my book Small Producers: Trapped by Capital. Small commodity production as we know it has ceased to exist. The multinationals producing the seedlings can manipulate prices at will. They can choose to export or not to export productive seedlings to a certain country. Knowledge is also disappearing. I mean the peasant's knowledge of turning seeds into seedling, which constitutes the essence of peasantry: When should the seed be watered, how much water does it require, what are the symptoms of disease?.. Peasants are losing that kind of knowledge.

When we talk about capitalist modernization wrecking havoc on small farmers, inevitably John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath springs to mind. What are the similarities and differences between the bank's ruining the American peasants in the 1930s, and what is happening today in Turkey?

Many similar things are taking place, but there are certain differences. Today in Turkey, there is a category that I call the 'village-based worker.' It is a recent phenomenon in the rural-urban relationship, and it is visible around the world. Villagers younger than 30 work in conditions reminiscent of those of the era of unbridled capitalism in the 19th century in organized industrial zones and factories controlled by various capitalist enterprises. I call these people village-based workers. Service buses bring them to the factories an hour from their homes where they work 12 hour shifts and have no proper workers' rights, for which they receive minimum wage or less. Child workers are also employed in these factories. The drama of The Grapes of Wrath has thus become reality in Turkey today. People take out loans from the banks, cannot repay their debts, then are jailed or their land is confiscated. The relationship between banks and villagers is set to become one of the most critical issues in the political and social struggles in the near future. Whenever they have financial difficulties, peasants have no choice but go to banks. But they are not offered low-interest agricultural loans to support agricultural production. These are dark days for villagers taking out bank loans to support agricultural production, and things are only going to get tougher. Banks operate as the financial hubs of capitalist penetration. For example, a bank will help a farmer set up drip irrigation in his fields by mortgaging his fields to finance it. This process has no oversight. In the past, the relationship between small producers and the state was very important, but this relationship has been weakened. Agricultural loan cooperatives and other agricultural support institutions had branches in every village, connecting small producers to state protection. State subsidies, too, supported small production. In return, small producers were some of the strongest supporters of the state. Now, this relationship is totally broken.

The villager is left to face the banks.

The state no longer provides subsidies for agricultural inputs, but it does still make support purchases, but they are not sufficient. The state announces which products will receive support as well as conditions of eligibility. Peasants must show the title deed or lease contract for their field, the sales receipt for the product concerned, the approval by the relevant agricultural engineer testifying that the individual has produced that product, as well as data on yield per square meter. However, the support purchase document is signed even before the crop is harvested; as a result, there is a yawning gap between the harvest on paper and the actual harvest.

Are multinational companies taking over ownership of farmlands across Anatolia which have turned into pasture? How can the peasants hold on to their lands?

Under current conditions, it is very hard for them to do so unless they engage in direct political struggle with a specific agenda. The government is at work issuing laws to lay the groundwork for the transformation of land ownership. First of all, the Law on Villages has been revised. From now on, common property of village dwellers and all land whose ownership status is unclear will be consolidated under the control of the muhtar. The result will be a concentration of lands. Muhtars are quite pleased, as this will make them more powerful. Later on, muhtars will most likely sell or lease out these pieces of land. Naturally, this will consolidate the regime of private property, as the common property of villagers will cease to exist. In fact, the entire notion of the village as being based on such shared wealth is being eradicated. If the government declares that pastures and meadows are no longer the village's

common property but the private estate of certain individuals, the village will cease to exist. Villagers in Turkey do not really own the land, but appropriate it. They appropriate the meadows and pastures through continuous use. However, this relation is now being transformed into a relationship of ownership. The next generation of villagers will sell their ancestral lands resulting in an urban population with absolutely no contact with their parents' villages and fields. Up until the 1980s, peasants migrating to the cities maintained their ties with villages. Now, however, migrants are utterly uprooted.
Parliament has also approved the Law on Metropolitan Municipalities, which grants metropolitan status to 30 provinces. This corresponds to one half of Turkey's entire land area and two thirds of its population. In these 30 provinces, all of the villages have lost their legal status and have been turned into neighborhoods. As such, village lands have been transformed into real estate. Accordingly, a simply legislative revision has opened the door to the capitalization of land.

According to your book, villagers were obliged to migrate to the cities from the 1950s onwards with their migration reaching massive proportions in the mid-1980s. They remained in villages but were severed from farming in the 1990s and 2000s. In other words, people continue living in villages, but they are not engaged in agriculture or livestock breeding, working instead in nearby factories. Do some villagers prefer to become workers living in villages rather than being totally uprooted from their land?

I believe the government's legal reforms led to a rise in the number of village-based workers. However, the Minister of Economy Ali Babacan argues that, in comparison with Europe, the main problem for agriculture in Turkey is limited land size and that this problem must be resolved. Unlimiting land size is exactly what is needed to deepen the penetration of capital. The government's legal measures are designed to uproot the peasants and force them to migrate, leading to a chaotic situation. It is expensive to live in cities and the reproduction of labor power is entirely commodified although most jobs do not pay decent wages and are precarious at best. As such, many people understandably choose to remain where they can limit the cost of the reproduction of their own labor. For instance, it might be a logical survival strategy to live in one's village home. Many people say, "When I retire, I will go back to my village" or "I can't make ends meet in the city, I want to return to the village." Here, the critical group is children and young people who suffer the most dramatic consequences of social inequality. Education is another area where Turkey's landscape of inequality is laid bare. Unsurprisingly, Turkey is among the nations with the largest gap between groups of highest and lowest achievers in education. A very small section of the society receives a top-notch education; at the other end of the spectrum, the children of seasonal agricultural laborers do not get any proper education at all. Thus this is a multi-dimensional process.

Another aspect of the massive migration of the 1990s is the forced migration of the Kurdish population. Kurdish peasants were "employed" as cheap laborers in Western and Central Anatolia. You just remarked that Anatolian laborers are tending to abandon labor-intensive production. Most of the remaining labor-intensive work is assigned to seasonal Kurdish farmhands. This displeases the landless peasants in those regions who with the racist complaint that "Kurds have come here and stolen our jobs." How does this population shift affect the social structure in Turkey?

In sociology, the migration of rural population to the cities is generally qualified as proletarianization. The forced migration from the Kurdish countryside was a very dramatic process, and as a result, the uprooting and proletarianization of this population has reached traumatic dimensions. This is bound to have deep, permanent consequences on the political and social texture of Turkey. Forced migrations and the annihilation of villages were organized by the state in response to security concerns. The aim was to eradicate the rural support base of the PKK. It was thought once they arrive in cities, Kurds would claim at most identity-based rights, and that the integration of Turkey with the EU would allow the state to gradually grant such rights to a national liberation movement defeated in military terms. However, it turns out that life does not function according to such social engineering.

> The drama of The Grapes of Wrath has thus become reality in Turkey today. People take out loans from the banks, cannot repay their debts, then are jailed or their land is confiscated. The relationship between banks and villagers is set to become one of the most critical issues in the political and social struggles in the near future.

Going back to the theme of proletarianization, in all the large cities and the Kurdish cities of Southeastern Anatolia, Kurdish workers make up the least qualified and least educated section of the labor force. They work under conditions of unbridled exploitation. They have had to adapt to the current form of capitalism with its widespread subcontracting. Labor bosses easily organize a Kurdish labor force through traditional networks. The same cannot be said of a worker from Central Anatolia. Kurds, however, entertain strong traditional bonds, making them susceptible to subcontracting relationships and intense exploitation. Kurdish workers are employed in the shipyard scrap business, in the worst municipal jobs, and in construction. In fact, Kurds even discussed establishing independent labor unions. Since trade unions have always been organized on a national scale, their boards did not sufficiently represent Kurds. Kurds could not join the trade unions as Kurds. As such, most Kurdish workers are not unionized. Considering the profound crisis of the Turkish labor movement from the 1990s onwards, I believe that Kurdish laborers who are

victims of forced migration have a critical role to play. The inability of trade unions to organize Kurdish laborers has further aggravated the crisis of the union movement.

Do you agree with the observation that Turkey's working class is becoming more and more Kurdish?

This would be right in demographic terms. Vast numbers of Kurds have joined the labor market. However, there is no significant class identity to talk about. So this observation is accurate in demographic terms, but not in political terms.

Do you think it's possible that villagers who are victimized by agricultural policies could join together to wage a new struggle?

I think so. There are precedents in some villagers' struggles against the construction of hydroelectric power plants and mining companies. I think that they have a great potential. I believe that people are much more politicized in small-scale settlements. In urban neighborhoods' coffeehouses most people talk about soccer, but in village coffeehouses the main topic is politics. In villages, people are all eyes and ears. As such, however, they are also susceptible to relationships of clientelism, as suggested by the high percentage of votes enjoyed by the ruling party in such localities. But precisely because of this, these people are much more concerned with any permanent damage on their lives and the destruction of their lands. Now they no longer have a "father state" to complain to. Their only remaining alternative is to join forces and take direct political action. I believe that village-based solidarity associations constitute a critical hub of social struggle even in cities. These constitute social solidarity networks, and create political unity. I know as fact that many individuals participated in the Gezi Park protests through their village associations.

During your study, you visited 22 villages in 10 provinces from Tekirdağ to Urfa. What are the noticeable differences between these regions?

The key factor determining the regional characteristics of the small peasantry is their range of products. The product range determines the employment of household labor, the position vis-à-vis the penetration of capital, and relationships with the market. I had the chance to confirm this trend. In this study, I also observed that peasants are rapidly abandoning labor-intensive products. Many employ advanced technologies in terms of mechanization. Technologies eradicate labor-intensive processes and help certain entrepreneurs thrive. For example, an ambulant entrepreneur might purchase a certain machine which small peasants need only occasionally and lease it out to villagers. The population under 30 years of age opts for non-agricultural work. What surprised me most is the fact that villagers believe agricultural production is risky. This is striking since "risk" is a very urban concept. The villagers have a heightened risk perception due to the fluctuation of product and input prices. Working as a wage laborer, even under precarious conditions, is now considered to be less risky and preferable to agriculture since it offers at least a fixed salary. The fact that risk has become a term widely used in the countryside is a critical indication of the dependence on the market and the extensive penetration of capital. I concluded that the small peasantry will survive maybe not as an independent mode of production, but as a household unit increasingly dependent on capital. The small peasantry cannot regain its previous autonomy unless it embraces a political orientation against dependence on capital, in other terms, unless it behaves like the working class. Other than that, there are no differences between regions in terms of the abuse of agricultural support policies. This is a general trend that has generated considerable dependence. In other words, if the state decides to cull these purchases one day, it might trigger a significant popular uprising.

Might this policy be precisely designed to prevent such an uprising?

The idea of providing support to those who do not grow crops is the brainchild of the World Bank. WB funds were utilized to establish new forms of incentives designed to liquidate the agricultural loan cooperatives (TKK) that used to subsidize agricultural inputs. The new funds provided money to those who do not grow crops. The WB's texts on "the management of poverty" indicate that this population constituted a significant security threat, that it must be brought under control, and that dramatic pauperization must be avoided to prevent social uprising. These funds grant villagers some money to keep them as consumers.

What are the prospects for Turkey's agriculture 20 years from now?

Developing countries like India, China, Brazil and Turkey have doubled their population of wage laborers in the last two decades. This is an incredible development. In the 400-year history of capitalism, the number of workers had never doubled in just 20 years. What does this mean? All salaries, especially those of less-skilled workers are in a race to the bottom. In this sense, Turkey is a unique case. Under the current dynamics of capitalism, the labor force is rapidly severed from subsistence farming and thrown into the labor market. The reproduction of labor power is totally commodified. Almost nothing escapes commodification. People find themselves living a life where they need cash for housing, education, transport, etc. How to raise the cash? By selling one's labor power. The system is financialized, and financialization is gearing up accordingly. The result is that there is either no employment or only precarious employment. In the previous generation, people worked hard at a certain profession and then retired. Ours is a generation of people who constantly swap jobs in a labor market where employment and unemployment are intertwined. On current trends, Turkey is heading towards social struggles centered on the demands of equality and freedom. The neoliberal form of capitalism has reached its limit long ago and the pendulum is now swinging in the opposite direction. I believe that the notion of private property will be cede its place to shared property; that's where the world's future lies. In this sense, this dark world will give birth to a brighter future.

Save the spirit of Belgrade Forest!

Belgrade Forest, to the north of Istanbul's European coast, covers approximately 5300 hectares with mostly broadleaf trees. Recent archaeological excavations in Yenikapı confirm that the Forest dates back 8500 years; it has been serving Istanbul's public throughout the city's history. First used for its water sources, Belgrade Forest was later used for firewood and construction materials.

After Suleiman the Magnificent's expedition to Belgrade in 1521, Serbians from Belgrade were settled in the area, which was then known as Belgrade Village; they also gave the name to Belgrade Forest. During and after that period, seven aqueducts were built, making Belgrade Forest Istanbul's most important water source.

In the imperial order dated 1907 and signed by the "Minister of the Private Treasury of the Ottoman Sultan" (Nazır-ı Hazine-î Hassa) it states that, "the forests in the environs of Istanbul should be protected for both the welfare of the people and the beauty of the city."

Istanbul's northern forests of mostly white oak and chestnut trees were also important sources for construction materials. Recent archaeological excavations in Yenikapı revealed that all the piers in the Harbor of Eleutherios (later known as the Harbor of Theodosius) and all of the ships built particularly between the 9th and 11th centuries were made of white oak and chestnut tree timber. It is likely that this wood was sourced from the Belgrade Forest. Some imperial orders also mention lumber from forests in Üsküdar and Alemdağ.

In the early Republic era, preservation works were undertaken because of the forest's important function as a water source. On November 2, 1953, the Forest was designated a "Protection Forest" in Decree No. 2073 by the Council of Ministers. After this date, 3000 hectares of the Forest which had been a picnic area was downgraded to a "Natural Park"

Population increases and the proliferation of housing developments within city limits meant that the Metropolitan and County Municipalities could not meet the city's needs for green spaces. Belgrade Forest, which had been protected, was turned into picnic areas meter by meter, as it continued to function as a water source and educational area. In recent years, its function as a picnic area has become more prominent as it is no longer used as it once was as a water source.

The Importance of Belgrade Forest

Belgrade Forest is very important for a number of reasons:

- It's location at the intersection of three large phytogeographical areas - the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and Iran-Turan. It is on one of the most important plant migration paths during periods of great climate change. The Forest is also home to 450 plant species, one quarter of which are ligneous, and has the qualities of a natural arboretum and botanical garden.
- Located to the north of Istanbul, a city of almost 15 million and growing, the Forest cleans the city's air with strong Black Sea winds with the oxygen it produces.
- Despite all polluting factors and the excessive increase in population it is still an important source of water.
- It serves Istanbulites as one of the most important everyday leisure and entertainment spaces.
- It is located on one of the few bird migration paths in the world, giving the birds the opportunity to rest during long migrations.

Problems with water in Belgrade Forest

Three of the most important water basins on the European side of Istanbul are in Sazlıdere, Alibeyköy, and Kağıthane. These three water basins are expanding by absorbing the rivulet tributaries of the Sazlıdere, Alibeyköy, and Kağıthane rivers, shelter the most important green spaces of Istanbul where the northern forest waters drain. The Forest, located at the northern-most point of the Kağıthane rivulet, is the best-preserved forest in the Kağıthane basin. This green swath running through the history of the city continues to bring water to Istanbul through its seven historic aqueducts.[1]

Belgrade Forest was Istanbul's most important water source from the Roman and Byzantine eras up to the Ottoman era and into the 1990s. As Istanbul rose in importance during the Ottoman era, aqueducts were built to transport water into the city. From 1554 to 1839, water from the aqueducts was carried to Taksim Square; from there it was distributed around the city. Gradual population increase in the city led to the forests losing its function as a water source; it is still in danger of pollution due to the high numbers of visitors it receives.

Another problem is the haphazard draining of underground reservoirs that have or have not been

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properly inspected. In the past, water was tapped from 80-100m below the surface; now, due to excessive water removal, the water level has dropped to 200m underground. The excessive draining of water and the water level dropping to greater depths will harm the forest in the long term. The dieback in predominantly older or weaker trees in dry periods has increased primarily because of lack of water, and secondarily due to pests like insects and fungi. The Belgrade Forest gives us abundant examples of this phenomenon.

In the past, water was tapped from 80-100m below the surface; now, due to excessive water removal, the water level has dropped to 200m underground. The excessive draining of water and the water level dropping to greater depths will harm the forest in the long term.

Wildlife problems in Belgrade Forest

Belgrade Forest is an important wildlife reserve sheltering some of Turkey's threatened species. Nine of the 21 confirmed mammal species are designated protected by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, while the rest are considered threatened.[2]

Wildlife in Belgrade Forest faces the following problems: (E., Hızal et al, 2013.)

1. Stray and wandering dogs damage wildlife to a great extent. Unfortunately, a significant number of domestic dogs are released into the forest and the canine population continues to grow. These dogs, which also occasionally attack people, pose one of the greatest threats to small animals such as squirrels and birds because they are left to fend for themselves against this new threat.
2. Certain forestry policies lead to the cutting down of dead or hollow trees and this damages the habitat of some mammals.
3. Poaching.
4. Increasing traffic density. Vehicle traffic increases from May to September on Sundays in particular causing damage and intense noise pollution.
5. Off-roading and motorcross.
6. Picnicking in areas that are not designated as such.
7. There are also many other negative factors such as grazing, unlicensed butchering, water wells, and the breaking up of wildlife areas by wire fencing.

A project intending to study the movements of wild animals captured poaching and other damaging activities clearly on night vision cameras.[3]

Recreation and related problems in Belgrade Forest

Belgrade Forest is one of the most important recreational areas in Istanbul available to the public. Belgrade Forest's registry data shows us the following:

• During December, January, and February the number of visitors declines and the Forest receives an average of 40,000 visitors a month.
• During April, May, and June the number of visitors increases and the Forest has an average of 100,000 visitors a month.
• There are approximately 800,000 registered visitors who visit the Forest annually.
The number of unregistered and unregulated entries is estimated at around 400,000.
• With the growing importance the public places on physical activity, the Forest has seen an increase in pursuits such as cycling and orienteering since 2002.[4]

Legal designations and their likely effects

Despite having been a protected area during the Ottoman era, negligence and damage during World War I lead to weakened protection measures in later periods when the Forest suffered fires, intense lumbering, and sustained great damage. During the early years of the Republic, Belgrade Forest was protected once again and its uses were more controlled. On November 2, 1953, Decree No. 2073 of the Council of Ministers put the Forest under official protection once more; the first picnic areas were designated in 1957. The National Parks Law of 1983 has been implemented very quickly, with areas of the Forest reclassified as a "nature park" and 300 hectares being converted into picnic areas.

The creation of nature parks creates the risk of construction. The "Regulations Relating to Plans for Protected Areas" published in the Official Gazette No. 28242 on March 23, 2012 by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, a nature park is defined as "suitable environs for people's leisure and entertainment within an integral landscape with flora and fauna." Even though the definition mentions fauna and being integral with the landscape, areas within the bounds of a forest are completely deprived of any meaning. Even if the wildlife is there to begin with, with the increased numbers of visitors to a nature park, their habitat will surely be destroyed.

Article 22 of the by-law on National Parks published in the Official Gazette No. 19309 of December 12, 1986 states:

As a condition to be in the public interest and in accordance with permission that may be granted to a real person or legal entities to build touristic buildings and facilities in the national and nature parks located outside the boundaries of touristic regions, areas and centers, by the Ministry of Finance and Customs, by obtaining approval from the Ministry.

The entrepreneur can prepare a project under the guidance of the grounds the Ministry determines with the conditions stated in the existent plans for the area in question. The entrepreneur can demand the establishment of usufruct from the Ministry with the condition of obtaining permission from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The duration of the usufruct established on behalf of real persons or legal entities resulting in such permission may not exceed forty-nine years at

the end of which all the facilities shall be, in their integrity, transferred to the Treasury.

