

CHAPTER 5

THE BEGINNING OF LIBERALIZATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OPPOSITION PARTIES

THE transition of Turkey's one-party regime to a multi-party system was prepared domestically by the political, social, and economic developments described in the preceding chapters and by the liberal concepts at the foundation of the Republic. The transition was made imminent by external factors such as the signing of the United Nations Charter, and Turkey's need to adjust her political regime to political philosophies made dominant by the victory of the democracies in the second World War. It was brought about by the decision of the Republican Party government under the direct influence of İnönü, the President.

The liberal and individualistic ideas of the French Revolution which had inspired the Young Turks and had an impact on their Constitution in 1908, were preserved by the Republican regime.¹

The Constitution of 1924 defined individual rights and freedoms in their broadest liberal meaning, but designated the National Assembly as supreme, embodying in itself all three government powers: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. (The Judiciary was independent in the discharge of its daily functions [Article 8, 54]. Theoretically, the Republic granted rights and freedoms to the individual, but deprived him of any means to assure their enforcement. In practice, the concentration of all power in the National Assembly, and the resulting lack of any check or balance of government powers, rendered rather meaningless the liberal provisions regarding human rights and freedoms. These, therefore, could be granted and restricted at will as the government saw fit, as

¹ Hüseyin Nail Kubalı, *Devlet Ana Hukuku*, İstanbul, 1950.

happened in the experiment of the Liberal Party in 1930, and especially during the war years. Yet the government justified all these restrictions, not as logically stemming from the regime's political theory, but as an imperative, practical necessity in order to concentrate all powers in the Assembly so that it might carry out modernization.²

The justification, and the necessity for the strong government which prevailed in Turkey between 1923 and 1945 will be a matter of discussion for years to come. Whatever turn these discussions may take, one still can rightly question whether or not any other solution existed to bring about the urgent reforms Turkey needed. A society emerging from social and economic inertia, with a large section of the population dominated by fatalism, and without a large progressive and far-sighted intelligentsia, could not have done otherwise. Whatever faults one may attribute to Atatürk, one cannot say that he lacked enlightenment, and his enlightenment was Turkey's great fortune.

The individualistic nature of the Republican regime was brought up repeatedly by Atatürk himself.³ Dictatorship in general, as a political theory, had never been accepted and was even considered harmful for Turkey,⁴ even during the time of the most rigid enforcement of one-party rule. This rule did not resemble the Western dictatorship, for it had no terror and a relative freedom of publication was recognized.⁵ Various reforms and the new system of education were introduced not for the purpose of enhancing dictatorship, but to liberate the individual from the age-long effects of personal, despotic rule.

² *BMMTD, Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi (Zabıt Ceridesi)* (Records of the Grand National Assembly), Session 7.3, Vol. 20, p. 7 (Inönü's speech).

³ John Parker, *Modern Turkey*, London, 1940, pp. 76, 77.

⁴ Richard D. Robinson, "The Lesson of Turkey," *The Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1951, p. 427.

⁵ Lewis, "Recent Developments in Turkey," *International Affairs*, July 1951, p. 320.

The government itself recognized that the individual's rights limited somehow its own power by re-establishing the *Devlet Şurası* (Supreme Administrative Court). Although this Court was not entitled to judge the constitutionality of laws, it did provide the individual with some rights to sue the government for damages to his own property and person. The implicit conclusion was that the government recognized the temporary nature of the restrictions imposed upon individual rights and freedoms. Once the conditions which necessitated the restrictions disappeared, there remained no justification for continuing them.⁶ In other words, once the reforms became generally accepted and the danger of reaction was reduced, the individual's rights and freedoms could be restored to him again.⁷ The general public had viewed with misgivings the strengthening of one-party rule, especially after Atatürk's death in 1938, when a small bureaucratic-minded group in the Republican Party gained power and exercised a rigid control over all activities.⁸ Some open discontent was already visible at the party convention of 1939, but the second World War started and the desire of preserving a united front during those crucial years caused postponement of talks for liberation. During the war years, Turkey, after a cautious policy of neutrality (she had an alliance with France and England in 1939 and the non-aggression pact of 1941 with Germany) and occasional fluctuations which irritated the Allies, finally came

⁶ The spokesmen for the Republican Party, somewhat in a sudden change, claimed in 1946 that the Party's intention was not to establish a dictatorship but a democracy like those of Western Europe. The Party encouraged the establishment of opposition parties in the past, they said, with that purpose in mind, such as the Liberal Party. *Ulus*, August 22, 1946.

⁷ Allen remarked in 1935 that when the country had become sufficiently enlightened to understand democracy one might look for the relaxation of the one-party rule. Henry Elisha Allen, *The Turkish Transformation*, Chicago, 1935, p. 48, n.9.

⁸ It has been often said that after Atatürk's death an administrative and political oligarchy in the Republican Party firmly established its own power in the government appearing as a dictatorship. *Ulus* (editorial), July 4, 1946; also Lewis, "Recent Developments," p. 320.

solidly to the West's side. She cut her relations with the Axis in 1944, declared war on Germany and Japan on February 23rd in order to qualify for United Nations membership, and on February 24, 1945 she embraced the United Nations Declaration.⁹

It appeared certain at the end of the war that Turkey's political and economic interests lay in the West, and that these could be best served by a closer rapprochement to it. Thus, the destruction of the one-party regimes in Italy and Germany,¹⁰ the adherence of Turkey to the United Nations Declaration, and her closer rapprochement to the West considerably weakened the foundations of one-party rule at home. Moreover, the political atmosphere abroad, especially in the United States, made it apparent that without a democratization of her political system Turkey would not be able to gain in the West the proper moral recognition she desired and needed. Furthermore, the strains of discontent at home, stemming from various political, social, and economic measures

⁹ The Turkish declaration in this respect reads: "Turkey having already, at the time of signing her alliance with Great Britain on October 19, 1939, embraced the cause of the Allied Powers in their struggle against aggression, has since then broken off her diplomatic and economic relations first with Germany and later with Japan, and having declared war on those powers on February 23, 1945, has decided to adhere to the United Nations Declaration." *Department of State Bulletin*, XII, March 4, 1945, pp. 373-374; also *United Nations Documents 1941-1945*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, New York, 1947; Gotthard Jäschke, *Die Türkei in den Jahren 1942-1951*, Wiesbaden, 1955, pp. 40, 41, 42. Professor Jäschke's outstanding chronology has been of very valuable assistance in checking dates and completing the information in this work. For the beginnings of democracy in Turkey, see also the memoirs of Hilmi Uran, Vice-Chairman and Secretary General of the Republican Party in *Dünya*, October 19, 1958.

¹⁰ Adnan Menderes best described the effects of war on the Turkish politics in a speech in Aydın: "The difficulties encountered during the war years uncovered and showed the weak points created by the one-party system in the structure of the country. The hope in the miracles of one-party system vanished, as the one-party system countries were defeated everywhere. Thus, the one-party mentality was destroyed in the turmoil of blood and fire of the second World War. No country can remain unaffected by the great international events and the contemporary dominating ideological currents. This influence was felt in our country too." *Cumhuriyet*, July 18, 1946.

