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## **DEMOCRATIZATION FROM ABOVE IN RESPONSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: TURKEY, 1945-1950<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Introduction**

On 6 March 1995 the EU-Turkey Association Council took a decision regarding the inauguration of a customs union between the EU and Turkey, following the pattern set out in the Ankara Agreement of 1963 and the Additional Protocol of 1970. The Council's decision received the European Parliament's assent on 13 December 1995, enabling it to enter into force on 1 January 1996. Following the Association Council's customs union decision, the Turkish government has launched a series of democratizing and liberalizing reforms<sup>2</sup>. It is apparent that the tactical goal of the Turkish government for initiating the reforms has been to persuade the European Parliament to give its consent to the Association Council's customs union decision. The government's strategic goal, on the other hand, has been to fulfill the necessary political conditions, such as those formulated in the June 1993 Copenhagen meeting of the European Council<sup>3</sup>, of Turkey's qualification for full membership in the EU.

The recent economic and political restructuring in connection with the customs union and further integration with the EU constitutes the second major wave of democratization in postwar Turkey in response to the international context. The first such wave, I will argue in

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<sup>1</sup>During the rewritings of this paper I have greatly benefited from the comments and criticisms of the editors of this journal. My discussions with Prof. İlkey Sunar and Prof. Nükhet Sirman of Boğaziçi University have also been very enlightening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

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<sup>2</sup> Some of the reforms, especially the constitutional amendments extending political participation rights to the civil and professional associations, have brought about substantive improvements. Those that touched upon the sensitive issues of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and minority rights, such as the attempt to liberalize the infamous Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law, have produced no more than cosmetic changes.

<sup>3</sup>In June 1993, the European Council meeting in Copenhagen adopted the criteria for membership to be applied to the countries of central and eastern Europe. Membership requires: stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. For more information on the Council's decisions see the official WWW site of the EU at "<http://europa.eu.int/comm/agenda2000/index.htm>"

this paper, was the dismantling of the one-party regime and the initial transition to democracy in the aftermath of the Second World War, when the Turkish state launched a series of democratic reforms as an instrument of its foreign policy strategy of full integration with the US-led Western camp.

The general argument of this paper can be stated in three analytically distinct propositions. First, **the postwar transition from a one-party to a multi-party regime was a state-led regime change**. No non-state actor (whether it be the bourgeoisie, the landlords, the small peasants, the urban lower classes, or any coalition of these) played a determinant role during the transition process. Although there were non-state opposition forces in favor of democratization, they were not powerful enough to raise the expected costs of suppression to a level at which the powers-that-be would agree to a power-sharing arrangement within the framework of a multi-party regime.

Second, **the state undertook the democratic reform in response to the international context**. Liberalizing and democratizing the regime was a political reform undertaken by the state leaders as an instrument in their overall foreign policy strategy of getting fully integrated with the newly emerging US-led Western camp. The Soviet war of nerves, which was intended to isolate Turkey internationally and incorporate it into the Soviet sphere of influence, was one additional factor that significantly raised the expected external benefits for the Turkish leaders of the alliance with the US and integration with the West.

Third, **the final outcome of the democratic transition was a reallocation of political power among the state actors**: Political power was transferred from one group of the Kemalist ruling bloc (the **Civilianized<sup>4</sup> Kemalist Leaders**, organized in the Republican People's Party) to the other group of the Kemalist ruling bloc (the **Civilian Kemalist Leaders**, organized in the Democrat Party). In other words, at the end of the democratic transition political power remained within the Kemalist ruling bloc and it did not pass into the hands of the political representatives of the social groups and classes.

In what follows, I will first present a brief theoretical model in which to analyze the interaction of the international and domestic factors in the processes of authoritarian breakdowns and democratic transitions. I will then abstract, from the available pool of historical facts, the central episodes, turning points, actors, and institutions of the Turkish regime change of 1945-1950, on the basis of the model's conceptual scheme and causal linkages. This particular reconstitution of the history of Turkey's postwar democratization will necessarily leave out certain events and actors which have been assigned a leading role and place in different studies, while bringing forward some other incidents, organizations, and persons as being more critical from the perspective of the model. The three hypotheses of this work, and the theoretical model within which they operate, will, I believe, be sufficiently illustrated in this particular reconstitution of a short but critical episode of

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<sup>4</sup>The term "civilianized" is borrowed from Alfred Stepan (1986, p. 73). It refers to the political leaders who have entered politics as active duty soldiers (usually as heads of a military-led independence movement or participants in a military takeover), and, after having accomplished their initial political objective, resigned their military posts and retained their newly acquired civilian titles only.

modern Turkish history. In the final section I will reconsider the hypotheses about the leading role of the state in the regime change and the final reallocation of power among the state actors, and I will present a critical discussion of some of the alternative perspectives in which it has been argued that the transition was a society-led regime change from below and that at the end of the process political power was transferred from the state bureaucracy to the political representatives of some social groups and classes.

## **2. A Model of External-Internal Linkages in Authoritarian Breakdowns and Democratic Transitions**

Democratic transitions have been one of the hot topics of comparative politics, particularly since the Southern European transitions of the 1970s, the Latin American transitions of the 1980s, and the post-Soviet and Eastern European transitions of the 1990s. There exist fairly well developed models of democratic change, built on the experiences of these regions. Unfortunately, these recent models have generally dismissed the international factors as being insignificant explanatory variables (Pridham 1991c, pp. 1-3). As a result, we do not have at our disposal a theoretical model in which to conduct our present analysis of the effects of the international factors on the democratic transition in Turkey at the end of the Second World War. For the purposes of this paper, I have developed a general approach to internal-external interaction, using the slightly modified forms of the basic concepts and relations of Robert Dahl's (1971) and Adam Przeworski's (1986) well-known models of authoritarian breakdown and democratic transition.

Przeworski conceives the "critical threshold in the transition to democracy" as the occurrence of conflicts and power struggles within the **ruling bloc**. When the intra-bloc conflicts cannot be resolved in the usual ways, some groups from the ruling bloc begin to appeal for support to forces until that moment excluded from politics by the authoritarian regime. As a result, the ruling bloc disintegrates *qua* bloc. When the breakdown of the ruling bloc begins, there emerge the **hardliners** and the **softliners** within the ruling bloc, and the **moderates** and the **maximalists** among the opposition. With the disintegration of the ruling bloc, political competition, though still in rudimentary form, begins. From that moment on, the question is whether the ruling bloc will tolerate its political competitors to grow up and put up a major challenge to its rule (Przeworski 1986, pp. 50-56).

What roles can the international factors play in this process? To account for the effects of the international factors on authoritarian breakdown and democratic development, we can rely on Dahl's classic condition for a government to tolerate the opposition, namely, that the expected costs of suppression must exceed the expected costs of toleration (Dahl 1971, p. 15). If Dahl's condition holds, then the internal relations of forces will, by themselves, lead to the breakdown of the authoritarian regime, and the international factors favoring democracy, if any, will play at most a facilitating role in that event. If Dahl's condition does **not** hold, however, the international factors may exert a more than facilitating, and at the initial stages actually determining, impact on the process of authoritarian breakdown and democratization.

Even if the expected internal costs of suppression are well below the expected internal costs of toleration, an authoritarian government may still contemplate liberalization and

democratization under the influence of what can be called the **expected external benefits of democratization**. The expected external benefits of democratization could be many, ranging from enhancing the state's general international prestige, to countering the criticisms of international human rights organizations, obtaining trade concessions and economic aid from the democratic states, or qualifying for membership in the respected international organizations such as the NATO and the EU. Once a more liberal environment is thus created with the thrust of the external factors, the weaker factions of the ruling bloc will see in these new conditions an opportunity to forge alliances with groups outside the bloc and to renegotiate the terms of their coalition with the more powerful intrabloc factions. In other words, external factors may well prepare the ground for what Przeworski calls as the "critical threshold in the transition to democracy", by causing the occurrence of conflicts and power struggles within the ruling bloc and thereby creating the conditions for its consequent disintegration.

