

## 6 The multi-party conundrum 1945-1960

Despite the alliance with Great Britain, Turkey remained neutral throughout the Second World War, watching the turn of events with the utmost caution. Opinion in ruling-party circles see-sawed according to the fortunes of the belligerents and until the Nazi defeat at Stalingrad in January 1943 Berlin benefited from Ankara's benevolent neutrality. But as the tide began to turn against the Axis powers so did political attitudes and policy among Turkey's ruling circles. The notorious Capital Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) of November 1942, which had discriminated against the minorities, was abandoned in stages, being repealed finally in March 1944. This was an open confession of the failure of arbitrary government which had so alienated the entire bourgeoisie; the landlords and peasants had been alienated by laws which virtually allowed forced collection of farm produce. The retirement of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (Chief of Staff since 1921) on 12 January 1944, with the explanation that the government intended to establish civilian control over the armed forces, signalled the loosening of the mono-party regime. He was conservative, authoritarian, and a believer in the autonomy of the soldier from any political interference. President İnönü, in his speech opening the new session of the Assembly on 1 November 1945, hinted that he was prepared to make major adjustments in the political system and to bring it in line with the changed circumstances in the world, a reference to the victory of the democracies over fascism. The main deficiency in the Turkish system, he noted, was the lack of an opposition party and he was now prepared to allow the formation of such a body.

Though external factors were significant in pushing Turkey towards political change, it was the erosion of the political alliance between the military-bureaucratic elite, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie which made the status quo impossible to maintain. The

private sector had grown considerably during the republic and was no longer willing to endure the unpredictable and arbitrary behaviour of the state. In this it was encouraged by pressures from the West, especially the United States, which called for the opening of the Turkish system to market forces. Thus while the representatives of the private sector in the Republican People's Party pressed for liberalisation, the hardline statist, led by the redoubtable Recep Peker, wanted to transform the system so as to tighten the hold of the state.

Opinion within the RPP polarised around the Land Reform Bill which came before the Assembly in January 1945. With this measure, the hardline Kemalists wanted to break the political hold of the landlords and war profiteers by transforming Turkey into a republic of independent peasant proprietors. After weeks of angry debate, party discipline prevailed and the Bill was passed on 11 June. The critics of the Bill had attacked the government for two reasons, one economic, the other constitutional. Land reform, they argued, would lead to a decline in production which would have all sorts of adverse consequences; the principle of private property guaranteed by the constitution was also being violated.

Four of the principal critics who went on to found the main opposition Democrat Party (DP)—the businessman-banker Celâl Bayar, the bureaucrat Refik Koraltan, the historian Professor Fuad Köprülü, and the cotton-growing landlord Adnan Menderes—broadened the attack on the government. They proposed that the government implement fully the principle of national sovereignty as stated in the constitution and that party business be carried out in accordance with the principles of democracy. The unremitting attacks on their party led to the expulsion of three of them and the resignation of Bayar on 1 December 1945. Rumours in the press that Bayar and his friends were about to form an opposition party were confirmed when the formation of the Democrat Party was officially announced on 7 January 1946.<sup>1</sup>

There was no sense of alarm in RPP circles at the news of the opposition party. After all, its leaders were all Kemalists of long standing who espoused the same basic philosophy as their opponents with only a difference in emphasis. Mahmud Celâl Bayar was, with İsmet İnönü, the grandee of Turkish politics. He was born in a village in Bursa province in 1884. In 1903 he joined the Bursa branch of the Deutsche Orient Bank as well as the secret political Young Turk organisation, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, Bayar

took an active part in the national struggle in the İzmir region. Thus when the republic was established in 1923, he became the deputy for İzmir in the Assembly and minister for reconstruction in the 1924 cabinet. Having won the confidence of Mustafa Kemal, he was picked to lead the ailing private sector. As a first step he founded the Business Bank of Turkey (Türkiye İş Bankası) in 1924 and soon became one of the motors of economic change. In 1932, during the economic crisis, Bayar was appointed minister of national economy in order to keep the statist faction in line even though statism had been adopted as one of the fundamental elements in the party's programme. Then finally in 1937, Bayar replaced İnönü as Atatürk's last prime minister. After Atatürk's death in November 1938 when İnönü became president, Bayar resigned and was given no other ministerial post. When he next appeared on the political scene, it was as the leader of the dissident faction in the ruling RPP.