Within one month of the establishment of usufruct of the annunciation to the entrepreneur by the Ministry the notarized written contract in compliance with the example provided by the Ministry will be given to the Ministry. Following this, the area permitted to be built upon is delivered to the entrepreneur by the Ministry with written proceedings exclusive to the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is responsible for complying with the conditions promised to the Ministry.

The extension of the period of established usufruct is implemented in compliance with the provisions of Articles 8 and 9 of this Law.

A careful read of this article of law leads us to a clear understanding of the real risk of construction in areas designated as nature parks within Belgrade Forest.

What can be done to help Belgrade Forest?

These suggestions could be used to solve the problems already listed above; all that is needed is the desire and the willpower:

1. Belgrade Forest's "nature park" designation should be reversed completely and the "reserve forest" status applied in 1953 should be put back into effect. In short, the pre-existing legal situation should be upheld.
2. Picnic activities should be kept at a moderate level. The vehicle and human traffic in the months of heavy months like May and June should be reduced. The entry of vehicles and people into the Forest, other than the designated picnic areas, should be disallowed.
3. The public should be educated not to abandon domestic dogs in the Forest and the existing stray dogs should be gathered and transported to rehabilitation centers.
4. The increase in the number of upturned trees and soil areas with excessive human traffic should be rezoned into picnic areas, and the areas used as picnic areas should be rotated over time.
5. The protective measures to be put into place for Belgrade Forest should be announced in the media and society should be made aware of these important issues.
6. The damage that the third bridge project and the linking roads that will be built alongside it will cause to the Forest is obvious. This massive project, which is not included in the long-term structural plans for Istanbul, should be immediately aborted.
7. If the project is not aborted, linking roads inside and around Belgrade Forest should not be built. The entire periphery of the Forest should be encased and traffic should be monitored strictly so that as it is surrounded by construction work it doesn't transform into an artificial "Belgrade Park."
8. The water facilities within the Forest should be removed so that the Forest can be inherited by future generations and sustain its livelihood.
9. The management of some of the areas reserved as nature park has been delegated to district municipalities. This should be fully reversed and the picnic areas should be managed as "picnic areas" under the control of the Regional Directorate of Forestry. The status of "picnic area" is already under the consideration of the General Directorate of Forestry, which is responsible for its full protection, care and development.
10. Suitable areas of forest should only be opened to public use during daytimes and construction of all other proposed facilities should be disallowed. The existing picnic areas should be opened on a rotation basis. Alterative picnic areas should be created in districts such as Çiftalan, Ağaçlı, Göktürk and Kemerburgaz.

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Child poverty in Turkey: Access to education among children of seasonal workers

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The increase in gender-based analyses of child poverty in Turkey has shown that boys and girls experience poverty differently, and that it is impossible to think of children and their experiences as being "gender free."[1] Accordingly, I will devote the last section of this article to girls. I also aim to look at the issue through an inverted prism. Current research and academic literature on seasonal agriculture does indeed touch upon the issue of seasonal workers' children's limited access to education; as such, it is critical to understand girls' and boy's "lack of education" rather than a general "panorama of education."

What do we know about seasonal agricultural labor and migration? What are the limits to our knowledge? Significant albeit limited studies on the issue tell us something, but where do we come across gaps in our knowledge?

What we know: A historical perspective

We know that seasonal farm labor is an economic, sociological, and historical phenomenon. Literature in Turkey has frequently focused on the theme of the farmhands as, for instance, in Yaşar Kemal's novels that take place on the Çukurova plain, where Anatolian commercial cotton cultivation began. The plight and fortitude of seasonal agricultural laborers come up all too frequently in such literature. In the primitive capital accumulation process, accumulation was mainly focused on what are known as the three whites: Sugar, opium, and cotton. The cultivation of cotton supports the production of textiles, laying the infrastructure for labor-intensive industrialization. The labor-intensive textile industry in turn plays a key role in capital accumulation. An understanding of the history of yarn is almost tantamount to understanding the primitive mode of capitalist accumulation. Indeed, in the 1860s, the British began to cultivate cotton commercially in Çukurova, bringing in laborers from Egypt, known as fellahs, who toiled under very difficult conditions.[2] The cotton was then exported as raw material to the United Kingdom for processing, after which it was sold back to the Ottoman Empire as finished textile products. The production process first drew on Arab slave labor, which was gradually replaced by the poor Kurdish and Arab villagers living in the vicinity of Çukurova. We know that in this period, all members of laboring households, including young boys and girls, were put to work in the cotton fields.

Social transformation in Çukurova means that it is not difficult to recruit local workers. Today, seasonal agricultural laborers come from the urban and rural poor of Turkey's southeast and eastern regions. The employment of children as farmhands is a historical phenomenon underpinned by poverty and it generates discrimination. This process is reproduced continuously; the only changing element is which socially fragile group participates. Today, most of these laborers are Kurdish, Arab, or Roma although this type of labor has been practiced for centuries by various groups. The profession of "farmhand", or ***ırgat***, epitomizes this historical form of exploitation:

Being a "farmhand" is synonymous with abject poverty, being disadvantaged, with dire living and working standards, a lack of social security, the inability to access basic civic rights, as well as social exclusion. In daily life, "farmhand" stands for being a victim in economic, social and political terms.[3]

In the eyes of the landowner, employing a "farmhand" is equivalent to "possessing" her or her labor. Spatial exclusion plays a key role in this process. Another key factor is the presence of the three basic actors in this form of labor exploitation: The landowner, the laborer, and the middleman or the go-between who brings the two together. Over time, the roles of these actors has changed in their sociological senses. Along with industrialization, the social state, too, has become a crucial actor. The landowner becomes less and less visible and less and less responsible, another key factor for capital accumulation; farm laborers in Turkey are employed under terrible conditions which deny them access to social security and pay them very low wages. Landowners, on the other hand, pay very little in tax.

In return for connecting the landowner with the laborer, the middleman takes his cut from the laborer's wages, and occasionally a fee from the landowner. In most cases, the middleman recruits from among his acquaintances, his fellow villages, townsmen, relatives or even family members, including children. And because the farmhand labor system is so historically ingrained, the middlemen are never ostracized socially for making money by brokering the landowner/laborer relationship. For the laborer, the middleman reduces the risk associated with working in an unknown region at an unknown farm. For example,

without a middleman, a Kurdish worker would not dare toil in the misty hazelnut groves at an altitude of 700m in the Black Sea province of Ordu.

What we know in figures

Although seasonal agricultural migration is a prominent sociological issue, there are no representative statistics on the numbers of migrant laborers. According to estimations based on small-scale studies, over one million people in Turkey are believed to migrate for periods of two to ten months. Lacking firm statistics, it is a challenge to make the problem visible, and to carry out observation and assessment studies.

One important dimension in seasonal agricultural migration is child labor. However, Turkey's statistical institute or TÜİK carries out Child Labor Surveys that do not collect data on child labor in seasonal agricultural migration. TÜİK's Basic Child Labor Survey indicates that the percentage of children between the ages of 6 and 17 employed in agriculture has risen from 36.6% in 2006 to 44.7% in 2012. This information does not however include any findings as to whether this increase can be associated to seasonal labor or not.[4]

The legal dimension

In Turkey, there are so specific laws to protect seasonal, traveling or temporary agricultural laborers. In the current legislative framework, Labor Law No. 4857 and the Code on Obligations does include certain provisions concerning seasonal agricultural laborers' access to basic services like housing, health care, and education for their children. In 2010, the Prime Minister's Office issued communiqué no. 6 which dealt with seasonal and migrant agricultural laborers in only a temporary fashion, and which was riddled with problems.

There are a number of international conventions that deal with child workers in cotton fields. Turkey signed both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child, documents state that children, regardless of their gender, must have access to civil rights like health services and basic education. In social and in economic terms, child labor constitutes a serious violation of child and human rights. The International Labor Organization's Minimum Age Convention, number 138 of 1973, was designed to eradicate child labor by setting minimum age limits. The Worst Forms of Child Labor, number 182 of 1999, which Turkey also signed, reinforced this convention. Nevertheless, even though Turkey has committed itself to fulfilling the provisions of these conventions, children engaged in seasonal farm labor are still largely deprived of their rights.

Qualitative aspects of seasonal agricultural labor

Another key aspect of seasonal agricultural labor is its connection to economic poverty, the lack of land or other property, as well as to deprivation or the lack of access to social rights and the deprivation of "skills and qualifications" that would allow one to participate in urban production. Recent studies also highlight the fact that laborers migrate as households, with men women, boys, and girls participating collectively in this process.[5] Research also underscores the feminization of poverty and the issue of cheap labor.[6]

Who are seasonal agricultural laborers? Where do they migrate from, and why do they migrate?

Rural families from Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia with little or no land of their own make up much of Turkey's seasonal agricultural workers. Impoverished and dispossessed urban poor also become seasonal agricultural workers, including many migrant laborers from the cities and districts of Diyarbakır, Batman, Adana, Şanlıurfa, and Van.[7] Forced migration in the 1990s is an important factor that is a backdrop to this issue.[8]

Another important aspect of seasonal workers is their ethnic identity: the majority are Kurds, Arabs, and Roma people such as the Rom or the Dom. This is not a coincidence, as in Turkey there is an ethnicization of poverty; many studies reveal that certain ethnic groups are the most impoverished and deprived, and that these groups have struggled to access resources, especially after the forced migrations of the 1990s.

On the other hand, a large portion of the urban poor who become the seasonal labor force come from Şanlıurfa, a province that did not have much forced migration. Is this due to a strategy to gain 'property?' Migrant laborers in this province themselves can best explain the rural manifestations of what is called "taking turns in poverty."

"I am eighteen years old. I started to work as a seasonal farmhand when I was eight. Back then I used to provide for my siblings. I am my parents' fourth child; we are ten siblings in total. I was a student at the school. Teachers came over to say, "She should continue her studies. Send her to boarding school." But mom and dad wouldn't listen. I have been working as a seasonal worker for ten years. This year, on May 15, we went to Sivas to harvest beetroot. Then we went to Dinar, Afyon for cucumbers. On July 15, we were in the villages near İzmir harvesting tomatoes. On September 15, Hatay, for cotton. We came back to Urfa just fifteen days ago. In fifteen days we will be off for Adana to work in the orange groves. We are working this hard on purpose. We want to work a lot so that we can make money, buy a house and get out of this life. We are trying to save money."

(Respondent: Female, 18 years old, Şanlıurfa)

Why does agriculture need seasonal laborers?

In Turkey, seasonal laborers are needed in the south, in the Black Sea region, and in central and western Anatolia. Seasonal laborers work in the cotton fields in Adana and Aydın, hazelnuts in Ordu and Sakarya, beetroot in Yozgat, Konya, Kayseri and Nevşehir, and tobacco in Düzce, just to name a few examples. All the regions share a drop in local populations as their increased access to education has led to their predilection for higher paying jobs

and a migration to the big cities. The result is a transformed sociological structure as younger generations break from their elders' agricultural life. These regions are also intersected by national and transnational migration. This situation, which I call Articulated Migration, is apparent in the countryside around Nevşehir and in Konya's Kulu district. Rural Kulu has seen a significant emigration to Sweden; the beetroot and chickpea lands left behind are cultivated by internal migrants from southeastern Anatolia.

Another problem in the regions whose demand for seasonal labor is high is the aging local population. According to data from the Haceteppe Population Studies of 2008, the fertility rate in the East (including the Southeast) is 3.3, but only 2.2 in Central Anatolia, 2.1 in the South and the Black Sea, and 1.7 in the West. That is, the degree of demographic transformation varies from region to region. Families in the East and Southeast have more children, and laborers from these regions are in demand for the agricultural production in other regions.

Despite the demand for their labor, Kurdish, Arab, or Dom Roma migrant laborers work under dire conditions. Living in nylon or cloth tents, they suffer from inadequate hygiene and a lack of access to clean water or sewage infrastructure. They do not have adequate access to health services and girls and boys do not have access to education. On top of all that, many workers face discrimination and social exclusion. Despite certain regions needing agricultural workers, these same workers are ostracized and discriminated against as they work very hard for very low wages.

Girls and boys in seasonal agricultural work

Boys and girls of seasonal farm laborers work alongside their families. Studies have shown that these children can suffer from malnutrition and even famine, as well as living in deficient housing without access to potable water, sewage for waste, and suffering from a lack of even basic health and education services. Like their parents, these children are socially ostracized and discriminated against in the regions where they work.[9]

The problem of child labor must be tackled in tandem with education policy. Studies suggest that although most children are enrolled in school, they cannot attend classes during the migration period.[10] Obliged to migrate with their families from March to November, these children are absent from school for an average of 60 days a year as they work on average 75 days a year for ten hours a day.

The issue is not these children's enrollment, but their attendance. According to current law, they fall into the category of dropouts due to death, chronic health problems, overseas migration, or age limit. These children can be conceived as 'hidden dropouts.' Turkey's Ministry of Education can boast of a nearly 100% net enrollment rate, but survey data on attendance paints a very different picture.

When children migrate for seasonal work, there is no system for local school officials to deal with their participation in local schools. In my field studies in the provinces of Ordu, Yozgat, and Şanlıurfa, school managers expressed their reservations:

"Their education is not our province's concern. They must be schooled in their hometown." (Ordu)

"They don't blend in with the students here." (Yozgat)

"Children of seasonal agricultural laborers generally fail in their classes and bring the host province's average scores down. As such, they are not wanted by those schools." (Şanlıurfa)

"It is difficult to keep track of these children since their records are transferred to our province over the Internet."

"Since children arrive at different times of the year, it's hard to register and monitor them."

"Curriculums do not match."

"They have a hard time coming to school since they live in tents."

"Children have difficulties going back and forth between a nomadic lifestyle and school life."

"The children suffer from discrimination."

Problems specific to girls engaged in seasonal labor

Girls not only work in the fields, orchards and groves, but they are also expected to carry out domestic chores and to "lend mom a hand." Girls have more responsibilities than boys; they carry water from faraway water sources to the tent, they maintain the family's belongings, they cook, set the table, and wash the dishes as well as cleaning, gathering firewood and taking care of the animals. Although they return from the fields at the same time as boys, girls must then continue to fulfill their domestic duties as the boys join the men in waiting for the women to provide them various services.

A girl's most important responsibility is taking care of younger siblings; a girl of 12 or 13 can assume the entire responsibility of caring for a two or three year old sibling. With such obligations, girls are often obliged to abandon school at a younger age than boys. Sometimes, girls do not get to experience adolescence as they are married off as child brides.

Mothers can be said to "negotiate with patriarchy" by manipulating their daughters' labor, but this situation still reproduces gender roles to the detriment of women. The words of a teenager testify to this reproduction of the patriarchal social structure:

"My mother works along with the rest of the family. She works in the field and takes care of the house. I take care of my sibling, carry water, wash the dishes... My mom knows how to do the things my father does, but my father could not fulfill her duties. At the end of the day, however, my father gets the money. Women cannot talk to the middleman, it would not be appropriate. Women tell the men what they need... We talk to mom, some may talk to their elder sisters or brothers. It might change from family to family, but in general my mom and I (the women) do not get any money..."

(Respondent: Nevşehir, 14 year old girl)

In lieu of a conclusion

Child seasonal labor migrants cannot attend school and thereby cannot obtain the skills necessary to change their impoverished condition. Poverty is reproduced as these children are excluded from education, which supports the 'new poverty' argument: Girls born to a poor family cannot ameliorate their conditions, and grow up to be poor women.

But there is a paradox in their lack of achievement at school: Girls and boys who work as seasonal laborers tackle very challenging tasks, work for long hours under tough conditions, and manage to survive. Many can juggle several languages at a very young age. These achievements demonstrate that these children are indeed bright, and successful, but the current education system cannot enhance the capacities of these children who have proven their brilliance and resilience in real life. Many girls and boys who don't attend school regularly because of their working conditions choose not to attend school even when they are not working and are free to attend. Why can't the education system hold on to these girls and boys, who have great real-life skills? The policies of state agencies are to blame.

I believe that teachers are key in tackling this problem. It is very important for children engaged in seasonal agricultural labor to be monitored by their teachers. Turkey has an urgent need for alternative education policies; in France, for instance, children of nomadic families are educated in traveling school buses, or are given compensation classes.

The problems of children in the seasonal labor force must be addressed with special attention to break the vicious cycle of poverty. Basic services like education and health care must be organized to suit their specific needs. Alternative policies must also be formulated to address gender and ethnic differences in seasonal agricultural labor.

One last issue is specific to Şanlıurfa, which both provides and receives migrants and which plays a prominent role in seasonal labor just like Çukurova did in the past. This city, which provides a large part of Turkey's cotton supply, must be studied in depth to understand its seasonal labor dynamics. Should rural poverty in Şanlıurfa be imputed to lack of land or other property, despite the region suffering only limited forced migration? Or, does the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP), brining irrigation and thus wealth to the region, further impoverish the poor and landless peasants by mechanizing agriculture? Is it true that peasants who lose their land as a result are forced to migrate to other provinces to find work? Conventional rural development policies do not diminish poverty. We must formulate alternative development policies that truly address the real issues.

The problems of children in the seasonal labor force must be addressed with special attention to break the vicious cycle of poverty. Basic services like education and health care must be organized to suit their specific needs.

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Urban contexts of the June days

Only time can tell what history will call that "thing" that suddenly appeared in the center of Istanbul in June 2013. It began when a small group of people objected to the destruction of "a few trees" in Taksim's Gezi Park, near Harbiye. The trees were to cede their place to the construction of a sidewalk, something completely forgotten about in the "Project for a Pedestrian-Friendly Taksim," a project which was organized in a manner contrary to the purpose of the project and to current zoning. The reaction to the violence against the tree-protecting protesters was clear, but executives of the contractor firms, with the support of police forces, anarchically cut down the trees on May 28. We can't yet predict how this movement that snowballed after dawn raids by the police on May 30 and 31 will be remembered in the future, or how it will be defined as a historical concept.

At around seven in the evening on May 31, police forces were overwhelmed by the collective resistance. On June the 1st around 3:30 in the afternoon, the "Gezi Spirit' " managed to surmount the police barricades and enter Taksim's Gezi Park once again, severing all relationships with material goods. We cannot name this movement without falling into the trap of "word over content," and it should also not be our priority to do so as "June" continues.

A view of Taksim through the lens of urban transformation

Taksim Square is one of the most important expressions of Turkey's modernization style in an urban environment. The Square emerged in the 1930s with construction that was undertaken under the pretense to make the area match "the level of modern civilizations" even as it was on the edge of a historic area. Taksim Square was to be more like nearby Pera instead of like the historic center of the old capital city or an heirloom of the old regime.

How Taksim Square evolved, maturing in the minds of the people, exceeds the bounds of this article. But we must mention the four issues that will help us fully understand the intentions for the Square that have become even more significant lately because of what's happening in Taksim now.

The first of these issues is the fixation on the Artillery Officers' Winter Barracks that once stood where Gezi Park is now, a building that was rebuilt and altered many times. During the reign of Mahmud II, bombardment destroyed the barracks and the front façade. Photographs, many of which are recirculating now, show that the building was renovated during the reign of Abdülaziz. Later, it was demolished in two stages. Some 80 years later, on February 9, 2011, Decree No. 4225 of the Board of Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage No. 2 of Istanbul registered the building seemingly without any reference to a source document or to any source data.

The second issue is the "Taksim Mosque." The Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey - whose title will remain until the creation of his post within the Municipality of the Republic of Turkey - announced his plans on November 27, 2012, saying that the mosque would "naturally" be "built."

The mosque's location is said to be where the Kasımpaşa Sports Club parking lot is now, directly behind the water distribution tanks. The Prime Minister, too, has said that this is where the Taksim Mosque will be built.

During the National Front government, an article published by the Ministry of Culture on May 13, 1977 sparked a debate on what would be built on this 2699m² site. The debate continued with the zealous Bedrettin Dalan, Istanbul's Municipal Mayor at the time. Today, the Prime Minister is reviving the issue, despite the fact that there was a definitive court decision that states that using this site for a religious institution would be in breach of law.

