
EPISODE 5

TURGUT ÖZAL AND ANAVATAN PARTİSİ (THE MOTHERLAND PARTY)

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Introduction

Turgut Özal was born in Malatya as the first male child of Mehmet Sıddık, an officer at Ziraat Bank, and Hafize Hanım, a primary school teacher, on 13 October 1927. Mehmet Sıddık, who started his civil service in Malatya, took his family to these cities as he later served in Bilecik, Silifke and Mardin (Çölaşan, 2008: 19). Turgut Özal, who started his primary education in Söğüt district of Bilecik, completed secondary school in Mardin as his family moved to Silifke and Mardin, respectively. However, due to the fact that there was no high school to continue his education in Mardin and the financial situation of the family, he started high school education in Konya High School as a boarding student. Due to the fact that his brother Korkut Özal would also start high school, the family, which had more financial difficulties, brought the two siblings together at Kayseri High School, and Turgut Özal completed his secondary education in Kayseri High School in 1945.

Turgut Özal, who started his university life in the Department of Electrical Engineering at Istanbul Technical University thanks to the scholarship he won, came to Istanbul for the first time. Özal, who grew up in a conservative family and whose political ideas began to take shape during his university years, participated in the events of the ITU Student Union and the Turkish Culture Center. He actively took part in the burning of the left-wing Tan Newspaper and the eventful funeral of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (Çölaşan, 2008: 21). Özal, who stayed in the dormitory of the university with his brother Korkut Özal, was also interested in the intellectual and religious activities that Istanbul offered to them (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 22-23).

Turgut Özal and His Experience in Bureaucracy

Özal, who graduated as an Electrical Engineer in 1950 and started to work in the Electrical Works Research Administration in Ankara to do his compulsory service for a while due to his scholarship, went to the United States in 1952 to specialize in engineering economics. His first visit to the USA and his impressions there greatly changed Özal's worldview. Having acquired a great knowledge here, he expanded his worldview and vision and returned to his home country and started to work at the Electrical Works Research

Administration, but this time as the general manager technical advisor (Laçınok, 2007: 538). Özal mentions the contribution of his trip to the USA with these words: “... *but I learned this. Only talent is not enough for vision. In order to see what and how it will happen in the future, it is imperative that you go to countries that have progressed more than you and analyze them. This is essential for vision. If you add experience to talent, your vision improves...*” (Barlas, 2000: 56).

He made his first marriage to Ayhan İnal, the daughter of a family from Malatya notables, but this two-year marriage ended. He married Semra Yeğınmen, who worked as a secretary in the same government office, in 1954. Özal completed his military service in 1959 at the Army Ordnance School in Ankara, and Süleyman Demirel, who did his military service in the same place, was among the students he taught. As a conservative bureaucrat, he supported Prof. Dr. Ali Fuat Başgil against the presidential candidate of the military in the aftermath of the 27 May 1960 coup (Acar, 2008: 186).

Özal, who served as the Deputy General Manager of the Electrical Works Research Administration until 1965, served as the deputy general manager for one year in 1966. Özal, who also participated in the establishment works of the State Planning Organization in this period, was later appointed to the Prime Ministry Special Technical Consultancy and in 1967 to the Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization. With his extraordinary practices here, he tried to develop engineering consultancy services in Turkey. For his practices during his duty as undersecretary, Sakıp Sabancı, one of the important businessmen of the period, commented as: “*Mr. Turgut Özal became the Undersecretary in charge of Planning. Until then, there were so many formalities that put industrialists in distress; I was one of them. For example, to obtain an incentive certificate in any area you had to apply a committee where seven ministries were represented per law. Moreover at the level of undersecretary. It took ages to get a result. Because it was really hard to convince these seven undersecretaries with different thoughts and characters and that they reach a consensus and confirm your project. When Turgut Özal was appointed to Planning. It was like a dream. A dream came true. He gave this authority to Planning and became a dynamic person who decided with his own team instead of seven people. We loved him very much. Because we were moaning.*” (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 35).

Özal, who had to resign from his duties in the bureaucracy after the government resigned after the 12 March 1971 military intervention, went to the USA when he took an offer from the World Bank (Sınayuç, 1994). Özal, who stayed there until 1973, worked as a consultant at the World Bank’s Industrial Office and gained deep experience in the field. His wife, Semra Özal, explained the process of Turgut Özal’s departure from office and the process of going to the USA as follows: “*Turgut Bey was previously invited to an international meeting in Switzerland as the Planning Undersecretary. Believing that he should go to that meeting, he went to the airport, checked in his luggage, but he was not*