The determining influence of the international factors may extend well beyond the moment of disintegration of the ruling bloc, if the powers of the emerging opposition forces are not at a level to deter the government from using coercive means to curb the growth of the opposition. Under these circumstances, even though the government can easily suppress the dissidents given the favorable internal distribution of forces, it may still choose to tolerate them because of what can be called the **expected external costs of suppression**. The expected external costs of suppression could be of three kinds. First, they could mean the inability of a state to obtain the expected external benefits of democratization and therefore the continuation of the existing status quo. Second, they might imply the withdrawal of some of the already acquired external benefits and thereby a return to the status quo ante. Third, and worse, they could entail a fall to a lower international status than the existing one. The government's apprehension of a negative reaction from the democratic foreign powers will thus protect the opposition like a shield and provide it with the necessary maturation time during which it will fortify its internal support base. And once the opposition manages to organize internal deterrents against the possible suppressive acts of the government, a situation of an internal balance of forces will occur, which is the necessary condition of the inauguration of a self-sustaining competitive regime.

### **3. The Foreign Impulse, The Kemalist Ruling Bloc's Decision to Democratize the Regime, and Its Breakdown qua Bloc: From the Spring of 1945 to the First Multi-Party Elections in July 1946**

At the end of the World War II Turkey's international standing was at its lowest level due to the Turkish government's constant refusals to participate in the war on the Allied side and its conciliatory, and at times openly collaborative, policies towards Nazi Germany in the initial years of the war. All the Allies were critical of Turkey's war record, but the harshest criticisms were coming from the Soviets who were accusing the Turkish government of being fascist and reactionary. At the same time the Soviets were proposing to renew the Turco-Soviet "special friendship" of the interwar years, on the condition that Turkey accept active Soviet participation in the defense of the Turkish Straits (Erkin 1968, pp. 253-255; United States. Department of State 1969a, pp. 1234-1237). What made matters even worse for the Turks was that Great Britain and the USA did not seem to be opposed to the idea of the re-establishment of the Turco-Soviet "special relationship" of the interwar years, not even

to its extension to include Soviet participation in the defense of the Turkish Straits (Erkin 1968, p. 251; United States. Department of State 1969a, pp. 1239-1241).

From the point of view of the Kemalist ruling bloc any reinstatement of "special relations" with the USSR would result in its eventual deposition from power by Soviet-backed groups in and out of the state and would turn Turkey into a Soviet dependency. In his memoirs, President İnönü, the leader of the dominant faction of the Kemalist ruling bloc, says:

"The Russians proposed a joint defense of the Straits. The Russian forces would settle on the Straits area. Then Russia would keep coming up with new demands as the requirements of the joint defense. Their status in our country would be no different than their status in the eastern European countries which they had occupied. I made my decision immediately: Our answer would be no. I did not rely on any foreign power in making my decision. However, I was thinking that the Anglo-Saxons would not like Russia to hold the door to the Mediterranean." (Toker 1990, p. 138).

The prevention of the re-establishment of the "special friendship", or for that matter any kind of friendship, with the USSR thus became for the Kemalist ruling bloc a question of its own political survival. Starting from that premise, the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership, the dominant group of the Kemalist ruling bloc, followed two policies to guarantee the continuation of their domestic power.

The first policy was to repress all the alternative political cadres and opposition groups that the government deemed were congenial to and manipulatable by the Soviets. The second policy was to try to win the approval of the USA for reintegrating Turkey firmly and fully with the US-led Western world, as this was the best and most secure way of preventing international isolation of Turkey that would eventually give way to dependency on the USSR. The question then became what to do to obtain the approval and support of the USA. Rephrasing a paragraph from Robert Jervis: If the Turkish leaders were to decide intelligently how to act, they had to predict how the US would behave. If they sought to influence the US, they needed to estimate how the US would react to the alternative policies they could adopt. Even if their actions did not affect the actions of the US, they needed to know how the US would act in order to tailor their actions accordingly (Jervis 1976, p. 32).

### **3.1. The Kemalist Ruling Bloc's Struggle under Uncertainty to Win American Friendship**

In early 1945, the US was in many respects a big unknown for the Turkish decision-makers. The Turkish leaders had access neither to the much-needed current information on the decision-makers and decision-making mechanisms of the US in matters of foreign policy, nor did they have a pool of historical information which they could reasonably rely on in formulating their foreign and domestic strategies for winning the support of the US against the USSR. In early 1945 there was at least one thing about the US, however, which the Turkish leaders knew for certain. These were what I call the **revealed ideals** of the US. By the revealed ideals of a state I mean public statements by its leaders regarding the general criteria of political regime, economic system, and foreign policy

orientation on which they would judge another state a friend or a foe. At the end of the war, as it had been at the beginning, the revealed ideal of the US was the victory of freedom and democracy over dictatorship. It was President Roosevelt who was the chief architect of the Atlantic Declaration of August 1941 which openly cited freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom from poverty, and freedom from fear as the four basic principles which the US was fighting for. The Turkish regime, with its single party, "National Chief", censorship of the press, and anti-minority discriminatory policies involved none of these principles, and looked very much like the regimes which cost the USA hundreds of thousands of lives and huge sums of money to destroy. The Turkish regime was certainly a foe, rather than a friend, of the US with respect to the latter's revealed ideals.

The second thing which the Turkish leaders knew for certain was that their foreign policies, particularly during the initial years of the Second World War, was supportive of Nazi Germany, and the Americans did not like it and protested it on many occasions even to the point of excluding Turkey from the Lend-Lease aid program in October 1941 when Turkey concluded a commercial agreement with Germany.

The third information with any certainty concerning the US policy towards Turkey was that the Americans were sympathizing with the Soviet argument that the USSR must participate in the defense of the Turkish Straits because the Turks proved their unreliability by letting the German warships pass through the Straits and thus seriously hampering the security of the USSR. On the issue of the Soviet demands for Turkish territory, the attitude of the Americans was at best indifferent to and at worst supportive for the Soviet position.

Moreover, the political and economic regime of Turkey, with its party-state fusion and state ownership of the means of production, was in many respects similar to Soviet Communism rather than to Western democracy and capitalism. Hence, it was very difficult for the Turkish government to argue that Turkey was part of the West to be protected against assimilation by the USSR through a "special friendship". In fact, the existing political and economic institutions of Turkey could very well be used to justify just the opposite argument, that Turkey was part of the Soviet world to be protected against the West. Hence, it was necessary for the Turkish government to prove that Turkey and Russia belonged to different political and economic worlds.

The Turks, and every other nation in the world, knew well the revealed ideals of the US, but they did not know its "basic intentions", which refer to a state's willingness to run risks and make sacrifices to further its revealed ideals (Jervis 1976, p. 50). The knowledge of America's basic intentions required both historical as well as current information about its foreign policy decisions, decision-makers, and decision-making mechanisms, and the Turkish leaders severely lacked both types of information. In the absence of reliable information about America's basic intentions, the best shot of the Turkish leaders was to design their strategy of winning American support on the basis of America's revealed ideals. Therefore, democratic reform, in particular a limited and controlled opening whose worst outcome in terms of losing power seemed highly unlikely, was seen to be a very useful and a rather "inexpensive" action to make a positive influence on the US policy towards Turkey.

It was under these considerations that the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership gave the first two major signals of liberalization and democratization on 25 April and 19 May 1945,

right after the USSR expressed its conditions for the renewal of the Turkish-Soviet "special friendship" on March 19 and right before the conclusion of the San Francisco Conference on June 26.