The third issue is Bedrettin Dalan's "rupture." Although now he is known for being the absconder in the long-running Ergenekon trials, in the mid 1980s he was powerful and respected enough to cut through the heart of the city by widening Tarlabaşı Boulevard, destroying some of the best examples of Levantine architecture in the city to do so. This so-called rupture created the conditions for the freakish construction project known as "The Tarlabaşı Renovation Project." We must never forget that the Project was presented as one that would actually deepen the social stratification between the two sides of Tarlabaşı.

The freakish Tarlabaşı Renovation Project not only would drive waiters, tissue sellers, body shops, poor Kurds, unemployed Turks, Romany, cooks, prostitutes, the last of the iron welders, stuffed mussel sellers, machinists, and university students trying to find work out of their homes. We should also discuss the connections between the Project for a Pedestrian-Friendly Taksim, the brain child of the powerful people in country, and how it is spurring Tarlabaşı's renovation project. The Project for a Pedestrian-Friendly Taksim - which would *ipso facto* remove the residents from the project area - was developed based on the consequences of this history.

Now, we are facing an initiative that would close

Ş. Can Atalay

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off Taksim Square so that any opposition group couldn't amass there. This Square is the "modern" face of the city on the edge of Pera, and it has deep symbolic meaning because of its place in the history of Turkey's social struggles, a place where citizens who earn a hard living through hard work would assemble for rallies and protests. To take up another issue, was it just because of conservative or religious policies that tables and chairs were removed from outdoor cafés, bars, and restaurants near Taksim two years ago, forcing the lifestyle choice of café-goers to change? After two years of this policy, it is clear that it is more rooted in capitalist rationality than in the government being religious to the degree that it is hostile to alcohol.

A public space where people of the middle and lower classes can meet, talk politics, engage in politics, stage protests, or just go to the cinema or theater is no longer desirable. It is a mode of socialization that is no longer welcome in Beyoğlu or anywhere else. By intervening in the operations of venues where such people would meet, the state is trying to curb their socialization. Those in power have already started to clear marginal people out of Beyoğlu, the very same people who were the first to stand up in resistance to the state which is deaf to them: women, members of the LGBT community, young people standing up against the tyranny of neoliberal authoritarianism forced on them, white-collar workers and other unsatisfied with their own condition and searching for a new life.

Urban transformation through the lens of Taksim

Urban transformation is an umbrella term for many concepts. Does urban transformation in Turkey today mean urban improvement, earthquake safety, access to habitable housing, promoting urban life in harmony with ecological values...? Or, is it the opposite, and more importantly, where all imagination is stuffed away? The Dictionary of Urban Planning defines "urban transformation" as:

The clearance of disadvantaged neighborhoods (slum clearance) with public contributions or aid, the improvement and preservation of buildings, better conditions for housing, employment and leisure, rendering all or a part of cities and city centers in accordance with local plans and schedules more suitable to the changing conditions of the time and to improve the environment.

Many of these urban transformations claim our attention, but none is so thought-provoking as "the clearance of disadvantaged neighborhoods." The polite, culturally-sensitive masterminds of capitalist metropolises try to give it a positive slant, referring to slum clearance as "the removal of hovels and shanties to provide better living conditions for disadvantaged communities." In Turkey, urban transformation has been on the agenda since the early 2000s, a phrase used by polite ladies and gentlemen to express cutting poor people out of city centers to valuable urban spaces without even considering bettering their living conditions.

In Başıbüyük, an area relatively far from the city center, poor people were removed from the shanties by the coast without anyone saying anything about "providing them with better living conditions." And it was a "most natural right" for Romani to be relocated 40km from their neighborhood of Sulukule, a district close to the city's historic center. The right of property, capitalism's more sacred tenet, was the carrot on a stick that drew people away from their homes.

Over the last ten years, laws and regulations have been changed, even the barriers of some Constitutional norms have been removed to allow for the onslaught of urban transformation. The obstruction of ceasing and cancellation of the implementation of applications in breach of law by administrative jurisdiction, has, in mathematical terms, created a state of almost impossible convergence.

It has been made so difficult for an ordinary citizen to make an effective legal case for himself against the state's intervention into people's lives in public spaces. In Sulukule, for example, people pressed charges against the state, pressing through the legal system and winning some cases but with much hardship. But how can you stand up for yourself against a state apparatus that doesn't even follow its own rules, a state that makes nonsensical comments and creates impossible conditions? Trying to find a solution to halt the state's mega-projects like the third airport or the third bridge - both of which will destroy Istanbul's ecosystem, eradicate the forest reserves to the north of the city and damage the city's water sources – seems as impossible as taking a rocket to live on another planet.

How can you stand up against a state apparatus that doesn't even follow its own rules? Trying to find a solution to halt the state's mega - projects like the third airport or the third bridge - both of which will destroy Istanbul's ecosystem, eradicate the forest reserves to the north of the city and damage the city's water sources – seems as impossible as taking a rocket to live on another planet.

Planned hydro-electric plants will affect and even determine the lives of people living in rural areas in the immediate future; however, it has been made nearly impossible now to obtain a legal intervention to halt the plans. We will be left with nothing but water that can't find which drain to flow into, and a massive explosion!

Those June Days were an important point in time for many reasons. They were anti-authoritarian in character and made their objections to the conservative-marketing, marketing conservatism, and its representative democracy which is a mechanism of compliant production. The June Days was also the resistance of women against the oppression of their lives, as well as being well-represented by the LGBT movement, which has succeeded in making the social opposition an ally against homophobia. The June Days also witnessed the forging of a brotherhood between Turks and Kurds and the first signs of a desire for secularism from people of a poorer background, who live hand to mouth. All these social demands were voiced through the intervention of a public space - Gezi Park in Taksim Square. This bears significant meaning. The urban contexts of those June Days is something we must continue to consider.

Is the Ergenekon case a step towards democracy?

Orhan Gazi Ertekin

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Turkey's political agenda, already deeply divided between secularism and Islamism, was further polarized in June 2007 with the onset of a series of large-scale lawsuits. Since then, one ex-chief of staff, top army brass, senior military officers, as well as journalists, academics and businessmen have stood trial. Recently, judges announced the initial verdicts in some of these cases. These cases have turned into the foci of political struggles with various political camps investing heavily in terms of time and labor. Far from soothing these sharp social antagonisms, the law and the judiciary have become the key arena of political struggle, which naturally makes people question Turkey's legal system more and more. This cascade of lawsuits, with the Ergenekon and Balyoz (Sledgehammer) trials at the very center, have been reduced to absurdity in terms of their consequences if not their content. The country is once again sharply divided over these lawsuits.

The scope of the lawsuits

This cascade of lawsuits, still awaiting their final verdict, is centered on the period from the military coup of September 12, 1980 up to the 2008 lawsuit that tried to shut down the AKP (Justice and Development Party). These lawsuits call into question thirty years of Turkey's history. We should note, also, that there are many unsolved acts from these 30 years.

Let's follow the chronology. After the military coup on September 12, 1980, thousands of people were arrested, with some remaining in jail for extended periods as a result of lawsuits that were only recently resolved. In the coup's aftermath, a large number of people were executed, countless others tortured, a significant portion of the country's population was blacklisted by the state, the entire political arena was brought under strict state control, political parties, associations and trade unions were banned, and their leaders arrested. During the low intensity warfare that ravaged Eastern and Southeastern Turkey in the 1990s, thousand of people lost their lives in still unsolved murders, and hundreds of people were forced to migrate from their villages. It was during the same period that secular-minded intellectuals such as Bahriye Üçok, Uğur Mumcu and Turan Dursun were murdered. In 1993, 33 intellectuals and artists were killed in a fire in a terrible massacre in the city of Sivas; in 1995, many were killed in days of clashes in İstanbul's Gazi neighborhood. The Alevi community continues to demand that these two tragic events be fully explained. In the 1990s, religious sectors gaining power were subjected to pressure, and the Refah Partisi, or Welfare Party, the precursor of today's ruling AKP, was forced out of power in the coup on February 28, 2007, and there were many police operations against religious populations. Today's Prime Minister Erdoğan, for example, was imprisoned for four months. In early 2000, police forces dissolved Hezbullah in Turkey, which the state had been using in paramilitary operations against the PKK. Thousands of people were prosecuted and given lengthy sentences. After the AKP came to power, a member of Danıştay (Council of State) was killed in 2006; following this, the tensions between secularism and Islamism only escalated. In 2008, a case was filed to close down the AKP for supporting reactionary activities. The party narrowly escaped from being banned.

The lawsuits' underpinning perspective

The main claim underlying the lawsuits and indictments on these thirty bloody years can be summarized as follows: The Ergenekon organization is a secret structure inside the state that has vast means and capabilities. This secret organization is embedded in the army, the media, business world, and the judiciary, constituting a parallel structure within the state. This organization tries to rein in the power of governments and keep them under its control. If it cannot succeed in doing so, it organizes a military coup to bring down the rebelious government. Ergenekon carries out assassinations and various other means to this end. Certain political actors, NGOs and illegal organizations are also manipulated to fulfill Ergenekon's aims. The Ergenekon file also suggests that the chief of staff, top army brass, various academics, journalists and businessmen are among its accomplices. A long list of guns and ammunition, including bombs, automatic handguns and rifles, flame throwers and various other military equipment have been discovered in various locations. The supporters of the lawsuit consider this to be their strongest argument.

Nevertheless, there has not been any comprehensive or concrete explanation of the structure, hierarchy and leadership of this organization. The acts of violence that the lawsuits are based on are the abovementioned murder of a member of the Council of State, and the throwing

of a blast bomb into a newspaper's building's garden. The leader of the organization is not named, and even the hierarchy of the organization has apparently not been explained fully. All the same, although this organization is claimed to be extremely powerful and effective, the lawsuits can only attach it two acts of violence. The indictment hardly mentions murder, assassination, massacre or other acts of state violence like coups, coup attempts, overthrowing the government, etc. This disconnection between the general perspective of the lawsuit and its concrete arguments and claims leads to serious legal gaps, with leaps in logic necessary to even make a case.

In the Ergenekon case, 275 people are being prosecuted and the file includes over 1 million documents. The total number of pages of the three indictments stands at 5818. In the Ergenekon case alone, 254 defendants have received prison sentences. An ex-chief of staff was given life sentence, one of the harshest punishments provided in the Turkish Criminal Code. 21 suspects were acquitted. The Balyoz case has 365 suspects. In this lawsuit, retired army generals received aggravated life sentences that were then reduced to 20 years of imprisonment because they did not actually carry out the action they were accused of. The Yargıtay (High Court of Appeal) continues its work on this case. In total, a total of 404 military officers are standing trial in these mega trials. Aside from the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, there are other connected files known as the OdaTv lawsuit, the Zirve Publishing House lawsuit, the Poyrazköy-Kafes lawsuit, and the Military Espionage lawsuit.

Another remarkable dimension of the Ergenekon lawsuit is its perception of the perpetrators and victims. The case presents a rather comprehensive look at the accused perpetrators with military officers, the media and business community playing a key role in the organization, with certain NGOs and illegal organizations also involved in certain actions to meet certain objectives. The Sunnite sectors of the population are portrayed as an innocent group that has been manipulated, whereas Kurds and Alevis are the main groups who provoke trigger panic about the AKP government. The lawsuit also claimed that the Kurdish political violence movement, the PKK, and the Turkish political violence movement DHKP-C, among others, were manipulated by the Ergenekon organization to attain its objectives. Such a perspective portrays a vast part of the population as the constituency, instrument and source of criminal pursuits.

It becomes apparent when we look at the concrete profiles of individual suspects. Among the suspects is the retired Brigadier General Veli Küçük, known to be the mastermind of various unsolved murders of the 1990s. However, we also come across the socialist journalist Ahmet Şık, who spent most of his professional life uncovering the so-called Turkish Gladio. Also indicted are MPs from the CHP (Republican People's Party), the party that established the Turkish Republic, as well as MPs from the ultranationalist MHP (Nationalist Action Party). There is a vast array of suspects, ranging from Doğu Perinçek, the General President of the İşçi Partisi (Workers' Party) to heads of mafia organizations. All these people are portrayed as the members of a single criminal organization. An analysis of the suspects' profiles reveals that the list includes people from almost every category except the Fethullah Gülen sect, which is considered by everyone, including its own spokespeople, to be the secret coalition partner of the ruling AKP.

Given Turkey's bloody last three decades, the definitions of "perpetrator" and "victim" presented in the lawsuit and the indictment are bound to provoke serious controversy. The prosecution is limited to actions directed against the current government, which leads to concerns that all the other crimes of the last thirty years will be overlooked.

The trial

As is known, modern trial processes are built on judiciary subjects. Each trial necessitates the presence of parties engaged in the determination of truth and legal argumentation. The relation between the prosecution and defense is one of equals, but that requires the trial not to be monopolized by the state. By placing itself on the same pedestal with the defense, the state assumes a certain political risk and includes citizens in the jurisdiction process. This is the key element characterizing a just trial inside the limits of the democratic theory of state.

But in the Ergenekon case, there are indications that the courts jealously strove to keep the Ergenekon lawsuit under their sole control. The limited period of defense granted to defense lawyers, preparation of expert reports, dissimulation of certain pieces of evidence from the suspects and their attorneys, and the fact that many demands of the suspects -such as the consultation of various witnesses- were ignored. These are just some elements of the case that suggest that the trial was monopolized by the state. Secret witnesses and detention procedures turn this impression into a strong suspicion.

Secret witnesses

Recourse to secret witnesses establishes an unequal relationship between the legal parties in the trial, thus minimizing the suspects' chance to take part in the judiciary process and turning them into simple objects of the trial. This method grants immense power to the prosecution, which can then be easily manipulated for political purposes, and translates legal relations into relations of power.

Detention

The Specially Authorized Courts where the lawsuits are taking place frequently resort to detention as a key instrument of crime and punishment. In the practice in Turkey, detention turns into a sort of preliminary punishment, which not only prevents the judge from establishing a cool-headed and sound relationship with the case and perpetrators, but also reduces the judge into a type of corrections officer.

New cases, old procedures

We can clearly see Turkey's well-known judiciary customs and culture in action in the lawsuit, and it is inevitable to observe the tension between

the newness of the lawsuit and the oldness of the trial process. I had previously made the following observations:

One cannot make any serious statements about this trial without extending the debate to include the nature of law and the judiciary in Turkey. One of the key issues in the Turkish political arena is the fact that law and the judiciary are not a space of negotiation between different social parties, but rather an instrument of the state and the government. Law and the judiciary are monopolized by the government, which in turn prevents the establishment of egalitarian legal relations between the parties involved and reduces the judiciary into a key instrument of the strong. Accordingly, citizens are viewed as "vassals" that must be content with their assigned position in the legal system, whereas "justice" is turned into a "service" granted by the state to those outside of it. Governments give us no chance but to consent to their "justice." However, the judiciary is the most important area where an absolute equality between the government and those outside of it must be preserved. Well, we should ask, has Ergenekon brought this inegalitarian judiciary tradition to an end?

> This cascade of lawsuits, with the Ergenekon and Balyoz (Sledgehammer) trials at the very center, have been reduced to absurdity in terms of their consequences if not their content. The country is once again sharply divided over these lawsuits.

An analysis of the evolution of the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases reveals that this anti-democratic tradition is intact and that the cases are based on a legal perspective totally disregardful of the questions of evidence and proof. More importantly, the defense is largely deprived of means and instruments that could change the course of the trial, the defense cannot act as a legal subject equal to the prosecution, and is neutralized by a coalition between the police, the prosecution and the court. Even the most rudimentary analysis shows that the defense cannot take part in the jurisdiction process. Only its presence is tolerated, and its other actions are deemed unacceptable.[1]

During the jurisdiction process, the police, prosecution and court have acted in line with a common perspective and excluded the defense from their coalition, which is a cause for serious concern. The hearings, as well as the legal judgment and logical methods employed aggravate this concern.

The hearings

The actual hearings of the Ergenekon case themselves are a crucial aspect of this controversy. After complaints that the hearings were not worthy of the name, I participated in the *Yargıtay (Court of appeals)* hearings on behalf of the *Demokrat Yargı Derneği* (Association for Democratic Jurisdiction), where I serve as co-president. I wrote the following observations for a daily newspaper:

Let us take a look at the daily hearing procedure. Here are my notes for the afternoon of July 25th, 2013: The only thing that suggests that this actually was a hearing was that the chief justice insisted that he was listening carefully to defense lawyers' arguments. Otherwise, the judges maintained a minimal contact with the courthouse and lawyers. One of the judges repeated the following pattern every couple of minutes: He analyzed the list before him, checked out his computer, took a look at the audience, sipped some water from a glass (he reached out to the glass around 50 times and drank some water; the audience could not help but wonder whether the judge was really thirsty or if this was some sort of sports activity), tilted his head to the side, took notes, then bowed down his head, played with the computer's mouse etc. This pattern repeated itself over and over again, at the same rhythm. Another judge raised his head only three times during the entire three-hour hearing. He looked at the audience for six minutes the first time, three minutes the second time and only one minute the last time. For the remaining two hours and 50 minutes, he looked down. When the defense displayed its charts and graphics, he did not raise his head even once to take a look. Another judge was mostly nodding off during the trial, and went into full sleep in the last twenty minutes. (The same individual later participated in the hearing on July 29, 2013 with an ear completely bandaged. No one questioned whether he was actually capable of presiding over the trial. That day he slept for about ten minutes). The most tragicomic event of all was that neither the chief justice nor the other judges asked a single question, although this is supposed to be the main practice in any trial. The hearing did not involve questioning, curiosity, analysis, or any other acts related to the fundamental conventions of trials. This so-called hearing thus lacked legal conventions and dynamism. Unfortunately this is the legal culture upheld by the new government and its new judiciary system.[2]

All these events, which would have been considered alarming and addressed on the political agenda in any democratic country, slipped under the radars in Turkey. Woefully, no one voiced criticism and demanded the truth, the way Émile Zola had done in the Dreyfus affair.

Struggles inside the judiciary

Naturally, the Ergenekon chain of lawsuits cannot be separated from the upheaval inside the judiciary apparatus. In the first years of its rule, the AKP government kept a close watch on the coup supporters inside the army and waited in anxiety; then from 2004-2005 onwards, the government locked horns with the judiciary. That's when a lawsuit was filed to shut down the AKP; after that the government started to see the judiciary as one of its key political targets. The referendum of 2010 was a critical milestone as the government managed to defeat the traditional judiciary apparatus, which had been posing a threat for some time. At the elections for the HSYK (High Council of Judges and

Prosecutors) held immediately after the referendum, the government was pleased to think it had shaped the top judiciary bureaucracy according to its will. The AKP government considered that its supporters had won in the HSYK elections, and that it had thus brought the HSYK under control, a body which has the authority to shape all the critical points of the judiciary system. Nevertheless, the AKP government once again was worried about the judiciary when the Specially Authorized Prosecutor's Office issued an order to question the undersecretary of the state intelligence service MİT, uncomfortably close to the AKP. At this point, it dawned on the AKP that the judiciary system and its supreme council HSYK was indeed controlled by the Gülen sect, its covert coalition partner. That was when there appeared a divergence of opinions as regards the judiciary and the course and results of the Ergenekon trials. The Gülen sect insisted on shaping these lawsuits at will, whereas the government tried to intervene more and more in the judiciary. At this juncture, the Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed his overt support for the ex-chief of staff and stated that those who now prosecute him will be held accountable in history books. The tension between the two sides is ongoing.

Power struggles

If we think that these lawsuits are limited to the legal and judiciary areas, and the struggles inside the judiciary then we won't see the bigger picture. The legal and judiciary aspects of the lawsuits must be analyzed against the background of the power struggles in Turkey over the last three years.