allowed to pass through the police checkpoint. He returned. To be more precise, I was in Ankara. This event happened in Istanbul. Unfortunately, in the meantime, like a fugitive or a murderer, I do not know what happened, under the conditions of that day, they started looking for Turgut Bey in Istanbul and they went to my sister's house and searched my sister's and my mother's house. To see if Turgut Bey was there. However, Turgut Özal had come to Ankara at that time. Of course, this incident upset him immensely. Because it was a terrible thing for us that would go as far as searching the house. We were both saddened by this incident. And at that time, he contacted the World Bank President McNamara. McNamara said to him: "Take the plane and come here immediately, and let's have a talk." They knew each other. They used to be friends. He wanted him to go immediately and he went. The late Sunay called me, "Tell him to come over, and talk. There has been a mistake, let's fix it immediately, he can stay and work here." But he phoned. McNamara told him to start working at once. Start working as my advisor. Özal asked my opinion. What will you do with the kids if I stay there? Because he took his bag and left. I told him to start working there, and that I would take care of the works here. And I really had a hard time. I wanted to take our good old belongings that we used at home. Because the World Bank paid for our shipping. Even the carpets we used created a lot of problems, the customs officers said that they were almost historical, antique rugs, and could be taken out of the country. And as a result, the late Naim Talu also helped. We got permission and sent them. And I took the kids and went to America. We stayed there for about two and a half years." (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 41-42). After working for the World Bank in the position of advisor, Özal returned to Turkey and started to work as a senior manager in the private sector (<http://www.malatya.gov.tr/ozal-ve-malatya>).

Turgut Özal, who had been interested in politics since his youth, first stepped into active politics in 1977. Although he wanted to be chosen as an MP from the Justice Party in the 1977 elections, he was not invited by the party, and upon the insistence of his brother Korkut Özal and his close friend Recai Kutun from Malatya, he became a candidate for the National Salvation Party (MSP) Izmir MP and lost with a very small difference of votes. Despite having a conservative worldview, he had become a candidate with the intense insistence of his close circle, although he advocated a completely different and liberal policy from the model of economy and politics proposed by MSP in the elections. Turgut Özal later explained his candidacy for Izmir MP from MSP as follows: "Well, at that time in 1977, Süleyman Bey would nominate me again. Then they said that they would nominate me, but I had gone. Neither nomination nor anything, nothing ever happened. Neither did they offer me, nothing like that happened. They came and insisted. They said, "You promised before." My family does not agree, and I'm not very willing. I have things to do. After that, I was ultimately nominated from Izmir! But that was also an experience. Look, let me be honest, it is the first time I got involved in politics. How to talk in a coffee house, in a public square. That's how I entered politics, my family (wife

and children) didn't want it, they got up and left. There was not a village or town that I did not set foot in Izmir in a month. As a result, of course, we were not elected, here we came back again “ (Barlas, 2000: 88).

Being a candidate for Izmir MP and entering politics for the first time provided Turgut Özal with a great experience for his later political life in terms of public relations, integration with the grassroots and experience. Shortly after the election, Özal became a member of Turkey's most powerful employers' organization, Metal Goods Industrialists' Union (MESS), and after a short time, he was elected as the General Secretary of this organization and appointed to the chairman in 1979 (Sinayuç, 1994). After the defeat of the government established with independent MPs under the leadership of the Republican People's Party in 1979 in the midterm elections, the administration resigned and as a result, a minority government was established under the presidency of Süleyman Demirel. Upon a special invitation to correct the bad economy in the established minority government, Özal returned to his service as a civil servant and was appointed as the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry and the Deputy Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization. He took an active role in the preparation, persuasion of the parties, and implementation of the 24 January decisions aimed at the liberalization of the Turkish economy (Güzel, 2008: 616).

Establishment of the Motherland Party (ANAP)

The incident that enabled Turgut Özal to rise in bureaucracy and to reach the highest point came with the duty given to him after the military coup of 12 September 1980. After the military coup, he became the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Economic Affairs in the Bülent Ulusu Government before the transition to the civilian period between 1980-1982. Due to measures such as the prohibition of strikes and trade union activities under military rule, and the determination of maximum wages, the implementation of the January 24 economic decisions prepared under the leadership of Özal was not met with any resistance, and inflation started to decrease and exports started to increase. However, as a result of the interest rates being set free in 1981, the bankers emerged with the promise to pay high-interest rates in 1982, but soon they started to go bankrupt one by one. And, as a reflection of these incidents, especially the incident of “Banker Kastelli”, Finance Minister Kaya Erdem was dismissed and Adnan Başer Kafaoğlu was appointed in his place.

Unable to accept the dismissal of Kaya Erdem by the military administration of the time, Özal resigned from his post on July 12, 1982. He described his relationship with the soldiers during this period as follows: “*There was concern among the soldiers that the economic situation would always remain in a critical line. They also needed outside assistance and support, as they did not fully believe that the situation would improve.*