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taken during the war, had become so serious that it was necessary to "open a safety-valve" to prevent a general upheaval.¹¹ All of these helped to prepare the ground for liberalization.

By accepting the Charter of the United Nations Turkey pledged to liberalize her political regime in accordance with the democratic principles of the Charter. The Turkish delegate to the San Francisco Conference in 1945 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; it may even prove better than some of them . . ." and added that after the war every democratic tendency would be allowed to develop in Turkey.¹² A few days after this declaration, President İnönü declared on May 19, 1945, ". . . the political régime 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. The Grand National Assembly, our greatest democratic institution, had the Government in its hand from the very beginning and constantly developed the country in the direction of democracy."¹³

¹¹ Lewis, "Recent Developments," p. 323. This writer, who had a chance to talk to several people from various parts of the country at that time and was told of the general discontent among the populace, also subscribes to Professor Lewis's idea which he attributes to the Democrats. For the situation of Turkey after the war and the emergence of the multi-party system, see also A. C. Edwards, "The Impact of the War on Turkey," *International Affairs*, July 1946, pp. 392-399 *passim*.

¹² *Ayın Tarihi*, May 1945, p. 633. The CHP Parliamentary Group met on March 27 and 28, 1945 and discussed the pending San Francisco Conference. *Ayın Tarihi*, March 1945, pp. 10, 11. The announcement in respect to these meetings was very succinct but from private information gathered it appears that the Turkish delegation to San Francisco was instructed to declare that liberalization was under way in Turkey. See also Dankwart A. Rustow, "Politics and Islam in Turkey 1920-1955," *Islam and the West*, p. 90, n.40.

¹³ *Ayın Tarihi*, May 1945, pp. 52-53. Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 45.

The opposition to the government formed over the years, became somewhat personalized during the debates on the Land Reform Law, and was encouraged by İnönü's declaration and the signing of the United Nations Charter by Turkey. It first came into the open when the Charter was submitted to the National Assembly for ratification. Adnan Menderes, who appeared as the outspoken critic of one-party rule, pointed out that the Charter "requested respect for the sovereignty of the people in the administration of the country by establishing mutual respect in the observance of civil and the political rights of the individual and the state . . . through free voting . . . consequently the liquidation of obstacles to the will of the people will strengthen the freedom and independence of nations."¹⁴ In his view, the United Nations Charter and the Turkish Constitution were in perfect harmony, but that this harmony was disrupted in practice, however, by the restrictions imposed on freedom by the Republican Party. According to Menderes, the acceptance of the Charter entailed the liquidation of these restrictions to fulfill the obligations undertaken by the Turkish Government under the United Nations.¹⁵

This speech against one-party rule met violent reaction in the Assembly on the part of the old guard Republicans, but the demand to conform to the United Nations Charter soon became the main theme of the press.¹⁶

The effect of international events and pressure on Turkish internal politics has always been a subject of controversy, especially in the light of the country's extreme sensitiveness to criticism from abroad. It was said that international pressure, embodied in the United Nations Charter, made the Re-

¹⁴ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 19, pp. 170, 171. Debate on August 15, 1945. Jäschke, *ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁵ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 19, p. 171.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174ff. (remarks of M. Ökmen). *Tan*, August 23, 1945; *La Turquie*, August 22, 1945. The left wing papers protested against the one-party rule in strong terms. Some of the Republican newspapers also appeared critical of the one-party rule and its restrictions. See Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 50.

publican Party accept political liberalization, as in the past foreign pressure had brought about the *Tanzimat* of 1839 and the Reform Edict of 1856.¹⁷ Although the effect of indirect moral pressure for democratization from outside cannot be minimized,¹⁸ it would be erroneous to consider it as the exclusive factor in the introduction of the multi-party regime in Turkey. To do so would amount to the denial of the social and cultural forces within Turkish society, and would make the transition appear to be dictated only by opportunistic motives. The acceptance of the United Nations Charter, nevertheless, decidedly set the stage for the opposition to one-party rule, since it provided the dissidents with legal and moral arguments against the one-party system and encouraged them to bring their opposition into the open and to seek popular support.

It was under the pressure of all these internal and external developments in 1945 that the Republican Party philosophy gradually underwent a fundamental change. Premier Şükrü Saracoğlu, who one year earlier in 1944 had declared that the Turkish political regime was likely to be a postwar model for other countries,¹⁹ agreed to "a review of this or that measure which had been adopted in order to protect the new regime."²⁰

¹⁷ *Ayn Tarihi*, September 1945, p. 23 (remarks attributed to opposition newspapers). *Yeni Sabah*, February 19, 1948 (Sadık Aldoğan's views); also *The Times*, London, November 1, 1945.

Hamit ve Muhsin, *Türkiye Tarihi*, İstanbul, 1930, p. 654; also Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, July 1954, pp. 849, 850.

¹⁸ The idea of outside pressure for democratization was so persistent even later on, that the British Ambassador to Turkey, during a visit paid to the Newspapermen's Association, found it necessary to deny publicly any interference by Great Britain in the internal affairs of Turkey. *Cumhuriyet*, September 3, 1946; also *Ulus*, September 5, 1946.

¹⁹ Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 27; also *Vatan*, September 16, 1945 (remarks of A. Menderes).

²⁰ *Ulus*, September 6, 1945. One and a half years earlier *Ulus* wrote edi-

Spokesmen for the Republican Party declared that in Turkey the sovereignty of the people was recognized and that basically the regime was democratic, consequently they declared that democracy had been in existence in Turkey for twenty-three years, since the inception of the Republic.²¹

The Republicans' first opportunity to prove these liberal intentions came with the İstanbul by-elections. These elections, in which candidates were freely nominated as contrasted with the past when the Republican Party Central Committee had supreme control over nominations,²² were held on June 17, 1945. The elected deputies, however, belonged to CHP (Peoples Republican Party).

Martial law, on the other hand, enforced in İstanbul throughout the war years, was extended for an additional six months.²³ This law gave the government supreme authority to take all measures as it deemed necessary for the country's security. Since the main and the most important part of the Turkish press was concentrated in İstanbul, which was also, politically speaking, the most "sensitive" spot, such over-all authority could be used, as happened repeatedly, for political purposes.

The opposition within the Assembly gradually took a more definite form. The sharp criticism of the government voiced during the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Commerce in 1945, and the seven votes cast against it were the beginning of an ever increasing opposition to the government.²⁴ Formal opposition developed with the submission

torially that freedom could be restricted whenever necessary to materialize populism. *Ulus*, January 6, 1944.

²¹ *Ibid.*, May 23, 1946; July 28, 1946 (Declaration of the Minister of Justice, A. R. Türel); also Lewis, "Recent Developments," p. 321.

²² *Vatan*, June 8, 1945; Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 46.

²³ *Ayın Tarihi*, June 1945, p. 5.