Since 2010, the power bloc in Turkey has consisted of the AKP government and the Gülen sect. Unlike Turkey's traditional religious communities based on solidarity among believers and safety nets, the Gülen sect is a tightly knit, hierarchical and calculative organization. When the AKP came to power in 2002, the sect started to provide the cadres required by the government to reach its objectives. That made the sect politically very valuable in the eyes of the government. In contrast with the emotional, knee-jerk, local reactions of the government's own constituency, the Gülen sect's cool-headed attitude made it much more convenient for national and international political strategies. The systematic and resolute progression of the Ergenekon trials and the coldblooded disregard of all criticism might be attributed to the Gülen wing of the power bloc. However, the problem was that such a resolved and coldblooded sect did not stop at the government's set boundaries. Struggles inside various state institutions indicated that the government and the sect had increasingly divergent views on many national issues such as the Kurdish problem. The components of Turkey's new power bloc were playing chess across various state institutions. This game turned into all-out battle when the judiciary, on top of all the abovementioned cases, connected the undersecretary of MİT -who reports directly to the Prime Minister- with Kurdish political violence and launched an investigation. The result was a violent clash between the two sides. Nevertheless, this struggle did not become explicit until the Foundation of Journalists and Writers controlled by the Gülen sect issued a press statement in August 2013. Today all groups with even a rudimentary knowledge about the power bloc in Turkey talk about the struggle between the government and the sect, and position themselves according to the actions taken by the two sides.

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This is where we come across the most serious problem in these lawsuits and related political issues are concerned. There is an underlying power struggle that renders every issue in Turkey ambiguous and confuses our ability to get to the truth. This process engenders fear and anxiety and raises concerns about the future and safety.

When we take a holistic look at the intellectual, cultural and political developments underlying the Ergenekon files, we can certain fundamental conclusions. First of all, it must be said that if these trials are really meant to uncover the Turkish Gladio, the biggest barrier to such an attempt is the judiciary system itself. Here, the real problem is the judiciary's incapability of differentiating between the guilty and the innocent, the lack of a real jurisdiction process, and the gradual transformation of the judiciary into an instrument to crush and terrorize the opposition. As such, instead of representing the society as a whole and soothing social antagonisms with its rulings, the judiciary system seems to be integral with one side of the conflict and prevents jurisdiction from being based on social common sense. This is a key factor that renders the judiciary apparatus itself problematic.

On top of our reserves about the Turkish judiciary's capacity and willingness to discover the "truth," we must also add the current situation of Turkey's sphere of politics and power. In a country where everything about the judiciary, politics and power is surrounded by an obscuring mist, it seems nearly impossible for us to discover the truth and unravel Turkey's bloody past.

Endnotes

1. Ertekin, Orhan Gazi: 'Ergenekon Öldü Yaşasın Ergenekon,' Radikal 2, August 11, 2013.
2. Ertekin, Orhan Gazi: '"Yeni demokrasi"nin iflası', Radikal 2, August 4, 2013.

Participative democracy and active citizenship

Understanding the street protests which broke out in Gezi Park in Istanbul's Taksim Square starts by questioning their social and psychological background. Barriers exist to our understanding of the events, including the way representatives of the ruling party have depicted the events and the simplistic approach of various dissident political organizations trying to control the mass movement.

These long-running protests have been characterized by their mass participation, and therefore there are many issues to be taken into account in any analysis. One such issue remains predominant although it is affected by other factors: The issue of participation in the political decision-making process.

Turkey has had multi-party politics for 66 years and there are seventy legally registered political parties today; nonetheless, citizens have very limited means to participate in politics. Although it might seem like there are no major barriers to establishing or joining a political party, or to exercising the right to vote or to be a candidate, this first impression is far from the truth.

Structural barriers to intra-party democracy and various hurdles in the electoral system itself leave a large section of the population dissatisfied because they are no efficient means for them to take part in the political decision-making process.

Civilian participation in politics

Many groups face strong headwinds when they try to take a part in political life in Turkey: Disadvantaged groups such as women, the young, disabled, and refugees; environmentalists; broad-based social organizations focusing on cultural rights or freedom of conscience; trade unions and trade associations. Civil society attempting to take part in the law making processes, or to appraise current practices or policies, it is held back by a lack of experience and of capacity. The writing of a new constitution - of vital importance - presents a remarkable example. A commission, made up of MPs from political parties currently represented in parliament, made a public appeal and collected their written and oral demands and suggestions for Turkey's new constitution. But how and to what extent the public's suggestions will be taken into account remains in questions; there is no binding mechanism for classifying or evaluating the comments that were collected. Civil society's participation in the process of drafting a new constitution has thereby been reduced so far to the mere expression of opinions. In contrast, elsewhere in the world, principles and mechanisms for transparency and participation have been enacted in similar instances.

One of the more salient threats to public participation is the absence of a culture of negotiation and governance. For example, although the state has organized a number of conferences to bring together representatives of the Alevi community, the outcomes of these events have not been translated into any tangible results and none of the Alevi community's concerns have been addressed.

Protesters gain confidence in the face of police force

In 2013, many different social groups experience severe police action: Football fans, left-wing groups trying to hold Labor Day rallies in Taksim Square, even pro-Republican circles trying to celebrate national days with alternative ceremonies. Police forces increasingly used tear bombs as a routine measure to disperse crowds and to break up demonstrations; their use of tear bombs also become increasingly arbitrary. A natural result was various social groups who had faced police violence for different reasons banding together to become stronger against security forces. For example, the Gezi Park protests were a peaceful demonstration until the police intervened with disproportionate force. As excessive police force continued over the following days, the protesters' focus shifted from the original ecological demands to a mass rally against public authorities. This shift was only reinforced when the Prime Minister continued to defend the police forces, and when he blame the demonstrators for wrongdoing even after a number of protesters had been killed by the police.

Concerns of the Alevi community

Turkey's Syria policy created anxiety in the Alevi community. Concerns that the state would follow a sectarian line in Syrian policy was paralleled in perceptions of the Kurdish peace process. Alevis are concerned that the state will join forces with Sunni Kurds against the Alevi community, as it did in the Ottoman era. Bitter memories of that time were further stoked when the government announced the new third bridge across the Bosphorus would be named after Sultan Yavuz Selim, who is infamous for having organized

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massacres of the Alevi people.

Against such a backdrop, the overwhelming participation of Alevi groups and Alevi neighborhood's support of the protests should come as no surprise.

The Prime Minister's criticism of the main opposition party and its leader- who happens to be an Alevi- has engendered further anxiety. Many Alevis are concerned about the state's intervention in their communities.

State intervention in daily life

Debates on the consumption of alcohol or the use of birth control are not just technical or public health issues, but are symptoms of Turkey's political polarization. The ruling party's efforts to motivate its conservative base also create an oppositional front. Concerns that the government will deviate from secularism and intervene to an ever-greater extent in individuals' lifestyles are woven into the mass reaction against authoritarian policies where dissident groups rally together in defense of democracy as they see it.

According to dissidents, the government believes it is the sole authority that decides the fate of Gezi Park or how many children each family should have. The result is that initial efforts to protect a handful trees in a park have transformed into the belief that by rallying for trees in the park, protesters are actually defending their individual freedoms and their future.

Malls and mosques

Remarkably, after the eruption of the Gezi protests the Prime Minister, speaking on a TV program, said that the government had not yet decided what they were planning to build on Gezi Park. He also emphasized that the government was planning to build a mosque in Taksim Square.

His efforts in the following days to paint the protesters as enemies of mosques and agents of the so-called "interest rate lobby" were also remarkable.

His accusations reveal the Prime Minister's tendency to translate economic and political tension into the symbolic world of beliefs, and to associate belief with identity. Instead of addressing the actual threats of global developments and domestic fiscal policy to protect Turkey's economy, the government took the easy way out and created domestic and foreign enemy scapegoats.

The government has not broken the economy's dependence on short-term foreign capital inflows and high interest rates; instead, it cowers behind its accusations that the protests are funded by the "interest rate lobby" and that protesters drink alcohol in mosques, both of which seem to be readily accepted by its loyal constituency.

Developments in the Middle East: Testing political Islam

Turkey's politics are affected by internal conflicts among Islamic groups in the Syrian opposition and the fate of the Morsi government in Egypt.

Islamists in Tunisia agreed to a power-share deal for that nation's transitional period; on the other hand, Islamists in Egypt have decided to singlehandedly write a constitution and establish single-party rule.

Turkey's branding of Morsi's critics as putschists, as well as the government's tendency to reduce democracy to the ballot box, is a reflection of its perspectives on its domestic politics. The government cannot tolerate an opposition with its 'with me or against me' mantra, and it certainly cannot work with an opposition to govern the nation. The socialization and democratization of politics is the best way to avoid military rule or a coup. We must discuss how authoritarian political tendencies pay the way for military intervention before we can make a defense of civilian rule, electoral politics, or the ballot box.

Religion, politics and the turn toward authoritarianism

It is certainly not unusual for any political tradition to become authoritarian after coming to power. But when authoritarian tendencies are founded on a government's idea of the divine, the resulting political space is much more problematic. The risk is that a government that can easily block freedom of expression is legitimized, and the situation can degrade into religious or sectarian strife.

An Islamophobic attempt to ostracize religion completely from the social and political sphere lays the groundwork for radical Islamism and for democratically unacceptable discourse. In the same way, political practices which rely on religious references only risks derailing the pursuit of a government based on reason and reconciliation.

The military coup in Egypt and the influences holding sway over various groups in the Syrian opposition have become the focus of fresh debate. Does moderate Islam facilitate the reconciliation of Islamic communities with universal values? Or does it tend to seize power and establish authoritarian rule?

Conservative democracy and majoritarianism

Today, these questions generate a number of worrisome answers for many sectors of society in Turkey where the Justice and Development Party government has left its mark on the last decade of politics. In Turkey, it is technically legally impossible to establish a political party based on religion, but conservatism has de facto achieve the same goal. The denial of pluralism and upholding of majority rule as a necessary corollary of respecting the ballot box, accusations that dissidents stand against religion and intolerance of other's choices could gradually lead towards an authoritarian rule. Respect for the majority - one of the basic tenets of democracy - does not however condone a disregard for the minority's demands.

Neither a dictatorship of the majority nor of the minority is defensible; rather, we should defend the creation of government mechanisms which defend and reinforce universal human values. In politics in Turkey, right-wing politicians in particular have taken refuge in polarized language based on the sectarian and ethnic identity of the majority, ostracizing the remainder of the population.

The 'Patriotic Front' that then Prime Minister Adnan Menderes established in the immediate aftermath of the transition to multi-party politics has been reproduced by today's right-wing leaders.

Flag race

In that context, it was surprising that Prime Minister Erdoğan initiated a flag race in his party's meetings and rallies organized upon his return from foreign visits in the early days of the Gezi protests. The Prime Minister appealed to citizens to hang the flag of Turkey from their windows; he even went so far as encouraging them to use the Ottoman flag with three crescents.

The AKP government appeals to its base with traditional, right-wing, conservative reflexes as well as making interludes to the religious constituency

> There can be no such thing as civilian rule when the military simply cedes its place to the police and when freedoms of expression and association are readily violated. Civilian rule cannot simply be reduced to government by those not in military uniform.

of the MHP, the Nationalist Action Party. Political liberals who had supported the AKP government and its bid to join the EU soon felt shunned as the government shifted from claiming to be a pioneer of change to being a pro status quo political party. In accordance with flag legislation, the government endorsed 'normal' national flags as opposed to flags with a portrait of Atatürk that Kemalists and others in the opposition favor. The polarization is also a symptom of political bifurcation: There are only two choices, harking back to the past or accepting the current government's line. There is no place for a third alternative which would defend freedoms.

Foreign powers and toppling the government

The government reacted with paranoia from the early days of Gezi, branding the international press and human rights organization that issued warnings about police action, as well as various foreign governments, as 'foreign powers trying to topple the government.' The government fueled deep-seated suspicion in Turkey of foreign powers in its attempts to portray the protests as illegitimate. The government has been so proud of its foreign policies, and it has asserted its right to intervene in regional developments. It was therefore surprising to see the government seemingly oblivious to the notion that this would meddling in another nation's internal affairs fall back on nationalist paranoia at the first instance of a strong, visible opposition.

Protesters on the street were portrayed as 'proxies of foreign powers' or 'putschists' working with 'undemocratic means.' A product of a certain political vision, certainly, but the irony is that the government, keen to portray itself as the victim saw nothing untoward in being domineering and condescending itself.

Is getting rid of military oversight enough?

Weakening military oversight is not in of itself enough to establish a democratic government. Turkey must slough discourse based on concepts like 'war against terror' and 'internal enemies' in order to establish civilian rule and reinforce social participation.

One way to move beyond a legacy of military rule and states of emergency is to initiate a process to democratize politics. There can be no such thing as civilian rule when the military simply cedes its place to the police and when freedoms of expression and association are readily violated. Civilian rule cannot simply be reduced to government by those not in military uniform.

The current government has yet to make any change to the ten percent electoral threshold or to the laws regulating political parties that uphold despotism; both are legacies of the military government that took power on September 12, 1980. Their inaction on these important points can only be explained by their pursuits of individual or party interests. The government is trying to revise the internal statue of the Grand Assembly, not to make it more democratic, but to serve itself. Once again, the government stands in conflict with its own claims of making a democratic constitution.

Democratizing politics

The recent revision of laws regulating the Chamber of Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) is a typical example of their attempts to centralize all authority in the central authorities. Instead of addressing the urgent need to democratize the inner workings of such chambers, the government transferred the trade chamber's powers to a ministry; there is nothing democratic about that. Although such reorganizations may weaken the opposition, they also risk further escalating political tension.

Making civil society and the judiciary more dependent on politics is not the way to empower politics. Such attempts to reinforce power cannot create a more democratic environment. In Turkey, where checks and balances are evaporating day by day, there is an urgent need to open politics to democratic participation.

It is unacceptable for Turkey to turn a deaf ear to the pursuit of participative democracy while internationally, representative democracy remains in crisis.

Forcing the doors of perception open

I've spent three-fifths of my life in Istanbul. I attended university here, I've lived and worked in Istanbul, finally becoming a MP for the 2nd precinct which includes Gezi Park. I even am a member of the Parliament's Environment Commission. So it was an invaluable experience for me to witness the chain of events that started on May 27.

The underlying reasons for many struggles for democratic rights across the world are various economic or political factors. The spark of the protests in Turkey, however, that started in Istanbul before spreading to 80 provinces, was a simple handful of trees. In others, the spark was the environmental awareness of the populace. It was the first protest of this kind in the history of social protest in Turkey.

Mainstream politicos from the government and the opposition –including from parties not represented in the parliament – were unable to grasp the fact that a truly motley crew of protesters that included people from diverse viewpoints could join forces over this issue. Everyone in my generation of politicians, myself included, was immensely delighted at the sight of this magnificent electoral base, thinking, "these young people are incredible, we must lead them, influence them, and win them over to our party."

But this attitude falls short of understanding this crowd. That is because the so-called Gezi spirit was so appealing and it engulfed the individual to such an extent that some of us thought, "if we leave these young people alone, either something awful will happen to them or we will lost the chance to translate this great potential into action." Others among us tried to isolate and ostracize those with a very different stance from our own, selectively recruiting the remaining ones to our party, organization, or ideological group.

Well, none of that was meant to be. The fluid crowd could not be contained in any vessel as it followed a holistic intelligence, forming an integral mass that acted like a singular system aware of all its parts in contrast interaction, communication, and relation with one another. Every individual had the power to affect, change, and direct the others. As such, could not be influenced or steered from outside.

It is such a revolution that it cannot be ignored or dissipated, despite the government's condescending attempts to brand it as marginal or radical. This revolution continues to set the public agenda. It has nothing to do with classical or conventional revolutions that were reduced to conquest, overthrow, and making heads roll. It is not heads but brains that are rolling now. I think of it as "forcing open the doors of our perception."

What about the CHP?

At this point, readers must understand this but be thinking, "What does the CHP plan to do?" Indeed, this is our real subject. But without sharing my personal take on Gezi Park as the CHP MP from Istanbul's 2nd Precinct, you might not know the perspective that my reports to party headquarters, its president and leadership are based on.

From the first day on, CHP MPs, officials, provincial and district committees, women and youth organizations joined the Gezi Park protesters. I believe that we were well aware of our role in this process because we did not adopt the attitude that most of our critics would expect. We acted as facilitators and refrained from trying to lead the crowd because we could see that society continues to identify the CHP with the state. The CHP is the political party that established the Republic of Turkey, and as such, people hold on to the perception that it continues to control the state, despite the fact that the CHP has never been able to create a full-fledged single-party government since the transition to multi-party politics. As someone who has kept a close eye of various public rallies prior to Gezi Park, I can make the following claim: Due to this perception, protesters are critical of the CHP and distance themselves from it, but they also want to see the CHP around and are assured by its presence, criticizing the CHP even more harshly if it is not present. I never heard anyone say or cry, "Where are the AKP or MHP or BDP MPs?"

To give an example, everyone called on the CHP to cancel its meeting to be held in Kadıköy Square on June 1, 2013, and to join the protesters in Taksim instead. The CHP's decision to cancel the meeting and come to Taksim in solidarity played a key role in forcing the police to abandon Taksim Square to protesters.

To put it briefly, during the Gezi Park protests, the CHP pursued a policy of understanding this spontaneous reaction, standing in solidarity, and acting as a facilitator to help Gezi Park protesters voice their claims and demands.

Our legislative efforts followed the same spirit. The CHP submitted parliamentary motions called for an in-depth investigation into the zoning status

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of Gezi Park, as well as certain acts of violence the state attributed to the protesters. The CHP proposed draft legislation to prevent the police from using excessive force, and to ban the deployment of tear gas. The party also proposed the replacement of the current prohibitive and oppressive Law on Assembly and Protest with a new law which would actually guarantee the people's right to stage rallies and protests. The ruling party, which controls a majority in parliament, would not allow any of these draft proposals to be discussed.

What lessons should the CHP draw from Gezi Park?

Although the Gezi Park protests themselves seem to be abating, it seems clear that Turkey's public agenda will never be the same again. Certain issues, which used to spark passionate political debates, occupying newspapers for days on end before the Gezi Park protests, now arouse much less interest. Today's opposition parties will undoubtedly be affected by this movement; it changed the way social opposition voices its opposition, as wells as its reasons, methods and codes of opposition. There are many lessons to be drawn from Gezi, from environmental policy and urban transformation to the designation of candidates in local elections as well as the determination of elected officers who will manage the city, from transparency in city management to forms of opposition and ways of employing the media.

The CHP must be the political defender of the freedoms demanded at Gezi Park and during the following social protests. In Gezi Park, young people and citizens from diverse ethnic, ideological, class, education, and religious backgrounds put their utopia into practice for twenty days. Despite their differences, people approached each other without stigmatization. They relayed their message that they want a world where no one otherizes another. These opinions were widely shared by other CHP MPs and party officials who supported the Gezi Park protests, and were presented in reports to CHP headquarters.

> Not only the CHP but all political parties whether represented in Parliament or not have caveats. But the more a party sticks to its 'red lines,' the farther it seems to steer away from the citizens' democratic demands.

The majority of the protesters' demands for democratic rights are part of the CHP's commitments listed in its electoral program, as well as in the democratization report and proposal package recently unveiled by the party.

CHP, Gezi Park and the Peace Process

The CHP's recently announced report, which starts "This is our appeal to everyone living in these lands who demands reconciliation, democracy and peace. For a free and democratic Turkey..." coincides with the demands voiced during the Gezi Park protests. But before focusing on that, I'd like to focus on the peace process.

The issue that dominated the public agenda in Turkey before the Gezi protests was the peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question. Although the Gezi Park protests pushed the peace process aside, it is still the most important issue on the agenda. However, it has become increasingly evident that the peace process cannot be fully realized unless Turkey completes its democratization process. Before Gezi Park, the general impression was that the so-called peace process initiated by the government to settle the Kurdish question would entail the democratization of Turkey. Now, however, events have shown that while the government claimed it was undertaking a peace process in one region, it did not refrain from violently cracking down on the legitimate demands of a social opposition movement in another. The government ramped up its pressure of the media and journalists, took recourse not to negotiation but to violence, threats, and stigmatization to end the protests, and formulated conspiracy theories suggesting that it would file yet another large-scale lawsuit to arrest and prosecute dissidents.

