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The Role of Statism in Turkish Economic Life, 1929-1939 / Devletçiliğin Türk İktisadi Yaşamındaki Rolü, 1929-1939

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ABSTRACT

Statism manifested itself in the policies which regulated economic life throughout 1930s with various tools and mechanisms. Those statist policies were conducted by implementing ad hoc measures rather than those with a theoretical systematic approach. The emergence and evolution of statism was affected by various social, economic and historical transformations. The study will be conducted in two parts, coinciding with those transformations between the years 1929- 1931 and 1932-1939. In the first part, 1929-1931, the effects of the Great Depression on the Turkish Republic, still in its nation-state building process, will be discussed. One of the founding principles of the Turkish Republic was economic independence. In this era, this principle led to the policies of protecting and promoting the Turkish private sector in order to enable industrial development. Being interrupted by the Great Depression, the task of promoting the private sector shifted to one where ideas of enabling industrial development with state-owned enterprises were considered. In the second part, 1932-1939, we explain the historical process of state involvement in capitalist accumulation and in the establishment of modern industries. In this period, when economic life had been structured with statist policies, a grand five year development plan was implemented to achieve industrial expansion. This was also a period in which the relations between classes were transformed and out of which emerged one of the most unique movements in Turkish economic thought, the “Kadro” movement.

KEYWORDS Statism; Development; Planning; Industrialization

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