²⁴ *Vatan*, May 30, 1945. Four votes belonged to the future founders of the Democratic Party: A. Menderes, C. Bayar, R. Koraltan, F. Köprülü. The remaining three votes belonged, respectively, to H. Bayur, an old critic of the government, R. Peker, dissatisfied with the economic policy, and

to the Republican Party's Parliamentary Group of a proposal known as the *Dörtlü Tahrir* (Proposal of the Four) of June 7, 1945. The signatories were Celal Bayar (ex-Premier), Adnan Menderes, Fuad Köprülü, and Refik Koraltan.

They mentioned the democratic nature of the Turkish Constitution, the attempts of Atatürk to give a more liberal character to the government, and finally the fact that the fear of reaction had necessitated the imposition of restrictions on the Constitution and that the second World War had prolonged the enforcement of these restrictions.²⁵ Now, since the war was over and the intellectuals and peasants were ready for democracy, they proposed to restore to the National Assembly effective powers of control over the government, grant to individuals the rights and freedoms which had been prescribed in the Constitution, and finally allow the development of political activity based on more than one party. In an effort to arouse public backing, the signatories requested an open debate on the proposal. Although very carefully worded, and apparently submitted in order to produce a change in the Republican Party from within, this proposal, if accepted, would have produced a sudden and radical change in the political life of the country.

The Republican Party's Parliamentary Group met on June 12, 1945, and after seven hours of closed-door discussions rejected the proposal on the ground that it aimed at certain amendments in the existing laws and regulations and that the National Assembly and not the Group was the proper place to discuss such requests.²⁶

E. Sazak, rich landowner who, according to Premier Saracoğlu, "became an oppositionist from the day the Land Reform Law came under discussion." *Ulus*, May 30, 1945. See also my Chapter 4.

²⁵ For text, see Naki C. Akkerman, *Demokrasi ve Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler Hakkında Kısa Notlar*, Ankara, 1950, pp. 72-75; also *Vatan*, September 22, 1945 (Declaration of A. Menderes). *Cumhuriyet*, July 18, 1946; *Ulus*, November 26, 1950.

²⁶ *Aynı Tarihi*, June 1945, p. 13. Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 14. See also Chapter 15.

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It is rather difficult to explain the rejection of the proposal in question, for in fact it was the denial of all the liberalization promises made by the Republicans during the spring of 1945. It may be assumed that a majority in the Republican Party found the idea of sudden political liberalization too radical, but it may also be true that in an effort to establish a genuine opposition party, the Republican hierarchy decided to reject the proposal and thus create between its authors and the rest of the Republicans certain differences which eventually would have led the signatories to separate from the Republican Party. Indeed, a number of democratic measures adopted by the Republican Party only a few months later, if accepted entirely or partially at that meeting, could have met the demands formulated in the proposals and would have left little ground for the signatories to maintain a critical attitude toward their own party.

Public opinion seemed to be in sympathy with all efforts to criticize the Republican Party; therefore it voiced approval of the four signatories. Encouraged by this reaction, three months after the debate on the proposed party reform, Fuad Köprülü and Adnan Menderes brought their opposition into the open by criticizing the government, the Premier, and some "undemocratic" laws in the *Vatan*, which had already turned against the government. The Republican Party asked the two to explain their critical attitude but did not receive a satisfactory answer, and consequently found their activities "contrary to the spirit and letter of the Republican Party and decided to expel them." Refik Koraltan, the third co-signatory of the proposal was also expelled from the party for criticizing the decision regarding his two colleagues.²⁷

Celal Bayar, the fourth co-signatory, had prepared for submission to the Grand National Assembly a request for amending Articles 17 and 50 of the Press Law restricting

²⁷ *Vatan*, September 13, 14, 18, 1945. *Ibid.*, September 22, 1945; October 2, 1945, November 27, 1945.

freedom of information, but his request was rejected by the Republican Parliamentary Group.²⁸ Bayar resigned from the Assembly as Deputy of Izmir and on December 2, 1945, from the Republican Party itself, in order, according to his biographer, to give the opposition a genuine aspect by founding a new party.²⁹

Thus, in the winter of 1945, about five months after the proposal was submitted, the four signatories had severed their relations with the Republican Party. Meanwhile in opening the Assembly on November 1, 1945, İnönü made further declarations encouraging the opposition. He declared that the country was progressing in freedom and security towards democracy and that its only shortcoming was the absence of an opposition to face the party in power. He expressed his hope that such an opposition party might be established in accordance with the principles of democracy and the country's needs. This democracy, however, had to suit the character and culture of the Turkish people, and the structure of the country. İnönü had in mind at this stage a rather limited democracy that would not challenge the Republican Party's rule. He nevertheless promised that the anti-democratic laws were to be amended and urged the dissidents in the Republican Party to come into the open.³⁰

While these developments took place in the Republican Party, the opposition's issues were defined in the press. A common opposition front was created in the summer of 1945 around the newspapers *Vatan* (Homeland) and *Tan* (Dawn). Some other publications still dubious of the outcome of the democratization efforts followed reluctantly. Immediate liberalization demands concentrated on a number of issues con-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, June 14, 1945.

²⁹ Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 54. *Tasvir*, July 9, 1946 (open letter of Cemal Kutay). For some general information, see also Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in My Time*, Norman (Oklahoma), 1956, pp. 221-224.

³⁰ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 20, p. 7. Jäschke, *ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

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nected with restoration of the rights and freedoms granted by the Constitution. Among them were freedom of the press, amendment of the Associations and Penal Laws, amendment of the Police Law (especially Article 18 which gave the security forces the right to seize and hold indefinitely any person deemed "dangerous" and to search houses without a warrant), autonomy for universities, direct elections, and the separation of the President of the Republic from the Chairmanship of the Republican Party.³¹

Meanwhile, discussions in the precinct meetings of the Republican Party, known in the past for conformance to the wishes of the party hierarchy, gradually became more critical. They grew vehement when the critics realized that they were not silenced or expelled from the party as would have been the case in the past.³²

A violent political polemic which degenerated into personal slander between Ahmed Emin Yalman, the editor of the opposition newspaper *Vatan* and Falih Rifki Atay of *Ulus* (State), the official newspaper of the Republican Party, besides dissipating the fear of criticizing the government and its representatives, forced *Ulus* to adopt a strictly Republican Party line and give up its claims of general representation. Moreover, the impact of public opinion was being felt, as proved by the fact that *Yeni Ekonomi* (New Economy) of İzmir, which had been suspended by the governor of İzmir for having published news of an automobile accident caused by the governor's son, was reopened at the insistence of the press.³³

It was this general atmosphere of political relaxation that led Nuri Demirağ, a rich İstanbul industrialist, to request on July 6, 1945, and obtain on July 18, 1945, permission to

³¹ *Tan*, June 22, 26, 1945.

³² See *Vatan*, September 19, 20, 1945 (meetings at Üsküdar [Scutari] and Eyüp). On developments in Turkey during this period, see Malcolm Burr, "Politics in Turkey," *Spectator*, July 13, 1945.

³³ See *Yeni Ekonomi*, *Vatan*, November 17, 18, 1945.

