

From Empire to Democracy, Turkish Republic Model, Role of One Party

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Abstract

Democratic form of government and democratic society mark an important achievement in the development of nations. There are basically two approaches to democracy. In stable and strong democracies people have fought for it. An alternative approach is up-to-down, observed in societies without serious history of independent social institutions, free legislation and educated citizens. Turkish Republic, in spite of its present deficiencies and past military interventions, is the most developed democracy in the Islamic world and in the middle east along with Israel. A basic rule of the democracy is changing of the government by free elections. Turkey has experienced several examples of this fact. Republican People's Party played a major role in the establishment of Turkish Republic. The party spent efforts for implementing contemporary institutions and legislation, realizing reforms, and achieving a multiparty political regime in the early years of the republic. The results of the election in 1950 was a victory for the main opposition Democratic party (DP), and there was a swift change of the government. The RPP has been the main opposition party since 1960 and in many critical episodes has become a coalition partner in different governments.

Keywords: democracy, Ottoman Empire, monoparty rule, political party, Turkish Republic

1. Historical Background

Modernization or more specifically westernization in Ottoman Empire started early in the 19th century; the first written constitution and opening of parliament in December 23,1876 was the major milestone to that cause.

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The important section 8 of the constitution started with the statement saying that all citizens of the empire are called "Ottoman" regardless of religion and ethnic origin. It also defined the equal rights and responsibilities of citizens. State officers were required to speak Turkish which was announced as the official language .

The parliament was composed of two bodies; congress and senate. Sultan Abdülhamid dismissed the parliament indefinitely after the defeat against Russia in 1878. The second trial of parliamentary system was in 1908 again by sultan Abdülhamid. He was urged to reopen the parliament by the pressure exerted from the political movement named "İttihad ve Terakki" (Union and Progress). This organization was mainly composed of high rank army officers and intellectuals who realized the great risks confronting the Ottoman empire. During that period Ottoman empire was called as "the sick man of Europe". Russians and British were discussing their interests and shares related to post-Ottoman era.

The pluralist nature of the Ottoman empire did work well until the nationalist uprisings which began in eastern Europe in early 19th century. The second constitutional parliament created an inspiration of equality, freedom and peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious identities. Unfortunately this positive atmosphere did not last long as a result of the disaster of Balkan war and the ethical problems. Consequently such breakdowns resulted in evoking of Turkish nationalism.

The defeat at the end of World War I marked the perishing of the Ottoman empire from the historical scene and the following chain of events led to the foundation of a new state, the Turkish republic.

1.1 The Turkish Republic

The Turkish republic was founded on October 29, 1923. Mustafa Kemal, afterwards named Atatürk was the founder and first president of the republic. A series of major legal and institutional changes were implemented in the first 15 years of the republic. These drastic reforms for modernization may be summarized as follows:

- a) abolishment of Ottoman sultanate,
- b) abolishment of caliphate, March 3, 1924

- c) unification of education systems, March 3, 1924
- d) abolishment of canonical court with replacement of new judgement law, April 8, 1924
- e) law of amnesty for those who betrayed during the war of independence, April 16, 1924
- f) acceptance of the constitution, April 20, 1924.
- g) revolution of hat and dress, November 25, 1925
- h) acceptance of international time, calendar and measurements, December 26, 1925
- i) acceptance of Turkish civil law, February 17, 1926. Swiss Civil Code was put into effect
- j) acceptance of Latin alphabet, November 1, 1928
- k) law giving the women the right to vote and eligibility to be elected in municipality elections, April 3, 1930
- l) law for assigning family name for citizens, June 21, 1934
- m) switching of weekend vacation from Friday to Sunday, 1935
- n) outlawing of traditional and religious costumes
- o) law for right of women to vote and be candidates in general elections, December 5, 1934

1.2 Republican People's Party (RPP)

Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, (CHP)

Republican People's Party (RPP) or Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) was in fact stepwise transformation of the former associations established during the war of independence which served as legal and theoretical basis for the new state.

