

An Analysis of the Press Laws in The Democrat Party Era

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Türkiye underwent significant social and political transformations as it transitioned to a multi-party system. In 1946, Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Fuad Köprülü, and Refik Koraltan, having broken away from the Republican People's Party, founded the Democrat Party. It is observed that the Democrat Party, which came to power in 1950, received significant support by emphasizing press freedom and granting legal rights to media workers. Although initially a broad freedom was granted to the press, efforts to control the media were observed over time. Notably, the Democrat Party, which displayed a harsh attitude towards opposition newspapers, was seen to establish its biased press. As the years progressed, this diversification also brought along the phenomenon of sponsored media. Although numerous studies have focused on the 50s, there are limited evaluations of the Democrat Party era through press laws.

For this purpose, this thesis examines the relationship between the government and the press in Türkiye between 1950 and 1960 in the context of press laws, state structure, and domestic and foreign policy processes. The study intends to examine the local and international developments and their reflections in the press laws of the period. The period during which the Democrat Party remained in office is examined regarding press laws. This thesis aims to address the changes that the Democrat Party underwent between 1950 and 1960 and the effects of these changes on the press laws and their amendments.

Keywords: Democrat party, political power; press laws; republican people's party; Turkish political history;

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the Democrat Party holds significant importance and influence for the Republic of Türkiye, serving as a notable example in the country's democratization process. Since the Tanzimat Era, implementing and interpreting democratic values like freedom of the press and freedom of expression have been central to ongoing debates. During the initial years of the Republic of Türkiye, the press had a pivotal role in the process of nation-building, guided by the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This period witnessed a controlled and state-centric press, in line with Kemalist principles, emphasizing secularism, nationalism, and modernization. The Democrat Party, which came to power during significant developments worldwide, particularly after the Second World War, led to significant political, social, and economic transformations. In this context, examining the press laws during the Democrat Party era is essential for understanding a significant milestone in Türkiye's democratic history.

The legal and material development of the press in Türkiye is a complex narrative intertwined with the country's economic development and developments in foreign policy. Numerous studies have been conducted on the Democrat Party era in Turkish politics literature. Some notable works in the literature of Turkish political life regarding the Democrat Party era include Feroz Ahmad's "Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye", Cem Eroğul's "Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi", Kemal Karpat's "Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System," Erik-Jan Zürcher's "Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi", and "Demirkırat" by Mehmet Ali Birand which has been adapted into a video documentary. Similarly, "Ve İhtilal" by Aytan Öymen, which presents the press and political agenda of the 1950s through newspaper headlines and includes subjective commentary, is considered one of the most valuable contributions in the literature. Also, there have been numerous studies regarding the history of the Turkish press in the literature. Examples include Murat Özgen's "Gazetecinin Etik Kimliği", Hıfzı Topuz's "Türk Basın Tarihi", Nuri İnuğur's "Basın ve Yayın Tarihi", and Alpay Kabacalı's "Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü".

The Democrat Party's rise to power in the 1950 general elections, often referred to as the "White Revolution", marked the first peaceful transfer of power between political parties in Turkish history, setting the stage for the development of democratic processes.

Accordingly, democratizing the political environment provided opportunities for diverse voices to be heard. The media played a central role in shaping public opinion during this period. Previously restricted under Kemalist principles and martial law, the press experienced newfound press freedom. Throughout the Democrat Party era, there was a significant increase in the number of newspapers, reflecting a wide range of political ideologies and a growth in media organizations. This expansion was driven by economic development and advancements in printing technology. This contributed to the emergence of a more pluralistic and dynamic public discourse, encouraging openness and debate within Turkish society. However, the democratization process was not without challenges. When the Menderes government faced economic difficulties, it encountered criticism and tensions. As the economic order deteriorated, the press voiced concerns, leading to clashes with the government. This created a vicious political and legal cycle. In 1954, tensions surfaced over press freedom between the press and the government, leading to conflicts between government authorities and media organizations. The delicate balance between freedom of expression and government control ultimately reached a crisis point, culminating in the military intervention of May 27, 1960. Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, and key party members were tried, convicted, and executed, leading to significant changes in the political landscape. Despite its turbulent outcome, the Democrat Party era left an indelible mark on Türkiye's political evolution, highlighting both the potential and challenges of multi-party democracy. This period is significant for demonstrating the complexity of democratic processes and how political pluralism can become entangled in undemocratic practices. The significance of analyzing press laws during the Democrat Party era (1950-1960) in Türkiye lies in understanding the interaction of legal regulations with economic, external, and internal political dynamics. While studies have been conducted on both democratization and press laws in Türkiye, there has been a lack of research specifically focusing on democratization or authoritarianism through the lens of press laws. The Democrat Party era, encompassing its prelude, tenure, and aftermath, is a significant example in Turkish history. The uniqueness of this study stems from its examination of this period through the prism of press laws.

