

Extended Abstract

Akyiğitzade Musa and Conservation Thought*

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Abstract

In the 1830s, the idea of free trade entering the country through foreigners residing in the Ottoman Empire and having ambassadors of foreign consuls in Istanbul became an unrivaled system of thought until the 1880s. Firstly in the 1870s, the 1838 Trade Agreement was signed in light of the principle of free trade. In Tercüman-ı Hakikat, Ahmet Mithat and Mizancı Murat demanded protective customs tariffs in Mizan for the country's economic development and protection of industry. Kazanlı Akyiğitzade Musa, who taught economics at the Military School in this period, also adopted the idea of patronage. In 1896, he said that the state should protect industry with customs walls for the economic development of Ottomans in his book *İlm-i Servet: Azadeği-i Ticaret and Usul-i Himaye*. In this study, the authoritarian economic views of Akyiğitzade Musa known as *İktisad yahud İlm-i Servet: Azadeği-i Ticaret ve Usul-i Himaye ve İlm-i Servet veyahut İlm-i İktisad* will be given in the light of economics books.

Keywords

Ottoman Empire • Idea of economic suffering • Akyiğitzade Musa

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Even though an economy policy had always existed prioritizing the state with a direct intervention on economy in the Ottoman Empire, in the 1830s a thought system entered the state that was contrary to the archaic economic tradition and minimized the state in terms of finance. With the trade deal signed in 1838 in parallel with this thought system, the principles of free-trade thought were practiced in the empire. This thought became the only dominant idea in the empire until the 1880s. As mentioned in the study, economists expressed their views that the idea of free trade has not matched the economic realities of this empire since the 1880s. These economists, who demanded that the state directly intervene in the economy and that industrialization would be ensured through customs walls, also demanded the implementation of protective economic policies in the country. The reason why Akyiğitzade Musa, one of these economists, has been chosen as the subject of this study is that for the first time in the Ottoman Empire he compared the idea of free trade with the idea of patronage, emphasizing patronage to be the only way out for the industrialization of economically backward countries like the Ottoman Empire.

Influenced by the views of the German Frederick List and the Frenchman Paul Cauwes, Akyiğitzade stated that the temporary protective customs policy should be implemented in order for a country to develop its industry. Akyiğitzade did not object to the free trade idea in terms of principal; however, he stated that in order to practice this idea, all countries in the world should have the same economic conditions and that as long as these conditions were provided, countries could be competitive. Akyiğitzade's understanding of protectionism is provisional and conservative. He emphasized that the state should patronize industrial sections that have a potential for developing the state's industry and that this patronage should continue until the industry branch reaches the level of being able to compete with the international market. Akyiğitzade stated that all states initially patronized their own industries for economic development, and even though England was behind India in cotton production, it had protected its domestic industry through patronizing policies; in time, England made far cheaper production than India. In order to emphasize protecting industry as important in terms of economic development, he gave examples with the developed economies of Germany and the United States aside from England, pointing out that these countries were challenging England in international competition by courtesy of their protection policies.

Akyiğitzade stated that a country specializing in only one sector is wrong and that, if a country were developed only in industry or agriculture and not in other sectors, this country would become dependent on other countries. On this subject, Akyiğitzade thought differently than List. In contrast to List's view, which argued that development should only be on industry, Akyiğitzade wanted the country's agriculture, industry, and trade sectors to develop in equal ratios. He objected to a

country only being an agricultural or industrialist country. He emphasized that the different economic sectors are parts of a country's economic organism and that just as an organism can't function without any limbs, the lack of development in one sector would cause the country to not fulfill the function of the economic organism. For this reason, he asked for trade, industrial, and agricultural activities to be unified in the country. He indicated that a country with only agriculture developed would be damaged in exchanges with an industrially developed country and that in time it would become dependent on this industrially developed country.

He stated that, while the idea of free trade was taught by educational institutions all over the world, it found no practical application in any country, even in England where some products were protected; high customs duties were put on most products in France and the United States. He stated that the bureaucrats in the Ottoman Empire had made the necessary attempts to increase the customs duties and emphasized that the bureaucrats had adopted this idea. In his work, Akyiğitzade Musa gave an objective view of the main principles of the idea of free trade and patronage, later on comparing these two opinions in light of the main principles. After expressing supportive statements proving the correctness of the principles of protection, he put forward patronizing policies as a solution for providing underdeveloped countries competitiveness with developed countries. Akyiğitzade's views were respected in the 1890s. His economics lectures at the Harbiye School show that the protective ideas were respected in the country during this period. Akyiğitzade was the only economist to systematically advocate protective thought in the country after the 1880s.

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