The roots of RPP dates back to Sivas congress on September 4, 1919 which marks an important event in the history of Turkish independence war. This congress is regarded as the first convention of RPP because several preexisting activist associations were unified to form "Anatolian and Thrace Defenders of Law" (ATDL) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal who afterwards founded People's Party (PP) on September 9, 1923. The former ATDL joined PP on that day and during the fourth convention of the party the final name of RPP was given upon unification of these two bodies.

The ideology was defined as being secular, populist, statist, republican, nationalist and reformist. These principles were reflected on the party flag with six white arrows on red background.

The republic started as a monopoly rule and opposition was limited to groups within the party. The earliest attempt of forming different parties and transition to a multiparty political system was marked by the foundation of the Progressive Republican Party (PRP)", in Turkish "Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası" only a short time after the declaration of the the republic. This experience was a failure mainly due to the fact that the party's activity was interpreted as religious threat. This may be reasonable and regarded as the natural self-defense reflex of the new state and its leaders. The second trial was the foundation of "Liberal Republican Party (LRP)", in Turkish "Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası" on August 12, 1930.

It competed in the municipal elections but it also did not serve to the expectations. It was eventually dissolved.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died on November 10, 1938. He was replaced by İsmet İnönü, a former four star general, war hero, the first prime minister of the republic and chairman of the Turkish diplomatic mission in the Lausanne peace treaty. Mr. İnönü's first years of presidency coincided with the hard times of World War II.

2. Political Evolution in the Republic Era

The story of RPP is closely associated with that of the Turkish republic, for practical purposes we can analyze its evolution in below timeframes:

- a) 1923-1950 : RPP had the absolute power and monopoly rule
- b) 1950-1960, main opposition party
- c) 1960- October 16, 1981 period, coalition partner in several governments
- d) October 16, 1981-September 1992- closed
- e) September 9, 1992-2002, reopening and reconstruction
- f) 2002- until present, main opposition party

2.1 1923-1950 Period

The 1923-1950 period may be divided into two phases. The first one is from 1923 to the death of the founder and the first president of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on November 10, 1938. The second half started with the election of İsmet İnönü as the second president the next day after Atatürk's death and ends with the first fair general election on May 14, 1950.

The events of the first phase is partly summarized in section 1.1.

The second half of this era is represented by İsmet İnönü and his policies. İsmet İnönü, born in 1884 graduated from the military academy in 1903 and served in different divisions and fronts of the Ottoman empire. He moved to Ankara to accompany Mustafa Kemal in his struggle against foreign invasion. He was the commander in chief of the western front during the war of independence and was highly credited for the two battle victories near the town of İnönü which afterwards became his family name. He presided the Turkish diplomatic mission in Lausanne peace talks in 1924 which ended with a treaty giving international recognition for the new Turkish republic. He was the closest supporter and partner of Mustafa Kemal especially in the establishment of the republic. In fact many military and civilian war heroes were hesitant about the nature of the new regime. İnönü was the first prime minister of the republic and was elected as the second president of the republic after Atatürk's death. He received the absolute majority except his own vote.

Mr. İnönü spent great effort to avoid Turkey's involvement in World War II. As an experienced general he was very well aware of the devastating effects of a war of that magnitude. He did his best to refrain from being militarily active in the war, tried to keep neutrality and resisted against to pressure especially from British prime minister Winston Churchill.

The inevitable economic effects of WW II were felt nationwide. Some legislation bringing sanctions, limitations and heavy taxing were naturally unpopular.