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establish a new political party, thus acquiring the honor of having formed the first opposition party in Turkey after the second World War.³⁴ This party, *Milli Kalkınma* (National Resurgence), lacked a concrete and detailed program and limited its activities to a policy drawn up personally by the founder. It therefore played only a minor part in the political struggle. But by allowing its establishment, the government proved its willingness to accept opposition parties.

It would be inaccurate to envisage all these developments as taking place without any reaction on the part of the Republican Party. Sharp attacks were directed against the press, in whose criticism certain party extremists saw a real danger to the nation's security, and who openly invited the youth to "silence" the opposition newspapers.³⁵ As mentioned before, the opposition was centered around the *Vatan* and *Tan*. The first paper adopted liberal and the second socialistic views. (The editors of *Tan*, Zekeria Sertel and Sabiha Sertel, were among the very first to open fierce and bitter attacks on the Republican Party and its members. *Tan* voiced strong support of the Land Reform Law and continued thereafter to publish a number of articles on the social and economic problems of the country, all examined from a socialist viewpoint.) Premier Saracoğlu complained that the "two newspapers which we thought had different political views were united in opposition,"³⁶ thereby causing *Vatan* to state its political views as not being socialistic.

³⁴ *Vatan*, July 8, September 8, 22, October 27, 1945. On this party, see also *Türkiyede Siyasi Dernekler*, 11 (A publication of the Ministry of Interior), Ankara, 1950, pp. 105ff. Tarık Z. Tunaya, *Türkiyede Siyasi Partiler*, İstanbul, 1952, pp. 638ff. See also my section on minor parties in Chapter 15.

³⁵ *Vatan*, May 23, 1945. *Ibid.*, September 11, 1945.

³⁶ *Aynı Tarihi*, September 1945, p. 23. *Tan* was accused of communistic leanings, and *Vatan* of supporting foreign capitalist interests. *Tan* denied in an editorial any communistic sympathies. Both papers had been accused of being Jewish by Rasih Kaplan, probably because the editor of *Vatan* was a *dönme*, converted Jew (that is of the Jewish group which accepted Islam in the sixteenth century), and the editor of *Tan* was an immigrant. *Tan*, October 10, 17, 1945.

The mounting antagonism to *Tan* was increased further by its editors' publication of *Görüşler* (Views), a political magazine, which violently attacked the Republican Party and the President and asked for a new reorientation in internal and in external (pro-Soviet) politics.³⁷

The expected reaction to *Tan's* criticism occurred on the morning of December 4, 1945. A huge crowd, carrying anti-communist as well as anti-oppositionist posters,³⁸ stopped in front of the *Tan* offices. In a matter of minutes the printing presses of *La Turquie*, *Yeni Dünya* (New World) and *Görüşler*—all these had socialist tendencies—were destroyed. Several places (*Berrak*, *ABC*) selling leftist publications were also wrecked. The newspaper *Akşam* (Evening), which criticized the destructive aspects of the demonstration, was forced by the demonstrators to take out the critical remarks. According to the Minister of Interior, "the police followed the manifestation step by step," but were unable to stop the wreckers, although they successfully prevented them from reaching certain foreign representations.³⁹ Despite the fact

³⁷ See *Görüşler*, December 1945.

³⁸ One poster read: "In no other democratic country in the world is there as much freedom as in ours." *Ayn Tarihi*, December 1945, p. 3.

³⁹ *Ulus*, December 5, 1945. *Ayn Tarihi*, December 1945, p. 3. It is a truth that *Tan* and *La Turquie*, whatever their ideology and purpose, were among the very first newspapers to criticize the one-party regime and ask for a more liberal system. Mehmet Ali Aybar, professor at the University of İstanbul (later dismissed; and also publisher of the pro-left *Zincirli Hürriyet* [The Enchained Freedom]) was one of the first to write violent anti-government articles in the *Vatan*. The best known is his "Democracy on Paper." See *Vatan*, August 24, 1945. Ahmet Emin Yalman in his recently published memoirs—rather fragments of memoirs—treats casually the destruction of *Tan*. He mentions the fact that in the morning of the demonstration he walked to his office and soon his building was surrounded by gendarmes and police. Actually *Vatan* narrowly missed meeting the same fate as *Tan*, and the police were there to protect the building. The buildings of *Tan* and *Vatan* are at a distance of 500 yards from each other. This writer, who was studying at the University of İstanbul at that time and had, by chance, learned how the "manifestation" was organized, found out that it was decided to spare *Vatan* in the last moment in order to give the manifestation an anti-communist only and not an anti-opposition feature. For Yalman's views, see *Turkey in My Time*, p. 226.

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that Istanbul was under martial law, the demonstration lasted several hours and took place three blocks from police headquarters. This destructive action, contrary to the Republican Party's liberalization promises, could be explained partly by the fact that during this period Turkish-Soviet relations were deteriorating because of the Soviet's demands for a revision of the Montreaux Convention.⁴⁰ Moreover, it created unfortunate precedent for forceful action against "leftist" ideas. It also covered the beginnings of democracy in Turkey with a cloud of fear and suspicion that force would eventually be used to silence all opposition to the government.⁴¹ The destruction of the left-wing publications and book stores was treated with mild criticism in the press, but in the Republican Party there seemed to be a certain relief that the leftists were finally silenced.⁴²

By this time it was clear that the four signatories of the proposal had decided to form an opposition party, and, indeed, on January 7, 1946, the Democratic Party was formally established under the leadership of Celal Bayar. Thus, the Democratic Party, like many other parties in the past, was formed directly within the National Assembly instead of developing from the people upwards. (Three of the founders were still deputies.)

The government and the Republican Party welcomed the establishment of the Democratic Party and expressed the hope that it would soon emerge as a party with a program different from that of the Republican Party.⁴³ Meanwhile,

⁴⁰ See my Chapter 14.

⁴¹ For an inside view of the prosecutions following the destruction of *Tan*, see Sabiha and Zekerya Sertel, *Davamız ve Müdafamız*, İstanbul, 1946. It was the publishers of *Tan* who were sent to the court, supposedly for some instigatory writings appearing in their newspaper. See *The New York Times*, March 24, 1946.

⁴² For opinions, see *Vatan*, *Akşam*, December 5, 6, 7, 1945; also Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 54. *Cumhuriyet*, January 20, 23, 1945, March 24, 1946.

⁴³ *Ulus* (editorial), January 8, 1946; *Akşam* (editorial), January 9,

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Hikmet Bayur, the old critic of the government, was expelled from the Republican Party and added his own prestige to the opposition.⁴⁴ (He worked for the Democratic Party but did not become a member.)