Mustafa İsmet İnönü was also born in 1884 in a middle-class home similar to that of Bayar. Like many youths of his class he was sent to a military school. This was a way to acquire a modern education and open doors to upward mobility in a society which had become highly stratified with limited opportunities for Muslims. In 1905 he graduated from the artillery school as a staff captain and served in many parts of the empire. In the war against Greece, he defeated the Greek army at the Battle of İnönü (hence his surname) in 1921. In a national movement marred by factionalism he became a loyal supporter of Kemal Pasha who sent him to Lausanne to lead the delegation to negotiate peace. In the republic, İnönü served as prime minister for much of the time until his resignation in 1937. He became one of the principal figures in the party-state bureaucracy and was therefore well positioned to be elected president on Atatürk's death. His presidency coincided with the Second World War and his great achievement was to keep Turkey neutral despite pressures from all sides. During these years he established a virtual police state which made him very unpopular. But at the end of the war he had the foresight to recognise that circumstances required the dismantling of the mono-party regime and the introduction of multi-party politics though not democracy.

The Democrat Party was expected to behave as the Free Republican Party had done in 1930 and the Independent Group during the war, as a token opposition which would keep the government on its toes without actually challenging its legitimacy. That is why İnönü pressed Bayar to become the leader of the opposition even though Bayar was

uncertain of the outcome. Initially, therefore, the DP came to be seen by the public as a ‘control party’, a safety valve which could be turned on and off so as to deflect public hostility and head off a popular explosion.

Initially it seemed as though the Democrats would serve precisely that function. Their programme hardly differed from that of the ruling party. They adopted the ‘six principles of Kemalism’, as was required by the constitution, but said that they would interpret them according to the needs of the times. They claimed that their main goal was to advance democracy; that would mean curbing government intervention as much as possible and increasing the rights and freedoms of the individual. They emphasised populism and popular sovereignty and demanded that political initiative emanate from below, from the people, and not from above, from the party. The Democrats soon became the spokesmen for private enterprise and individual initiative and that won them the support of the businessmen as well as the liberal intelligentsia.

The Republicans failed to sense the seething undercurrent of popular hostility their rule had created in the country. Despite the radical reforms which had transformed the legal and institutional structure of Turkey, the people in general had benefited only marginally, though their expectations had risen dramatically. They resented the state constantly imposing its will upon them without ever taking their sentiments into account; the policy of secularism had never been explained to them and they had never understood how they had benefited from it. It was all very well to claim to be doing things ‘for the people’, but why did things have to be done ‘in spite of them’ as the RPP slogan had it?

The Democrats exploited the hostility of the people towards their government with skill. They constantly emphasised the arbitrary character of the mono-party state and promised to remove it, especially its representative in the countryside, the hated gendarmerie, from the backs of the people.

The Republicans quickly spotted the danger and responded by taking measures to liberalise the party and society. In May 1946, four months after the founding of the Democrat Party, President İsmet İnönü gave up his titles of ‘National Leader’ and the party’s ‘Permanent Chairman’ and adopted the rule that the chairman would be elected every four years, (This change made little difference in reality because İnönü continued to be elected party chairman until his defeat in 1972.) The Republicans also decided to hold a general election in 1946 rather than in 1947 so as to give the Democrats little

time to organise, and to win a mandate before the DP could defeat them.

The most interesting decision that the party took was to abolish Article 22 of its regulations which forbade the founding of 'associations with the purpose of propagating ideas of class distinction, class interest and regionalism'. The party radicals, those who had supported land reform, believed that the RPP ought to become a 'class party'; it ought to seek the support of peasants, workers, tenant farmers, artisans, and small merchants and isolate the Democrats as the representatives of landlords and big business. However, despite this change in the regulations, the party's centre prevailed and the RPP continued to oppose class struggle, seeking instead a balance among the classes.

As a consequence of its ambivalence, the RPP failed to placate any constituency other than its traditional supporters. The Democrats, who were equally opposed to class conflict but who kept on attacking 'the tyranny of the state', became the party of the 'little man' by default. The 'little man' came to believe that by helping the Democrats come to power not only would he liberate himself from an oppressive state but the DP would also improve his material lot. The Democrats knew that they could come to power only in a fair and honest election and their priority was to prepare the ground for that.

The years 1946–1950 were transitional years during which the two parties struggled to acquire new identities so as to win over the electorate. The Republicans wanted to gain time by holding early elections and winning a fresh mandate before the Democrats were fully organised. The Democrats refused to take part in an election and legitimise RPP rule until the rules had become more democratic. Consequently, the government was forced to amend certain laws and meet the Democrats halfway. Thus the electoral law was amended to permit direct elections instead of two-tier elections through electoral colleges; the universities were granted administrative autonomy; and the Press Laws were liberalised. At the same time, the government threatened to close down the opposition party if it refused to participate in the election under the new rules!