From the beginning, the CHP supported a solution to the Kurdish question without recourse to conflict, violence, bloodshed, or terrorism. At the same time, the CHP's president Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and party officers indicated countless times that peace could only have a strong foundation in Turkey when it has guaranteed with democracy and freedoms. The Gezi Park initiated a process for democracy and peace: No one could turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to this, and everyone must try to understand the demands voiced. We must try to avoid the error of thinking that these demands for democracy can somehow be against the peace process.

What does CHP demand? What do Gezi Park protesters demand?

The 10% electoral threshold must be removed! The people must elect their own representatives! These two demands are taken from CHP's democratization program. CHP was always keen on the removal of the extremely anti-democratic 10% electoral threshold, which allows the majority to oppress the minority and violate its rights. This demand was also included in the electoral program. Now, it is urgent for the threshold to be lowered. Impeding this reform will not benefit any political party. In the 2011 elections, CHP took a crucial step in this direction by organizing primary elections in 29 provinces, and also made primary elections part of its charter at the latest party congress.

After the Gezi Park protests lost steam and the social opposition went back to the drawing board saying "yes, now we must do something", one of the first civilian campaigns organized was the "movement for a new electoral law". In its first initiative, this movement demanded the removal of the 10% electoral threshold, followed by a campaign dubbed "I want to elect my MP".

Should the CHP charter be democratized further? I think so. Primary elections must become the dominant mode of determining candidates. That is why, I say "We must go further".

Respect for democracy and human rights

The CHP's Democratization Package explains its demands and commitments focused mainly on democratic rights and freedoms, and will determine the party's agenda in the coming period. The most important demands for rights and freedoms in the total 17 articles in the Package are as follows:

- Democracy and human rights must be respected.
- Freedoms of thought and expression must be guaranteed.
- Freedoms of conscience and religion must be protected. Each belief must enjoy equal opportunity.
- Freedoms of assembly, association and protest must be strengthened.
- Freedom of press must be established.
- All imprisoned university students must be released.
- The Special Courts with special powers should be abrogated, and lawsuits sent to retrial.
- The judiciary should not have recourse to secret witnesses and illegal phone tapping.
- Freedom to the people's MPs.

These are examples of our demands, reactions against the anti-democratic policies of AKP rule. The CHP has been voicing these demands for some time. Those who took to the streets in defense of Gezi Park were also asking for more democracy, freedom, and rights. Citizens tool to the streets to demand freedom for writers, academics, journalists, students, lawyers, and public servants condemned to ling prison sentences as a result of omnibus lawsuits for the simple reason that they thought differently and expressed their thoughts, in short, because they were dissidents. The families of Special Court victims took to the streets. The violations of the freedom of assembly - which began with the banning of the Labor Day rally in Taksim Square on May 1, 2013, and continued with bans on rallies on Istiklal and in front of the courthouse in Çağlayan - increased the pressure on the opposition that was already on the brink of revolt. In the end, dissidents took to the streets to save a couple of trees.

Be clear about democracy and freedoms!

The CHP's Democratization Package also demands resolution on issues that have left deep scars on the public conscience:

- Unsolved political murder cases must be solved.
- The Uludere massacre must be investigated and explained.
- Not a prison but a museum should be constructed in the province of Diyarbakır.

Will that suffice? Of course not. The events of Afyon and Reyhanlı must be brought to light and those responsible for the death of citizens during Gezi protests must be prosecuted; the package predates the Gezi protests. And let us not forget the demand to make Nevruz an official holiday.

Well, would that be enough? Precisely at this point, the CHP says, "No, it is not enough, we have to do more."

The CHP's Democratization Package including many of the demands that were echoed later in the demands of the Gezi movement. However, if the Democratization Package could be rewritten today, it would surely extend the scope of democracy, freedoms and rights in the Package. Various statements by party officials have led me to believe so.

Many Gezi Park protesters I spoke with criticized the CHP, many saying some form of "we are here because you've failed to create a strong opposition." It is clear that the CHP has largely failed to communicate our ideas to the public and to formulate 'clear and resolute' policies that satisfy the demands, wishes, expectations, and dreams of this group.

That is exactly where we need to do more. People expect the CHP to defend democracy, freedom, and rights without caveats. Does the CHP have such caveats? Of course it does. Not only the CHP but all political parties whether represented in Parliament or not do. We all have such caveats, but the more a party sticks to its 'red lines,' the farther it seems to steer away from the citizens' democratic demands. Due to its social democratic nature, the CHP has occasionally steered clear from certain issues since it felt that it could not base policies on religion or ethnicity. However, by doing so, the CHP has also left large blanks in these areas, which now add up to rather strong caveats.

What's next for the CHP?

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has said in several statements that the CHP has drawn the necessary lessons from the Gezi Park protests. The party's vice presidents and other officials made similar statements. As already noted, the CHP has already written reports about the party's next moves. The party's Istanbul MPs, Binnaz Toprak, Ayşe Danışoğlu, and myself wrote one such report. We listed what the Gezi Park protesters were demanding from the CHP and presented the report to the Party Assembly. It has had a warm reception. Some of these demands concern the upcoming local elections while others are more general demands. They include the following:

- The CHP's political discourse must be positive. Instead of constantly criticizing the government, the CHP must put forward its vision for Turkey. The CHP must avoid aggressive language, shouting and swearing, and any language that pushes people to hopelessness, trepidation and anxiety and/or excludes or otherizes people.
- Avoid abstract concepts and be clear about defending democracy and freedoms; the electorate does not identify with abstractions.
- During the Gezi Park protests, very different ideological and ethnic groups came together to create a model of peace unimaginable a short time ago. While formulating its policies on peace, the CHP should take heed of this spirit.
- No one should be deprived of their right to work because of their clothing. The crowds of people who stood shoulder to shoulder in the Gezi Park protests will not abandon each other in work life.
- The CHP should defend the lifestyle and rights of secular-minded citizens more vehemently against the religious conservatism imposed by the government.
- The CHP's concrete steps for democracy and freedoms are not widely known by society at large. To solve this problem, communicate your ideas in a more professional way.

The Gezi Park Resistance and the Peace Process

On May 31st as crowds of protesters were being tear-gassed by riot police on every single street leading to Istanbul's Gezi Park, I was in Diyarbakır at the Middle East Women's Conference organized by the Democratic and Free Kurdish Women's Movement. The majority of our friends in Istanbul were participating in the rallies. It was evident that these protests were radically different from the almost weekly protests on various issues that we had been participating in for the last few years. I was anxious. Having arrived in Diyarbakır in the morning, I impatient as never before to return to Istanbul. My only hope was that during my two hours on the airplane, the police wouldn't shoot anyone in the head with a gas canister or a rubber bullet, and that no one would get arrested. On the other hand, I also hoped that the crowds would not abandon Taksim Square and that there would be room for me, too, among them, so that I could finally feel the joy of standing together in large numbers without fear. A tweet I read while boarding the airplane helped soothe the anxiety that had taken hold of me since the morning: "Cops, you better run now: here come the Kurds, the true masters of protesting."

The protesters managed to enter Taksim Square in the afternoon of the following day. Throughout that entire day, almost everyone in the huge crowd on Istiklal - including me - was watching their mobile phones. Çarşı, the fan group of the Beşiktaş football team, was struggling fiercely against the police. On Istiklal, various political groups resisted the police forces with all their might. The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) had cancelled the meeting it had called for that day in Kadıköy, and their supporters were marching en masse towards Taksim waving Turkish flags instead. That was when we heard the news that the first protesters had made it into Taksim Square. It was a group of people from Tarlabaşı, a neighborhood with a large Kurdish population. However, when the rest of us managed to enter the square, the countless Turkish flags, national anthems and the crowd's various pro-Atatürk chants had already alienated the Kurds, who began to abandon the Square and go back home. The month that followed was exhausting for us, that those with not an organizational but instead organic, ideological and emotional affinity with the Kurdish movement. Everyday, we reconstructed the Kurdish-Turkish fraternity forged in the barricades and reinforced ties between the Gezi resistance and the peace process launched in January. In this article, I would like to discuss this connection.

A peace process, no matter where in the world, consists of two pillars: The redistribution of sovereignty to include all those previously excluded, and the socialization of peace. Despite the government's claims to the contrary, the Gezi Park resistance has made a great contribution to the socialization of peace in Turkey. After a very long period when such a thing was not possible, this resistance movement allowed for the fraternization of Turks and Kurds. Furthermore, the relationship between the peoples of Turkey and the Kurd's struggle went beyond a simple bond of 'empathy' to create a common ground for their common struggle in terms of demands, form, and content.

The role of the Kurdish Liberation Movement in Gezi protests

The reasons underlying the popular uprising centered around the Gezi resistance has been discussed by many social scientists. Two influential approaches remain after we filter out the pro-government pundits who brand the resistance an international conspiracy or a putschist plot.

The first views the uprising as a reaction against the increasing attempts of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and in particular Prime Minister Erdoğan to intervene in people's private lives and lifestyles. According to this theory, the resistance can be reduced to a revolt for dignity. Through their resistance, the populace voices its disapproval of the Prime Minister who utterly disregards those who are different than he, and demands the state withdraw to the limits of its legitimate authority. Leftist intellectuals criticize this first approach, which we may label as liberal, and hold in their second approach that the Gezi resistance cannot be separated from anti-capitalist struggles taking place around the world. Across the globe, and especially in Greece, Spain, Brazil, and the Arab countries, there has been a massive reaction against the intensification of labor-force exploitation and the commodification of life's every sphere. Although Turkey has at present no economic crisis, neoliberalism threatens both urban life and nature, destroying ethical values that organize daily life and pushing people into isolation. In their defense of Gezi Park and its trees against development plans, the people protesting also reject commodification and marketization.

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Which approach portrays a more accurate picture is not important for our discussion. What is really interesting is that both arguments are based on a certain exclusion, a certain systematic oblivion. In its discourse on dignity, lifestyle, and living space, the liberal approach underscores the youth, non-violence and new-found agency of the Gezi resistance activists. They seem to have forgotten that in October, just seven months before said events, Kurds had rallied on Istanbul's streets for the Kurdish prisoners on hunger strike in much the same fashion as the Gezi protesters. They, too, had faced police forces employing similar tactics. Both approaches disregard Kurdish youth who have danced traditional dances in front of riot control vehicles (TOMA), egged the police on with proclamations like "Police forces, you are surrounded. Surrender now!" and stood strong against pressurized water cannons. Again, many of the protesters during the hunger strikes were young women, mirrored by the huge female participation in the Gezi resistance. Such an oblivion in both approaches minimizes or limits the so-called universal criticism that the Gezi revolt directed at the state, and makes the universal agency created by Gezi appear transient and tame.

Those who emphasize the anti-capitalistic nature of the Gezi resistance tend to ignore, or place within brackets, the Kurdish people's movement since 2006, even as they compare this popular revolt with similar ones around the world. They seem to reduce the Kurdish movement, with its multiple demands and plurality, to its national dimension, almost excluding it from the global arena of popular movements. The 2006 "serhildan," or revolt, in Diyarbakır, was an uprising against both the state and the upper classes associated with the upscale *Ofis* neighborhood. Kurdish youth, who are frequently reduced to being nothing more than "stone-throwing kids" act not just with ethnic but also with class-based rage. It is impossible to disassociate the Gezi Revolt from the Kurdish movement and to single it out in the context of Turkey without conscious or unconscious oblivion. That in turn would limit the Kurdish movement to a single dimension - that of nationalism - reducing it to a known entity and obscuring its contributions that go way beyond the nationalist dimension.

Such oblivion was further reinforced by the absence of Kurds in the Gezi protests. The Kurdish political movement's first reflex was to label the Gezi resistance nationalistic. Later, because of the ongoing peace negotiations with the government, the Kurdish political movement refused to channel their forces into the Gezi resistance movement or to devise strategies for it, further obscuring ties between the Kurdish movement and the Gezi resistance. During the resistance, the Kurds defined themselves as a movement for national sovereignty, and when they returned to Taksim Square under the banner of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), they expressed themselves with national symbols like flags and anthems. This is how they 'exposed' the Gezi protesters to their presence by accepting being just one national color in a multitude of political movements. The Kurdish movement did not play an effective role in establishing the bonds between the Gezi resistance and the peace process, and it failed to set a more universal example. However, both life and the protest movement went way beyond the intentions of social science and Kurdish political forces to pave the way for the establishment of those bonds.

The peace process

The first lesson to draw from the Gezi resistance is that such a popular uprising must go hand-in-hand with the peace process. That is, from the very beginning, the resistance and the peace process were developing in tandem inside an unbreakable organic bond. After January 2013, the Kurdish peace process entered a new phase. After the breakdown of the 2009 Oslo peace talks between the Kurdish Workers' Party's (PKK) senior leaders and the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT), the 30 year-old low-intensity conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK escalated once again. In Roboski in December, 2011, 34 young men and children smuggling goods into Turkey were detected and killed by unmanned drones belonging to Turkey's military. When no military or political authority was held accountable for the massacre, tensions only increased more. The Kurds lost faith in the Turkish citizenry, too, when the Turks did not register an appropriate reaction of outrage to these deaths. After the summer of 2012 when both sides suffered a heavy death toll, nearly 10,000 Kurdish political prisoners went on hunger strike starting in October and November to press the government to restart peace talks. Popular uprisings broke out across Turkey and Kurdistan; the government responded with police violence and tear gas.

> Up until the Gezi resistance, the Kurds' demands for democratic autonomy were perceived largely as a part of their hidden agenda whose end game was independence and separation. After the outbreak of Gezi, it became obvious that such demands were not that movement's choice but an urgent demand, and not just for Kurdistan, but for all of Turkey.

After a message was released from the PKK leader Abdullag Öcalan, who is imprisoned in solitary confinement on the island of Imralı, denied access even to his lawyers for the past two years, the hunger strike was called off. In January, peace talks began between MIT and Öcalan on Imralı. Despite the assassination of three Kurdish politicians in Paris in January, talks continued. BDP MPs Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder read Öcalan's spring message at the Kurdish spring resistance festival of Newroz in Diyarbakır; around 2 million people gathered for the occasion. In his message, Öcalan urged guerilla fighters to lay down

their weapons and to retreat to camps in the Kandil Mountains of Iraq's Kurdish Federal Region. He also heralded the beginning of an unarmed struggle for the oppressed masses. From that spring day until the beginning of the Gezi resistance, peace became a reality for everyone after thirty long years of war.

It is not wrong to say that Prime Minister Erdoğan and his entourage were the first ones to establish a connection between the peace process and the Gezi Park protests. According to them, protesters and their leaders wanted to damage or halt the government's plans for peace. Indeed, the participation of nationalist circles in Gezi protests in Ankara and Izmir led the BDP to make similar declarations. During the first days of the Gezi uprisings, BDP co-president Selahattin Demirtaş declared that they would not rally side by side with nationalists. Many BDP members expressed their concerns about protesters calling for Erdoğan

> The resistance showed without a doubt that the peace process in an urgent need for all of Turkey, and that potential beneficiaries of the process include not only the Kurdish people but all the peoples of Turkey as stronger civilian rule would put all kinds of demands for democracy on the agenda.

to resign. Their priority was the continuation of the peace process, and chanting such slogans - whatever the chanters' true intentions - could jeopardize the peace talks.

But the Gezi resistance and the peace process are closely connected in more ways than one. For one, if war and conflict had been raging in Kurdistan, such a popular uprising could not have taken place. But, after war and death ceased to be the top item of Turkey's agenda and the military tensions deescalated to a degree, the Gezi protests where different social sectors came together as a truly civilian protest in the political arena became possible. For people in Turkey, accustomed to living with anxiety, animosity, suspicion, discrimination, and militarism, the peace process created an environment conducive to 'another' discourse, sensitivity, or concern. Daily life, which had been completely colonized and terrorized by war and conflict, was opened to new agendas. Maybe this is precisely why the idea of peace gained traction among all the sectors of society that participated or showed interest in Gezi, something that no attempt at ideological persuasion could have achieved.

The majority of Gezi participants or supporters were not part of the Justice and Development Party (AKP.) For some protesters, the peace process was simply a new chapter in the AKP's betrayal of Turkey. Led by the main opposition party, the CHP, these groups had been critical of and stayed distant from the peace process from the start. But the Gezi protests showed them that engaging in politics, creating a discourse and taking action that could go beyond deep-rooted dualities and political parties' stagnant vote shares could only be possible as long as peace prevailed. Although opinions of the content and form of the peace talks and the peace process differs according to one's political affiliation, the majority of people in Turkey have understood that peace is in their interest. In short, the Gezi protests sided with peace in an objective sense.

The Kurds' concerns that the Gezi protests could damage the peace process did not only stem from suspicions about protesters' intentions. Since he had supported the Gezi uprising, the state blocked Sırrı Süreyya Önder, the BDP's Istanbul MP, from going to Imralı to meet with Abdullah Öcalan. This in turn fueled concerns that the AKP could pit the Gezi resistance against the peace process. The fear was the possibility that the state could refuel armed conflict with the Kurds to distract attention from Gezi, and to punish the Kurds for their participation in the protests. Such worries were partially assuaged with the swift reaction of the AKP when soldiers opened fire on Kurdish villagers protesting a military post in the district killing a young man and drawing the ire of Kurdish people and politicians. Immediately after the news of the Medeni Yıldırım's death, AKP members initiated the pro-peace hashtags #dirençözüm and # halklarkardeştirayırankalleştir which trended worldwide. One of the most important results of the Gezi resistance was that everyone- with the exception of those who benefit from war and of the ultra-nationalists- whether they personally participated in the protests or not, left simple empathy behind to actually side with the peace process in order to defend their own voice, interests, and actions.

Gezi and the peace process: common demands

In subsequent days of the Gezi resistance, the BDP co-president Selahattin Demirtaş and Istanbul MPs Sabahat Tuncel and Sırrı Süreyya Önder made more detailed statements about the relationship between Gezi and the peace process. In a conference on the issue in July, I attempted to analyze this relationship with the following points:

First of all, the issue of police violence and state terror. In both the Gezi resistance and the peace process, the main demand was for the state to stop using repressive and illegal methods against the opposition. A second and closely related demand was the investigation, trial, compensation and reparation of crimes committed by state authorities in the past. For example, the current governor of Istanbul, Hüseyin Avni Mutlu, served as district governor in the town of Silopi and deputy governor of Şırnak in the 1990s when scores of dissidents disappeared. During Mutlu's post as governor of Diyarbakır, Ceylan Önkol, a young girl, was killed by mortar fire from a military post. All charges against the suspects were dropped. In similar fashion, the state has been unwilling as of yet to investigate suspects in the murder of protesters during the Gezi revolt and bring them to court.

Another convergence point for Gezi and

the peace process is a common emphasis on decentralization and on participative, direct democracy. Up until the Gezi resistance, the Kurds' demands for democratic autonomy were perceived largely as a part of their hidden agenda whose end game was independence and separation. After the outbreak of Gezi, it became obvious that such demands were not that movement's choice but an urgent demand, and not just for Kurdistan, but for all of Turkey. Although Kurdish people form the majority of certain provinces, centralization and electoralism keep them from being the stewards of their own decisions. Now, many Istanbulites see the Kurds' situation not as an occasion for empathy but as a fact visible in their own everyday lives.

Finally, the fact that women were in a majority in the Gezi resistance further strengthened its bonds with the peace process. The Kurdish Liberation Movement defines itself as an ecologist women's movement that holds that today's main conflicts are gender and ecology. This is another aspect where Gezi and the peace process overlap.

The fellowship of Gezi

In terms of socializing peace, Gezi's biggest contribution is not in common interests or demands. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the resistance was the establishment of a pluralistic yet common identity; in other words, the creation of fraternity. In the days when the state withdrew from Gezi Park and Taksim Square, Kurds and Turks came together under their different banners. This togetherness included occasional scuffles and harassment, but also hugging and dancing. In the absence of the state, individuals come look at each other and communicate directly, shattering previous assumptions about the state's ideological and material authority. After thirty years of separation, the two peoples put aside their left-wing intermediaries to see the common roots of each other's oppression. They transformed each other.