Important events, political activities and legislation during the 1946-1950 period included

a) The idea of shifting to multiparty and real democracy was substantiated during this period. Foundation of Democrat Party (DP) on January 7, 1946,

followed by the foundation of the Turkish Socialist Party on May 14, 1946 and finally Turkish Socialist Workers and Villagers Party are examples of the preparations for multiparty regime. The Turkish Grand Assembly passed a law permitting establishment of political parties and societies on class base interests.

b) faculty of theology was founded in 1949 in Ankara University

c) religion courses in fourth and fifth grades of elementary schools requiring parental approval were implemented

d) religious teaching was allowed outside the regular schools under state supervision

The first fair election was held on May 14, 1950 and the DP had an overwhelming victory thus ending the 23 year rule of RPP.

The political map of the world in 1950 reveals that very few countries where changing their government and parliament was possible by free vote of the people. This success is further accentuated by the fact that this progress was accomplished only in 23 years including the years during which the most devastating war mankind had ever witnessed was fought.

2.2 1950-1960 Period

This period begins with the election on May 14, 1950 and ends with the military coup on May 27, 1960. The winner of the 1950 elections was the DP and this marked the end of the PRP's 27 year old monoparty rule and start of the multiparty system. The ruling DP and the main opposition RPP dominated the political arena during this decade and the general appearance was that of a two party democracy. DP focused on more liberal economy and personal freedom during the election campaign. The sufferings of WW II and the natural tendency of reaction to long rule of RPP were the other factors determining the results of the 1950 elections. During this decade elections were held in 1950, 1954 and 1957. RPP received 39.4 %, 35.4 % and 41.1 % respectively. The percentage of the seats RPP gained in the Turkish Grand Assembly in those elections were 14.2, 5.7 and 29.2 respectively.

The great discrepancy between the percentage of vote received and percentage of representation in the parliament was associated with the election system ; the simple majority system, in some respect similar to that of US system.

The performance of DP during the early years of their administration created satisfaction among the general public. Efforts were spent for expansion of the economy, extensive use of machinery in agriculture, infrastructural investments including roadways were the main areas of success. The decision of sending troops to Korean war was important. The contribution of the Turkish military in general and particularly that of Gönür front were highly esteemed. Turkish casualties being the third after US and UK paved the way to Turkey's NATO membership in 1952. This alliance marked definite position of Turkey in western world.

The devaluation of 1958, signaled the decline in the economy. The DP government announced moratorium and also the highest devaluation in the republic era. One dollar jumped to 9 Turkish Liras (TL) from 2.8 TL. The devaluation rate was 221.4 %. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) loaned 250 million dollars.

The political pressure on RPP and antidemocratic attitude towards press, university and military led to political instability. A military coup on May 27, 1960 ended the 10 year old DP government.

2.3. 1960-1980 Period

The military junta dismissed DP. The president, the prime minister, all cabinet members, DP deputies and high positioned bureaucrats were thrilled. The very unfortunate event was the execution of prime minister Adnan Menderes and two ministers. This tragedy was not only personal but also a source of hostility in future politics. The parliament was also closed and a temporary assembly was assigned mainly with the function of preparing the new constitution and the country for elections. The new constitution was indeed very liberal in nature and brought personal and institutional rights and freedoms. The senate was added to become an element of check and balance . The need for this came from the experience of the last decade; the suppression and the antidemocratic approaches of DP administration. Elections were held on October 15, 1961. RPP received 36.7 % and Justice party (JP), which claimed to be the continuation of DP, 34.8 % of the general vote.

The percentage of the seats gained in the parliament were 38.5 % for PRP and 35.1 % for JP. These figures denote fair representation and was associated with the new election system used instead of the previous simple majority system.

A coalition government was formed with participation of RPP and JP. RPP was the major partner. The historical political figure ,Mr.İnönü then 77 years old,became the prime minister. Two more coalitions governments were formed after the breakdown of the first one. RPP was the main partner in all of these governments while İnönü continued as the prime minister.

These were the first examples of coalition governments in Turkish republic's history.The importance of this experience was to show that alternative forms of governments are possible in democracies. In particular coalition governments require the culture of negotiating , political tolerance, cooperation and ability to reach consensus.

