

susceptibility to the market price fluctuations as his need to pay cash, to meet his obligations, increased.

Again, this role of the dependence on price fluctuations is ignored when the debt of the peasants is reduced, as Hakim does, to primarily behavioral factors and assumed inherent characteristics of peasants as manifested in “ignorance” and for “being generally not far-sighted.”⁴⁴ Again, this tendency to blame the victims ignores the structural basis of debt: the combined and cumulative impact of the price fluctuations, the abrupt increased monetization of the primarily subsistence economy that was mainly reflected on the peasants by the imposition of the tax in cash, and, in the case of tenants, the increased demand for money rent, and hence the need to borrow money in bad times. Moreover, peasants had to face the competition from agricultural imports, to be discussed later, and in certain years, bad harvests.

Many of the government reports investigating the Arab agricultural conditions, starting from the late 1920s and into the 1930s, have recommended, among other measures, the provision by the government of credit to peasants. In its turn, the government did provide loans totaling about £P 1,763,000⁴⁵ from 1919 to 1945, excluding the amounts extended to citrus farmers, which amounted to about £P 3,659,000⁴⁶ (of which 47 percent went to Arab growers and 53

⁴⁴Hakim in Himadeh, 497.

⁴⁵*Survey I*, 349, 353.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 355.