From the very first days of the Gezi protests, the Kurds were airing their disappointments. Why hadn't the Turks taken to the streets before, since they were so obviously capable of doing so? At Gezi, the Turks asserted their rights and mourned for those killed by the police. But why hadn't they defended the Kurds' rights and mourned for their dead? The Turks knew how to record their resistance and make an epic narrative out of it. So why hadn't they portrayed of an entire nation of guerilla fighters, mothers, children, women, and politicians and their thirty years of struggles as terrorists instead of heroes? The Turks saw that the media was telling lies about their protests. So why had they believed its lies about the Kurds? These questions were not answered in their entirety. But when Turkish people took to the streets in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Eskişehir, and Antakya chanting with the Kurds in protest against the death of Medeni Yıldırım, who died when bullets were fired by police from a military post in Lice, it was a first glimpse of hope that a common identity could be created against the state. Today, the Kurdish question is being discussed in many public forums across Turkey. Much like the informal truth commissions, these forums shed light on the Kurds' suffering through state terror and on the events of the past.

Conclusion

The Gezi resistance made significant contributions to the socialization of peace is Turkey. The resistance showed without a doubt that the peace process is an urgent need for all of Turkey, and that potential beneficiaries of the process include not only the Kurdish people but all the peoples of Turkey as stronger civilian rule would put all kinds of demands for democracy on the agenda. During the Gezi resistance, demands of the Kurds and other peoples of Turkey blended as it became apparent that the Kurds' demands and their struggled for freedom and peace were not requests for special privilege or calls for separation; in fact, their demands are for the rights of all people to live a free and honorable life. Many ideas, sentiments, and truths which had been avoided or ignored due to certain 'sensitivities' came flooding into the public sphere.

The AKP has been designing the peace process as its own imperialistic project. The resulting political peace between the state and the Kurds will allow Turkey to establish itself as a regional superpower and a world player that is open to invest economically in Kurdistan and plunder its natural riches, securing Turkey's present Ottomanist cultural aspirations. But the Gezi resistance pointed to a different kind of peace, a peace of emancipation which is urgently needed by all Turkey's peoples, a peace that will uphold the universal struggle of all the oppressed.

Marching like Zapatistas

At the Democracy and Peace Conference held on May 25-26 in Ankara, you responded to criticisms about your relationship with the ruling AKP: "We should stop thinking as if AKP will remain in power forever. At some point, the AKP will not be in charge of the government; what we need to do is to join forces to change the system." The Gezi Park resistance erupted right after the conference. What is your take on the Gezi uprising in this regard?

Sebahat Tuncel: It is problematic to act as if AKP will remain in power forever, and to reduce left wing or socialist movements to simple opposition, sheer antagonism. If we really want to build a democratic, free and ecological society where women are liberated - the demands that fueled the Gezi resistance - we need to gear up our organized resistance and play an active role. I had not foreseen such a far-reaching social revolt. However, as a person active in grassroots organization, I had observed that the people were becoming increasingly frustrated with the repressive and authoritarian regime. Underneath the transformation process in Middle East, too, there lies a reaction against repressive, authoritarian, pro-nation-state policies that disregard the views and inputs of the populace and imposes its own ideological perspective. There were harbingers of such an uprising in Turkey. Many similar revolts had already taken place in Kurdistan; however, such a massive and long-running people's movement is the first of its kind in Western Turkey.

What kind of effect will the Gezi uprising have on the near future?

I believe that it is probable that more similar movements will arise in the coming years since the government has not taken any steps to soothe the people's anger or to meet their demands for justice and freedom. As long as such demands are not met, the resistance could well turn into a well-organized people's movement. I think that one weakness of the Gezi revolt is the lack of an avant-garde, a pioneer. Everyone took part: Women, youth, soccer fans, Alevis, Kurds... They all brought their own revolt and there appeared to be no united avant-garde. As such, all these groups viewed the resistance from their own perspective. All struggled to reinforce their own viewpoint and channel the nascent people's movement to their own favor. No force capable of leading such a powerful people's movement arose.

The lack of an avant-garde, which you qualify as a weakness, is seen by some as an opportunity. Wouldn't you say that this played a key role in allowing many different groups to join forces in Gezi Park?

Yes, there is that aspect. The resistance completely upended Turkey's traditional style of politics. It gave the clear message to the government, opposition and all political parties inside or outside Parliament that the classical style of politics was over. The people said, "since you ignore me, I'm opting out." This is a critical step forward in terms of democratization. The local forums that were organized after Gezi Park was cleared by the police especially open up great opportunities towards participative democracy. Secondly, the idea that the military coup of September 12th, 1980 had crushed us like a cylinder, rendering the youth apolitical and co-opting them inside the system was shattered. The youth is no longer a sector of society that can be manipulated into approving the government's policies. Now, they have stood up and said "No!" and protest.

During the Gezi protests, a friend of ours said, "September 12th is truly over now."

That is a sharp observation. The repressive and centralist ideology of the September 12th coup has indeed been demolished. Women participated en masse in the Gezi uprising and rejected the government's sexist perspective towards the female body. They voiced their powerful objection to the government's systematic patriarchal attempts to decide everything from how many children a woman should have to what kind of a social role she is meant to fulfill. People in Western Turkey started asking themselves: "Did the government also mislead us about what was happening in Kurdistan? Were our opinions wrong?" Years of official ideological bombardment had rendered the people more and more nationalistic, making them play the ostrich about the Kurdish question. Now, suddenly they started questioning themselves. The Gezi resistance has been a great step forward, paving the way to the appearance of a new avant-garde.

The real objective of "The committees of wise men" organized by the government in the context of the Kurdish question seemed to be persuading various social groups to embrace the "peace process." However, as you have just indicated, the encounters in Gezi Park was rather instructive for those who had previously opposed the settlement of the Kurdish question. Could we say that the Gezi resistance has facilitated the peace process in this regard?

Sebahat Tuncel

Born in Malatya, in 1975 Tuncel studied Cartography and Land Surveying in Mersin University. A founding member of the Democratic Society Party (DTP), she has been an MP of İstanbul since 2011.

The initiation of the negotiation process facilitated the birth of the Gezi resistance. The fact that this revolt did not break out earlier can also be understood in this context, since people are not reacting against policies that are new, far from it: The AKP has been in power for 12 years. The socialization of peace is a crucial issue. The peace process should proceed not as a negotiation between the state and PKK, but rather between the state and all the peoples of Turkey. This negotiation process will not only resolve the Kurdish question, but also democratize Turkey. The Gezi revolt showed what was required to end anti-democratic politics: Justice, freedom, democracy, requirements for women's liberation, the recognition of LGBT individuals' identities, recognition of the Kurdish liberation struggle, freedom for other peoples… Freedom is the issue that stands out, and is also a hot topic of social debate. The negotiation process cannot be separated from the Gezi resistance. Some tried to channel the Gezi revolt as they drew to an initial close, but failed. Many people who took to the streets in defense of Gezi Park were heavily influenced by the bombardment of nationalist and militarist ideology, and used to turn a blind eye to what was actually happening. Those people came across Kurds perhaps for the first time in their lives. They stood shoulder to shoulder in the barricades. Naturally, this did not go smoothly. We saw that people who had received that ideological bombardment were utterly ignorant about the rights and freedom demanded by Kurds. They had taken as granted the state's claim that Kurds are separatist, ignorant, feudal, backward, etc. It's not so easy to transform this mindset. Gezi opened a window of opportunity in this regard. Of course I can't say that this issue is solved for good, but at least people could observe the media's stance, the yawning gap between what actually happens during the day and what is broadcast in the evening news; they started to think "Maybe some of what I watched up until today was not real either." We saw this clearly when Medeni Yıldırım (an 18-year old Kurdish man) was killed. It was very meaningful that Istanbul was the first to react, as this hinted that the nationalist, racist and chauvinist propaganda was starting to lose its grip on the people. But naturally it wouldn't be right to say that Turkey has changed for good, that the new atmosphere is completely different. To reach that goal, organization is a must. To translate the popular revolt of Gezi Park into a significant gain, one must interpret this reaction accurately, lead the process correctly, create bonds with the groups at the forefront, and find the right organization model.

Although the concepts of the HDK (Peoples' Democratic Congress) overlap with the Gezi spirit, the HDK was criticized for not participating in the uprising, especially in the first few days. Does HDK criticize itself in this regard?

Indeed, the HDK concept corresponds exactly to the message of the Gezi resistance. In the forums that mushroomed after the Gezi resistance, we witnessed a culture of democracy being built. The HDK was built on precisely this concept. Unfortunately, we were not successful in positioning ourselves. We should be self critical in this respect. It turns out that the HDK concept was way ahead of our position. If we had preserved the enthusiasm of the first days, the HDK could have played a much more organized and effective role in Gezi.

All components of HDK participated in the Gezi resistance from the very first day, but it was not until five or six days later that HDK started to act in unity. Here the main self-criticism should be as follows: Everyone defined Gezi from their own standpoint. This is closely related to not being able to foresee which way the resistance could evolve. The HDK might have passed into action with some delay, but the resistance itself could not be controlled by an organized force or a political party. Besides, there were certain groups with whom we would never stand shoulder to shoulder under normal circumstances. Normally, we would join forces only with those struggling for democracy, freedom, women's liberation and an ecological society. We did not strive to lead the entire movement; it would not be realistic. If the HDK can manage to make an accurate assessment of this process, and transform itself into an organization that responds to the concerns and demands of the people, it shall succeed. We have already seen this across the Middle East: Those who are organized win the day.

The BDP's (Peace and Democracy Party) Co-Chairman Selahattin Demirtaş' statement, "We support the Gezi resistance, however, we cannot join forces with racist, nationalist, fascist groups," was hotly debated. In places like Diyarbakır and Hakkâri, many commentators overtly suggested that the Gezi resistance risked aborting the negotiation process. Do you think that such a risk really existed?

In the early days of Gezi there was such a concern. It was only natural for people watching Gezi unfold from Kurdistan to hope that the protests did not interfere with this first ever official peace negotiation. This peace talks, initiated after thirty years of Kurds struggling for democracy and freedom, were being closely watched by the global public. Kurds have paid a very heavy price and lost many lives to get to this point, and now they want peace. Although they do not trust the government, Kurds have embraced the process since it was initiated by Abdullah Öcalan. The Kurds' first reaction to the Gezi resistance was "What is this all about?" I don't think that the BDP's stance was wrong. We participated in the resistance in the Western provinces. In Antalya, İzmir and Ankara though, the protests had a different hue, with nationalist social groups taking to the streets en masse. Some of our party bureaus were attacked, and so our supporters lost their enthusiasm to join the protests. This was not the case in Istanbul. Öcalan posters were around for ten or fifteen days. In numerous provinces like Diyarbakır, Hakkâri and Şırnak, people organized events in support of Gezi. We stated clearly that the BDP was an active participant of the resistance. Add to that the fact that our very own MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder was in the forefront of the resistance. After he was attacked,

we were the first political party to call the public to Gezi Park. Demirtaş's statement that BDP cannot stand hand in hand with nationalist sectors who want to channel the resistance towards their own goals was given in answer to a question. We are a part of this resistance, however, we cannot join forces with nationalists, or with the supporters of Ergenekon. It seems notable that whenever there is a debate about social opposition, the Kurdish movement is always the first to be criticized. This suggests that people expect something from that movement. As the party which most enthusiastically upholds the demand for democracy, BDP shall position itself after due consideration of these criticisms. The opinions that we aired in Parliament over the last two terms and the policies written in our charter were translated into practice at Gezi Park. That's what is important.

> The People's Democratic Congress (HDK) concept corresponds exactly to the message of the Gezi resistance. In the forums that mushroomed after the Gezi resistance, we witnessed a culture of democracy being built. The HDK was built on precisely this concept. Unfortunately, we were not successful in positioning ourselves. We should be self critical in this respect.

Would it be accurate to say that since previous peace negotiations in recent history were all disrupted by unclear events, Kurds were cautious against Gezi despite the call from the BDP?
The war in Kurdistan inflicted immense damage. People living in Western Turkey are still unaware of what the Kurds have been through. They don't know that peace is tantamount to life in the eyes of Kurds. These two communities do not attribute the same significance to peace. Of course Kurds don't want this opportunity to be squandered. In the most critical periods when we all thought that peace was just around the corner, there was another provocation that guttered the process. Each time, the result was more pain and more lives lost. Kurds have experienced this over and over again, and it is inscribed in their memory. So their precaution about the Gezi protests is quite understandable. Plus, there is a large group of protesters waving Turkish flags and chanting slogans like, "We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal." These groups are particularly visible in the mainstream media. For Kurds, such imagery is reminiscent of the 1990s and torture. As such, the Gezi resistance was traumatic for Kurds. Compared to Gezi, the repression we have faced over the last 30 years has been much worse, but everyone turned a deaf ear.
Indeed, Kurds have no problems with the flag of Turkey or values; however, the state used these as a pretext to inflict torture, repression, violence, and terror on Kurds. All this is still very fresh in people's memory. Nevertheless, thanks to Gezi, I believe that the significance of the flag as an image has started to change in young people's minds. After the army opened fire on people protesting the construction of a military outpost in the Kurdish-populated district of Lice, many people waving Turkish flags joined the marches organized in protest. This shows that change is in the air. A lot has changed with Gezi. There have been many new developments in artistic, political terms. Icons are being changed. There is a strong demand for democracy and harsh criticisms against the military state and police state. The symbols and images used by Kurds drew ire in the first days, but then people got used to them. There was change on both sides, as Kurds got more accustomed to Turkey's flag, and Turks felt more comfortable with the images, colors and posters used by Kurds.
Abdullah Öcalan **frequently draws attention to the people's movements across the Middle East in talks with his attorneys. In a statement issued in March 2003, he said that "Middle Eastern dictatorships will crumble to be replaced by either a spring of the peoples or puppet regimes controlled by the USA." If you were to adapt this observation to today's Turkey, where do you think we are headed: Towards a people's spring or a new authoritarian regime?**
Abdullah Öcalan proposes a new system: Democratic modernity against capitalist modernity. He observes that the world is going through a general crisis and chaos, and suggests that in its aftermath, either the hegemons will reorganize their rule or that the oppressed, laboring masses will join forces and turn this process to their benefit, initiating a spring of the peoples. We see that this is quite accurate for the Kurdish case. Neighboring Rojava (in Northern Syria) is a case in point. There is a revolution underway in Rojava, and the people are defending their home. Before that, we had the example of Iraq. If the Iraqi Kurds had not been an organized force when the USA intervened in Iraq, there would be no regional Kurdish government today. I believe that the same is valid for Turkey. If the oppressed, the laborers, the poor in Turkey manage to get organized, they can create a powerful people' spring.
Öcalan directs three criticisms at capitalist modernity and suggests alternative systems. First, he criticizes industrialism, a result of excessive profit drive. Industrialism leads to the pillage of the ecological system and he proposes an ecological society in response. Second, the nation-state concept. The nation-state underpins nationalism and triggers wars and conflicts. As an alternative, Öcalan proposes the democratic and autonomous society model. His third objection is to neoliberalism. Öcalan's alternative is the participative economy. In Turkey, there are serious problems in all three of these dimensions. It is evident that the nation-state concept does not respond to the current needs of the peoples of Turkey. Especially Kurds, but also Arab, Azeri, Armenian, and Laz people want to live in a country they can truly call "home," where their rights and freedoms are assured under a fully democratic system. The hardcore pro-nation-state stance stands

out as the main cause of crisis and chaos in Turkey. The demand for an ecological society constitutes the essence of the Gezi resistance. Those "handful of trees" are a political issue. People are calling out, "stop pillaging nature!" All across Turkey, people are standing up against hydroelectric power plants and dams, demanding an ecological society. It is also evident where neoliberal policies have brought Turkey and its population. I believe that the people will start to question neoliberalism in the near future. All these issues point towards the socialist society we all long for. I think there are opportunities in this regard in Turkey and the Middle East. We need to organize to struggle against the capitalist modernity that enslaves us with fresh shackles every day. At the moment, capitalist modernity is more organized than we are. As such, we are the simple operators of its grand machine. But it is up to us to say no and bring the machine to a grinding halt.

Is there progress in the peace process?

This is a tough question. Our surveys indicate that the people do not have much faith in it. Both sides must have faith if the process is going to yield results. Öcalan's manifesto made public during the Newroz festival in Amed (Diyarbakır) is very crucial. Just like the PKK's 1984 declaration of armed struggle had an immense impact on Kurdish politics, Kurdish people and even the Middle East, I believe that the Amed Newroz of 2013 will likewise have a significant impact. There, the announcement was clear that from now on the fight would be continued through democratic politics and intellectual struggles. For this to materialize, the state would take certain steps to inspire hope among the Kurds. The Kurdish side, namely the PKK, the KCK, Öcalan, the BDP, Kurdish women's and youth movements have taken ambitious steps. The PKK started pulling its military forces out of Turkey across the border. The Kurdish movement is keen on positioning itself according to the democratic peace process; but in every phase of the three-phase roadmap, the state must also take measures to inspire hope to convince the Kurds with concrete action. Nevertheless, we have yet to see any action that would convince public opinion in general in Turkey, let alone the Kurds. Not a single step has been taken on the Law on the Fight Against Terror, the imprisonment of KCK members, the Law on Political Parties, the electoral threshold, prisoners with health problems -none of which ought to be used as trump cards during the talks.

Some expect the state to take action in autumn…

In our talks with state officials, they suggested that a package of democratization is in the pipeline. However, progress cannot be made if the state does not take concrete action that will build trust. But far from taking such positive action in the domestic arena, the state gives its support to the El Nusra Front as it launches massacres against the Kurds of Rojava, thus further eroding the people's trust. In short, not much progress is being made. However, if the government wants the peace process to move forward -and Turkey has no other choice any longer- if the government wants to avoid the fate of other governments in the Middle East, it must take concrete action towards the democratic and peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question. I believe that the state is cognizant of this fact, but has not stopped thinking, "How can we break the Kurds' will, how can we weaken this movement?"

In recent times, the Kurdish movement has started to voice demands for the improvement of Öcalan's sanitary conditions in prison. These demands also include an indirect call for Öcalan to be liberated. It is hinted that this might materialize in the third phase. How possible is this? How does Öcalan's imprisonment affect the Kurdish movement?

> We are talking about pulling armed groups over Turkey's border, but these people need to be integrated into democratic politics. The guerrilla forces marching towards the Qandil mountains should come back to Turkey and join democratic politics – just like the Zapatistas once did.

Öcalan's health problems are a political issue. His health is critical for the healthy progress of the peace process. Öcalan is the leader of the Kurdish people. If a people's leader is not free, then neither is that people. As such, the Kurdish question cannot be resolved unless Öcalan is set free. If Turkey wants to make a new contract with the Kurdish people, if this issue is to be settled, if a democratic republic is to be established, if the Kurds will come to enjoy self-rule, then it is necessary for Öcalan to be free.

There is yet another aspect of this matter. We are talking about pulling armed groups over Turkey's border, but these people need to be integrated into democratic politics. The guerrilla forces marching towards the Qandil mountains should come back to Turkey and join democratic politics – just like the Zapatistas once did. The Kurds' problems and other peoples can be solved with a democratic constitution even under Turkey's system. In this regard, the policies of the CHP (Republican People's Party) are as unhelpful as the government's unwillingness. A social democratic party is setting up roadblocks to the peace process. In particular, the CHP presents the Kurds' demands for the liberation of Öcalan to the general public in a falsified manner. But despite everything, I believe that the period ahead will be bright, because Turkey and Kurds have no option other than peace. I think that an autonomous Kurdistan and other autonomous regions will create a new Turkey, which will benefit everyone.