The contributions of RPP as the major partner in these three coalitions until the winter of 1964 may be summarized as follows:

- a)March 28, 1962, law was accepted covering 147 university professors and faculty to return to their positions who were expelled from their jobs by the military junta.
- b) July 1, 1962, the government replaced some military origin governors by civilians
- c) September 10, 1962. The Grand assembly passed the law for 55 great landowners in eastern Anatolia to return back to their home towns who were forced to leave by the military junta.
- d) October 18, 1962. Law of partial amnesty for DP members who were sentenced during the junta period .
- e)October 19,1962. Law for public assembly and open demonstrations
- f)July 24, 1963. Law number 274: organization of labor unions and syndicates.Law number 275: freedom of strike,lockout and labor negotiations and agreements.
- g)September 12, 1963. Partnership agreement called " Ankara protocol" was signed between the Turkish government and the European Economic Community, the precursor of the European Union. The agreement was intended to be effective as of December 1, 1964.
- h)February 1, 1965. Social security law became effective by this date. The law expanded the limits of social security and brought many new developments in accordance with contemporary understanding and practice.

The results of the elections held in 1965 and 1969 revealed the victory of JP while a new, young politician, Süleyman Demirel, became the prime minister.

RPP received 28.7 % of the general vote in the election held on October 10, 1965 and gained 29.8 % of the seats in the parliament. The performance of RPP in the next election of October 12, 1969 was quite similar; 27.4 % of the general vote and 31.8 % representation in the parliament. In both instances RPP was the main opposition.

In the second half of sixties Mr. Bülent Ecevit, formerly a journalist, was elected as general secretary of RPP. This young and charismatic man stepped into politics as Ankara deputy in the 1957 election. He worked in the formal newspaper of RPP, named "Ulus" and drew attention as a promising politician. Mr. Ecevit described RPP in the center-left of the political spectrum and openly started an opposition against Mr. İnönü. The elections for the executive committee of the party was held on May 5, 1972 during the fifth extraordinary convention of the party. The convention voted in favor of Ecevit. İnönü, after 33 years of chairing the party, resigned from office and eventually from the party. Ecevit was elected as the third chairman after the two founders of the republic who were simultaneously the chairman of the party.

The rejuvenated, energetic party under the leadership of Ecevit touched the masses and created a great sensation of hope nationwide.

The following election was held on October 14, 1973. RPP was the leading party receiving 33.3 % of the general vote and a corresponding 41.1 % of the seats in the parliament. This was not enough for a single party government and after some negotiations RPP formed a coalition government with " National Salvation Party " (NSP) who had profound religious references. The performance of NSP was 11.8 % of the general vote and 10.7 % of the seats in the parliament. Ecevit was the prime minister and RPP the major partner of the coalition.

The utmost important event during this coalition was the Cyprus conflict. The island had been a source of conflict since the midfifties between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. London and Zürich treaties in 1960 created the independent state of Cyprus with a Greek majority and Turkish minority.

These treaties privileged United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey to intervene either independently or in joint mission against any threat to the integrity of the republic. The Greek supported uprising and throwing of the legal president Makarios ruled out cooperation with Greece. Prime Minister Ecevit visited London proposing joint action which was refused by prime minister Harold Wilson. This situation led to amphibious operation of the Turkish armed forces on July 20, 1974. The next month a second operation was performed in the east of the island for strategic military reasons. This mission of Turkish military strictly divided the island into northern Turkish and southern Greek parts. The Turkish part approximately consisted 37 % of the island's land.

This action yielded political, demographic and military consequences. The embargo by US to Turkey, was ironically beneficial. Turkey realized that it had relied too much on US military aid and support. This dependence could be lessened if Turkey would initiate projects of his own for defense and she did so.