Within two months after its establishment, the Democratic Party had opened branches in sixteen provincial seats out of the existing sixty-three provinces, in thirty-six district seats, and in an indefinite number of villages. Nevertheless, this was rather slow development, for a considerable number of people were convinced that the new party, like the Liberal Party of Fethi Okyar in 1930, was not born from genuine opposition. This belief was widespread, and in order to shatter it the Republicans and Democrats had to assert repeatedly the genuine character of the opposition.⁴⁵

During the first few months following the establishment of the Democratic Party, relations between the Democrats and Republicans were friendly. This favorable attitude on the part of the Republicans, according to the Democrats, was based on the assumption that the Democratic Party "will not establish organizations in the eastern part of the country, in border provinces and in villages; and instead would limit its activities to a few provinces deemed to be politically advanced enough to accept new ideas"; would register members gradually, one by one, and not advance claims for power for at least forty to fifty years to come, thus playing the part of an ornament of democracy.⁴⁶ In fact, having been in power for

1946; also Jäschke, *op.cit.*, p. 56. See also my section on this Party in Chapter 15. For text of Program, see *Siyasi Dernekler*, pp. 169-182; *Tunaya, Siyasi Partiler*, pp. 662-673.

⁴⁴ *Ulus*, January 24, 1946.

⁴⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, March 14, 1946 (C. Bayar's statement). *Tasvir*, April 23, 1946. *Ülke*, March 10, 1946.

⁴⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, July 18, 1946 (speech of Menderes in Aydın). For a general view of political developments in 1946-1947, see Ahmed E. Yalman, "The Struggle for Multi-Party Government in Turkey," *The Middle East Journal*, I, 1947, pp. 46ff.

twenty-three years, the Republicans felt that an opposition party could not easily take root.⁴⁷

However, as the Democratic Party expanded, the friendly attitude of the Republicans changed. Indeed, after the relatively stagnant first three months, the Democratic Party suddenly began to expand greatly, mainly because people became convinced of the genuine character of its opposition. Thus, in the Spring of 1946, the Democratic Party came to represent within its own ranks almost the entire opposition. In towns and villages groups of citizens would get together and form a local branch of the Democratic Party,⁴⁸ and then establish contacts with the central body with little regard for the fact that the Democratic Party did not yet have a program accepted by the party, nor were its views clearly formulated: its only distinctive character being its opposition to the government.

It became apparent to the Republicans that in a very short time the expanding Democratic Party would offer a real challenge to the Republican Party and might even oust it from government in the forthcoming election, scheduled to take place early in 1947.

The Republican Party decided to call a party convention to discuss certain matters connected with democracy and to change the date of the municipal elections from September to May 1946;⁴⁹ this last decision forecasting imminent general elections in the summer of 1946. The amendment to the municipal law to provide for an early election was submitted by the Republican Government and debated and passed the same day in the Assembly, but not without the first open clash between the party in power and the opposition. The opposition claimed that the holding of the elections at an earlier date than actually due aimed at delaying the organiza-

⁴⁷ *Son Saat*, March 30, 1947 (Köprülü's views).

⁴⁸ See *Tanin* (editorial), July 8, 1947.

⁴⁹ *Ayın Tarihi*, April 1946, p. 6.

tion of the Democratic Party, and demanded measures to assure the integrity of elections and amendment of undemocratic laws, notably the Press, Association, and Police Laws. The Republicans, some of them in plainly threatening terms, claimed that the opposition needed to "mature" before it could advance any claims to office. They claimed that new elections were necessary to determine whether they still had the confidence of the people, through an Assembly elected in a new democratic direct election instead of the old indirect system.⁵⁰

The Republican Party Convention met on May 10, 1946, and following the opening speech of President İnönü it proceeded to consider the agenda. İnönü pointed out that the internal and external situation of the nation made imperative the holding of new elections, and that there was need to democratize the election system. Should the Republican Party lose the elections, İnönü said, he would go into opposition as the Chairman of the Republican Party, a position he did not wish to relinquish despite criticism levelled at him for being both President of the Republic and Chairman of the Republican Party. İnönü recommended the following: (a) lifting the ban on the formation of associations and political parties based on class interest; (b) adoption of the direct voting system in place of the old indirect system; (c) amendment of the party by-laws in order to nominate and elect the party chairman, instead of having him nominated for a lifetime (*değişmez başkan*), and change the name of *şef* (chief, leader) to "party chairman"; and, (d) abolition of the Independent Group in the Assembly—and as a conclusion to all these, the holding of new elections.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 22, p. 216 (Menderes's speech). *Ibid.*, p. 222 (R. Koraltan). *Ibid.*, p. 218 (R. Peker); also *Ayın Tarihi*, April 1946, p. 22 (views of R. Peker).

⁵¹ *Ulus*, April 27 and May 11, 1946; *Ayın Tarihi*, May 1946, pp. 32ff. *İnönünün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, İstanbul, 1946, pp. 401-407; also Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 60.

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The convention concluded after İnönü's proposals were accepted and he had been elected chairman of the party.

The decisions reached at this convention were of crucial importance. The recognition of the fact that there were social classes in the country and of their economic interests as the basis for political associations was diametrically opposed to the concept of a classless society, which had been preached for the previous twenty-five years. The direct election also was indeed a profound reform enabling the average Turkish citizen, for the first time, to assert his own opinion directly by vote instead of through an intermediary.

The decision to call the elections one year early was, however, motivated by practical considerations. Early elections, in addition to keeping the Republicans in power, could destroy, or at least lessen the zeal and enthusiasm of the opposition, which found in the approaching elections the source of strength for its activities. Moreover, it was thought that if the elections were won by the Democratic Party only a few months after its inception, when neither its leaders' ideas nor the party's principles were clearly known, it could be done only by a coalition based on all the discontented elements—from the religious reactionary to the landless peasant—which might in the end menace the very bases of the regime itself.

The reaction of the Democratic Party to the decisions of the Republican Convention was indeed very strong. The Democratic Central Committee accused İnönü of having broken a promise to hold general elections at the regular time, that is in 1947, and if early elections were necessary, that decision should have been taken in agreement with the opposition parties. İnönü was criticized because as President he had legal immunity, but as party chairman he had to intervene in daily politics, thus being forced to use his immunity and privileges in favor of his party.⁵² Fuad Köprülü,

⁵² *Vatan*, May 14, 1946; also *Celal Bayar Diyor ki* (edited by N. Sevgen),

in an interview accorded to the correspondent of the *New York Times*, accused the government of opposing the establishment of political parties by unorthodox means, such as telephone tapping and the use of secret police to follow opposition members. In reply, the Republicans compared the statements of the Democrats to the broadcasts of Radio Moscow, and accused them of demagoguery, and censured Köprülü bitterly for having involved the foreigners in a discussion of domestic affairs.⁵³

The municipal elections were held amidst this controversy on May 26, 1946. The Democratic Party decided to abstain in view of the existence of undemocratic laws and of the intention of the party in power to obstruct the establishment of a real opposition.⁵⁴ The National Resurgence Party, which had lost a considerable number of its followers to the Democratic Party, at first decided to participate in the elections, but then quit them in İstanbul at 11:00 A.M. on the day of the elections, accusing the government of partiality.⁵⁵ Popular participation in these confused elections, according to the opposition, was very small,⁵⁶ but according to the Minister of Interior, it averaged fifty to sixty per cent.⁵⁷ Although officially not participating in the elections, the Democrats voted in great number for the non-Republican candidates, in Kastamonu, for instance, while in other places they backed the National Resurgence Party which won some seats in a few

İstanbul, 1951, pp. 107-110. This book contains excerpts from some of Celal Bayar's speeches in 1920-1950, mainly reproduced from newspapers.