Objective versus process: Dichotomy in Turkey's EU membership bid

Enlargement policy, one of the European Union's (EU) key foreign policy instruments, directs candidate countries towards membership with conditionality and allows new countries to join the EU. After twelve Eastern European countries joined the EU, however, the enlargement policy dropped off the top of the EU agenda. Some suggested that following the lessons taken from eastern enlargement, the EU started to suffer from enlargement fatigue and it saw its capacity to absorb new members dwindle. The economic crisis that sent shock waves throughout the world pushed some EU member states to the brink of bankruptcy, and its dire social and political consequences had a negative impact on the debates about deepening of European integration and the future of the EU.

Turkey, too, has been affected by this unfavorable atmosphere, especially since the Cyprus question ground its negotiations with the EU to a halt and as some member states oppose its membership. The arguments "membership itself is not important, it is the negotiation process what counts" and "only after the negotiation process is completed can there be a final decision on membership" work well pro the cases of those for and contra Turkey's membership. Those in favour of Turkey's membership try to keep the negotiations going, while those against it emphasize the open-ended nature of negotiations.

Destined to join the EU?

For opponents to Turkey's membership, the key issue before negotiations began was the formulation of the ultimate objective of the talks within the Negotiating Framework. Prominent political figures such as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, as well as the European People's Party, the body consisting of Europe's Christian Democratic parties, and the government of Austria all argued that Turkey should be granted the status of privileged partnership, not full membership. Countries that supported Turkey's acceptance and the EU Commission, however, held that the ultimate objective must be membership. This was before ferocious opponents of Turkey's bid, Merkel and Sarkozy, for example, had come to power, and Austria voiced the strongest objections to Turkey's membership. Austria insisted that the Negotiating Framework had to clearly state the possibility that the talks might not end in membership.

The final version of the Negotiating Framework shows that it was meant to appease all sides. Although it clearly states that the shared objective of the negotiations is membership, the document also emphasizes that the process is open-ended, and that the result cannot be guaranteed beforehand. Thus the shadow on the EU's commitment to Turkey's eventual membership was cast. This weakening of the EU's commitment is all too apparent when we compare the provisions of this document which lays down the principles that will govern Turkey's membership with the 1999 Helsinki Presidency Conclusions calling Turkey a "candidate State destined to join the Union." The Negotiating Framework, approved when Turkey's potential membership had been opened to discussion, was worded to ensure that the membership process continued smoothly, without large setbacks.

EU's reluctant enlargement process

To date, no candidate state that entered negotiations has failed to become a member of the EU, excepting only those countries that ended the process themselves or that refused EU membership in a public referendum. This does not mean, however, that candidate status or the opening of talks will lead certainly to membership. The history of the EU's enlargement is rife with setbacks to prospective members during the membership process, debates on widening vs. deepening, the necessity of reforming EU institutions to accommodate new member states, the impact of regional and global dynamics on enlargement policy, debates on the identity and future of the EU, and the progression of candidate states towards membership despite all these debates.

Contrary to popular belief, the EU is reluctant to expand, and not just in the case of Turkey's potential membership. Of course, the ultimate objective of enlargement policy is membership: the negotiation process Europeanise the prospective member according to EU laws and norms and prepares it to join the Union. Just as membership without the negotiation process is unthinkable, so, too, a negotiation process without the objective of membership would lose its significance and influence. An analysis of candidate countries with those countries participating in the European Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership without prospects for membership shows that the prospect of eventual membership adds a lot of weight to the EU's powers to transform a country, and to the impact of conditionality.

Erhan İçener

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To be or not to be a member

Proponents of the negotiations ending in Turkey's EU partnership expect that Turkey will become Europeanised in the process and become a country that will not generate problems for the EU. They predict that once deprived of the opportunity to become a member, Turkey's domestic and foreign policies will become less predictable, and thus they emphasize the importance of negotiations while refraining from statements committing them to Turkey's accession. Political leaders of prominent EU countries like Germany and France avoid making statements that reference an eventual Turkish membership, reinforcing the public sentiment in Turkey that its EU membership bid is in vain.

> The negotiation process not only ensures Turkey's harmonization with EU norms, but also is expected to expand the EU's capacity to integrate and absorb Turkey. If Turkey is rejected by the EU once the negotiation process has finished, it would be difficult to explain the decision by anything other than identity policies. Such a situation could, in fact, signal the end of the EU's motto, "unity in diversity."

Turkey's late president Turgut Özal likened Turkey's acceptance into the EU to "a long and winding road," which certainly suggests that Turkey was fully aware of the challenges ahead from the outset. As the light at the end of the tunnel looks ever dimmer, Turkey is starting to question both the itinerary and the destination. Turkey's membership objective has been called into question because of the content of the Negotiating Framework and the sluggish course of the negotiation process thus far. Such messages from the EU signal Turkey to declare EU membership dispensable, even going so far as rejecting the EU altogether. Prime Minister Erdoğan's statements - "we shall forge ahead with the Ankara criteria if the Copenhagen criteria do not work out" and "if the EU membership bid fails, we could join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization - are the results of the ambiguity of Turkey's eventual EU membership. In superficial debates in Turkey, some defend a privileged partnership, others the Norwegian model, or becoming a country on the periphery of a more flexible EU with different levels of integration. But if negotiations result in a status other than membership, the public in Turkey and its political actors clearly will not be satisfied with its ability to exercise sovereignty, or with Turkey's - possibly a lack of - representation and voting rights in EU institutions.

In Turkey's current climate of excessive self-confidence underpinned by the AKP's achievements in foreign policy and in the economy, unsurprisingly, the argument that not gaining membership is not the end of the world is increasingly gaining support; in opinion polls, support in Turkey for EU membership remains very low as Turkey-EU relations continue to sour. While the membership objective loses significance, the most important risks are the erosion of the importance Turkey has placed on European norms and values that form the essence of the process, and the disappearance of the EU anchor in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. As an example, it is telling that the government of Turkey did not take the EU's norm-based warnings in the aftermath of the Gezi events seriously.

Prospect of Membership: Illusionary Carrot?

It is widely accepted that Turkey differs from other candidate states because of its history, identity, and size. Turkey's potential acceptance into the EU is sometimes portrayed as a disaster for EU institutions, policies, and integration. That opinion reached its peak when France's former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing declared that, "Turkey's entry into the EU would be the end of Europe." Nevertheless, just as enlargement has its price, so does rejecting Turkey's EU membership after fifty years of integration and talks.

In the aftermath of 9/11 and the Arab Spring, the ideas of the clash of civilizations, Islam vs. democracy, Muslims in Europe, and multiculturalism have once again spring to the top of the world's agenda. Considering the EU's prominent role in these debates, it is evident that Turkey's EU membership bid is crucial to the EU's image and how it is perceived. The negotiation process not only ensures Turkey's harmonization with EU norms, but also is expected to expand the EU's capacity to integrate and absorb Turkey. If Turkey is rejected by the EU once the negotiation process has finished, it would be difficult to explain the decision by anything other than identity policies. Such a situation could, in fact, signal the end of the EU's motto, "unity in diversity."

The EU's policy of enlargement is meant to bring peace, security, and stability to Europe as long as it continues to conform to the EU's ideals and norms. Defenders of Turkey' EU bid aim to ensure the consolidation and oversight of gains made during the membership process, and to make Turkey a part of the EU's efforts to deepen integration on the basis on common values. In the short term, the most important measures to ensure Turkey's integration with the EU are hastening the settlement to the Cyprus question and preparing the public in Turkey and in Europe for Turkey's EU membership. Once membership becomes an attainable and realistic goal, the reform process can regain momentum, with Turkey working more ambitiously to adopt the EU's norms. But, if the prospect of membership is just the illusion of dangling carrot, negotiations and the EU's policy of enlargement are bound to be unsuccessful and ineffective.

Rural life in Turkish cinema: A location for innocence

In cinema, location is not simply where one is, but a place specially chosen to give the right feeling and awareness to the film and its narrative. Rural films or village films mainly refer to those movies which choose rural areas and villages as their location, and focus on the problems of those regions.

In Turkey, up until the early 1950's, village scenes were shot in the studio. This unreal character of the location was the reflection of the general perspective on cinema. Blending the Western cinematographic style with the melodrama genre, these films presented a transcendent perspective on the village from an urban vantage point. While creating its narratives, Yeşilçam –a metonym for the Turkish film industry, similar to Hollywood– largely drew inspiration from foreign cinematic narratives and tried to follow foreign movie patterns.

Shooting rural films in Turkey means shifting one's focus on specific problems: the land question, local landlords or "ağa", blood feuds, drought, internal migration, contraband, banditry, problems of education and health, and most significantly, the Kurdish question. However, due to years of censure, films could only scratch the surface of these issues. Directors learned lessons from the examples of their predecessors who suffered from state repression for many years, and instead opted for shooting films in other genres such as melodrama or comedy.

There are a series of rural comedy films in the history of Turkish cinema. Where were these villages located? To which ethnicity did their population belong to? Were these the nomadic Yörük villages of Central Anatolia or the Kurdish villages of the East? All such issues were left unclear in these films, which hollowed out the entire rural culture through stereotypes such as the good or bad ağa, and cunning or foolish peasant protagonists. No one spoke Kurdish in the films set in the Kurdish countryside. Films did not tell of the actual problems of the remote villages of Anatolia. They created the perception that villagers are naive, foolish, uncivilized, libidinous, cunning or murderous people – a perception that still remains intact. Many people continue to perceive villagers through this lens.

The first film to take up the actual problems of village life was Metin Erksan's "Aşık Veysel'in Hayatı / Karanlık Dünya" [Life of Aşık Veysel : World in Darkness] (1952). The film was banned by the censure board, as a result of the reactionary nature of the ruling Democrat Party. The censure board justified its decision by suggesting that the film depicted how the popular bard Aşık Veysel became blind from smallpox as a young child. The argument went, "Were there no doctors in the town? If this film is screened aboard, it would create the impression that children across Turkey are going blind due to smallpox. As such, this film cannot represent Turkey in the international arena." In order to circumvent the censure, Erksan was obliged to add new scenes shot in a hospital, where doctors spoke in a way which went against the spirit of the entire film: "Don't worry; from now on, the children in your village will be immune to the smallpox." However, the film was once again slammed by the censure board. This time, they criticized the film saying that the wheat plants seen in the film were too short, "which creates the impression that Turkish lands are arid and infertile." Still, Erksan did not lose heart. He cut out those scenes, and replaced them with rural panoramas taken from American films, showing fields with tall wheat and modern agricultural equipment. The censure board was also critical of a scene which depicted girls performing the traditional "turna" dance, since two of them were barefooted, whereas the other two wore woolen sandals. The current web site of the General Directorate of Copyright and Cinema under the Ministry of Culture depicts this film as "the movie emasculated by censure"; however it is also the first social realist film in the history of Turkish cinema.

"Susuz Yaz" [Summer of Drought] (1963) is another heavily censured film shot by Metin Erksan. The story depicts the loss of innocence and the transformation of rural life.

The film was banned by the Censure Board and shelved, but the producer and also a leading actor in the film, Ulvi Doğan secretly took it to Europe with another name. The film went on to win the Berlin Film Festival's top prize, the The Golden Bear, and shot to fame across Europe. The film stands out as a great village movie, featuring a sound narrative and an authentic cinematic language.

Yılmaz Güney's destiny sets him apart from other filmmakers. This director of Western films was eventually transformed into a legendary filmmaker. His films, which enjoy a prominent place in the history of Turkish cinema, were created while he was either in prison or a refugee in foreign countries. His

Ferit Karahan

Born in 1983, in Muş, Karahan studied at Marmara University. From 2002 to 2006 he worked as an assistant director and advertisement director in various companies, TV channels and on a feature film, Press. He has won awards at national and international film festivals with his short films Beriya Tofanê-Before the Storm and Xewna Yusiv-Yusuf's Dream.

film “Yol” [The Road] (1981) was banned until 1999 as it focused on the Kurdish question.

From early 1960s onwards, the village became one of the favorite locations of Turkish cineastes. “Sürü” [The Herd] (1978) written by Yılmaz Güney in prison, exposes the rural social structure. The film depicts conflicts between clans and fights between individuals. There are documentary-like images scattered across the film, which help portray village life in a much more realistic, naked fashion. He points to the damage inflicted by capitalism across rural areas, and the loss of the city’s innocence, from a class-based perspective. The film is very important in terms of addressing the key problems of the people living in the Anatolian plains. The film focuses on the mechanisms of corruption and exploitation laid bare during a train journey, the dramatic contrasts and antagonisms between the countryside and the large city, the replacement of feudalism by capitalism, as well as the rule of “the law of the jungle” as a result of the decay of feudal moral values.

Especially in the films he wrote and shot in the 1970s and later, Yılmaz Güney upended all the hackneyed prejudices of Turkish cineastes and filmgoers about village life. In part due to his political beliefs, he adopted a straightforward perspective on events and people, and narrated what he saw through the language of the locals. Real locations, real events, real people... In his films, the well-groomed juvenile leads of Yeşilçam turned into peasants with stubbly bears, chapped hands and cold-bitten faces. After these films were recognized and deemed worthy of awards in various festivals, the whole category of village films underwent a radical if not sudden change, and nothing was ever the same as before.

In the aftermath of the military coup of September 12, 1980, the 1980s were a rather unproductive period for the Turkish cinema. Most films from this period of focus on the pursuits and depressions of the individual and on women’s issues – not to mention pornographic movies, and simplistic rural farces. The Turkish cinema was badly wounded in this period. There was not a single worthy film on rural life.

The first thing that springs to mind while talking about village films in the history of Turkish cinema is the concept of “innocence”. In the eyes of a director living in the huge metropolis that is İstanbul, Anatolian life always appears to be more innocent, caring and appealing. Nuri Bilge Ceylan focuses on this innocence in his films “Kasaba” [The Town] and “Mayıs Sıkıntısı” [Clouds of May]. With his unique style, he can be said to take a still shot of the village. The main reason underlying these films’ immense success is his ability to look at his own personal story through a strong social realist lens.

“Karpuz Kabuğundan Gemiler Yapmak” [Boats Out of Watermelon Rinds] (2004) is another key film on village rural life shot by the “peasant director” Ahmet Uluçay, who is deeply knowledgeable about his rural surroundings. The film skillfully blends images of reality and dreams to present a very realistic insider’s view on village life.

Whereas innocence was the key concept in the village films of the first decade of the 2000s, other phenomena and events are making their way into contemporary rural cinema. Long gone are stories about individuals suffering from typical urban depression, or a couple of village girls fighting over a piece of land or water well in the village. “Tepenin Ardı” [Beyond the Hill] (Emin Alper, 2012) is among the films to shatter such hackneyed images. In a plain yet impressive

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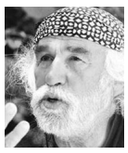
cinematographic language, the film recounts the internal struggle between the members of a family having a picnic by their country home, against the background of Turkey’s deep-seated socio-cultural legacy and the Turkish society’s perception of the outsider, the alien, the other. As such, the film directs a strong and appropriate criticism against Turkish politics, where all internal problems are attributed to “foreign powers”. All the protagonists in the film lie and deceive one another. They all have a secret agenda, hidden behind their words. The film masterfully shows that innocence is nowhere to be found, through the story of a handful of characters.

In recent years, filmmakers who opt for digital technologies take their cameras and go back to their own villages to shoot films featuring the people and locations they personally know of. Many such films have received awards in domestic and overseas competitions and festivals. As such they have set a precedent for groups of young and upcoming directors who collectively shoot political films without any concern for making profit. It is an auspicious sign for the Turkish cinema to see Kurdish and Turkish directors who grew up in the countryside and are fully acknowledged about village life telling a story with more straightforward, plain and realistic films which defy all censure.

This is what being an artist is: Taking sides



Mehmet Aksoy

Born in 1939, in Hatay. Aksoy graduated from the sculpture atelier of Şadi Çalık at Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy. During his long stops in Berlin and London he shaped his art of sculpture. He opened tens of exhibitions and won countless awards. Aksoy returned to Turkey in the early 1990s, and settled in Polonezköy, İstanbul. He lives in his "Beetle House" which he designed himself. He has been sculpting for 50 years.

Ayşegül Oğuz

Born in İstanbul, in 1983, Oğuz has been working as a journalist / reporter since 2003. She is a member of staff of Express and Bir+Bir magazines.

Setting out for the village of Cumhuriyet, on the other side of Istanbul, I was wondering what kind of place the Böcek Evi, or Beetle House, was. This has been the sculptor Mehmet Aksoy's atelier and home since he returned to Turkey in the 1950s, building himself a 'new' life after years of living in Berlin. I got to know Aksoy a bit better by reading his interview in the book The Glutton of Sculpture: Mehmet Aksoy Tells His Story by journalist Aydın Engin. In that book, Aksoy talked about his Beetle House:

In Yayladağı we call them 'tümmâhâ'. You call them dung beetles… The word 'tümmâhâ' probably comes from Egypt, from Arabic. In general they are called dung beetles because these insects create new worlds in dried dung and give meaning to waste. They dive into dried dung and dig many little holes… I saw the house as a sculpture. In this house, lines are related to one another. The doors are not ordinary, are they? It became the way it is, because it suited the forms. Something is only made if it suits another factor, if doesn't suit it doesn't work. That's why the pool is the way it is. I drew twenty sketches for the pool. In the beginning the pool wasn't the way you see it now. There was always something I didn't like about the sketches I made. The issue is being able to confront what makes you uneasy. I am a man who confronts what he is not happy with. If I'm bothered about something, if I don't like it all that much, I research, I search for solutions. I try to solve the problem.

We cross over the bridge and continue towards Polonezköy. Driving through one of Istanbul's forests, I realize once again how the city has changed hands. The high-security walls of the villa development Beykoz Konakları startle me as we pass by. A little while later, as we drive through the forest, the taxi driver complains about how the number of buildings being built increases each day and how this lovely scenery and its surrounding nature are destroyed. But it is still surprising to see such a beautiful forest in Istanbul and the villagers who sell the fruits of the forest by the side of the road. From the open taxi window I inhale the oxygen-rich air into my lungs; we leave Polonezköy with its mosque and church behind, and reach the Beetle House. This house has nothing to do with trickery; it truly qualifies as being a part of nature. I first saw the huge crane that I later understood to be the back leg of the beetle.

The Beetle House isn't just a house, it is also like a museum. This house is a glass globe. It even has eyes. The moment you enter the house you go into a Mehmet Aksoy retrospective, you become a part of the gallery space that comprises Mehmet Aksoy's artistic productions of the last 50 years. Lounging back on a comfortable sofa the song of goldfinches permeates the house from the depths of the forest, music to your ears. The scenery of the Beetle House is the forest. All shades of green transform as the world revolves around the sun. As I drink in the scenery, Mehmet Aksoy and I begin our conversation. When we realize we have a mutual friend we begin our conversation with things that interest us both. The first question comes naturally. I ask Mehmet Aksoy **"**Do you have a new thrill these days, a new work?" The sculptor begins his reply: **"**The inspiration behind a sculpture is sometimes the spreading of a number of thrills that supersede each other. Lately I have been deeply intrigued by glass. The relationship between marble and glass is interesting; one of them hard, transparent, the other hard but not transparent, one of them reflects light very well while the other absorbs it. The materials themselves have certain contrasts making them very useful in creating illusions. We try to create an illusion in life through forms. Marble absorbs light at a certain thickness; it takes light in and gives it back out. I have been using this method a lot."

Aksoy begins telling me about the sculpture that was the first of his Series of Light Sculptures, a piece he made for Can Yücel's grave in Datça, the great poet we lost in 1999: **"**A great poet, a grown man, a man of great stature, a man with a beard, but in essence he was still a child. He is intelligent, speaks several languages, he strikes the right note, but you look at him and see the child within him. He is innocent, clean, righteous and emotional. So how do you make a sculpture of such a man? More importantly he is a poet. I scaled down the marble into a round stone from both sides; the marble was reduced to between one centimeter and half a centimeter. It was an Afyon marble that absorbed light really well. With light I first made a fetus in his mother's womb. When light falls on it the fetus appears. A fetus of light, as if he is in his mother's womb… I connected it to a source of water. That water turned itself into life, death, birth, childhood, the sun. When you look at it, it seems to be a relief but when the sun goes behind the sculpture a fetus made of light appears. That is what an illusion is."

