

workday and no clear dichotomy between “work” and “leisure.” For any given “stock” of farm labour [sic]—in a household or in the sector—the actual “flow” of labour inputs into agricultural production is determined by a “subjective equilibrium” in the allocation of labour time. And the activities other than farming embrace pursuits such as handweaving and other types of cottage industry as well as leisure and a variety of “noneconomic” activities—litigation, ceremonies³⁷ [and other communal functions].

Then there was Carmi and Rosenfeld’s statement that “the peasant’s weakness” was to be sought in dry farming and having to pay debts, interest on loans, and taxes, all of which precluded the possibility of capital accumulation. Although it was true that a majority of peasants were primarily engaged in dry farming, there were others who had access to more resources and larger than average holding, as discussed earlier, who got involved in the cultivation of other marketable crops in varying degrees. The spread of commoditization and commercialism did not have a uniform impact on all peasants. In addition, Carmi and Rosenfeld’s treatment of debt and taxes is ahistorical. While debt and taxes existed during the Ottoman era, there was a profoundly qualitative difference in their impact with the onset of British rule as land was increasingly commoditized and taxes were required in cash. With the new conditions, the probability of loss of land was much greater, something that befell many peasants throughout the Mandate period.

It is obvious that the smallholder, burdened with debt and taxes, was unable to “accumulate capital.” Those who did, in varying degrees, acquire surpluses

³⁷B. F. Johnston and P. Kilby, “‘Unimodal’ and ‘Bimodal’ Strategies of Agrarian Change,” ed. Harriss, 60.