President İnönü gave the following instruction to the head of the Turkish delegation at the San Francisco Conference:

"The Americans may ask you when we will establish a multi-party regime. You will give the following answer to this question: 'In the history of the Turkish Republic Atatürk was the great reformer. The role of İnönü will be to institutionalize the reforms and to establish full democracy, which was also the intention of Atatürk himself.' İnönü would like to have done this before. The many dangers and problems that came with war held him back. It is the greatest desire of the President to achieve this goal as soon as the war will be over." (Ünal 1994, pp. 123-127).

İnönü's message was communicated not only to the Americans but also to the whole world through the Reuters, and found its way back to Turkey where it was interpreted by the dissidents as a clear signal for coming up to the daylight from the underground. Upon receiving İnönü's instruction, the chief Turkish delegate to the San Francisco Conference declared to the Reuters correspondent that "The Republican regime, as a political institution, is determinedly progressing on the way to modern democracy. Our constitution can be compared with the constitutions of the most advanced countries..." (Karpas 1959, p. 141).

İnönü's second signal for democratization came on 19 May 1945, during the San Francisco Conference, in a speech he gave on the occasion of the Youth Day: "... the political regime and the government of the people established by the Republican regime shall develop in all aspects and in every way, and as the conditions imposed by war disappear, democratic principles will gradually acquire a larger place in the political and cultural life of the country." (Karpas 1959, p. 141).

Upon these two objective signals of the President promising a more liberal attitude towards the opposition, the four prominent Civilian Kemalist Leaders (Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan, Fuat Köprülü, and Adnan Menderes) decided that it was their time to act for enhancing their status vis-a-vis their major partner in the Kemalist ruling bloc. Thus, on 7 June 1945, they presented the National Assembly group of the Republican People's Party (RPP) with the following three demands, which would later come to be known as *Dörtlülük Takrir* (The Manifesto of the Four):

1. In accordance with the word and spirit of our Constitution, to take every measure that will establish the Assembly's control [over the administration], which is the real basis of national sovereignty.
2. To ensure for the citizens full use of their individual rights, as envisaged by the Constitution.
3. To reorganize all the activities of the party on the basis of the principles mentioned above." (Topuz and Ünsal 1984, pp. 135-136).

In their manifesto, the four Civilian Kemalist Leaders (Bayar, Koraltan, Köprülü and Menderes) were proposing democratic changes in the intra-party structures. However, this

was really an attempt to conquer the RPP from within (Ağaoğlu 1972, pp. 83-87; Goloğlu 1982, pp. 33-35). The Manifesto was duly rejected by the RPP Assembly Group upon the instruction of the President. The Manifesto is an excellent document for an analysis of the sources of legitimacy referred to by the Civilian Kemalist Leaders: the Constitution (it was basically democratic), Atatürk (he always wanted democracy), political maturity of the people (the reforms were assimilated by the people and there was no need for worrying about religious reaction and restricting rights and freedoms on that basis), and the victory of the democratic powers in the war (if Turkey would want to be part of the Western world, it would have to adopt the political regime of the West).

The Manifesto of the Four was followed by the campaign of two opposition newspapers, *Vatan* and *Tan* (both of them published by the only Turks of the time -- Ahmet Emin Yalman and Sabiha and Zekeriya Sertel -- who had studied journalism at Columbia University) for more rights and freedoms. The four Civilian Kemalist Leaders (especially Köprülü and Menderes) were also frequent contributors to these newspapers. Major demands for liberalization voiced in these newspapers were freedom of the press, amendment of the Associations Law, amendment of the Penal Law, amendment of the Police Law, autonomy for the universities, direct elections, and the separation of the Presidency from the chairmanship of a political party (Yalman 1956, pp. 221-251; Güvenir 1991).

One basic argument for the demands for political opening was that it was required by the norms of the United Nations Organization which Turkey was about to join and by the standards of the Western civilization which Turkey was trying to identify itself with (Karpaz 1959, pp. 148-152; Toker 1990, pp. 25-74). On 15 August 1945, on the day when the National Assembly convened to vote for the ratification of the San Francisco Treaty, Adnan Menderes said: "By ratifying the UN Charter we do not commit ourselves to anything that is not consistent with our Constitution. However, there are undeniable inconsistencies between our Constitution and the de facto state of affairs in the country. Hence, I wish we could use the ratification of the UN Charter as an opportunity to repeal these inconsistencies." (Toker 1990, pp. 71-72).

President İnönü's response to these demands was an even stronger signal for democratization. That signal came in the form of a speech he gave on 1 November 1945, on the opening day of the National Assembly. In his speech, İnönü said that in the early days of the Republic the radical reforms, such as adopting the Latin Alphabet and establishing secularism, could not have been carried out under a democratic regime. However, he added, democratic character had been intrinsic in the foundation of the Republic and that dictatorship had never been accepted in principle. The Turkish regime's only democratic shortcoming, argued İnönü, was the absence of an opposition party. He therefore invited the RPP dissidents, i.e. the Civilian Kemalist Leaders, to come out and found a political party of their own rather than trying to conquer the RPP from within. The president also promised to take measures that would expand freedom of speech and to make the necessary legal amendments for preparing the ground for free and fair multiparty elections in the span of two years (İnönü 1993, pp. 54-64).

The response of the signatories of the Manifesto of the Four to that unequivocal signal for democratization was to leave the RPP to found an opposition party. Hence, on 7 January 1946 the Civilian Kemalist Leaders founded the Democrat Party (DP). The Civilianized



Kemalist Leadership allowed the formation of the DP but it was hoping that the new party would not establish organizations in the eastern part of the country, in border provinces and in villages, would limit its activities to a few provinces deemed to be politically advanced enough to accept new ideas, and would not advance claims for power for at least forty to fifty years to come, thus playing the part of an ornament for democracy (Bozdağ 1991, pp. 15-16).

The program of the party of the Civilian Kemalist Leaders' was similar in content to that of the RPP. The Democrats adopted the six principles of Kemalism, though they placed a different emphasis on each of them. In particular, they underemphasized, and did not hesitate to scold the excesses of, statism, secularism and revolutionism, while overemphasizing populism, nationalism, and republicanism. Their main line of attack focused on the oppressive and much-hated "bureaucrat", promising to curb government control and increase individual freedom. The Democrats also committed themselves to reduce government intervention in the economy and to rely on the private sector in matters of economic development (Demokrat Parti 1952).

### **3.2. Failed Attempts of the Civilian Kemalist Leaders to Forge Alliances with the Disaffected Bureaucrats, the Liberal Intelligentsia, and the Discontented Young Officers**

Here's a summary of what happened so far. Foreign factors forced the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership to open up the regime. The Civilian Kemalist Leaders saw in this an opportunity to enhance their status in the Kemalist ruling bloc. They first attempted to conquer the RPP from within by means of the Manifesto of the Four. When that failed, they left the RPP (the party of the Kemalist ruling bloc) and founded a new party (the DP). That act symbolized the breakdown of the Kemalist ruling bloc *qua* bloc. The Civilian Kemalist Leaders went outside for support, but who was out there that would give a meaningful support to them? That is to say, which individuals or groups commanded enough resources that could eventually develop into a meaningful restraint on the suppressive acts of the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership if it decided to crush the opposition movement led by its former partner in the Kemalist ruling bloc?

The first group the Civilian Kemalist Leaders could turn to for support consisted of the small but influential group of **Disaffected Bureaucrats**, which included people who had been purged from their high positions in the Kemalist ruling bloc during the presidency of İsmet İnönü. Hence, differences in opinions notwithstanding, each of the Disaffected Bureaucrats had an account to settle with the president.