The determined and courageous leadership revealed by Ecevit during the Cyprus crisis made him more prestigious, and with the firm expectation of an election victory Ecevit terminated the coalition. But the political outcome was not as expected. Ecevit resigned and multiple center-right parties agreed for a coalition government. RPP was again the main opposition.

The next election was held on June 5, 1977. RPP performed better than the last election receiving 41.4 % of the general vote and 47.3 % of the seats in the parliament, but still not enough to form a monoparty government.

Ecevit's minority government did not receive a confidence vote in the parliament. In the aftermath of this failure center-right parties formed a coalition government. In the following years unrest, violence and bloodshed in the country accelerated. Eventually military intervention occurred on September 12, 1980. The junta closed the parliament, banned all political activity, closed the ruling JP and RPP. The party leaders and executive officers of the parties were taken under protective custody.

2.4 September 9,1992-2002

After nearly eleven years of absence RPP reopened on September 9, 1992 on its 69th birthday. This was more than a simple restart because all the party's properties were transferred to state and all written data expired.

Foundation of new parties and candidates for the executive boards of the parties was under the strict control and approval of the junta. Political activity focused on finding parties that would substitute the former major center-right and center-left parties. Finally three parties were allowed to compete in the election held on November 6, 1983. Turgut Özal's Motherland Party(MP) receiving 45.1 % of the general vote and 53 % of the seats in the grand assembly succeeded in forming a single party government after a long time.

RPP was nonexistent during the elections of 1983,1987 and 1991. The first election after reopening was on December 24, 1995. RPP received 10.7 % of the general vote yielding to only 8.7 % representation in the parliament.

RPP received 8.7 % general vote on the election of April 18, 1999,which was not enough for representation in the parliament . This was the worst election result in the history of RPP . The election results yielded a triplet coalition composed of the Democratic Left Party (DLP), Motherland Party and National Movement Party (NMP). The prime minister was Bülent Ecevit who after resigning from RPP founded DLP.

2.5. 2002-Present

In general, the nineties were years of political fragmentation and efforts for normalization of the political arena dominated this decade. The most devastating economic crisis in recent Turkish history exploded in 2001. The government implemented severe and unpopular decisions in order to reactivate and stabilize the economy. Simultaneously, a group of young politicians formerly working in hardline religious parties, resigned from their party to establish a new party named Justice and Welfare Party(JWP) under the leadership of Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Their principal motto was " change", but no clear explanations were made as to how and why change is needed.

The results of the election on November 3, 2002 brought drastic changes. The main partner of the triplet coalition, DLP dropped from 22.2 % general vote of the 1999 election to 1.2 % in 2002. The other partners NMP and MP received 8.4 % and 5.1 % respectively, none of these parties gained seats in the parliament. JWP received 34.3 % of the general vote which generously corresponded to 66 % representation in the parliament. This overwhelming majority in the parliament led to a strong one party government under Mr. Erdoğan's leadership.

RPP received 19.4 % of the general vote in the election of 2002 gaining 32.4 % of the seats in the parliament. This result positioned RPP as the main opposition.

JWP's general vote jumped to 49.83 % in the election of July 22, 2007 and then to 49.8 % in the election of June 12, 2011. JWP had 62 % of the seats in 2007 and 59.45 % in 2011 respectively. RPP received 20.88 % of the general vote in 2007 and 24.54 % in 2011, these figures corresponded to 20.36 % of the seats in 2007 and 24.54 % in 2011. RPP continued to be the main opposition to the results of these two elections.

3. Discussion of Monoparty Rule

In the political literature, many prominent authors have discussed and commented about monoparty.

Wiatr (2) has suggested six main groups for party systems:

1. Alternative party systems; two or more parties compete under equal conditions,
2. Consensus party systems; where multi-partyism does exist but one political party commands in a lasting way the royalties of a predominant majority of citizens and runs the government,
3. Hegemonic party systems; all the existing parties form a lasting coalition within which one of them is accepted as the leading force of the coalition
4. Monoparty systems,
5. Suspended party systems; where political parties exist but are prevented from regulating political life by other forces,
6. Non-party systems; government is ideologically hostile toward the political parties as such and does not permit them to function.