Moving forward, this study will address the following questions to further the examination discussed previously: 'Did the press laws during the Democrat Party era contribute to

authoritarianism?', 'Did these laws set the stage for the May 27, 1960 Military Coup?', and 'How did the economic and political developments during the Democrat Party era influence the press laws?'. To explore these inquiries, the hypothesis that the Democrat Party's transformation can be analyzed through the lens of press laws will serve as the primary framework.

In this research, primary sources include press laws, while secondary sources encompass studies on press laws, newspapers, and the Democrat Party. Additionally, the study incorporates an interview with Selahattin Çetiner, a former military officer who served during the Democrat Party era and was a key witness to the Himmedede/Yeşilhisar incidents.

In this study, the history of the press worldwide is initially examined. Following that, the history of the press and press laws in the Ottoman Empire and the early Republic are explored. This thesis assists in understanding the evolving relationship between state/authority and media autonomy by examining the press laws during the Democrat Party era within the context of historical development. In this regard, this thesis sheds light on how laws that either liberalized or regulated the press during the transition from single-party rule to a multi-party system impacted the democratization process, freedom of expression, journalistic practices, and the broader functioning of the media. Secondly, this thesis is crucial in unraveling the delicate balance between press freedom and government control. By examining specific laws, regulations, and martial law decrees issued during this period, it becomes possible to discern the extent to which the government sought to control the press and how it reacted to such regulations in pursuit of journalistic independence. Furthermore, the findings of this thesis hold contemporary significance by providing a historical context for current debates surrounding press freedom in Türkiye. By conveying historical lessons from the Democrat Party era to the academic community, this thesis contributes to a more informed discourse on the challenges and opportunities of media regulation in democratic societies.

This thesis aims to systematically analyze the press laws during the Democrat Party's tenure in power and their impact on press freedom. The relationship between the Democrat Party and the press is examined by considering various factors such as the practices during the single-party era and before, policies and practices regarding press laws, the political

atmosphere of the period, and the international context. In light of these, this thesis is significant for understanding the role of the Democrat Party era in press freedom and evaluating its contribution to Türkiye's democratization process.

RESULTS

The Emergence of the Press in the Ottoman Empire and its Development Until the Republican Era

The Turkish printing press was established in 1727, more than 300 years after the German Johann Gutenberg' invention of the printing press in 1440. The first Jewish printing house was founded by Brothers David and Samuel Nahmes in Istanbul in 1493. Abgar Tıbir founded the first Armenian printing house in Tokat in 1564, and the Priest Nicodimus Metaxes founded the first Greek printing house in 1627. Although the number of non-Muslim printing houses operating between 1494 and 1729 increased to 37, they did not print any single Turkish copies. The first newspaper in the Ottoman Empire was the Bulletin de Nouvelles, which was published by the French embassy dating back to 1795. The Bulletin de Nouvelles, which was a news bulletin to prevent anti-French propaganda, and which was distributed in coffee houses in Istanbul, was followed by many bulletins and newspapers published in French in cosmopolitan commercial centers such as İstanbul and İzmir (Kabacalı, 1990, p. 143). While Europe continued to print books in the last 300 years, it also took essential steps in newspaper printing. On the other hand, the establishment of the first printing house in the Ottoman Empire was not effective at the beginning and it took about a century to publish the first newspaper in Turkish (Girgin, 2009, p. 10).