The most prominent member of this group was no doubt the former Chief of the General Staff Marshal Fevzi Çakmak. Marshal Çakmak had served as Chief of the General Staff from 1922 until his forced retirement by President İnönü in January 1944. A former Ottoman War Minister and the second soldier, with Atatürk, to have risen to the highest rank of Marshal in the Turkish army, Çakmak resented İnönü and he was contemplating to replace him as president<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>Cihat Baban, a prominent journalist in the 1940s, wrote in his memoirs that although a devout Muslim and a staunch anti-communist, the Marshal was not opposed to the idea of friendship with the USSR. In his

Besides Marshal Çakmak, the Disaffected Bureaucrats included such people as Tevfik Rüştü Aras (1883-1972), a medical doctor and minister of foreign affairs between 1925-1938 and Cami Baykut (1877-1958), a former soldier and minister of the interior in the first Kemalist government in Ankara between 1920-1922. Tevfik Rüştü Aras was the architect of the Turkish-Soviet friendship treaty of 1925 and a staunch supporter of the continuation of that friendship in the postwar era. Cami Baykut too was a bureaucrat of the era of Kemalist-Leninist alliance against Western imperialism and he was willing to see that alliance to continue through the postwar years (Baban 1970, pp. 102-117; Toker 1990, pp. 47-55).

Aras and Baykut were not alone in their support for the idea of friendship with the USSR. The **Liberal Intellectuals** in the press and the academia, most of them foreign-educated and some of them being among the very few Turks who had been educated in the US, were extremely critical for the anti-Soviet posture of the state leadership during and after the Second World War. The liberal intellectuals were also fully supportive for Turkey's rapprochement with the United States, but not at the cost of alienating the Soviet Union. Among the most influential liberal intellectuals in the press were Sabiha Sertel (1895-1968) and his husband Zekeriya Sertel (1890-1980). Both of them were graduates of Columbia University and they were the publishers of the daily *Tan*. In the academia, Mehmet Ali Aybar (1908-1995), Pertev Naili Boratav (b.1907), Behice Boran (1910-1987), and Niyazi Berkes (1908-1988) stood out as the defenders of the liberal values. Two of them, Boran and Berkes, held graduate degrees from the US universities, which was extremely rare among the Turkish professor in the 1940s.

It should be noted that, although small in number, disorganized, and devoid of organic connections with the masses, the Liberal Intelligentsia constituted the only alternative elite group outside the Kemalist ruling bloc, involving some of the best educated and intellectually most productive persons in the country (Aybar 1988, pp. 9-70, 101-110; Karakuş 1977, pp. 73-131; Mumcu 1993, pp. 90-163). In the eyes of the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership of the state the disaffected bureaucrats, with the support of the liberal intellectuals, were most likely to accept the good offices of the Soviet Union to try a comeback to power

The third potential support group for the Civilian Kemalist Leaders involved the **Discontented Young Officers**, who were deeply affected by the shabbiness and impotence of the Turkish army in comparison to the modern armies of the Second World War, and put the blame on the old-fashioned commanders and their allies in the Kemalist ruling bloc. Although severely discontented, the young officers also saw themselves as the guardians of

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conversations with Baban, Çakmak always referred to how the Soviets had supported the Turkish War of Independence and how Atatürk himself had always been very sensitive on maintaining Turkish-Soviet friendship. Friend of the USSR and communist were two different things according to Çakmak. Çakmak's problem was with President İsmet İnönü. Çakmak, together with İnönü and Atatürk, was a founding father of modern Turkey and a living legend for the Turkish people. He was bitter of the fact that İnönü sent him into retirement in 1944, after nearly 22 years of service as Chief of the General Staff. He just wanted to take revenge, by unseating İnönü and becoming president in his place. At one point, he even said that he would not turn down the good offices of the Russians for overthrowing the İnönü dictatorship (Baban 1970, pp. 92-117).

the Kemalist revolution and this ensured their loyalty to the President who personified Kemalism.

Three later events helped the young officers to withdraw their loyalties from their commanders and from the President and the RPP. The first event was the breakdown of the personalistic control of the military by the end of the war. For most of the one-party regime the military was placed under the command and control of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, who was himself a leading member of the Kemalist ruling bloc. This personalistic control of the military establishment was continued until President İnönü forced Marshal Çakmak to retirement in 1944. Between 1944 and 1949 İnönü appointed loyal generals as Chiefs of the General Staff. In 1949, the National Assembly passed a law which reorganized and institutionalized civil-military relations, by placing the Chief of the General Staff under the Minister of Defense.

The second event was the arrival of American military materiel and American officers in 1947. The newly established military relations with the United States in the late 1940s, contacts with American officers, and access to state-of-the-art war materiel created deep-seated divisions between the *Americanist* young officers and the old Pashas of the German school, whom the former pejoratively referred to as the *Prussians*. At the same time, the American connection boosted the self-confidence of the young-officers, because it was them who first acquired the knowledge of the new weapons and mastered the new war techniques, and this quickly raised them militarily in a superior position relative to their antiquated commanders.

The third event that helped the young officers to shift their loyalties from the President and the RPP to the DP was the opposition party's demonstration of its Kemalist credentials by purging from its ranks all the anti-Kemalist persons and groups, a continual process that finally resulted in the formation of a third party, the Sunni-conservative Nation Party, in July 1948. It was after these three critical developments that a group of young officers formed a secret organization and concluded a secret pact with the Civilian Kemalist Leaders organized in the DP, to the effect that the officers would have protected the DP against government repression and electoral misdoings and in return the DP would have made a sweeping military reform if it had come to power (Belen 1971, pp. 25-40; Kurtbek 1991)<sup>6</sup>.

As it was said before, the loyalties of the young officers would shift towards the opposition late in the transition process, right before the elections of 1950, and it was only then that the opposition party would acquire a powerful domestic deterrent against the suppression of the government. Until the officer support materialized in early 1950, however, the only *potential* coalition that could pose a meaningful restraint on government suppression could be the one that brought together the charismatic authority and bureaucratic connections of the Disaffected Bureaucrats and the propaganda and communications skills of

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<sup>6</sup>For more information on the Discontented Young Officers and the military in general see Hale (1994, pp. 59-119) and Özdağ (1991, pp. 95-169). After the DP came to power in the May 1950 elections, two influential members of the young officers' junta, Fahri Belen and Seyfi Kurtbek, were given cabinet seats and the DP government immediately purged the military top brass; however, the new government stopped short of undertaking a thorough military reform as it had promised. The ex-officer members of the government stepped down in protest.

the Liberal Intellectuals. And it was to these two groups that the Civilian Kemalist Leaders initially turned for support for their opposition movement.

The Civilianized Kemalist Leadership sensed the dangers of the potential coalition between the Civilian Kemalist Leaders of the DP, the Disaffected Bureaucrats, and the Liberal Intellectuals. And it designed its own plans to prevent that coalition from materializing. The first blows targeted the weakest group among the three, the Liberal Intellectuals. On 4 December 1945, in Istanbul, government-provoked university students, aided by the police, destroyed the headquarters and printing facilities of the daily *Tan*, published by Zekeriya Sertel and Sabiha Sertel. This event, known as the *Tan Affair*, was followed by similar attacks of government-provoked student mobs on the persons and properties of the Liberal Intellectuals. While the Liberal Intellectuals were being dealt with by the government, the process of building an alliance between the Civilian Kemalist Leaders of the DP and the Disaffected Bureaucrats broke down because of the irresolvable struggles between the two groups for the leadership of the opposition movement (Baban 1970, pp. 95-122; Goloğlu 1982, pp. 41-70).

As a result, the dangerous liaison between the Civilian Kemalist Leaders of the DP, the Disaffected Bureaucrats, and the Liberal Intellectuals failed to materialize. The DP leaders were not able to build up a domestic coalition that could deter government suppression. The expected domestic costs of suppression was so low that "It was widely acknowledged that in those days İnönü could have had the new party closed down by simply sending a few gendarmes to the DP headquarters." (Ahmad 1977, p. 17). What stood between government suppression and the opposition was the expected external costs of suppression, i.e., the belief of the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership of the state that its retreat from the experiment with democratization might stir a negative US reaction and hamper its efforts to obtain the US support against the threatening Soviet Union.