Monoparty rule has found worldwide practice especially in the 20th century. The aftermath of WW II has created an atmosphere of freedom and more democratic systems, this naturally had an effect on decreasing the number of such parties and consequently the number of countries under such a regime. Even today, nearly two billion people live in countries where absolute monoparty hegemony is still effective.

Monoparties by definition are totalitarian and have no tendency to share the governing power and legislative function. The observation of such parties has revealed slight political tolerance in few examples, ranging from banning all parties to letting non-party candidates and accepting the political activity of smaller parties with no chance and hope of coming to government.

Monoparties may be categorized into three main groups according to their cause of existence and ideology.

1. In the first group the party is the symbol of a rigid ideology and its main function is to bring the ideology into life and prove that the theory is also applicable. The most commonly referred example are the communist parties of the former Soviet Union and once its East European allies. Another example is the fascist regimes of Italy and Germany.
2. The parties that lead an anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggle against forces who once dominated their countries. Examples: African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, Congolese Party of Labour of Republic of Congo and Worker's party of Angola.
3. BAAS party model- It originated from the union of Arab Rebirth and Arab Socialist parties in the early fifties. The origin was Syria, next to Iraq and finally spread to many Arab states. In Syria and Iraq these parties came to power as the result of coups. The mottos were solidarity, freedom, unified big panArabic state. They stood on the left wing of the political arena, followed socialist policies and had good relations with the socialist world.

The question of whether RPP is a typical example of a monoparty or differs from similar parties for its distinctive features which makes it exceptional is open to debate.

Maurice Duvergier (4) ,in his evaluation of the new Turkish state and RPP, the below points are emphasized:

- a) Turkish single party is different from fascist and communist single parties. For it has ideally remained a plural party system,
- b) there was nothing totalitarian about the organization of the single party in Turkey.It was based neither upon cells nor upon the militia,
- c) existence of a quite well-developed democratic spirit inside the party,
- d) RPP is an example of a single party in a country where real pluralism had not existed In this respect it represents the modernization of an autocracy of archaic structure; it has almost the same significance as the parties in pluralist systems.

Furthermore Duvargier (4) draws attention to a distinction between provisional and permanent single-party systems,or more accurately between the single party which claims that it is provisional and the single party which claims to be permanent. RPP is classified as provisional where the single party is regarded transitional, that is considered it to be no more than a necessary stage on the road to pluralism, could well be called potentially democratic.

Bernard Lewis (1) has classified the regimes in the Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa as of 2010. His typology is as follows:

- 1.Traditional Autocracies- example: Saudi Arabia
2. Liberalizing Autocracies- example: Jordan, Morocco
- 3.Dictatorship- example: Ba'th regimes in Syria and Iraq
- 4.The ex-Soviet Republics- Muslim populations in Central Asia
- 5.Revolutionary Islamic regimes- Iran
- 6.Democracies in the Western sense of the world- Turkey and Israel

He also states that of the present Muslim states in the Middle East, only one, the Turkish republic can be referred to as democratic in any serious sense.

Kishore Mahbubani (3) claims that no Islamic nation has been successfully modernised. He is of the opinion that Turks, Mexicans, Iranians and Chileans are fascinated by East Asia's success. According to him people are coming from all parts of the world to observe and learn.

He postulates that the winds of the Islamic world will move from East to West in future. He also marks this as a major historical change and points out that Algeria and Tunisia may be drawn into this process.

4. Role of RPP in Turkish Politics

This paper intends to describe the contribution of a particular party to its country. RPP has been the ideological basis of the Turkish Republic and in practice has been the ruling power nearly in the first three decades of the republic. The transition to multiparty democratic system has been initiated by RPP and in the first fair election held in 1950 the main opposition DP had won. Although RPP has been the major coalition partner in some governments, it has not succeeded in forming a majority government during the last 63 years.