The beginning of newspaper printing in the Ottoman Empire is directly related to state policy. To illustrate, the modernization movements initiated by Mahmud II were accelerated with the declaration of the Tanzimat. This process also contributed to the emergence of a new “Western” intellectual bureaucratic class, educated in modern institutions, which began to engage in newspaper work. The first examples of the press include official newspapers established by the initiatives of the state itself and the newspapers published by the foreign elite for diplomatic purposes. Takvim-i Vekayi

(1831) was the first newspaper published in Turkish in Istanbul, which was established with the decree of Mahmud II. It was also published in different languages within the purpose of popularizing the official point of view among the literate segments by controlling the circulation of public information (Topuz, 2003, p.13–15). The page layout, titles, and editorials of Tercüman-ı Ahval (1860), which is considered to be the first newspaper by some historians since it was not in the state administration and was based on private capital, were arranged and written by the owner Agâh Efendi (Topuz, 2003, p.18). After publishing the first Turkish newspaper (Takvim-i Vekayi), pieces that consistently lauded the state were published in either the official or semi-official publications for 30 years. Although it is considered that journalism was performed during the first 30 years of the Turkish press history, in reality, the newspapers did not fulfill the duty of controlling and criticizing the state and administrators on behalf of the people. Tercüman-ı Ahval was the newspaper of Şinasi and Agah Efendi, who were the two great names in the Turkish press history.

It would be helpful to examine the history of the Ottoman press in three periods.

- Ottoman Press During the Tanzimat Period (1831-1876)
- Ottoman Press during the Hamidian Era (1876-1908)
- Ottoman Press during the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1918)

The declaration of the Second Constitutional Era marked the beginning of a new period in terms of freedom of expression in the Ottoman press. However, this freedom also created some more problems. The atmosphere of freedom during the Second Constitutional Era persisted until the enactment of the Press Law of 1909, following the March 31 uprising. It was consisted of 37 articles. According to the law, it was required to notify the government to publish a newspaper. Moreover, writing articles that encouraged crime or publishing images that violated moral principles were prohibited. Additionally, the government was given the authority to close the newspaper (Beşinci, 1964, p. 395). On July 24, 1908, the number of newspapers exceeded 200. The liberal atmosphere paved the way for the emergence of young journalists who would become prominent the Republican era. The declaration of the Second Constitution paved the way for new developments regarding news agencies in the country. The most striking example was the establishment

the Ottoman Telegraph Agency with the collaboration of Reuter and Havas in 1911. (Uçan, 2019, p. 16)

During the Second Constitutional Era, ideologies such as Islamism, Turkism, westernism, feminism and socialism started to emerge. For instance, the feminist movement, which started to develop before the declaration of the Constitutional Era, found a new field of action after 1908. According to its supporters, women should have more participation in social life. Moreover, education of women and girls, equality of women and men, and ultimately, the place of women in society were mentioned in feminist publications. Many women could also find a place for themselves in these newspapers both as administrators and writers. Some of the publications issued during this period were Demet, Mahasin, and Kadın (Kocabaşoğlu, 2010, p. 28-29).

While there were only four daily newspapers in Istanbul before the Constitutional Era, the number surged to 389 in 1913. These newspapers evolved into the voice of certain political parties or movements. While publications such as Kalem and Cem were humor newspapers, journals such as Mehasin, Demet, Kadınlar Dünyası, and Kadın were published for women, and journals such as Arkadaş, Talebe, Mualim, Çocuk Yurdu were published for children. Socialism also had an impact on the emergence of the left-wing press. Although it was not as effective as other movements of thought, left-wing newspapers and journals such as Gave, İştirak, İnsaniyet, Sosyalist, and Medeniyet were published (İnuğur, 2005, p. 327).