Partly because of its self-confidence for having successfully obstructed the coalition of the Civilian Kemalist Leaders, the Disaffected Bureaucrats, and the Liberal Intelligentsia, and partly out of its conviction that its policy of liberalization and democratization did serve its foreign policy strategy of securing the alliance of the US, the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership undertook a series of liberalization decisions in the spring and summer of 1946. These liberal reforms in the fields of freedom of press and freedom of association were so thorough that "In a matter of months the Republicans abolished or greatly liberalized many of the restrictions that took them 25 years to impose." (Karpas 1959, p. 158).

And the first elections with the participation of the DP were held on 21 July 1946. So far the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership was largely experimenting with liberalization and things were going more or less fine. The elections were the first real test for their commitment to democratization. And they failed in the test. The elections were completely rigged. The results, which were declared a couple of weeks after the elections, showed the following distribution: Out of the 465 total seats the RPP won 395, the DP 64, and the independents 6 (Toker 1990, pp. 112-124). The success of the DP in the polls showed to the government that if liberalization and democratization were let go in full speed, then the opposition party would rapidly grow into an unstoppable force.

#### **4. The Authoritarian Interlude: From the Elections of July 1946 to the Reconciliation Pact of 12 July 1947**

Immediately after the Turkish leaders took the second major democratizing step in democratization and allowed the opposition party to run in the elections, the US gave strong signals that it was revising its policy towards Turkey and adopting a more tougher stance against the Soviet plans for Turkey (Kuniholm 1980, pp. 355-378). The clearest proof of the new US posture was no doubt the US reply to the USSR when the latter renewed its military base demands from Turkey in its notes of August and September 1946 (United States. Department of State 1969b, pp. 827-893).

From the perspective of the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership, the change in the US policy was indicative of the lessening (but certainly not the disappearance) of the expected external costs of using authoritarian methods to check the growth of the opposition of the Civilian Kemalist Leaders. Therefore, beginning with the fall of 1946, the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership brought its liberalization and democratization policies to a standstill and adopted a more authoritarian posture for dealing with the opposition. The authoritarian interlude came to end when the expected external costs of suppression rose again when the US President Truman proclaimed his famous doctrine in March 1947, in which he conditioned US aid to Turkey on progress towards democracy. The period until the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine was a period of "struggle to assure the survival of the opposition ... [and] the most important period to root the multi-party system in Turkey." (Karpas 1959, p. 169).

The clearest sign that the Civilianized Kemalist government was making a turn back to authoritarianism came on 5 August 1946, at which date İnönü appointed the chief hardliner Recep Peker as Prime Minister. İnönü endowed Peker with two critical missions. The first one was to suppress the Disaffected Bureaucrats, and particularly the charismatic authority of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak. Peker's second mission was to shrink the power bases of the Civilian Kemalist Leaders and to reduce their party to an ineffectual organization that would put no real danger to the RPP while saving the democratic appearance of the regime.

The threat posed by Marshal Çakmak was indeed serious. When the government rigged the July 1946 elections, Marshal Çakmak had stood out and declared the elections illegitimate (He too was elected deputy as an independent on the DP ticket). His words found immediate echo in the big cities as well as in the rural areas, who saw in the Marshal the long-awaited Pasha that would save them from the oppression of the one-party regime. The powers of a charismatic pasha, a hero of the War of Independence, were apparently greater and more credible for the Turkish people rather than the capabilities of the relatively unknown and civilian leaders of the DP. Other members of the group of the Disaffected Bureaucrats (most prominently Tevfik Rüştü Aras and Cami Baykut) as well as the Liberal Intellectuals were also provoking the Marshal to assume the leadership of a popular movement. The people showed their support for the Marshal when thousands of them hailed him in the Istanbul train station on his way to Ankara to take his seat in the National Assembly. In the Ankara train station the Marshal was greeted by another mass of people. After these developments, Marshal Çakmak declared himself as the savior of the people (Baban 1970, pp. 102-117; Toker 1990, pp. 125-148). On 20 October 1946 Marshal Fevzi Çakmak and other prominent members of the Disaffected Bureaucrats came together and

founded the Human Rights Association. The Association's declared objective was to promote the rights and freedoms as they were defined in the UN Charter.

In the eyes of the government, however, the Human Rights Association was nothing but a political party that would carry the Marshal and the Disaffected Bureaucrats to power, possibly with the tacit help of the Russians. The pro-government press immediately began attacking Marshal Çakmak and accused him of trying to overthrow the government in collaboration with the communists. Çakmak felt the danger which was in the air and immediately severed his relations with the Human Rights Association (Goloğlu 1982, pp. 130-138; Mumcu 1993, pp. 96-118).

On 16 December 1946 Peker swiftly moved on to suppress the left and the newly founded labor unions. Two political parties (The Socialist Party of Turkey and the Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey), almost all trade unions formed exclusively after the amendment in the Associations Law had permitted establishment of associations on class basis, and six left-wing periodicals were closed down by the martial law authorities on the grounds that they served foreign interests (Küçük 1987, p. 386).

The Democrat Party leaders knew that Peker's next target was their party and themselves. They did not have any retaliatory power that would make the government think twice before engaging in such illicit and repressive tactics. They had, however, one effective deterrent, and it was the threat of committing political suicide. The DP leaders knew that if they themselves closed their party under government duress, then that would damage the democratic appearance of the Turkish regime. They calculated that the government would not take that risk given its belief that keeping at least the appearance of democracy was necessary for not losing the support of the US. Hence, on 11 January 1947, the DP issued a declaration, known as the Freedom Charter (*Hürriyet Misakı*), in which it was basically telling the government that if it came down on the DP, the DP would withdraw from the parliament and from politics (Eroğul 1990, pp. 22-25; Goloğlu 1982, pp. 151-156).

However, the government had one last tactic in stock, which would ensure the repression of the DP with only negligible negative reaction from the US. And it was to portray the leaders of the DP as communist fellow-travelers (Toker 1990, pp. 147-148). Hence, on 29 January 1947, only two weeks later than the declaration of the DP's *Freedom Charter*, the Minister of the Interior made a long speech in the Grand National Assembly in which he claimed that he had strong evidence of a secret pact between the Communists, Democrats, and Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (Küçük 1987, pp. 262-263; Mumcu 1993, pp. 113-128). The Democrat leaders and Marshal Çakmak vehemently denied the Minister's claims. However, they decided that the only way to effectively avert the government's accusations was to use the same weapon against it. Hence, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak and the chairman of the DP's Istanbul Branch Kenan Öner accused the RPP of protecting the communists, and they concentrated their attacks on the former Minister of Education Hasan Ali Yücel, and indirectly on President İnönü himself, because Yücel was a *protégé* of İnönü (Goloğlu 1982, pp. 157-159; Küçük 1987, p. 428).

What prevented the government from continuing with repression was again an external event: The proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, which dramatically raised the expected external costs of suppression. According to Metin Toker, the biographer and

son-in-law of the Turkish President İsmet İnönü, when İnönü was told of Truman's speech committing US military support for Turkey against the USSR he "was awakened from his worst nightmares" and that he was as relieved as in the summer of 1941 when the German armies in the Balkans had turned north to attack the USSR instead of occupying Turkey on the south (Toker 1990, pp. 173-174).

On 12 March 1947, the next day Turkey became a member of the IMF and the IBRD, President Truman made his famous speech to a joint session of the Congress, in which he said in unequivocal terms that the justification for his request of military aid to Greece and Turkey is to protect freedom and democracy against internal subversion and external aggression (Paterson 1989, pp. 297-300).