The Democrats fought the 1946 general election reluctantly knowing that they had no chance of winning. Their organisation was still weak and the state bureaucracy, whose neutrality was vital for electoral success, was committed to the RPP given the DP's anti-state strategy. Thus the Republican victory in the July 1946 election was no surprise; the RPP won 390 of the 465 seats, with the DP winning 65

and Independents 7. There was a general consensus that the election had been conducted in an atmosphere of fear and repression and as a result the political relationship between the parties was poisoned for years to come.

Kemal Karpat, author of the definitive study of the transitional period, has noted that the year from 21 July 1946 to 12 July 1947 was crucial for the establishment of multi-party politics. On 12 July, President İnönü openly threw his weight behind the moderates in his party and dealt the death blow to the statist faction. As a result, the mono-party option was abandoned and the opposition was given 'freedom of action and equality with the Republican Party'.<sup>2</sup>

The government tried to recover its political fortunes by taking a few leaves from the DP book. Measures were taken to open up the economy: the lira was devalued in September, import facilities were eased, and banks were permitted to sell gold. The result of these measures was inflation. The cost of living index soared from 100 in 1938 to 386.8 in August 1946, to 412.9 as a consequence of the '7 September Measures'. Local and foreign businesses may have been encouraged by these economic trends but the mass of the people were alienated even more. The Democrats found that they now had a bread and butter issue to exploit against the government.

Under constant pressure from the opposition the government responded by anticipating and matching their rival's programme. İnönü continued to liberalise the party as well as the regime. Known as a devout secularist who never took the name of God in vain, he nevertheless decided to restore religious instruction in schools. The socialist Mehmed Ali Aybar, always a shrewd observer of political trends in Turkey, commented at the time: 'This party which has boasted so far about its revolutionism and secularism has found salvation by embracing religion at the most critical juncture of its life.'<sup>3</sup>

The policy of liberalisation gained momentum throughout the next four years until the elections of 14 May 1950. This was due partly to İnönü's commitment to the success of multi-party politics and partly to Turkey's growing involvement with the West. Those who believed that Turkey's future was best served by competitive rather than state capitalism were also convinced that foreign capital investment on a grand scale was vital for rapid economic growth. If foreign capital could be attracted only by serving Western interests in the region, the government was willing to do that too. Stalin's aggressive behaviour towards Turkey in 1945 facilitated the rapprochement with the West in general and the United States in particular. The Truman Doctrine

and the Marshall Plan began the process of Turkey's integration, culminating with Turkey's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1952.

With the outbreak of the Cold War and civil war in neighbouring Greece, both parties understood that the West desired a politically stable Turkey. Thus after July 1947, once the statist faction in the RPP had been finally defeated leading to Peker's resignation as premier, the two parties collaborated to provide stability. Such was the extent of co-operation between the leaders, that this policy was denounced by many Democrats as collusion, some of whom resigned in protest.

By 1950 the political initiative seemed to have passed to the Republicans. Over the years the RPP had taken on so much of its rival's colouring that it was difficult to tell them apart. The programmes of the two parties hardly differed at all. The party founded by Atatürk even promised to remove the 'six principles of Kemalism' from the constitution if re-elected. The private sector was constantly appeased and so were those who wanted to see restrictions removed from the practice of Islam. Religious concessions were considered of prime importance to isolate the Democrat Party as well as the Nation Party formed in 1948 by conservative dissidents among the Democrats. By 1950, the Republicans were so sure of success in the coming elections that they even offered some seats to the Democrats just to ensure the existence of an opposition in the new Assembly.

The Democrats could only exploit the public's memory of past grievances. They kept reminding the people that nothing could really change while that 'Cunning Fox', İsmet Pasha, remained at the helm. This propaganda proved to be effective because İnönü had come to symbolise the hated mono-party regime. But they abandoned the strategy of attacking the state bureaucracy and emphasised the differences between party and state, blaming the RPP and not the bureaucracy for the country's problems. The bureaucracy was first neutralised and then won over with the promise that its past misdeeds would not be investigated or punished. Without a neutral, if not a sympathetic bureaucracy, the Democrats' electoral success would be in doubt. The influence of the official has always been great in Turkish society historically dominated by an all powerful state. When voters saw that officials were no longer canvassing on behalf of the ruling party, they sensed the historic moment. They took heart and voted with their conscience and delivered a devastating verdict on 27 years of Republican rule. Almost 90 per cent of the registered voters came

to the polls and gave the Democrats 53.35 per cent of the vote and 408 seats, while the RPP won 38.38 per cent of the vote but only 39 seats in the new Assembly. The electoral system, based on the winner-takes-all principle, was responsible for the vast difference in seats despite only a 15 per cent difference in votes. But the electoral system was the creation of a Republican government which had so far used it to its own advantage.