From the perspective of the press, the Second Constitutional Era represented a period in which freedom was attained, despite the occurrence of adverse events for journalists. The most painful legacy left by the post-Second Constitutional Era on Turkish political life was the murders of journalists (Odyakmaz, 2003, s. 228) The editor of Serbesti, Hasan Fehmi, who criticized the Committee of Union and Progress, was assassinated. It was the first assassination of a journalist in the history of the Turkish press. The atmosphere of freedom that emerged after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era paved the way for the emergence of publications and writers with various views. This atmosphere of freedom soon turned into a period of chaos. The March 31 Incident made it easier for the rulers to find support for their ideas about controlling the press. In this regard, it could be argued that the Press Law in 1909 did not put pressure on the press. Some articles of the existing

law were amended. The prohibitions and penalties were specified in detail by law, yet this did not prevent arbitrary censorship of the press. The press was arbitrarily suppressed, during the period which the CUP took over the country's administration alone. The Censorship Ordinance came into effect in 1914 under the pretext of war conditions, which helped the CUP to control press (Kalemli, 2018 p. 526).

The article emphasizing "Writing news concerning army operations without the permission of military censorship," was enacted on August 25, 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War. That can be considered as the first sign of pressure on the press. The addition of paper scarcity to the state of siege resulted in a gradual drop in the number of newspapers during the First World War. While the number of newspapers and journals published in 1914 was 73, it was 6 in 1915, 8 in 1916, 5 in 1917, and 71 in 1918. The number of newspapers published in Anatolia decreased between 1915 and 1916. The formation of the Osmanlı Matbuat Cemiyeti (Ottoman Press Society) became feasible only in 1917. It is necessary to remind that many of these newspapers belonged to non-Muslims in the Empire.

The pressure on the press continued during the armistice and occupation period after the First World War. With a circular order that entered into force in February 1919, all kinds of actions related to the press and broadcasting were made subject to the decision of the government. The Istanbul Government continued to apply pressure on the press by enacting further restrictive laws.

The number of newspapers and journals had begun to increase after the Armistice of Mudros and during the years of the National Struggle. At the beginning of 1919, there were 68 newspapers and journals. The press of this period may be divided into two categories, pro-sultan and the pro-Ankara. Censorship began to be enforced in all areas under the occupation where martial law was imposed. On February 5, 1919, Tevfik Pasha II issued the censorship law as the government was under the pressure of the Allied Powers (Aybars, 2006, p. 111-113). The Ankara Government prohibited all kinds of communication related to Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal Pasha attached importance to the telegraph network to control the flow of news in Anatolia and took measures to prevent the entry of Istanbul newspapers into Anatolia to eliminate the harmful effects of the Istanbul press. Atatürk, who attached particular importance to the Istanbul press, sent a telegraph to the İstanbul Matbuat

Cemiyeti (Istanbul Press Society) on July 10, 1919, and asked the Istanbul press to support the National Struggle (Özkaya, 2007, p. 35).

On April 6, 1920, the Anadolu Agency was established to warn the public against internal and external provocations that intended to disrupt the national unity. One of the first laws made by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye was the Matbuat ve İstihbarat Umum Müdürlüğü Teşkilat Kanunu (The Law on Organization of the General Directorate of Press and Intelligence) dated June 7, 1920. Matbuat ve İstihbarat Umum Müdürlüğü (the General Directorate of Press and Intelligence), which was established within the Anadolu Agency, was subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a law enacted on December 25, 1920. This directorate was abolished in 1931, and the Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü (the General Directorate of Press) was established on May 22, 1933 (Girgin, 2009, p. 26). Since September 1922, the separatist minority press and the press against the National Struggle quietly disappeared. The monolingual and monophonic press, which started in Anatolia in 1919, was settled in Türkiye in 1922. With a decision taken by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye after the Lausanne Peace Treaty, on October 7, 1923, the martial law and censorship that existed in Istanbul during the occupation were removed (Türker, 2000, p. 7).

Press in the Republican Era

The history of the Turkish press, which had undergone challenging phases, especially during the First Constitutional Era, took a different trajectory with the establishment of the Republic. The Republican era was critical since the press was not entirely free during this period, and it was employed to influence people to embrace the new order. During the single party era, the state created its own media organs. With the New Press Law, it was attempted to ensure that the reforms made in the 1930s were populist and to eliminate the Republican People's (the RPP) opponents from various institutions of the state and society. Financing also functioned as a punishment mechanism for media organs opposing the regime.