Mehmet Aksoy and light: These two are completely interwoven. Mehmet Aksoy, who has dedicated his life to the art of sculpture, said, "We are sculpting light, not the mass." Just as in

his depiction of that fetus of light erected at Can Yücel's grave, he weaves his sculptures with the power of showing the different contexts of stone, striving to give a new form to the context with itself. He continues to explain the form light creates in his art: "To me, forms are surfaces that carry light. You have to control the places where light lingers and the journey light makes on the surface, thus you have to control light. If you place a solid form where the light is, the light stays there, it is not reflected the way the marble reflects it, the relationship between iron and marble is the same. The different reflections are caused by the material. Innovation is born from context."

Aksoy was born in 1939, in an Armenian town called Kesab or Kesap on the outskirts of Mount Aqraa, a mountain in Antakya. His father was a Turkmen. In "The Glutton of Sculpture", he says: "Before Hatay was annexed my father was a gendarmer in Kesap. So that's where I was born. Half the family stayed in Syria. The Turkmen living in the north of Syria are our relatives. We are Turkmen… I was born into the hands of an Armenian midwife."

In 1940, when Aksoy was one, Hatay was annexed into the Republic of Turkey. The family returned to Yayladağı from Kesab. His father quit his work as a gendarmerie and became a prison officer. Mehmet Aksoy is the oldest child of a family of seven children. His six siblings were born into his hands. He began his primary education in Yavuz Selim Primary School, the only primary school in Yayladağı.

At a very young age, Aksoy decided to become a painter. When he began middle school in Tarsus he was also introduced to sculpture. Aksoy was given clay and plaster in an art and handicrafts lesson, and he made a gazelle, his first sculpture. At high school he entered the teacher's college. After a year spent studying at the Gaziantep Teaching School he went on a summer holiday. In those days school reports were mailed home. The school report arrived, he had passed all his classes but the council of teachers decided that he wouldn't become a teacher because he was undisciplined and headstrong. He left the teaching school and went to study at the Antakya Lycée.

In those years every university had its separate entrance exam and Mehmet Aksoy had made it his life's purpose to get into the Academy. Even though his father talked to him about studying law, he was adamant in studying art. He left Yayladağı and set out for Istanbul. Already branded as headstrong during his high school years, the young man from Yayladağı was set on studying painting at the Academy. Bu the lecturer sculptor Şadi Çalık channelled him into sculpture, pressuring him into taking a serious interest in it. After Hadi Bara retired, Aksoy became one of the first students to attend the Şadi Çalık atelier. As the breeze of 1968 that would, as they say, discover the beaches hidden under the pavement, blew stronger Mehmet Aksoy began to feel the encompassing effects of politics in his life: "I had no comprehension of politics when I first arrived in Istanbul. I'd just finished high school. Nâzım Hikmet died in 1963, I didn't even know he existed. There was a sense of bereavement at the Academy, but it was hidden. People used to whisper Nâzım's poems into each other's ears. Later I began to find out who Nâzım is and I admired him. I learned so much during this period. There was the Dev-Genç movement at the time, we were involved in that. I was participating in protest marches. The 6th American Fleet had dropped anchor in the Bosphorus, we were upset and concerned."

Mehmet Aksoy, the student of sculpture, completed his studies at the Academy as he became politically active. As he perceived art the way he did life; he thinks that the richer life is the richer one's art becomes. He first went to London on a state scholarship but as he didn't like how London was under the thumb of conceptual art so he decied to go to Berlin instead. There he began studying at

> Nâzım had a great role in pushing me towards the form of the sculpture. His poem "On the Human" led me to make the sculpture called "Unemployed." It was like he had acted as my midwife.

the Hochschule der Künste for his second masters. Even though the curriculum was founded upon an inter-disciplinary basis, architecture was at the center of his education there. From 1972 until 1990, although he traveled between Turkey and Berlin sometimes, Berlin was his home. In an extended interview conducted by lebriz.com in 2009 Mehmet Aksoy speaks of his Berlin years: "The education process in Berlin allowed me to see the gaps in theory very easily; there were those who defended both painting and sculpture and also those who stood up for the conceptual. I came to clearly distinguish between all of these and then came to have a better understanding of the world. On the one hand, there was the capitalist system and on the other, the socialist system. You could easily see how the same event could be interpreted differently by both sides. That is what being an artist is, you have to hold a side, your mind has to be full and then you will be able to speak your own mind."

His love for Nâzım Hikmet, which began with a timid introduction in the 60s and later turned into great admiration, would make Mehmet Aksoy become a "poetic" sculptor. During certain turning points of his art, it was as if Nâzım would extend a hand to him and Aksoy would in turn transform his admiration into monuments with the sculptures he made. Aksoy explains this in his own words in "The Glutton of Sculpture": "Nâzım had a great role in pushing me towards the form of the sculpture. His poem "On the Human" led me to make the sculpture called "Unemployed." It was like he had acted as my midwife."

In this sculpture the form of a hand appears before us. For Mehmet Aksoy the hand has always served as a powerful image. The sculptor describes the hands in "Unemployed: "The idea that he likened hands to a tree abundant with fruit in the poem lit up the perception in me that the mind and the

conscience are insufficient, as if it's not possible to have control of one's own body and one's own power. I interpreted it as a process of the human's awakening and the hands likened to a tree full of fruit, that image carried me to the sculpture. The hands in that sculpture are very beautiful. The hands of the man, the veins, that spirit, that life and dynamism… The power in those hands versus the embryo-like state of the mind… So it really presents the contradiction between the mind and the awakening and the hands."

Hands… The hand finds its place in the "Monument to Humanity" that was destroyed in 2011. The adventure behind this sculpture began in 2004. Naif Alibeyoğlu, the Mayor of Kars at the time, wanted a monument to be built against the monuments erected for the Armenian genocide. The Armenian issue was seen as a blood feud between two countries and the monuments dedicated to the genocide were seen to instigate tension and hostility. The new monument had to answer that issue. The sculptor tells us how he came to think about the "Monument to Humanity:"

" I thought, what is Kars like? Whenever you are working on a sculpture for a specific location, the location is what you start with. So I asked myself, "What did this location, this place, witness and experience? What is it like now?" What could I make here that would play with the history, the past, the memory of this space, it comes out from that concern of making those things obvious. When you look at it from that perspective you realize that Kars is a place that has witnessed war every twenty years since the 1880s. Many people died in those wars and in the early 1900s 90 thousand people froze to death in the Battle of Sarikamish. A history of such suffering, a place that witnessed all of that. So I thought that making an anti-war monument would be to turn our backs on and reject the wars. And from that moment on you begin to ask the question of what war is. Then you realize that the psychology of war exists. The instinct to die and kill comes into the equation. Humans take their wildest and most brutal forms there. No matter how much progress you make, whether you go to the Moon, go to Mars, it makes no difference, war makes the human barbaric. War is not humane, you live to kill. Humanity could take a step forward and make wars not exist, you have to reject war. War makes brothers enemies."

In opposition of war, the sculptor made his work show war as a devastating event that breaks the human in half, and sets human against human. He uses eyes as elements that see everything and hide it all in their memory; to express the human as a conscience, he carved tears into the corners of the eyes. The "Monument to Humanity" was to be erected on a hill. Speaking of his choice of location Mehmet Aksoy talks about the fatelessness of the sculpture: "The sculpture has to be conceived with the city, when you get to the city you see the fortress with mountains behind it. It was a challenge to be able to contribute a new feeling of location to the spot, the only way you can overcome that challenge is by way of dimensions and volume. I think that my sculpture works well with the area, the city, the geography and the topography of Kars. It is very powerful and that's why it cut a wide swathe. It was not finished yet, and the incomplete, half-done sculpture was destroyed by an order. The fact that the Prime Minister referred to it as a "monstrosity" and that he stated "I will not see this the next time I come here" meant the end."

The argument followed in the wake of Prime Minister Erdoğan's trip to see the "Monument to Humanity" in Kars and his comment that it was a "monstrosity" also started another kind of destruction. A strong support campaign was started, artists and the people of Kars stood by Mehmet Aksoy and the "Monument to Humanity" and the sculptor initiated a legal struggle that turned into lawlessness. In the end the "Monument to Humanity" could not be saved and the sculpture was destroyed in 2011. Şahan Nuhoğlu's article "An Idiocy Relating to Sculpture" published in the 119th issue of Express magazine explains the destruction process of the sculpture. In the same article Mehmet Aksoy talked about what had happened to his sculpture:

"We had a report from the Preservation Board stating the location was suitable for the work. The city council also agreed. Then politics came into play. They are making me out to be a sculptor who was building illegally. The next thing that should be considered is the copyright. You cannot destroy this work without my permission. But the man was saying "it's a mess." He was scared to call it a sculpture. He was treating it as if it was an illegal structure. If you don't call it a sculpture, will it cease to be one? They are threatened by the idea of sculpture and art. If the sculpture had been finished we would have had the chance to provide more information so it would be understood. There would be eyes and tears; rising above it there would be two identical figures separated from one another. In the middle there was going to be an extending hand in an organic form. A single body divided into two. I first thought about how the human becomes hostile to himself, rather than confrontation. The meanings of a sculpture multiply in time if you know how to look at it."

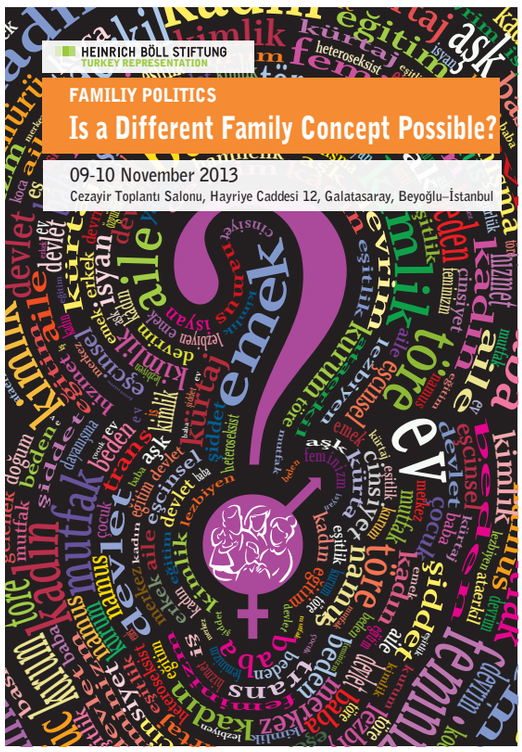
Now it is 2013. It has been two years since the "Monument to Humanity" was destroyed. As the spring became summer another demolition was on the agenda. Once again with Erdoğan's word, the construction of the Taksim Military Barracks will begin and the preparations for the destruction of Gezi Park will start. The public protests, the public that in Erdoğan's eyes is kicking up a fuss about "a few trees," and it does not let go of Gezi Park. Then the rest of the trouble follows. The Turkish public has an enormous awakening: The Gezi Resistance. The language of politics meets the language of art. The streets of Istanbul as well as those of other cities in Turkey embrace a level of creativity not short of the biennial, on the contrary one that surpasses the standards of the biennial. This was when we met Mehmet Aksoy, in days when we knew nothing would ever be the same again and in days in which we fully comprehended that this awakening wouldn't weaken or fade away. We advanced towards the art-life with the hopes that we regained in the Gezi Resistance with an old fellow, a glutton of sculpture, the man who chiseled the immortality of art into forms of light.

News from hbs

Is a different familiy concept possible?

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung brings to the table the concept of the family at a conference entitled “Is a different familiy concept possible?”, to be held in Istanbul on November 9th and 10th, 2013. At this event, we would like to analyze how gender relations are translated into family policies, and how the latter have evolved in the last decade. The main objective of the conference is to bring together women as well as LGBT individuals and institutions, all ostracized by current gender policies, to jointly decide on a common course of action and demands in this area. The conference will consist of the following six panel discussions:

How is the Concept of “Ideal Family” Created?
Family, Labor and Law
Social Policies Targeting the Family
Alternative Family Models
Violence and the Family
The “Others” of the Family, “Other” Families



One of the oldest social institutions, the family is the key instrument for keeping women under control, maintaining patriarchal power, and reproducing the social labor power. The reigning patriarchal and heterosexist family structure in Turkey defines the limits of sexuality for both sexes and imposes the marriage of a man and a woman as the only legitimate form of cohabitation. Besides, as always emphasized by feminists, the patriarchal family structure is one of the main sources of violence against women. Marriage, children, love, sexuality, wage labor in harmony with family life and economic hardship not only take a heavy toll on women, but also ensure the continuity of the family and imprison women inside it.

Feminist politics continue to question the universal institution of family, which has existed since millennia. Do we have to live in families? Is the current family structure the only possible one? Are there alternatives to this form which deprives women of their liberties, imposes heterosexism, and is economically based on production and consumption, and the exploitation of care and service labor?

We invite you to our conference entitled “Is a different familiy concept possible?” at the Cezayir Conference Hall in Taksim, to jointly seek answers to these questions and engage in a fruitful debate. (http://www.tr.boell.org)

International Hrant Dink Award 2013

In the trial for the murder of Hrant Dink, the Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper Agos, the Court of Appeal’s (Yargıtay) 9th Bureau has overruled the verdict of the lower court, and the prosecution of the suspects has started from scratch. In the first prosecution process, we had seen how the state insisted on protecting the civil servants who played a role in the organization of this heinous crime, and contented itself with punishing only those who had pulled the trigger. Instead of investigating the organized group behind the murder, the lower court had simply given a life sentence to the murderer Yasin Hayal.

As such, it is dubious whether the second trial

will yield another outcome. In fact, the Court of Appeal seems to think that there is not a "terrorist organization" but simply a "criminal organization" behind this murder. In response, the Dink Family has announced that they will no longer participate in the court hearings, since the first prosecution amounted to nothing more than ridiculing the family and that they do not expect the second prosecution to go beyond the first one.

In the six years following the murder, the state openly protected, praised or motivated the murderers. Many state officials thought to be involved in the crime were either promoted to higher posts or became MPs in the ruling party. Meanwhile, for the past five years, Hrant Dink Foundation has been rewarding individuals who lead the struggle for human rights and contribute to the democratization of the society. The 2013 International Hrant Dink Award was presented to laureates Saturday Mothers from Turkey and Nataša Kandic from Serbia, on September 15, 2013, with a ceremony organized by the Hrant Dink Foundation held at the Lütfi Kırdar Exhibition Center in Istanbul.

The award ceremony began with a song by the singer Hayko Cepkin. The awards ceremony was hosted by the actor Olgun Şimşek. In her speech, one of the members of the Award Committee, the political scientist Ayşe Kadıoğlu pointed out to the fact that the award winners were identified by an international jury in a two-round selection process, out of the nominees who were nominated before the April 15th deadline, just like in previous years and that the award winners common characteristic is their courage to remember, to face the history and to struggle for peace.

At the ceremony, Bophorus Jazz Chorus, in addition to Turkish and English songs, also sang an Armenian song, Gomidas' Yel Yel.

Before the awards presentation, Inspirations, a group of people and institutions from Turkey and from all corners of the world who multiply hope for the future with the steps they take, were saluted with a film acknowledging their achievements. The Inspirations of 2013 included Khassan Baiev from Chechnya who carried out medical operations for the injured on both sides of the conflict in the First and Second Chechen-Russian wars of 1994-96, The Landfill Harmonic Orchestra in Paraguay, Israeli graphic designer Ronny Edry, the Army in Reality - Panagn Iraganum from Armenia, Invisible Children, Inc. in the USA which has brought awareness to the atrocities carried out in Central Africa in one of the world's longest-standing conflict zones, by the Lord's Resistance Army, and from Turkey Emek Bizim, İstanbul Bizim Platformu, the Emek Movie Theater Belongs to Us, Bremen Mızıkacıları Perküsyon Grubu, the Town Musicians of Bremen Percussion Group, established by the Beyond Disabilities Association, Hakikat Adalet Hafıza Merkezi, the Truth Justice Memory Center, Haydarpaşa Dayanışması Platformu, the Haydarpaşa Solidarity Platform, Karadeniz İsyandadır Platformu, the Black Sea Revolts Platform, the Taksim Platform, the Gezi Park Library, the Volunteer doctors who provided medical support in the Gezi Park, and a group of women who came together on the seventh day of the Gezi Resistance to paint over or modify homophobic and sexist slogans sprayed and painted on walls around Taksim Square, İstiklal Street and Gümüşsuyu.

The award statue was presented to Saturday Mothers from Turkey by jury members Rakel Dink and Alexander Cherkasov, representing the International MEMORIAL Society presented the award to Hanım Tosun, İkbal Eren and Emine Ocak from the Saturday Mothers.

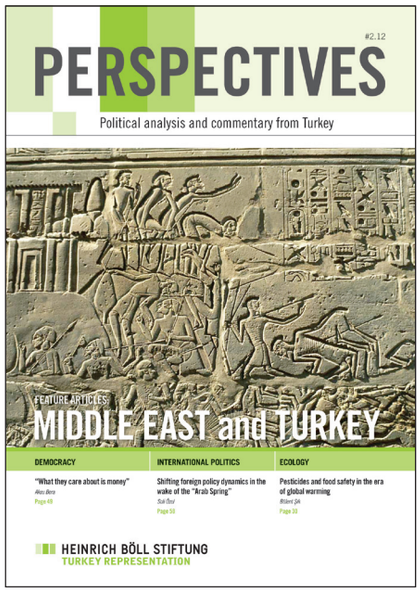
The second laureate of the 2013 International Hrant Dink Award, Nataša Kandic was presented her award by İsmail Beşikçi and Ali Bayramoğlu. Kandic, receiving her award after the speech of Saturday Mothers, said that after listening to the Saturday Mothers, she remembered the meetings and interviews she had with hundreds of parents whose children were lost. In her speech, Kandic stated the importance to facing the history and accepting the personal responsibilities and the necessity of finding the mass graves so that parents and the ones whose dearas are lost would have a grave, at least their relatives could find peace. Kandic also emphasized the importance of empathy in the process of establishing peace and building bridges.

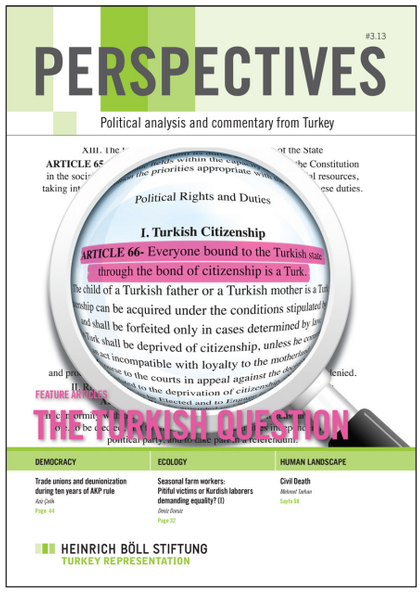
The Jury of the International Hrant Dink Award 2013 consists of Timothy Garton Ash, İsmail Beşikçi, Rakel Dink, Costa Gavras, Nilüfer Göle, Alexander Iskandaryan, Etyen Mahçupyan and International MEMORIAL Society.

Alper Görmüş, Amira Hass, the Conscientious Objection Movement of Turkey, Baltasar Garzón, Ahmet Altan ,Lydia Cacho, İsmail Beşikçi and International MEMORIAL Society the former laureates of the International Hrant Dink Award.

The award ceremony was broadcast live on www.hrantdink.org and www.hrantdinkodulu.org. All the details of the ceremony were followed in 3 languages (Turkish, English and Armenian) on Facebook and Twitter on the accounts of Hrant Dink Foundation and the award.

The International Hrant Dink Award shall continue to create international bridges between individuals and institutions fighting for human rights, democracy and against racism. While keeping the memory of Hrant Dink alive, the award will ensure that those courageous individuals murdered for demanding an egalitarian and free society, as well as their works, will live on in the struggle for justice. Undoubtedly, keeping alive Dink's perspective of justice and politics is key to creating a common language against nationalism and for social peace among the peoples of Turkey and Armenia, as well as Armenians in the diaspora.





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