Whenever Celâl Bayar was asked to define the differences between his party and the RPP, he was fond of using a culinary metaphor to do so. He used to liken the two parties to chefs engaged in preparing *helva* and claimed that the Democrats were the ones with the better recipe and the greater skills to make the better *helva*. He agreed that there were no ideological differences and that both parties were committed to the programme of developing a modern and prosperous Turkey. The Democrats promised to make Turkey a 'little America' within a generation, with a millionaire in every district. The Republicans shared the same dream. The difference between the two parties was not over goals but over the methods for achieving them.

The Democrats were in a hurry to move Turkey forward and were unwilling to tolerate any obstacles that might stand in the way of their programme. Thus Kemalism, which many Republicans viewed as a dogma, was seen by them as a flexible ideology to be interpreted in the light of changing circumstances. Statism, for example, had been a necessary evil during the crisis of the 1930s; it could be abandoned because the Turkish people had matured and no longer required the paternalistic state. This stage, they said, was reached in 1945 and the 1950 election only confirmed the fact; the country wanted to replace the state with the system of free enterprise as the motor of change.

Given the perception of themselves as the architects of contemporary Turkey who alone understood what was best for the country, the Democrats had little use for opposition. They saw the RPP as an anachronism whose historic role had been played out; Republicans were expected to sit back and let the Democrats get on with the job of transforming the country. As for the parties of the right, there was no need for them either because the DP also understood the spiritual needs of the Turkish people and intended to pass legislation to satisfy such needs. There was, of course, no room for the left; both parties were agreed on that. As a result of this consensus the parties of the left were ruthlessly crushed after 1945 and not allowed to function until the early 1960s.



The overwhelming electoral victories in 1950, and again in 1954, also helped the Democrats justify their attitude towards the opposition. They saw themselves as the representatives of the 'national will' (*milli irade*) to which they alone held themselves accountable. If they alienated the people then the people would let them know at the next election just as they had so convincingly informed the opposition. Though the Democrats professed to believe in democracy, their understanding of it was rather crude. They failed to shed the anti-democratic mentality of the mono-party period which brooked no opposition from any quarter, including from within the party itself.

The positive contribution of the DP to the development of democratic practice in Turkey was virtually nil; however, their negative contribution was considerable. During the ten years of DP rule, the intelligentsia which had for the most part supported the Democrats came to realise that multi-party politics, let alone democracy, could not function with institutions inherited from the early republic. All these outmoded institutions, from the constitution of 1924 to the penal code of the 1930s, had to be replaced with new ones suited to a Turkey in the throes of rapid change. The party leaders showed no awareness of this; their principal concern was to transform the country materially and they had no time for anything else. Thus when Prime Minister Menderes was reminded in the cabinet that the party had promised Turkish workers the right to strike, he responded, rather impatiently: 'Stop this nonsense. Is Turkey to have strikes? Let's have some economic development first and then we'll think about this matter.'

In fairness to the Democrats, it should be noted that they felt terribly insecure in power despite their overwhelming electoral success. They were uneasy with the state apparatus, especially the army which they suspected was loyal to İsmet Pasha. Therefore, one of their first acts in power was to replace the military High Command as well as a number of provincial governors with loyal Democrats.

The Democrats also suffered from a sense of insecurity *vis-à-vis* İsmet Pasha personally. Despite his lack of a charismatic personality, İnönü was respected in Turkey as Atatürk's loyal comrade-in-arms and the country's elder statesman. He had ruled Turkey for virtually the entire span of the republic, first as prime minister and then as president. The Democrats could not cast off his shadow now that he was leader of the opposition. They found themselves confronting the so-called 'Pasha factor' (*Paşa faktörü*) with İnönü symbolising the 'vigilant forces' (*zinde kuvvetler*) led by the army and the bureaucracy.

The history of their ten-year rule may be summed up as their failure to come to terms with this factor.

The Democrats were convinced that İnönü was the cause of all their troubles and that the opposition would melt away without him. Had he retired from politics in 1950, Turkey's history might indeed have taken a different turn. The ruling party might have felt more secure and behaved with a greater sense of confidence and justice. The RPP might have been able to reform itself for the task of opposition by acquiring a new identity in keeping with the needs of the times. İnönü symbolised the past and any significant change was difficult to imagine under his leadership.<sup>4</sup>

Measured in terms of political development, the decade of DP rule provides a dismal record of repressive legislation designed to curb what little political freedom there was. This policy was pursued even though the Democrats in opposition had constantly demanded the repeal of anti-democratic laws and promised to do precisely that if and when they came to power. How can this puzzle be explained?