⁵³ *New York Times*, May 14, 1946. *Cumhuriyet*, May 15, 22, 1946. Also *Ulus*, May 15, 24, 1946.

⁵⁴ For the discussions of the Democrats and their decisions for non-participation in elections, see *Tasvir*, May 6, 9, 1946; *Ulus*, May 8, 1946. *Celal Bayar Diyor ki*, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁵ *Tasvir*, May 27, 1946.

⁵⁶ İstanbul 49, İzmir 22, Adana 45, Manisa 30, Balıkesir 25 per cent, respectively. *Vatan*, May 27, 1946.

⁵⁷ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 23, p. 240 (statement by Hilmi Uran). Actually low participation was in areas in which the Democrats had established their organization and could induce the citizens to abstain.

places, notably in the town of Kırıkkale (six seats), near Ankara.⁵⁸

The municipal elections provided the first opportunity for citizens to nominate their own candidates, instead of having them imposed by the Republican Party, and to vote freely for them, and thus freely discharge their duties as citizens and voters. Furthermore, the elections brought into the open a number of personality conflicts in the Republican Party organizations and gave evidence of the strength of the Democratic Party. Finally, it evidenced a number of technical shortcomings in the voting system which had to be corrected before general elections.

The elections were held in relative freedom, despite cumbersome procedures, lack of secrecy, and partisanship by government officials not used to facing an opposition.⁵⁹

Inönü's trip around the country during the month of May, prior to the municipal elections, when he urged all the people to vote, was one of the first results of multi-party life. It meant that the government was gradually realizing its dependency on the people for its power.

The effects of liberalization were felt in other fields also. The sale and pricing of goods was partly taken out from government control and retailers were given broader opportunity to sell the products of state enterprises (Sumer Bank in particular). The emergency work obligation, which had been imposed upon villagers residing in some mining areas in order to meet the manpower shortage in the mines, was abolished.⁶⁰

Criticism from all quarters was bitter and sharp at all times, but the government limited itself to answering the charges,

⁵⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, May 29, 1946.

⁵⁹ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 23, p. 239 (interpellation by Hikmet Bayur).

⁶⁰ For a description of this work obligation, see *Ayn Tarihi*, May 1945, pp. 154-156; *Ulus*, May 14-16, 1946; *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 17, pp. 218-225, 396. See also my Chapter 3, n.28.

instead of silencing the critics as it had in the past,⁶¹ and continued the liberalization. Article 50 of the Press Law, which greatly restricted the freedom of the press, was amended with the explanation that modern institutions and reforms brought about by the Republican regime were generally accepted and were no longer likely to be subject to controversy. A partial press amnesty was instituted. As a result of these amendments to the Press Law, authority to close a newspaper was taken from the administration and given to the courts, which were supposed to conduct inquiries and request evidence in accordance with legal procedure.⁶² The Turkish Press Union, *Basın Birliği*, established under Law 3511 to control the press was disbanded, and the newspapermen were left free to join professional associations (Law 4932). A few months later a further amendment to the law abolished those requirements connected with the publication of a newspaper, such as the procurement of a publishing license from the highest local government official, the deposit of money (TL. 5,000), information on the publisher's educational background and certification of a good reputation in the community.⁶³

The universities were given autonomy in their administration and in internal affairs, even though their expenditures were financed from the national budget.⁶⁴ The duly established academic bodies alone could judge and penalize, if necessary, the faculty members for their actions or views. Siddık Sami Onar, an eminent professor of administrative law, was elected dean of the University of İstanbul by defeating the former dean, Dr. Tevfik Sağlam, who was considered the government's candidate.

⁶¹ *Ayn Tarihi*, June 1946, p. 17. (Premier Saracoğlu's statements); also *Ulus*, June 5, 1946; also Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, pp. 61-62.

⁶² *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 24, p. 262. Law 4935 of June 13, 1946.

⁶³ See Law 4955 of September 20, 1946; also *Siyasal Bilgiler Mecmuası*, November 1948, pp. 328ff. For laws see also Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, pp. 61-62, 65.

⁶⁴ *Ayn Tarihi*, June 1946, pp. 5, 12. Law 4936 of June 13, 1946.

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The Law on Associations was amended (Article 9) which forbade the establishment of associations on a class basis. Furthermore, instead of government officials, only the courts could decide to close an association after due inquiries.⁶⁵ Similarly, a number of old laws infringing upon the right of association were abolished, and the right of association was to be regulated primarily in accordance with the liberal provisions of the Civil Code.

Despite the fact that the affiliation of local associations with associations abroad was forbidden, and that the Democrats considered the right of association in Turkey still lagging behind the freedom of association enjoyed even in the Young Turks' era, the right of association was, nevertheless, placed on a relatively liberal basis.⁶⁶

The government also introduced an amendment to the Election Law in accordance with the decision taken by the Republican Party Convention, but the Democrats deemed it insufficient to assure the secrecy and safety of the ballot.⁶⁷ The elections were controlled by the government instead of the Judiciary, as requested by the opposition. Proportional Representation was not accepted because some right wing Republicans considered that there were no class differences in Turkey, and that such a system would be against the established tradition of a majority election.⁶⁸ (Nowadays the Republicans demand P. R.)

In a matter of months the Republicans abolished or greatly liberalized many of the restrictions that took them twenty-five years to impose.

Thus, with a certain degree of liberalization achieved the government decided to hold the general elections. Conse-

⁶⁵ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 24, pp. 48ff. Law 4919. See also Malcolm Burr, "Politics in Turkey," *Spectator*, September 13, 1946.

⁶⁶ *BMMTD*, Session 7, Vol. 24, p. 49.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, pp. 246ff., Vol. 24, pp. 39ff.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 250 (S. Sırer).

quently, the date for general elections was set for July 21, 1946.

The Democratic Party hierarchy favored the boycotting of the general elections, but following the wishes of the local organizations as expressed in a general consultative meeting held at party headquarters, it decided to participate in the elections, despite "the great handicaps in the election system."⁶⁹ The assurance of impartial elections given by the government, and the danger of being deprived of representation in the Assembly, and, consequently, of publicity and direct contact with the government, were other factors which determined the decision of the Democrats. Indeed, political parties in Turkey not represented in the Assembly have seldom, whatever the worth of their program and ideas, achieved popularity or attracted the attention of the press.

On the eve of elections the Democratic Party had already established organizations in over forty-one provincial "seats" out of the existing sixty-three provinces, in 200 district "seats," and in "a large number of villages."⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the Democrats gained a most valuable support in the person of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak. One of the closest friends of Atatürk and Chief of Staff during the War of Liberation and the only living Marshal of Turkey, pious and honest of character, he enjoyed respect and popularity among the young and the old and also the religious groups. Sent into retirement, he had shown his antagonism to the Republicans by refusing membership in the Republican Party and a seat in the Assembly.⁷¹ Instead, he decided to enter the forthcoming elections as an independent candidate on the Democratic Party ticket.