A review of the elections since the first fair general election in 1950 reveals that 16 elections have been held in Turkey, the last one in 2011. Seven different parties have been the leading party in those elections and four of them received enough votes to form monoparty governments. Ten elections yielded one party government and six elections led to formation of coalition governments. Four election results yielded change of the ruling government. The results of the 1961 and 1983 elections are not included in this figure because they were the first elections to be held after the military coups of 1960 and 1980. The extraordinary circumstances following military interventions do not allow us to make a realistic political analysis. After the coup of 1960, DP who ruled the country from 1950 to 1960, was dismissed and completely new parties except RPP competed. It should also be mentioned that the first election following the military intervention in 1960 was held on October 15, 1961. This short period of time was naturally not enough for normalization of the political life.

Overall evaluation of the 90 year old Turkish Republic shows that RPP has been a very important actor in the political arena except for the eleven years of nonexistence.

RPP ruled the country for 27 years as a monoparty, functioned as the major partner in several coalition governments and was the main opposition party for 21 years. RPP participated in 13 elections out of 16 and became the first party in three of them but did not receive enough votes to form a majority government. Only in one election it failed representation in the parliament. In the remaining six elections RPP received the second highest votes thus serving as the main opposition party.

5. Present Problems of RPP

The foundation of a new state from the ashes of six century old Ottoman empire and spending every effort for modernization of this new state, transition to multiparty democratic life, following democratic norms as the main opposition party and survival even after 11 years of extinction is an astonishing achievement. In spite of all these facts RPP has not won an election to form a monoparty government. What should RPP do in order to be a serious alternative for government and eventually win an election?

RPP holds the heritage of being state party. The daily needs, economic expectations and hopes for a better standard of living of the common people, if not totally ignored, has not attracted enough attention of RPP. Consequently it has not matched the hopes of masses. RPP had been assumed as the natural defender of the regime in coalition with civilian and military elite. RPP has been heavily criticized for supporting military coups. The duty now is to eradicate these misconceptions

RPP has to reconsider its ideology without ignoring its social democratic roots. One of the six arrows denoting the basic principles of RPP is statism. In the early years of the republic, the state funded and operated cement, textile, sugar, shoe and glass factories. This was an obligation at that time since the private sector was practically absent with very limited capacity for investment. It is now ridiculous for a modern state to be involved in the sectors mentioned above.

Mustafa Kemal was well aware of the reasons of stagnancy, decline and eventual perishing of Ottoman empire. Printing technology was introduced to Ottoman land two centuries after its invention. The great gap between Anatolia and the western world would only be shortened by shocking, revolutionary approach.

If Turkey's present regime and democracy are referred to a model at least in the Muslim world, it is because of the tremendous transformation and change brought by the republic. The leader and his close inner circle were far ahead of their people. This situation is just the reverse of the usual condition where the governing body stays behind the expectation and hopes of the people. The dilemma stemmed from the fact that while the process of metamorphosis was going on, the problem of absorbing and accepting was also a reality. The founding fathers of the republic are criticized for breaking the bonds with the past, denial of Ottoman identity and turning back to tradition, social habits and above all to religion. Ironically enough while secularism is regarded as the key element of Turkish republic's success on one hand, defending secularism is believed to be one of the main reasons for RPP's election failures during the multiparty era on the other hand.

6. Future Prospects for RPP

RPP has to start a serious self critique to define the deficiencies, faults of the past and contemplate over new horizons for the future using the conclusions drawn from this thorough evaluation. This work should begin from the headquarters of the party propagating to even to the most distal branches. A wide spectrum of participants including voters, the people, academia, labor unions and nongovernmental organizations should contribute to this work. Once a consensus is reached policies on different problems and particulars must be shared by all members of the party and a well planned interim education as well as the election campaign should be scheduled.