The new Press Law and the existence of opposition newspapers caused significant concern for the government. This first press law of the Early Republican Period was the result of this process. The new Press Law, also known as the "Matbuat Kanunu" (Press Law),

entered into force on July 27, 1931 (Official Gazette, 25 July 1931). This law marked a hardening of the government's stance toward the press. It prohibited the publications representing different ideologies and granted the government the authority to shut down publications deemed contrary to the state's interests. With the 1938 amendment, publishing political newspapers and journals was made contingent on a monetary deposit, and the licensing system was introduced. This law practically ended the freedom of the press in the country.

Freedom of press was no longer possible after the adoption of the new Press Law. To achieve propaganda tools, the party and the press were transformed into intertwined institutions. Paper distribution was also under the control of the state. During the war, the amount of paper given to newspapers was significantly reduced. However, Ulus, the official media organ of the government, was an exception. Before the shift to the multiparty period in Türkiye, the press depended on the ruling RPP. The press, dependent on the government's decision on paper and material imports, was also taken under the control of the RPP in terms of advertisement revenues.

After the Second World War, the ultra-conservative wing of the RPP was overwhelmed, and it was decided to adopt the multiparty system. The RPP had to make concessions to the press because most of the newspapers were on the side of the Democrat Party. One of the biggest obstacles to freedom of the press in 1946 was Article 50 of the 1931 Press Law. The transition to a multiparty system, which was one of the milestones for Türkiye's democratic history, is of great importance both in terms of Türkiye and in the context of media power relations. Before the RPP announced the election decision, it repealed Article 50 in June 1946.

The Democrat Party era, with an important place in the Turkish press history, had a significant role in forming the reflexes of modern press. In this period, the party carried out quite different practices. Initially, they became the most prominent defenders of freedom of the press, especially between 1946 and 1950. In their second term, gaining the support of the press became crucial to attaining power (Bulunmaz, 2012, p. 207). Developments in the global landscape and the government's changing policies forced the Turkish press to adapt to the circumstances. Except for the period from 1946 to 1952, the freedom of the Turkish press was limited regardless of the ruling party or leader until the 1960 coup d'état.

The period between 1923 and 1946 in the history of the Turkish press was a time of considerable change and notable occurrences. Over this period, the Turkish press underwent significant developments in response to remarkable sociopolitical transformations, including the proclamation of the republic. The press assumed a crucial role in conveying the principles of the young republic, nurturing national identity, and advancing literacy. However, the early years of the republic witnessed bouts of censorship and state regulation. The interplay between domestic and international affairs, including Türkiye's participation in World War II and the consequences of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, had a lasting impact on Turkish journalism. This chapter represents the period of change in the history of Turkish journalism, with advancements and struggles that mirror wider societal and political shifts during the era.

DISCUSSION

The Democrat Party Era

The Democrat Party era deeply affected Turkish political, social, cultural, and economic life as well as press freedom. The period can be divided into two as 1950-1954 and 1954-1960. The 27-year rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP) came to an end with the 1950 elections, and the Democrat Party assumed power. This new era brought along hopes for different groups. Particularly after the 1954 elections, the Democrat Party made nearly a dozen changes in the press law increasing the pressure and restrictions as well as intensifying them. However, it could also be indicated that between 1950 and 1954, the Democrat Party government granted new rights to the Turkish Press. During this period, economic development and the growth of the press sector progressed in parallel. With the arousal of economic problems in 1954, the government took strict measures. Considering that the government put pressure on both the opposition and the press, the decade could be separated into two different periods.