⁶⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, June 16, 17, 19, 1946. Sevgen, *Celal Bayar Diyor ki*, pp. 111-113.

⁷⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, June 27, 1946 (Bayar's statement).

⁷¹ See *Ulus*, June 29, 30, 1946 (Saracoğlu's declaration); Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, pp. 62, 63. On Marshal Çakmak, see my Chapters 7 and 10, n.51.

The election campaign developed at a fast tempo. The bulk of the opposition in the country had centered almost exclusively around the Democratic Party and took the form of a crusade for liberation, a march against "despotism," as the Democrats described it, which was epitomized in their famous poster—a raised hand with the caption *artık yeter!*, it is enough! Huge crowds, in a surge of unequalled enthusiasm, carried the Democratic Party leaders on their shoulders wherever they campaigned.⁷²

The Democrats accused the Republicans of slandering the members of their own party, of pressure and ill-treatment by the gendarmes,⁷³ of attempts to cast ballots before election day, and all kinds of interferences on the part of government officials.⁷⁴ The government's instruction to examine the party credentials of those going into villages for campaigning—a measure intended to stop propaganda by religious reactionaries—was interpreted by the opposition as an attempt to obstruct political activities in the villages.⁷⁵

The Republican Party headquarters sent a circular letter to its party branches advising them to avoid using forceful means in the campaign, and to abstain from accusing the opposition of receiving funds from abroad or threatening to abolish the opposition party.⁷⁶ Furthermore, instructions were given by the Ministry of Interior "to see that the citizens vote in full freedom without any hindrance . . . in the direct elections held for the first time in the country."⁷⁷ Despite these measures, there was a fear that the elections would not be impartial. A secret letter revealed by one of the district governors, in which he was asked to cooperate with one of the Republican deputies campaigning in his district for re-

⁷² *Cumhuriyet*, June 30, 1946 (Bayar in Adana).

⁷³ *Tasvir*, July 8, 14, 1946.

⁷⁴ *Yeni Sabah*, July 16, 1946. *Celal Bayar Diyor ki*, pp. 115-130.

⁷⁵ *Ulus*, July 11, 12, 1946. *Vatan*, July 10, 1946.

⁷⁶ *Tasvir*, June 20, 22, 1946. *Cumhuriyet*, June 25, 1946.

⁷⁷ *Ulus*, July 2, 1946. *Aynı Tarihi*, July 1946, p. 7.

election, added further to the fear of government pressure on the elections.⁷⁸

The Republicans in turn accused the opposition of talking about installing "people's courts" to sentence the "oppressors" and distribute the wealth; of acting with the sole purpose of destroying the Republican Party;⁷⁹ and of injecting religious propaganda, such as the promise to introduce the Arabic script and allow the reading of *Ezan* (call to prayer) in Arabic.⁸⁰ Both parties, however, kept the issue of communism out of this campaign, and the governor of Yozgat, who accused the Democratic Party of communistic aims, was brought before the court and sentenced.⁸¹

The right wing of the Republican Party portrayed the campaign of the Democrats as being directed against İnönü, who declared that he wanted to remain Chairman of the Republican Party because he was elected President by the majority in the Assembly and not by the people, and that he was bound to remain attached to one party. On behalf of the Republican Party he promised to ease the obligations imposed on villages to build their own school houses, but defended the Land Reform Law (which was criticized by the Democrats), promised to fight the rising cost of living, and gallantly pledged no ill-feeling for propaganda abuses during the election campaign.⁸²

Possibly the most interesting features of the campaign were the active participation of the people in the campaign and their enthusiastic support of the opposition, and the change in the relations between the people and the candidates for deputy. For the first time, candidates who, during one-party rule, had seldom visited their constituencies, had to go

⁷⁸ *Tasvir*, July 16, 1946 (letter revealed by Fuat Arna). Later in 1948 he opposed the Democratic Party leaders and went to the National Party.

⁷⁹ *Ulus, Tanin*, July 29, 1946.

⁸⁰ *BMMTD*, Session 8, Vol. 1, pp. 92ff.

⁸¹ *Aksam*, August 4, 1946.

⁸² *Ayn Tarihi*, July 1946, pp. 9ff.

into their election districts as early as possible, to talk to people and ask for their votes, promising in return whatever the people needed. The task of the opposition candidates was easier, for nobody asked them for a program; the mere fact of being in opposition seemed sufficient reason to justify their candidacy. Meanwhile a good many of the major newspapers of Istanbul, together with some newly published ones—the number of which continued to increase—had gone over to the support of the opposition.

A brief analysis of the social background of the 250 Democratic candidates for deputy in the elections of 1946 shows that there were fifty-two lawyers, forty-one landowners, forty doctors, thirty-nine businessmen, fifteen retired generals, fourteen engineers, thirteen teachers, and the remainder of other professionals.⁸³ A similar analysis of the Republican list shows that the great majority were retired military men, known political personalities or high government officials (ex-governors, etc.), and some professionals.⁸⁴

The elections took place on July 21, 1946, in a calm and orderly atmosphere, with eighty-five percent of the electorate participating.

As the results became known, an outcry was raised, for they were a disappointment to so many people. In the cities the Democratic Party normally had the lead, but the returns from towns and villages were overwhelmingly in favor of the Republican Party.⁸⁵ In Istanbul, announcement of the results, expected the night of the election, came out only three days later. According to the opposition, this announcement followed "secret talks to change the election results in favor of the Republican Party," and after Marshal Çakmak visited the governor and asked "as a citizen and as a candidate respect for the ballot."⁸⁶ Eventually the result of the

⁸³ *Cumhuriyet, Vatan*, July 21, 1946.

⁸⁴ *Vatan*, July 19, 1946.

⁸⁵ *Ulus*, July 26, 1946.

⁸⁶ The government was accused of having changed the election results

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elections in İstanbul (the workers and especially the minority groups had voted overwhelmingly for the Democrats) was announced, with the outcome being that the Democratic Party won eighteen seats out of twenty-seven seats contested. The over-all result in the country (465 seats) was 395 seats for the Republican Party, sixty-four for the Democratic Party, and six for the Independents.⁸⁷ This figure changed constantly during the following years.

The denunciations of government and the mounting popular resentment caused by accusations of fraud could not be quieted even by İnönü's conciliatory speech "mutually to forget the harsh words expressed during the elections."⁸⁸ When all attempts at pacification proved fruitless, the martial law authorities in İstanbul issued a stern announcement accusing certain newspapers of "continuing to publish instigatory reports which may arouse suspicions in the minds of the citizens, especially in respect to the result of elections, and thus bring damage to order in the country."⁸⁹ The notice forbade any criticism of elections. Yet, that very day, two newspapers—*Yeni Sabah* (New Morning) and the socialist *Gerçek* (Truth)—published Celal Bayar's indictment of the Government:

I declare, I even accuse; wickedness has interfered in the elections. The results of the elections are far from indicating the real will of the nation. If the lawless actions and various pressures

in the district election boards charged with drafting the final affidavits of results from the precincts which counted the ballots but sent only the figures to the district polling quarters. The district election boards were under the supervision of government officials and could easily be influenced to change the election results without danger of contradiction because the ballots were destroyed after the count at the polling precinct. For a detailed account, see Kenan Öner, *Siyasi Hatıralarım ve Bizde Demokrasi*, İstanbul, 1948, pp. 26ff. *Yeni Sabah*, July 23, 24, 1946.