More importantly, maybe the reference to democracy and freedom was mere rhetoric for the more *real politicker* US Administration, but the US Congress, and especially the US media and the general public, took these concepts quite seriously. So much so that, during the Congressional debates on the Truman Aid Bill in April-May 1947, the dictatorial practices of the Turkish government was subjected to harsh criticisms by the many respected members of Congress, distinguished media figures and almost all the public witnesses. The criticisms even reached the point when some Representatives proposed to exclude Turkey from the Bill (United States. Congress 1947a and 1947b). After all, it was the Congress which had the last word on the aid bill, and on the amount and type of the aid. Moreover, the aid was given on a yearly basis, and this meant that every year there would be a Congressional debate on the aid, with all the risks that implied. Finally, the Truman Aid Bill committed US military aid to Turkey, but it did not commit yet the US itself to come to the defense of Turkey in case of external aggression. In other words, there was still no formal bilateral defense treaty between the US and Turkey, and the Turkish leaders would love having one.

Moreover, in June 1947, immediately after the Congressional approval of the Truman Aid Bill which committed the US to furnish military aid to Greece and Turkey, a much more comprehensive US economic aid program for Europe was introduced by Secretary of State George C. Marshall, which later came to be known as the Marshall Plan for European Recovery. The Turkish government, in addition to the military aid they were promised to get under the Truman Doctrine, also wanted to receive US economic aid by being included in the Marshall Plan. The Turkish government's aspiration of receiving a fair share out of the Marshall Plan made it even riskier for it to alienate the US decision-makers, by putting an end to the already shaky democratic experiment and making a U-turn back to a regime which was diametrically opposed to all the revealed ideals and recommendations of the US.

All these considerations entered the calculation of İnönü and the other Turkish leaders for deciding on whether or not to go on with liberalization and democratization. And their decision was a positive one. Hence, it can be safely assumed that in the period following the Truman Doctrine the external constraints constituted again the main expected costs of suppression for the government.

Beginning with the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, and particularly throughout the Congressional debates on the Truman Aid Bill in April-May 1947, there was a considerable softening in the policies of the government. Hence, in the

course of June 1947 President İnönü met the DP Chairman Celal Bayar several times for finding a way of reconciliation. The DP leader recommended that the President issue a public statement which would give definite assurances that the government would not employ oppressive methods against the opposition and that it would guarantee free elections (Toker 1990, pp. 180-185). President İnönü accepted Bayar's requests and on 12 July 1947 delivered a public message, known as the 12 July Declaration, in which he reiterated his commitment to democratization and announced that he was at equal distance to the government and opposition parties (Topuz and Ünsal, 1984: 137-139).

It should be noted that the July 12 Declaration was not a unilateral proclamation of goodwill on the part of the President. It was rather the product of a month-long meetings and deliberations between the RPP and DP leaders. Therefore, it marked the constitution of a **pact** between the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership in the government and the Civilian Kemalist Leaders in the opposition. More than that, it also signified the formation of a pact between the softliners in the government and the moderates in the opposition against the hardliners and the maximalists in their ranks. The reconciliation pact was announced by President İnönü on the same day as the Turkish-US Agreement on Military Aid was signed at Ankara. Hence, his declaration was a message to the Americans as much as it was to the Turks. The reconciliation pact of 12 July 1947 constituted the point of no return in the Turkish transition to democracy. The opposition welcomed the President's speech. The next day, the DP chairman Celal Bayar said that the speech had "historical value" and that it was "an expression of good will and foresight" (Karpas 1959, p. 192). After the 12 July Declaration the softening of the government's policies continued, and finally resulted on 9 September 1947 in the forced resignation of the hardliner Prime Minister Recep Peker.

## **5. The Smooth Path Leading from the Reconciliation Pact of 12 July 1947 to the Founding Elections of 14 May 1950**

The period from Peker's forced resignation on 9 September 1947 to the first competitive elections on 14 May 1950 was marked by two developments: (1) intensive elimination of the hardliners in the government party and of the maximalists in the main opposition party; and (2) continual shift of the RPP ideology to the right, towards that of the DP, making the DP as the ideological agenda setter and the RPP its follower.

### **5.1 The Collaboration of the Softliners and the Moderates and the Elimination of the Hardliners and the Maximalists.**

The major hardliner elimination from the RPP came in November 1947, during the party's 7th Convention. The Convention moved the hardliners away from the positions of influence in the party and the government. There were rumors that the hardliner would leave the RPP to found a Kemalist party (Toker 1990, pp. 193-208). The second major step of marginalizing the Kemalist hardliners and shifting the RPP ideology to the right was the appointment of Şemsettin Günaltay, known for his strong religious-conservative credentials, as Prime Minister on 16 January 1949.

The opposition party, on its part, was dealing with its ultra nationalist, anti-secularist, or anti-Kemalist maximalists. In March and April 1948, eighteen maximalist deputies



(making up over one-third) of the Assembly Group and six members (constituting one third) of the Central Committee of the DP were expelled or otherwise forced to resign from the party. The expelled deputies formed the Independent Democrats group in the National Assembly. In July 1948, some of the nationalist and religious radicals who had been purged out of the DP came together and formed the far-right Nation Party, with Marshal Fevzi Çakmak being the party's honorary chairman. The last and definitive battle between the moderate leadership of the DP and the maximalist intraparty opposition was fought in June 1949, during the party's second general congress. In that congress, the moderates successfully obstructed the efforts of the Independent Democrats and other maximalists for a comeback. Having lost their last chance of gaining the control of the DP, the Independent Democrats, together with the other maximalists, joined the newly founded Nation Party (Toker 1990, pp. 210-234).

The Nation Party, chaired by very popular and prestigious Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, posed a real challenge for both the RPP and the DP. So they made a tactical alliance against the Nation Party. On 16 November 1949 the Nation Party leaders were suddenly arrested on charge of plotting to assassinate President İnönü and DP Chairman Bayar. The accused were soon released, but their arrest was a clear signal that the government, in complicity with the main opposition party, was determined to stop the Nation Party at all costs. What "saved" both the RPP and the DP from the challenge of the Nation Party was that the Nation Party's charismatic leader, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, conveniently died on 10 April 1950, just a month before the general elections. The Nation Party turned its deceased leader's funeral into a show of force of nationalist and religious radicalism. The RPP and the DP issued a joint communique on 18 April 1950 condemning the Nation Party's anti-Kemalism (Ahmad and Ahmad 1976, p. 64).

The tactical alliance between the softliner leadership of the RPP and the moderate cadres of the DP gave one positive result, which was the new election law of 16 February 1950, meeting the basic demands of the DP: secret balloting, open counting, and judicial control.

There was one momentous international event in the period following the reconciliation pact of 12 July 1947: The establishment of NATO on 4 April 1949, marking the beginning of the institutionalization of the Cold War. The establishment of NATO, without Turkey, and the Turkish government's quest for NATO membership was a net addition to the expected external cost of suppression. To the dismay of the Turkish leaders, Turkey was not admitted to NATO at the time of its foundation. Until Turkey finally joined NATO on 17 October 1951, there did not exist a formal defensive agreement between Turkey and one or more NATO members. In fact, many NATO members, most notably Britain and Norway, were openly objecting to Turkey's membership in the organization on the ground that this would be an overextension of NATO's responsibilities, and a country which was as close to the USSR as Turkey would bring more costs than benefits to NATO. The quest for NATO membership tremendously increased the stakes of the foreign policy of the Turkish government, as well of its project of democratizing the political regime which was used as an instrument of foreign policy. Under these circumstances, a reversal of democratization and return to authoritarianism would be too risky as it could be used by the opponents of Turkey's NATO membership as a justification for their arguments. Hence, in this period too,

which lasted from the foundation of NATO to the first competitive elections on 14 May 1950 the expected external costs of suppressing the opposition run very high<sup>7</sup>.