It cannot be explained by the strength of the opposition which Menderes criticised for being disorganised and ineffective, and expressed the hope that it would soon find its feet and play a constructive role. The opposition became weaker still after the Democrat triumph in the September 1950 municipal elections. The Republicans lost 560 municipalities out of the 600 they had previously held and their moral standing in the country declined sharply. This trend continued until 1957 and therefore the reasons for the Democrats' repressive policies must be sought elsewhere.

The DP was not as homogeneous as it appeared to be. Though its central leadership came directly out of the RPP, its support in the provinces came from people who first entered politics only after the opposition was set up in 1946. Such people had suffered greatly under Republican rule and hated the RPP blindly. They formed local DP organisation independently of the centre and saw the achievement of power as the opportunity to take revenge against their former oppressors. These were the Democrats who accused their leaders of being in collusion with the ruling party after 1947 and some even resigned to join the Nation Party in 1948. After May 1950, they criticised their government for being a continuation of the RPP and for not offering the country a different policy and programme. Menderes heard such complaints repeatedly in provincial party congresses and found that opposition within his own party was more of a nuisance than the official opposition. One way to appease his

dissidents, he learned, was to take harsh measures against the RPP, and that is the path he took.

But the passage of anti-democratic laws against the RPP, as well as against institutions like the universities and the press, ended up by alienating the liberal intelligentsia which had supported the DP from the very beginning because of its liberal promises. This intelligentsia, though a small minority, was strong in the universities and the professions; it expected the Democrats to strengthen civil society by furthering democratic freedoms instead of curbing them. Menderes's tightening of an already draconian penal code, his measures against the press, the confiscation of the opposition's assets, and attacks on university autonomy, all suggested that he had abandoned his promises of making Turkey more free and democratic. The government's closure of the Nation Party in January 1954 for violating the principle of secularism revealed the fragile nature of party politics. The Democrats' triumph in the 1954 general election only made matters worse; their share of the popular vote increased from 53.59 in 1950 to 56.62 in 1954 while their representation in the Assembly rose from 408 to 503. The Republican vote declined from 40 to 35 per cent and their seats from 69 to 31.<sup>5</sup>

These results transformed Menderes. With such an overwhelming endorsement from the people, he lost any doubts he may have had about his policies. He told the journalist Ahmed Emin Yalman, who had been an ardent supporter since 1946, that

The elections have revealed just how much the citizens like the road I have taken. Thus far I used to think it worthwhile to consult you journalists. But the people's lively confidence suggests that there is no further need for such consultations.

For a while, he even lost his fear of the army and threatened to run it with reserve officers if the regular officers failed to behave responsibly. Given this majoritarian view of democracy which placed the 'national will' above all else, there was no need to take anyone or anything into account (save the voters) when making policy.

In the constitutional structure of the 1950s, the only effective check on government was a strong opposition in the Assembly. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey was the most powerful institution of the state; that was where national sovereignty was said to reside. From among its members the Assembly elected the president, who appointed the prime minister, who then formed his cabinet from among the 'representatives of the nation' (*milletvekili*) as members of parliament

are designated in Turkey. They are expected to represent the nation and not their constituencies.

The Assembly passed laws and there was no upper house to review these laws or a constitutional court to assess their constitutionality. The president alone had the suspensive veto but he was too intimately associated with the governing party to act independently. Without a strong opposition the government could do as it pleased. Menderes had to keep only his own party in line.

After the 1954 election, Menderes's political problems stemmed largely from within his own party. The liberal faction, which favoured free enterprise and political freedom, opposed the reimposition of state controls over the economy as well as the curbs on political activity. Such Democrats either resigned or were expelled and went on to form the Freedom Party in December 1955. Meanwhile, the government's critics in the DP's assembly group went on the offensive in November, criticising among other things the economic policy as well as corruption among certain ministers. They could have brought about the fall of the cabinet had they found someone of stature to replace Menderes as prime minister. But such rivals had either resigned or been expelled. Therefore the assembly group finally agreed to give the vote of confidence to Menderes while forcing the rest of the cabinet to resign. Menderes had survived and his new cabinet and programme were both designed to placate his assembly group. But the group had inadvertently become his creature, confessing that he alone was capable of leading the government and keeping the party together.