⁸⁷ Jäschke, *Die Türkei 1942-1951*, p. 63; also *Ayın Tarihi*, July 1946, p. 5 (with slight difference).

⁸⁸ *Vatan*, July 25, 1946. For the elections and events thereafter, see the *New York Times*, July 22-27, 1946.

⁸⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, July 25, 26, 1946.

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imposed upon citizens had not reached a maximum level our party would have won the elections all over the country . . . when these pressures and lawless actions proved insufficient the party in power was forced to falsify the election records . . . despite official announcements, the nation chose the Democratic Party. The Republican Party is preserving power only through the forceful methods applied before and during the elections and thanks to the falsifications of election records.⁹⁰

As a result, the two newspapers were closed, but the pro-government *Tanin* (Echo), which printed the same statement, was spared.⁹¹

The enforced silence imposed on the newspapers and people by martial law authorities in the area under its jurisdiction had no effect elsewhere in the country, where thousands of people enthusiastically supported the leaders of the Democratic Party, who denounced the elections.⁹²

Protest meetings continued for days afterward, to the point of causing police intervention, as depicted by Recep Peker, the Premier in the new government established after the elections. On the evening of August 5, 1946, while being given the responsibility of forming the new cabinet, Peker was in the Assembly building, and, as he describes it, "the sidewalk across the street was filled by a simply clothed crowd. They yelled 'long live the Democrats.' They were shouting other things which I was unable to understand. The mounted police had to draw their swords in order to disperse the crowd at the gate of the Assembly. Not only the door of the Grand National Assembly was forced but also its moral integrity."⁹³ Somehow the meetings died down as the new Republican government took office, but the feeling of antagonism to the government persisted.

In order to understand the nature of the political develop-

⁹⁰ *Yeni Sabah*, July 25, 1946.

⁹¹ *BMMTD*, Session 8.1, Vol. 1, p. 271.

⁹² *Cumhuriyet*, July 29, 30, 1946 (trips to Bursa, İzmir, Konya).

⁹³ *Ayn Tarihi*, August 1947, p. 22.

ment until the elections of 1946, it is necessary to analyze the structure of the opposition and its ideas.

The Democratic Party attracted the main opposition groups in the country regardless of the differences of opinion and interest, and regardless of the fact that its program, views, and mentality were not known in any detail. Peasants, workers, intellectuals, and landlords rallied around to give it the character of a movement. The party moved directly into the political fight for power from the very beginning, not as a direct decision of its leaders, but forced by its supporters. The leaders became heroes overnight, and few people, if any, ever bothered with their opinions or their past affiliations and support of the Republican Party, which they now criticized.⁹⁴

The specific issues put forth by the Democratic Party in general involved the high cost of living, lack of freedom, the existence of undemocratic laws, and some abuses by the administration. The Democrats failed to present a systematic election program or detailed views on economic or social problems. Their basic theme was to blame the Republican Party for all the shortcomings, discontent, and feelings of hardship accumulated during the war years and the reform period, regardless of the actual value of the criticism.

The general public, on the other hand, now found the first chance to express their discontent against the party in power. A vote for the opposition meant simply a vote against the Republican Party.⁹⁵ As one newspaper put it, "the Democratic Party did not win the election; the Republican Party lost it."⁹⁶ This indiscriminate support of the opposition actually gave cause for concern for the future of party politics in Turkey,⁹⁷ but under the existing circumstances matters could hardly have been otherwise.

⁹⁴ See Ahmet H. Başar, "D. P. ve Muhalefet Fikiri," *Cumhuriyet*, August 10, 1946.

⁹⁵ *Tasvir* (editorial), July 24, 1946.

⁹⁶ *Vatan*, July 24, 1946. ⁹⁷ *Akşam* (editorial), July 27, 1946.

The Democratic Party showed courage to criticize openly the political deficiencies of the Republican administration and to discuss them before the public. From the beginning, it based its power on the masses instead of the few chosen ones. It brought a hope for improvement, awakened a general desire for freedom.

Political life was developing so fast that no one had time for ideological speculation, but a trained mind could have easily distinguished certain disquieting signs in the campaign speeches. The deputy candidates of the opposition, normally people of a certain educational background, would limit themselves to denouncing the government in general terms. The average citizens listening to them would ask specific questions, for instance: how to lower the cost of certain basic items, and raise the price of agricultural products; how to improve the communication system and provide additional employment and better nutrition; how to lift the pressure on the part of gendarmes and tax collectors, and speed up the distribution of land. The answer they received was, in general, "Let us get freedom first and the rest will come by itself."⁹⁸

Despite the heated discussions and certain partisan provocations, the public showed the greatest sense of discipline, order, and respect for authority. In many instances, average citizens would question the candidates or government officials, and would insist in a spirit of self-confidence and dignity on getting a satisfactory answer. The average citizen, hitherto considered incapable of exercising political freedom, proved the "elite" wrong. It was no small surprise to the politician to discover that the simple citizen in village and town had an accurate understanding of the situation and a sounder common sense than the rising politicians. The ones who lacked understanding were the small groups of pseudo-leaders in search of glory and fortune who wanted to go down in history for having headed the masses to some spectacular feat. Many

⁹⁸ Başar, *Cumhuriyet*, August 10, 1946.

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who had enthusiastically backed the one-party regime and searched for spoils there, now turned to support the multi-party system with the same selfish motives as before. They spoke for democracy in the vehement, and uncompromising tone of the one-party days, but as though the mere purpose of the struggle was to change the title "one-party regime" to a "multi-party," shift the people at the head, and keep the rest intact.

The smaller political parties had only a minor role in the elections of 1946. The campaign concentrated around the two major parties, and the minor parties were indeed overwhelmed by them. As a matter of fact, a political party based on issues other than those of the Republicans and Democrats had no chance of success at this time.⁹⁹

As the result of the elections, the Republican Party retained power, but it realized it lacked large popular support; while the Democratic Party by the same token realized the extent of its power, a fact of paramount importance in determining the relationships of the two parties in the future. In the National Assembly the number of Democratic deputies increased from three to sixty-four, or about fifteen per cent of the total number, thus affording them a better chance for participation in debates.

Personalities played a great part in the campaign, taking preponderance over ideas. On the other hand, new individuals achieved popularity through the simple fact that they could state their views strongly, especially in criticizing the government. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that emotional, eloquent, and colorful speeches and vehement denunciations of the government brought the greatest popularity to the insurgent politicians.

⁹⁹ For the small parties established during this period, see Chapter 15.