## **5.2. The DP's Becoming the Ideological Agenda-Setter and the RPP's Turning into the Ideological Follower of the DP**

Because the doors of repression were closed by the expected external and internal costs, and because the popularity of the opposition was rapidly increasing, the governing party had no choice but to play the democratic game by the rules. Once İnönü and his collaborators realized that repression was not an option, they focused their energies on the best strategy for winning the upcoming elections. There were basically two choices of electoral strategy available to the Republican People's Party: (1) To shift the party platform to the right of center, towards the ideology of the opposition, and (2) to shift the party platform to the left of center. What was then the "center"? At the time of the transition the central ideology of Turkish politics was the existing ideology of the RPP, which was based on the six principles of Kemalism defined by the Fourth General Convention of the party on 4 May 1935.

The problem for the RPP with remaining at the center, or with remaining as it was, was that since the transition to democracy and the emergence of the opposition the Kemalist principles had become increasingly unpopular. Hence, the RPP felt an urgent need to move away from the center, or indeed to move away from itself. The RPP could shift to the left, but it did not, despite the proposals of some party members to turn the RPP into a peasants' party. The main reason for not shifting to the left was of course the immense popularity of the right-of-center as represented by the DP. The RPP leaders decided to play on the safer horse, rather than gambling on a risky venture towards the left.

The RPP strategy of imitating the ideological platform of the DP was mistaken in one essential respect. By doing so, the RPP became the ideological follower of the DP and made the DP the ideological agenda-setter. Indeed, as soon as the RPP shifted its position to the right, the ideological initiative passed to the opposition and remained there till the end of the transition. One reason behind the overwhelming success of the DP in the 1950 elections was precisely this ideological leadership and agenda setting position. Especially when the election day came nearer the ideological leadership of the DP became all the more apparent. For instance, on 27 April 1950 the RPP delivered its electoral declaration in which the party promised to remove the six principles of Kemalism from the Constitution if it was elected to the government.

That the RPP could not repress the DP was understandable, given the expected external and -- later -- internal costs of suppression. That it chose to compete with the DP in DP's terms, rather than to devise an alternative left-of-center program, was also understandable, given the popularity of the DP program and the riskiness of venturing into the unknown seas of the left. However, the RPP could still take some institutional measures which would not have gone beyond the limits of legitimacy and legality, but which would have prevented a possible loss of the election from turning into a total loss of political power.

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<sup>7</sup>For developments regarding Turkey's entry into NATO see Bağcı (1991) and McGhee (1990, chapters 5 and 6).

That is to say, the RPP could have amended the Constitution and created some "reserve domains of power" which would have remained untouched whatever the results of the elections. In fact, leaving reserve domains of power for the existing rulers had been a standard feature of democratization in the history of many European countries.

A presidential system could have been instituted and İnönü could have been elected president; the term of the president could have extended beyond the election date; a second chamber in the parliament, at least half of its members appointed by the President and endowed with veto power over the decisions of the lower house, could have been created; a constitutional court with the authority of reversing the unconstitutional decisions of the parliament could have been founded; and finally, a proportional representation system, which would have minimized the "tyranny of the majority", could have been introduced<sup>8</sup>.

Not only did the RPP not attempt at creating any reserve of domains of power for itself, but it offered a reserve domain of power to the opposition. The motive behind this seemingly strange offer was that somehow the RPP leaders developed the conviction that they would be the winners of the election. They were sure that the DP would suffer a heavy electoral defeat and would not even be able to have representation in the parliament. They were worried that such an outcome could be misinterpreted in the USA as the result of government interference in the election and thus cause irreparable damage to their image and prestige abroad. To prevent this hypothetical outcome, the RPP leaders offered the DP the guarantee of a minimum number of deputies in the new Assembly dependless of the results of the election: "[T]he Republicans were confident that they had accomplished enough to win by a comfortable margin. They felt so sure of victory that they went as far as to offer the Democrats representation in the next Assembly. There were even unofficial meetings between members of the parties to discuss this, though no acceptable agreement was reached." (Ahmad 1977, p. 30). The DP leader Celal Bayar duly returned Prime Minister Şemsettin Günaltay's paternalistic proposal back (Ahmad and Ahmad 1976, p. 62).

What was the reason for this unwarranted self-confidence of the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership organized in the RPP? One reason, simply, was misinformation about the public opinion. And misinformation was rooted in the fact that the RPP was not a political party in the ordinary sense of the term. It was intermingled with the state and completely out of touch with the society. Still another factor behind the RPP leaders' grave misperception of the level of their popular support was their belief that because they had so successfully protected the people from the horrors of the war, the Turkish people were grateful to them and would show their gratitude by voting for them in the election. Süleyman Demirel, Turkey's current president, explains why the RPP logic did not work:

"By the end of the war, the people were living in miserable conditions. ... When the state leaders asked the people 'What do you want?', the answer they received was 'Bread'. To this, the state leaders replied 'But at least you are alive, we saved you from the horrors of the war'. But in the eyes of the people the war was a thing of the

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<sup>8</sup>Nimet Arzık, who wrote a critical biography of İsmet İnönü, reports that after losing the 1950 elections İnönü regretted that he had not taken such institutional measures and created reserve domains of power for himself and his party (Arzık 1966, p. 44).

past. ... They knew that there would be no more war. Hence, the government could no more force the people to live miserable lives by saying `You'd better live this life, because things might get much worse for you if we enter the war.'" (Demirel 1990, pp. 46-47).

The results of the 1950 elections, which were conducted with no major incident and complaint, woke the RPP leaders up from their dreams. The DP won 84% of the Assembly seats with 54% of the votes. The RPP got 14% of the seats with 40% of the votes (Aygen1962: 221-287).

## **6. A Critical Discussion of the Society-Centered Explanations of the Regime Change**

In this paper I have offered a state-centered explanation of the transition from a one-party to a multi-party regime in postwar Turkey, as opposed to the society-centered approaches to that same phenomenon. I have hypothesized that the Turkish transition was a state-led political change from above resulting in a reallocation of power among the members of the Kemalist ruling bloc, from the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership organized in the RPP to the Civilian Kemalist Leaders which joined their forces under the banner of the DP. The society-centered explanations, on the other hand, have argued that the transition was a society-led regime change from below, that the basic form, content and the outcome of the transition was determined by the conflicts which were unfolding at the deep-structural levels of the economy, society, and culture, and that at the end of the process political power was transferred from the state bureaucracy to the political representatives of some social groups and classes.

The largest, and analytically most rigorous, category of society-centered explanations of the Turkish transition involves class-based approaches centered on the premise of the bourgeoisie-bureaucracy conflict. Class-based explanations of the Turkish regime change have generally put the accent on the struggle between the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie, whose ideological manifestation took the form of a conflict between state control of the economy versus a free market ideology and between the bureaucratic monopoly of political power versus bourgeois dominance over the government within the framework of political democracy. In many class-based explanations, the power bloc behind the one-party regime has been characterized as a bureaucrat-bourgeois coalition in which the bureaucracy was the leading actor. Starting from this premise, it has been argued that the transition from a one-party to a multi-party regime between 1945-1950 signified not only a change of political regime but also a transformation of the class nature of the state: At this brief moment of Turkish history the relative positions of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie in the power bloc underwent a revolutionary change in favor of the latter and the bourgeois character of the state began to crystallize<sup>9</sup>.

Scholars writing from a class-based perspective have pointed out four wartime developments that they have argued prepared the ground for the postwar transformation of the political regime and the class character of the state. The first such development was the rapid accumulation of monetary capital in the hands of the commercial bourgeoisie through

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<sup>9</sup> Some prominent class-based explanations of the postwar regime change in Turkey can be found in Keyder (1987, pp. 112-115) and Sunar (1974, pp. 66-87).

wartime profiteering. The second development was the bureaucratic attempt to tax away the additional bourgeois wealth by means of the extraordinary Capital Tax. The third development was the Land Reform Bill of January 1945 (which became law in June 1945) that would have nationalized the land of the large estates and redistributed it to landless peasants. And the fourth development was the rapid impoverishment and suffering of the peasants and the urban lower classes during the war. The masses linked their misfortunes to bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption, and this led to the growth of a strong anti-bureaucratic bias among them.