The Democrat Party was successful in its economy policies during its initial period, which lasted from 1950 to 1954 and received tremendous support from the press. They enacted the Press Law that granted extensive freedom. The Press Law of 1950 had a liberal character. In terms of press freedom, this law was more effective compared to the law of

1931. However, the regulation in 1951 removed the equal distribution of press advertisements and was the first restrictive regulation of the Democrat Party. With the law of 1952, essential regulations on the social rights of press workers were introduced. Between the years 1954 and 1960, the Democrat Party, which became more authoritarian, became the target of negative criticism. The March 9, 1954, proposal aimed to take the press under control and contained articles with contradictions. Such steps can be considered as the first clues that the ties between the Democrat Party and the press started to break. After 1954, the Democrat Party took restrictive measures against the press. The government, which went through a period of political instability, problems, and economic difficulties, won the election postponed a year, and secured a majority in the parliament. Before the 1954 elections, the Democrat Party created a law on “Some crimes to be committed through broadcast or radio” to censor the press. Another important event that furthered the restrictive attitude of the Democrat Party towards the press was the 6/7 September 1955 Incidents. In July 1957, the police had strict practices for journalists who followed the campaigns of opposition leaders. The Democrat Party closed the Journalist’ Union, protesting the police’s practices with a statement, by declaring that it damaged the state’s reputation. After that, the relations between the press and the government came to the breaking point, eliciting widespread reactions in the foreign press.

The reasons, such as the economic disorder that occurred after 1957, the problems in the payment of foreign debts, the depreciation of the Turkish lira, and political tension resulted in an increase in the government’s oppressive attempts and censorship practices against the press. (Bulunmaz, 2012, p. 210) In 1958, the courts and prosecutors imposed numerous bans, and a significant number of press lawsuits were filed. Another oppressive and censorship-oriented behavior of the Democrat Party towards the press emerged when the American journalist Eugene Pulliam, who came to Türkiye in 1958, wrote down his observations after he returned to the United States. It caused the Democrat Party government to file lawsuits against the newspapers in which the translation was published, which was named as “Pulliam Cases” (Kaya A. E., 2011, p. 106).

Considering that newspaper owners had no income other than newspaper sales and advertisement revenues, it can be said that this practice was a concrete manifestation of the oppressive understanding of the Democrat Party on the press. As a result of these economic

pressures, the Democrat Party paved the way for the emergence of a loyal press. The closures of newspapers were followed by advertisement interruptions and allocation disruptions. Meanwhile, the Democrats continued to tolerate their supporters. (Oral, 1968)

CONCLUSION

Although the main subject of the study centers on the Turkish press, the effort to develop a theoretical framework to evaluate the ethics of journalism with its historical and ideological dimensions inevitably made it necessary to elaborate on the discussions about England, Germany, Soviet Russia, and the USA, which were in a leading position in the formation of the field of journalism. Based on the claim that journalism was an Anglo-American invention (Chalaby, 1998), how the field of journalism was formed in England and the USA was first examined, and it was revealed that the ethical principles were shaped in the process during which journalism became a field equipped with professional ideology and social power. This historical process witnessed the emergence of journalism as a specific field dominated by concrete news production, market norms, and professional values, with the disintegration of the understanding of the press, which was considered a founding element of the political struggle. State officials sometimes carried out press activities that were not professional in the early period. While the state carried out publishing activities and aimed to promote the official press, it also tried to subject a small number of newspapers with a limited oppositional potential to a legal and financial audit that it found contrary to state policy and public morality.

The freedom of expression within the Turkish Press diminished during the Second Constitutional Era, primarily attributed to March 31 Incident, which marked the initial significant upheaval in that period. As the first result of the internal and external turmoil after March 31 Incident, the press encountered a range of challenges, including censorship of free expression, targeted violence against journalists, financial penalties, and attacks on printing houses. The monophonic the Turkish Press, which was subjected to martial law pressures during the Balkan Wars and the First World War, partially regained its polyphonic structure during the occupation period after the First World War. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha during the occupation period, the Ankara-based

National Assembly was established, and the War of Independence was initiated. During the War of Independence, the Ankara-based press was established to liberate the country from the occupation and provide the concept of national sovereignty. The conflict between Istanbul and Ankara lasted for years. With the victory of the War of Independence, the Ankara Government gained its dominance throughout Türkiye. As a result of internal opposition and revolts against the Ankara Government and President Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the oppositional Istanbul press was silenced, and the press became the only voice through legal processes and trials.