The projects, solutions and ideas need to be convincing and applicable, promises realistic and sustainable. The message that RPP has made a good preparation and is ready to put its agenda into action should be conveyed to the general public. Teamwork is one of the key issues for success. Leadership in the 21st century requires the ability to form group of capable people and provide efficient cooperation.

RPP's priorities during the next election would be the following:

1. promotion of human rights, more freedom of expression,
2. reform for a neutral, fair and fast jurisdiction system,

3. reformist attempts to increase the quality of education at every level, health services and planning of man power,
4. reorganization of social security measures, more resources for welfare and scientific research,
5. reconciliation with people in certain geographic regions of the country. For example RPP had an extremely low vote and very few deputies elected from provinces of southeast Anatolia.

The rationale for the above list lies in the status of Turkey in the international community.

Legatum Institute (5) has reviewed many criteria and ranked 142 countries. According to 2012 figures Turkey's performance is :74th in the economy,55th in entrepreneurship,46th in governance, 91st in education,58th in health,93rd in safety and security,127th in personal freedom, 133rd in social capital and 89th in overall.

Freedom house has been evaluating countries since 1972 by using various parameters. The data of 2012 revealed that Turkey belongs to a partly free group consisting of 58 countries out of examined 195 . Freedom basically meant global political rights and civil liberties. Freedom of press was investigated in 197 countries and Turkey was again found to belong to a partly free group of 72 countries. The newest index used was the degree of internet and digital media freedom. Data was not available in a considerable number of countries and Turkey was in the partly free group where information was obtained from 47 countries (6).

The reporters without borders have classified countries into five groups according to the situation of press freedom in the country as of 2013; namely good situation , satisfactory situation,noticeable problems,difficult situation and very serious situation (7). Turkey belonged to the difficult situation group and was placed as 154th in the total of 179 countries reviewed. The study of the internet revealed Turkey to be classified in the group of countries under the topic "countries under surveillance" and it was noted that Turkish authorities had censored 138 words online.

Whatever the source and methodology is, the obvious common observation shows that Turkey is not in the premier league of the world. RPP's main focus for the future should concentrate to upgrading Turkey in every criteria possible.

According to latest statistics (8) the number of Turkish citizens registered to 71 legal political parties has reached 10,096,586. The number of members in some parties is negligible while 40 parties have no members. The ruling JDP has 7,551,472 registered members which make up almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of all individuals registered with any political party. RPP has 953,416 members corresponding to 9.44 % of the total. JDP has received 21,399,082 votes in the election of 2011 which on theoretical basis may be interpreted as receiving 35.28 % of its votes from its members. On the contrary RPP received 8.54 % votes from its registered members out of the total 11,155,972 votes. These figures suggest the need for increasing party membership.

Another organizational duty is to improve the communication between the center and the periphery of the party to maintain a continuous bilateral feedback mechanism. The branches in the provincial areas and smaller subunits should develop a better relationship with people, thoroughly understand the local and regional problems and expectations. The party leadership and deciding bodies of the party should regularly receive reports, ideas and solution alternatives from the rest while informative and educational programs for the party members should be initiated. The contact with people would be more beneficial if the attention is more directed to groups who do not vote for RPP. The reasons why they are against and the chances of winning such people is an important task and would pave the path for future election victory.

RPP is 90 years old, it is the oldest party of Turkey and one of the oldest in the world. It has a great share in the establishment of a new, modern state, in pioneering and realization of multiparty system, in reaching and preserving democratic maturity. The point is not to rely on this honorable past, but instead bring hope to people, prepare projects, solutions, ideals with firm political determination in order to design Turkey's future as it did in the past.

RPP has strong party roots, organizational development, professional staff and every necessary potential to succeed. The very short summary of success is the ability to combine the pragmatism of the 21st century with the fundamentally social democratic nature of RPP.

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