During the remaining five years before his overthrow by the army on 27 May 1960, Menderes treated his assembly group with the utmost caution. The 1957 general election left the Democrats weaker with the Republican seats rising from 31 to 178. But the Democrats were still very much in command. The rising inflation and the stagnant economy resulting from a grave shortage of foreign exchange forced Menderes to adopt even more populist policies. That is when he began to exploit religion for political ends though how successful such policies were is a matter of debate. In late 1958, he attempted to restore his authority by forming the 'Fatherland Front' designed to unite everyone behind the government with opponents and critics, as well as anyone else who refused to join the bandwagon, denounced as subversives.

The result was to heighten tensions. The opposition felt even more hopeless about changing the government through legal and institutional channels. Meanwhile, the government harassed the

opposition in every way possible. Finally, in April 1960, the DP's assembly group proposed setting up a committee to investigate the opposition's activities which were described as subversive and designed to instigate a military revolt. Despite Menderes's own doubts about the measure, such a committee was created on 18 April and given powers which clearly violated the constitution.

Students, led by some of their professors, demonstrated against this measure in the capital and demonstrations soon spread to other cities. The government responded by declaring martial law but failed to restore calm. Demonstrations continued into May and finally Menderes attempted to defuse the situation by declaring on 24 May that the investigating committee had completed its work and would soon make its findings public. He said that he intended to normalise the political situation by holding an early general election in September. But Menderes's gestures came too late. Groups of military officers, alienated from DP rule, had been conspiring to bring about its end. They carried out their *coup* on 27 May and toppled the Menderes government.

The Democrats regarded political power as the instrument with which to forge a Turkey worthy of being a member of the Western world in the second half of the twentieth century. The Republicans had laid the foundations after 1923, the Democrats wanted to build the superstructure with an up to date economy and society. Adnan Menderes (1899–1961) was seen as the man of vision who could undertake such a task. He was born into a wealthy landowning family of Aydin in prosperous western Anatolia and entered politics in 1930 by joining the short-lived Free Republican Party. When this party was closed down, Menderes moved to the RPP and remained there until his expulsion in 1945.

Celâl Bayar was impressed by his energy and his acute awareness of the country's problems. Menderes, he thought, understood the psychology of the people, especially the peasants with whom he had been in close contact on his estate. Bayar therefore invited Menderes to be one of the founders of the opposition party, and asked him to be prime minister in 1950. He believed that Menderes had the ability and the outlook to provide the kind of leadership necessary for the country to catch up with the West.

Menderes believed rather naively that Turkey could catch up simply by removing bureaucratic constraints on the economy and society, and by opening all doors to the winds of change blowing in from the West. (President Sadat of Egypt came to a similar conclusion in the early 1970s and launched his *infitah* or opening to the West.) Turkey had to

abandon her isolation and integrate herself as rapidly as possible into the post-war system now led from Washington. The Republican government had similar ideas and initiated policies for accomplishing these goals. The difference between the two approaches was that Menderes was willing to abandon all caution.

The Democrats' approach towards the economy was, generally speaking, haphazard. No thought was given to an overall plan because that was considered bureaucratic and communist and the Democrats liked neither. Instead, the government gave priority to the production of agricultural goods and minerals, both being in great demand in a Europe undergoing recovery, as well as creating an infrastructure which would facilitate such exports. For the moment, industrialisation was put on the shelf.

An immediate outcome of this policy was the expansion of the network of roads which opened up the villages of Anatolia for the first time and exposed peasants to the alien world of towns and cities. Supported by US financial and technical assistance, hard-surfaced roads capable of carrying heavy vehicles from automobiles and buses to heavy trucks and tractors increased from 1,642 km in 1950 to 7,049km in 1960.<sup>6</sup> Road construction was matched by mushrooming bus and transportation companies which had the effect of creating a national market. The road network which has continued to grow ever since provided the basis for the Turkish automobile industry which was set up in the mid-1960s to meet the demands of a growing middle class. The roads also opened up Turkey's stunningly beautiful coastline and beaches first to internal and later to foreign tourism with significant consequences for society as a whole. People in small coastal towns and villages who had been isolated from the outside world found themselves acting as hosts to people from other worlds, people who brought both cash and new ideas.<sup>7</sup>

In a similar manner, Turkish agriculture was mechanised and transformed. Despite the passage of a land reform law, the political power of the landlords prevented any effective land reform. Thus between 1947 and 1962 only about 1.8 million hectares were distributed to 360,000 families, with only 8,600 hectares being taken from privately owned land. The peasants again lost out; the state-owned lands which were distributed had been essential to sustain the landless or near-landless peasants who had used them for communal grazing. These people were reduced to the status of farm labourers or they migrated to the cities in search of work. They began the process of squatter communities which would proliferate for the next generation.<sup>8</sup>

Mechanisation altered the basic structure of Turkish agriculture. Between 1948 and 1962, the number of tractors multiplied from 1,750 to 43,747, and harvesters from 994 to 6,072. Consequently, new land was brought under cultivation and the area sown increased from 13,900,000 hectares in 1948 to 22,940,000 in 1959. This explains the sharp increase in food production which enabled Turkey to become a grain exporter in the early 1950s. The tractor also changed the relationship between landlord and peasant. In the past, peasants cultivated the landlord's fields in return for a share of his crop; now even peasants with land borrowed the landlord's tractor in return for a share of their crop.

