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Some rural myths of the Greek authoritarianism: Cooperative policy and ideological perception of agriculture. 1936-1940

Dr. Catherine Bregianni
Research Centre for the Study of Modern Greek History
Academy of Athens
14, Anagnostopoulou str., 106 73 Athens
tel. + 30 210 36 64 620
e-mail: cbregiann@academyofathens.gr

ABSTRACT

The General Metaxa's regime, pursuing fascist archetypes at the construction of its image but causing a repercussion of nationalistic principles at the organization of the State, had made an attempt to centralize the agricultural economy in order to apply a large-scale protectionism. The main axes of its agricultural policy were the protection of some agricultural products (and specially the protection of the grains), the regulation of the rural debts, the expansion of the Agricultural Bank's net. In spite the fact that those were as well the objectives of the previous liberal governments in the conjuncture of the international economic crisis, the Metaxa's dictatorship enveloped ideological principles and "theoretical" interpretations at this paternalistic politics. In fact, the regime had attempted to bring about a correlation with the rural population and for this purpose used a number of symbolisms like ceremonies, parades and a strongly populist discourse.

Among those measures, the reorganization of the agricultural cooperatives formed an essential channel for the rapprochement of the rural population and the dictatorship's cadres disseminated it as a significant economic interference of the regime. In this communication we will attempt to interpret the restructuring of the cooperatives during the Metaxa's regime and, also, the ideological facet of this activity by means of the political discourses. Our purpose is to illuminate the image created by the regime for its shelf, and to focus on the characteristics of the *New State* [in other words to the aimed Totalitarian State], as the main ideological figure of the military dictatorship. A comparative perspective envelops these questions, as similar or relative efforts could be confined to the Mussolini's regime.