Although İsmet İnönü, who became the second President of the Republic after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, gave signals of returning to the free order after he came to power, he increased the pressure on the press to consolidate Türkiye's position after the Second World War, which started on September 1, 1939.

The multiparty system, initiated with the establishment of the Democrat Party after the Second World War, swiftly became a significant chapter in Turkish history of politics due to various internal and external effects emerged under the power of the Republican People's Party. By multiparty system, the political parties aimed to present an image to the public through free elections that aligned closely with the 'Free World' narrative, a concept that gained prominence after the Second World War, but they failed. A particularly noteworthy moment was when the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics declared on November 7, 1945, that it would not extend the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, which had been in effect since 1925. Faced with the Soviet Union's request for border adjustments in the eastern provinces and the establishment of a base in the straits, Türkiye sought assistance from the United States. With Türkiye's approach to the United States of America, namely the western bloc after the Second World War, it was necessary to remove the pressures on the democratic life and free press. In this regard, the ruling the Republican People's Party perceived the democratization process that started in 1945 from two sides.

The sides included the conservative wing, on the one hand, and the side that favored faster democratization, on the other. In the light of this situation, the well-known 'elections with sticks', namely the 1946 elections, prepared by the conservative bureaucratic wing of the Republican People's Party, caused an agitated environment. However, with the Declaration

of July 12, 1947, President İsmet İnönü positioned himself relatively independently, above both the opposition and the ruling party. Consequently, the pro-democratization wing within the Republican People's Party had prevailed. This process provided the necessary positive momentum for Turkish political life and the Turkish press. The Democrat Party promised freedom of the press and legal rights to newspaper owners and employees until the May 14, 1950 elections and, as a result, received significant support within itself during the election process. Following the remarkable success of the Democrat Party on May 14, 1950, elections, they wanted to implement their promises after the election quickly. With Press Law No. 5680, which entered into force on July 21, 1950, the first step was taken for the promised free press. With the outbreak of the Korean on June 24, 1950, Türkiye joined the war on the side of the United States to overcome the diplomatic isolation. Türkiye's reputation in foreign policy increased with integration into the western wing during the Korean War, joining the NATO as a military pact, and successful trial of the multiparty system within the country.

When the tension between the government and the press is examined, it is seen that the most important explanation is the economy. The initially favorable relationship between the press and the Democrat Party since 1950 began to deteriorate gradually in the lead-up to the 1954 elections.

“When the Democrat Party attempted to integrate with the international economic system under internal and external pressures, it relied on the optimism provided by some temporary positive indicators. Agricultural production increased by over 10% per year between 1947 and 1953 with the cultivation of treasury lands and pastures with tractors obtained through Marshall aids, favorable weather conditions for agriculture, and the end of the mobilization and the return of job resources to agriculture with the young male population. Furthermore, the high conjuncture (1951-1953) caused by the Korean War increased the raw material prices in the world market and expanded the markets. Finally, Türkiye had 127 tons of gold and 13 million dollars in foreign exchange reserves during the Second World War. However, they were all gone by the end of 1953, and the weather conditions were reversed. The foreign trade deficit, which was \$ 22.3 million in 1950, reached \$ 193 million in 1952 with liberalization. Then, the gold sales released at the

Central Bank were stopped since one-third of the reserves were depleted in one or two years. Import liberalization also ended in 1953 because of the increase in exports.

Due to the rights granted to the press, the Democrat Party continued to act with the thought that there would be no criticism from the press. When the criticism started, they tried to keep the Turkish press under pressure through various laws, regulations, and martial law until the military operation of May 27, 1960.