The early 1950s were the golden years of the Menderes era. Thanks to the post-war demand for food in Europe as well as the economic boom stimulated by the Korean war, Turkey experienced an 'economic miracle' based on her export of food and raw materials. As money flowed into the countryside, there was a growing demand for consumer goods from home and abroad. What little industry there was flourished as did the merchants who were able to import goods which sold at inflated prices. In the four years, 1950–1953, Turkey experienced a phenomenal growth rate in the economy of 13 per cent a year.

Unfortunately, this miracle was based on the flimsiest foundations and was therefore doomed to collapse. Food and cotton production, for example, were based not on improved techniques but on an increase in acreage sown. By 1954, the economy began to show signs of stagnation with the growth rate dropping to 9.5 per cent. The good years were followed by lean years, especially 1956–1959, marked by spiralling inflation with prices rising at 18 per cent per annum. Meanwhile, the growth rate of the economy had flattened out to a mediocre 4 per cent, barely enough to keep up with the high birth rate.

The commercial and industrial classes prospered while the Turkish lira was kept overvalued at 2.8 to the US dollar though its market value was between 10 and 12 liras. Thus importing goods was an extremely profitable enterprise so long as the government was able to provide foreign exchange at this low rate of exchange and give import licences to its protégés. But the government also had to subsidise the export of farm produce otherwise such commodities were totally uncompetitive on the world market. Before long the supply of foreign exchange accumulated during the war when the balance of trade was in Turkey's favour ran out. By the mid-1950s, Turkey was unable to purchase capital goods and spare parts. As a result, farm machinery

could no longer be serviced properly and much of it went out of commission, while run-down factories were reduced to operating at half their capacity.

Under these conditions, the government abandoned its commitment to liberal policies and passed the National Defence Law on 18 May 1956. This law, which resembled the war-time measure of 1940, allowed the government to regulate the economy, including the distribution and pricing of goods and services. Despite the new laws the Democrats failed to restore stability and confidence in the economy. They had become victims of their own naive economic philosophy which had led them to believe that economic growth or advance was the same as development.<sup>9</sup> Their policy of cheap farm credits, huge subsidies for agricultural goods, and virtual tax exemption for farmers created a class of prosperous farmers and brought dynamism to the countryside. This rural prosperity stimulated consumption and created a demand which the economy could not meet. Food prices rose sharply and created an inflationary trend which dislocated the entire economy. Almost all sections of the population were affected, especially those on fixed salaries and wages, including government officials, military officers, and workers.

By the late 1950s, Menderes no longer controlled the economy. But he was sure that his problems were temporary and that his policies would begin to show results within a few years. He wanted to buy time with the help of his Western friends, especially those in Washington and Bonn. In July 1958, the Western powers announced their programme to rescue the Turkish economy and the Menderes government. They agreed to provide Ankara with a loan of \$359 million and the consolidation of Turkey's \$400 million debt. In return, Menderes was asked to 'stabilise' the economy by taking certain measures, the most important being the devaluation of the lira from 2.80 to 9.025 liras to the US dollar.

The 'rescue operation' by itself proved ineffective. Menderes lacked the confidence to take unpopular measures necessary to stabilise the economy. A year later, in October 1959, he went to America hoping that the ally he had served with such loyalty would help in his hour of need. Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan had gone on ahead to prepare the ground for an aid package of \$5 or \$6 hundred million. But President Eisenhower had lost all hope in the Menderes government and refused to bail him out. Menderes returned to Ankara empty handed and disheartened. At that point, Menderes, hitherto a totally unrepentent Cold Warrior, decided to



visit the Soviet Union the following July. This decision was all the more remarkable because during the course of his US tour, he had constantly warned his American audiences not to be deceived by Soviet overtures for detente for such an enemy, he warned, was not to be trusted.

When Menderes was overthrown in May 1960 the economy was in a state of collapse. But the economy and society had been so thoroughly shaken out of their lethargy that there was no question of going back. The post-Menderes regime assumed the task of restoring balance and order to the economy, and of organising economic life in a more rational manner so that Turkey could achieve the magic 'take-off'.