These four developments, it has been argued, made it necessary for the commercial and landed classes to build a common front against the bureaucracy for a renegotiation of the terms of the bourgeois-bureaucrat coalition, which had been in effect since the formation of that coalition in the early 1920s. The democratic transition of 1945-1950 consisted precisely of that renegotiation process. During the transition, the bourgeois front of the commercial and landowning classes used their newly acquired financial wealth and successfully mobilized the anti-bureaucratic bias among the population, so that at the end the bureaucracy had to come to grips with the new reality and accept the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The masses, on their part, gave their full support to the bourgeois front because of their deep-seated distrust for the bureaucracy. This mass support, together with the neutrality of the army, made it possible that the transfer of state power from the bureaucracy to the bourgeoisie assumed a democratic rather than a revolutionary form.

Class-based explanations of the postwar regime change in Turkey pose basic difficulties in the area class formation and political representation. Class formation, class-state relationship, and class-party relationship have been among the most extensively debated issues of social and political theory, and particularly of its Marxist variant. Although no conclusive outcome has emerged from the debate, we can observe that Marx himself, as well as some leading twentieth century Marxist political theorists such as Gramsci, distinguished between the structural and political characteristics of a social class. Marx conceptualized this distinction in his well-known dichotomy of class-in-itself and class-for-itself. Gramsci, on his part, made a tripartite classification of the historical levels (or, in Gramsci's usage, "moments") of the development of class power and class consciousness: The economic-corporate level, the social group level, and the hegemonic-political level (Gramsci 1988, pp. 204-206).

In the light of the above considerations, the question to be asked for the Turkish case is whether the Turkish bourgeoisie had reached the level of a "class-for-itself" or evolved into the "hegemonic-political" stage at the time of the regime change in the aftermath of the Second World War. In other words, had the Turkish bourgeoisie acquired the "hegemonic capacity", i.e. an "ability and opportunity to deploy its intrinsic strength for the purposes of isolating, cowing, dividing, and striking against an enemy" by means of "class-specific collective actions and institutions" (Therborn 1983, p. 40)? Given the available evidence, the answer is no. Indeed, Ayşe Buğra, who produced one of the very few empirical studies on the Turkish bourgeoisie, has argued that even in the 1990s, despite the considerable private capital accumulation and the proliferation of business organizations, "it is doubtful that ... the state-created bourgeoisie of Turkey would finally become a 'class-for-itself'" (Buğra 1994, p. 253). A similar observation comes from Korkut Boratav's empirical study of class-state relations in Turkey in the 1980s. Boratav has concluded his study with the observation that

as late as the 1980s "different business groups have turned out to be prisoners of short-term, segmented, and individualized interests, and their possible transformation into a mature bourgeoisie as a 'class for itself' has not taken place." (Boratav 1994, p. 170).

The Turkish bourgeoisie of the 1940s did not apparently possess the organizational and ideological capacity to take the means of administration away from the hands of the bureaucracy. What the bourgeoisie could do most, as could also the large landlords, the small-holding peasants and the urban middle and lower classes, was to give their monetary, human, ideological, and electoral support to one of the competing factions of the Kemalist ruling bloc, and in particular to the Civilian Kemalist Leaders organized in the DP. The DP, therefore, was not the party of the Turkish bourgeoisie. One can counter this last point by putting forward a functionalist argument and claim that although the DP was not the organic representative of the bourgeoisie, it was its "surrogate" or "functional" representative, in the sense of acting "on behalf of" the bourgeoisie and realizing the "bourgeois project". This functionalist notion of a bourgeois party without the bourgeoisie, similar to Mao's idea of a proletarian party without the proletariat, is epistemologically problematic, in the sense of being not verifiable, nor refutable, with reference to the historical facts.

The relationship between the DP and the Turkish bourgeoisie, just as the one between the DP and the peasant masses, was not one of political representation but a complete "delegation of will" from the social support base to the party, and from the party rank and file to the party leadership. The regime that resulted in the 1950s from this peculiar relationship between the DP and its support groups in the society resembled what Guillermo O'Donnell called in the Latin American context as "delegative democracy" (O'Donnell 1990). In this Turkish style delegative or patrimonial democracy, which characterized not only the 1950s but also the later decades, elections worked as the means through which "the nation" delegated its "will" to the winning party, and particularly to the party leader. In return of delegating its power, each support group received certain goods and services from the party in government. To reiterate my point, the DP did not represent the bourgeoisie, nor for that matter the landlords or the peasant masses, in the political arena; it at most occupied the patron's seat in the labyrinthine networks of patron-client relations.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

The main concern of this paper has been to elucidate the following three hypotheses concerning the postwar transition from a one-party to a multi-party regime in Turkey: first, the postwar regime change was a reform from above led by the state; second, the state undertook the democratic reform in response to the international context; and third, the final outcome of the democratic transition was a reallocation of political power among the state actors.

I have argued that in the immediate postwar years the internal relations of force in Turkey were not by themselves conducive to a democratic regime change. In other words, the **expected internal costs of suppression** remained consistently lower than the **expected internal costs of toleration** until very late in the transition process, when finally the opposition party organized a widespread civilian network and found supporters within the military. Although the expected internal costs of suppression were well below the expected internal costs of toleration, the Kemalist ruling bloc did indulge in liberalization and

democratization under the influence of the **expected external benefits of democratization**: what motivated the Kemalist ruling bloc to inaugurate, maintain, and complete the democratic transition was their foreign policy strategy of integrating Turkey with the international system of the democratic victors of the war. The need to put up a stronger resistance to the Soviet plans of isolating Turkey from the West and taking it in the Soviet sphere of influence was one additional factor that further enhanced the value of American friendship in the eyes of the Kemalist leaders of Turkey. One way of winning the hearts and minds of the Americans was perceived to pass through dismantling Turkey's fascist authoritarian regime, which was diametrically opposed to the ideals of democracy and freedom for which the Americans fought a war. On the other hand, what protected the opposition during much of the transition process was the **expected external costs of suppression**; that is to say, the apprehension on the part of the government that suppressing the strongly pro-American opposition and tilting back to authoritarianism would inflict serious harm on the relations with the US.

Within the framework of the open model of regime change outlined above, I have also argued that the process of democratization was initiated and controlled by the state actors and that at the end of the transition political power was transferred from one set of state actors -- the Civilianized Kemalist Leadership of the RPP -- to another -- the Civilian Kemalist Leaders that left the RPP and founded the DP. Although it was no doubt true that the DP stood closer to the social groups and classes in comparison to the RPP, this in no way meant that it was the political representative of any social class, including the bourgeoisie. I have based this last contention on some recent studies on the historical development of the Turkish bourgeoisie, which have unequivocally maintained that in the 1940s (nor for that matter in the later decades) the bourgeois class in Turkey had not yet reached the "hegemonic-political" stage (in the sense of Gramsci) or the level of a "class-for-itself" (in the sense of Marx). In other words, neither the bourgeoisie, nor any other social class, possessed the **organizational and institutional capacity** that would have compelled the Kemalist ruling bloc to a power-sharing formula. The main impulse for change, therefore, could not, and did not, come from below. On the other hand, once the change began and the Civilian Kemalists went outside of the ruling bloc for support, the support of the social classes alone, precisely because of their organizational-institutional incapacity, could not, and did not, deter the government from suppressing the opposition. The main deterrent against suppression came, not from below, but from the outside. Therefore, we can make the counterfactual statement that if there had not been any expectation on the part of the Kemalist ruling bloc that launching liberalization and democratization would bring them the much needed US support, they would not have contemplated a democratic change, and the Turkish regime would have remained an authoritarian one-party regime like Mexico's.

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