In conclusion, the Republic of Türkiye has failed in freedom of the press since its establishment. The assumption that the Democrat Party's ascent to power in a multiparty system was associated with economic liberalization was speculative, grounded within the broader 'Free World' discourse. Accordingly, arrangements promoting pressure were made for both newspapers and press workers between 1950 and 1954. Since 1954, much harsher sanctions have been imposed on the press that criticized the deteriorating economic structure with the punishments applied to the opposition and the press. The process started with giving more financial support to the newspapers supporting the Democrat Party instead of the equal distribution in the press and advertisements, which was the subject of lawsuits in Yassıada in 1961. It was proven that prominent press members such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Orhan Seyfi Orhon, Yusuf Ziya Ortaç, and Peyami Safa, who were close to the government, received support from the Democrat Party Government through the black budget. Thus, the concept of feeding the press entered into Turkish literature.

The Democrat Party period of the press started in 1950 with the liberal Press Law No. 5680. Unlike the law declared in 1931, this law allowed individuals without a license and those with a bad reputation to establish newspapers and it included the article stating that the owners would not be charged with the articles in their newspapers. Moreover, With the enactment of the Council of Ministers Decree on August 1, 1951, regarding the official announcements to be distributed to newspapers, equal distribution of official announcements was allocated to newspapers categorized as small and large. With Law No. 5953 on the Regulation of Relations between Employees and Employers in the Press Profession, adopted in 1952, press workers had union rights for the first time. Additionally, Law No. 5953 provided the following rights to journalists, eligibility for social security benefits; mandatory written employment contract between the employer and the journalist; compensation payment to the journalist wishing to terminate the employment contract

based on their seniority; payment to the journalist during military service, conviction, and the closure of the newspaper; weekly rest, annual paid leave rights.

However, in July 1953, Article 1 of the Law No. 6123 on Amending Certain Articles of the Turkish Penal Code and Article 273 of the Turkish Penal Code were rearranged, allowing public prosecutors to initiate criminal investigations against publications that insulted ministers without requiring a complaint from the relevant minister, a requirement that had been in place until then. Additionally, The Democrat Party allocated government advertising to pro-government newspapers to halt the distribution of press advertisements to newspapers critical of the government and to financially harm them. The opposition's attempt to participate in the elections as a bloc in 1954 did not yield any results as economic and social reforms received a positive response from society. With the self-confidence of the election results, the Democrat Party introduced "Law on certain crimes to be committed through publication or radio", leading to the imprisonment of Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın in December 1954. Consequently, the press considered the bill an undemocratic act by the party.

With the events of September 6-7, 1955, Turkish society witnessed once more the influence of martial law on the press. Relations between the press and the government came to a tense and censored point again. Law No. 6733, adopted on June 7, 1956, resulted in some changes in the Press Law. With this law, the bureaucracy secured itself legally, and reporting on issues stemming from economic deterioration by the press was deemed grounds for punishment. The 1957 elections marked the beginning of the end. Economic disruption and disruption of social peace altered both the press's perception of the government and the government's stance towards the press. The Democrat Party showed its first action towards the press in the new period by carrying out initiatives that put the press in economic difficulties and endangered the existence of press organizations. To this end; With a decree issued on November 26, 1957, the import of newspaper papers was assigned to a single source, and with another decree published on January 1, 1958, it was regulated that the distribution of announcements and advertisements to newspapers should be made from a single source. The harshness of the coup d'état in Iraq on July 14, 1958, increased the concerns within the Democrat Party, which gave rise to further anxiety. Eugene Pulliam's writings in 1959 made the perspective about Türkiye abroad even more

negative. Finally, after the proposal submitted to the Presidency of the Parliament on April 15, 1960, the Parliamentary Investigation Committee, established by the special law adopted by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on April 27, 1960, was assigned the authority to prevent the printing and distribution of newspapers and magazines and even to close the publication. As a result of these, student movements started and the Military Intervention of May 27, 1960, took place. It led to the removal of the Democrat Party from power. At this point, it could be stated that legal and economic freedom of press institutions and press workers are essential for democracy. The Democrat Party tried to intimidate the press, first financially and then through legal processes. Except for the first two years of the Democrat Party, during the remaining eight-year period, the prohibitive and censorship-oriented practices became very common. Türkiye returned to a period of stability with the administration of the National Unity Committee. The press also benefited from that. However, these processes were disrupted by the military interventions of March 12, 1971, and September 12, 1980.

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