Turkey's post-war foreign policy, especially under the Democrats, was perceived as a crucial element in their vision to transform Turkey. Thus Fatin Rüstü Zorlu, a career diplomat and one of the architects of Turkey's foreign policy under Menderes, envisaged new goals for his country's diplomacy. He saw the principal aims of Turkish diplomacy as not merely to end his country's isolation and to guarantee its security, but to obtain foreign aid and foreign investments to finance the creation of an economic infrastructure. This was to be followed by huge investments in industry so that agriculture and industry could develop side by side.

The Bureau of Commerce and Economy of the Foreign Ministry assumed a new importance under Zorlu's charge. He confided to his colleague Semih Günver, who later became his biographer, that

if we want to make Turkey a great, powerful, and respected country we must first develop it economically. This honourable but difficult task can be accomplished in this bureau and not in the Bureau of Political Affairs. Look! All of Europe is after America. What, after all, is the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine? Everyone is getting aid from Washington; meanwhile we are asleep. I am setting up this desk for foreign aid and international economic affairs within the framework of the bureau. You will head this desk and we shall work together.

Soon after, in the late 1940s, a minister of state in the cabinet was made responsible for supervising and co-ordinating these matters which assumed top priority.

Turkish policy makers knew that they had to pay a price for Western aid and investments and they were willing to pay it virtually unconditionally. In order to join the West they were willing to serve

Western interests in the region even if that meant alienating most of their neighbours. In return for their sacrifices, they expected to be treated as equals by their Western allies. That is why Turkey's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was so important. Apart from the psychological boost it gave, NATO was seen as a club whose membership would provide status and security as full and as firm as that enjoyed by the European members of the alliance. Outside NATO, Turkey would be relegated to the second league and regarded as a secondary zone of defence.

Once Turkey was allowed into NATO in February 1952, she began 'to champion the cause of the West wherever she could'. In the Balkans, Turkey tried to link Yugoslavia to the West, and away from non-alignment, signing the Treaty of Ankara with Athens and Belgrade on 28 February 1953. In the Arab world engaged in national struggles against Western imperialism, Ankara sided with the imperialist powers. It supported the British in Egypt and the French in North Africa. In the struggle between Prime Minister Mossedeq and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Ankara's sympathies were with the oil company.<sup>10</sup> Not surprisingly, Turkey came to be seen as the West's surrogate in the region, attempting to maintain Western domination through a new system of alliances. Much to the annoyance of the Turks, an Egyptian cartoon portrayed President Celâl Bayar as a poodle on a Western leash. The policy of creating an alliance which would include some if not all the major Arab states as well as Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, proved illusive. When the Baghdad Pact acquired its final form in 1955, Iraq was the only Arab state willing to join.

The Democrats—and the Republicans before them—were proud to be Western surrogates in the Middle East. They described themselves as the guardians of Western oil interests against enemy aggression. But they also saw themselves as the dominant regional power with an autonomous status at least comparable to that of European states like Britain, France, and Italy. However, they recognised the primacy of the United States. Commenting on the Eisenhower pledge of 1957 to defend Middle Eastern countries from 'the threat of international communism', *Zafer* (4 January 1957) the semi-official DP newspaper wrote:

We note that this doctrine, like the Monroe Doctrine, is clear and simple. The principle it seeks to promote is that the Middle East is for the people of the Middle East. The guarantee it provides is US military strength and the good it promises is to provide assistance

for the Middle East in the economic sphere through vast financial assistance...

History will judge the soundness or the unsoundness of the Eisenhower Doctrine...by the position and importance to be given by America to Turkey in this plan and its calculations.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy was complemented by the policy to attract foreign capital investment for the country's economic growth. As with foreign policy, the Republicans inaugurated the process to attract foreign capital by removing controls and obstacles. The decree of 22 May 1947 was followed by the Law to Encourage Foreign Investment on 1 March 1950. When these measures failed to achieve their goal, the Democrats followed up with more liberal laws in 1951 and 1954. In March 1954, they even abandoned the state's monopoly over the oil industry and threw it open to foreign investment.

Despite the concessions, foreign investment in Turkey remained disappointingly low. It was never sufficient to make a significant contribution in the country's development. At the same time, its influence was totally out of proportion to its size. That was due partly to the weakness of indigenous capital and partly to the underdeveloped character of the economy. Thus even relatively small investments tended to make an impression, and in partnership with foreign capital, local capital was dwarfed by its stronger and better-developed foreign partner. Thus in the 1950s, a relationship of dependence was established which continued to grow thereafter.