I know this job very well. At first, they offered foreign economic relations. But when I said there, 'You must grant all economic powers,' they agreed unwillingly. But, there was something I felt. I was constantly in custody. Because I was the right hand of the previous government. That is why the soldiers always looked at me with suspicion ..." Özal responded to the question, 'Did you work in harmony with the soldiers?' as follows: "When I felt that the events were developing in a statist direction, I resigned several times. I was always prevented. For example, we removed price controls. They say that they would implement price control. They wanted to deviate from the free market principle. When Bülent Ulusu also favored price control in the Council of Ministers, I wrote and gave my resignation. After all, what I wanted to happen, happens but I always struggled. In this sense, it is difficult to explain the issue to people who have no economic notion" (Barlas, 2000: 22-25; Küçükşabanoğlu, 2019: 117). Resigning from his position, Özal went to Side district of Antalya. Side is the place where the founding idea of the Homeland Party was developed, its intellectual foundations were shaped, and physical contacts were established for this purpose. Mehmet Keçeciler, one of the people he contacted during this period, describes this period as follows: "Özal called me one day. He had resigned from his post as the Deputy Prime Minister at that time. "Yes, sir." I said. "Mehmet, can you come over? Do you have annual leave left?" he asked. And I said to him, "How can someone use his annual leave when working with you? I still have 60 days off. Of course, I will come," I said. He said to me, "You had a party founding business, right? Let's talk about it. But first I have to go to the USA and get my heart checked. Let's see if I can go into politics or not" Özal went to the USA with a weight of 116 kg, stayed there for 20 days and returned as 82 kg after having lost 34 kg. He came back with a slim appearance. There was also a change in his image. They said many words that he got approval from the USA. It was obvious that he went to the doctor. The doctor supposedly told him to enter politics. At that time, the opposition frequently said, "Özal got permission from the US and came back." It was totally irrelevant." (Küçükşabanoğlu, 2019: 119).

Turgut Özal went to Washington, where his son Ahmet Özal was residing, after staying in Side for a certain period of time. He rented an apartment in Şişli, Istanbul which he would use as an office after he returned to Turkey in 1983. Here, they carried out the establishment works of the new party they planned to establish in the future. Özal's desire to establish a new party and his attempts in this direction were heard in a short time. In particular, the military administration wanted Özal to join forces with Bülent Ulusu instead of establishing a party on his own. The widespread belief was that if he participated in the elections with a new party instead of joining with Ulusu, he might be vetoed from the election by the soldiers.

Özal, on the other hand, knew that acting with a figure who could be perceived by the

public as a representative of military tutelage would negatively affect the public image of the new party to be established. For this reason, he insisted on his decision to enter the election with a party that he would establish and become the leader of, rather than to enter the election on the side of Uluşu and be a simple deputy. Özal explained the exchange of ideas he made with Kenan Evren on the way to form a party as follows: *On the one hand, Bülent Uluşu was forcing me “Come with me.” I said ‘no’ to him. And then I got up and asked for an appointment with Evren Pasha. I want to start a party. Will you let me do this? I need to get the answer to this question first because starting a party is not an easy job. You will enter, you will get a lot of people talking, you will undertake a lot of financial burdens, then they will not let you. Therefore, it the best idea to get permission in advance. Evren told me: ‘Of course, we cannot say no to your establishing a party, but don’t admit people from MSP and MHP into it.’ I mean, he sort of said that. As he assumed that we would not accept the leftists, he kind of said ‘Don’t let these ones in, either.’ I explained that I was thinking of forming a party that would unite everyone.”* (Barlas, 2000: 37-38).

All political parties which were active before 12 September 1980 in Turkey Grand National Assembly (Parliament) were closed after the military coup, their members were banned from politics, their leaders were taken under custody, and all their political activities were forbidden. Two parties were established by the National Security Council, which ruled the country under the leadership of Kenan Evren, in order to participate in the elections that were planned to be held for the transition to civil life, albeit per-functionary. One was the Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP), the party of Retired General Turgut Sunalp, and the other was the Populist Party (HP) founded by Necdet Calp. The military administration did not believe that the new party that was tried to be established under the leadership of Özal would be successful. Özal later explained this situation as follows: *I explained that I was thinking of forming a party that would unite everyone. I said that we had no prejudices against any political wing or thought. But these or my views were not important at the time. Soldiers thought I would not be able to get even 10 percent of the votes at that time. Accordingly, the miniature party that I would establish would be proof of democracy in Turkey “* (Barlas, 2000: 38).

The motherland Party under the leadership of Turgut Özal, which would leave its mark on the political history of the Turkish Republic from 1983 to 1991, was faced with obstacles in its foundation phase, and it even experienced difficulties in preparing the legally required 30-person founders’ list for the establishment of the party (Çölaşan, 2008: 190-191). This situation was also valid for other parties. Even MDP, which was seen as the party that would certainly win the election by the soldiers, was looking for deputy candidates with newspaper advertisements (Cemal, 1986: 371). After deciding to establish the Motherland Party, Özal explained the founders’ problem they experienced

with the following words: *“While establishing ANAP, I had a hard time finding the founders. Whoever came became the founder. That’s how we brought together the 37 people. Maybe, if I was to start a new party today, I would never accept some of them. But then we had no alternative. Some of the people we visited were afraid of being a founder. Some came up with advice. Kazım Oksay was the lawyer of Asım Kocabıyık. Mehmet Yazar brought Abdullah Tenekeci Pasha. Vural Arıkan wanted to work with us, Şarık Tara brought him. Then Leyla Yeniay Köseoğlu brought Mesut (Yılmaz) “ (Barlas, 2000: 43).*

Turgut Özal would now be able to establish his party and enter the elections. Although seven important names in the founders’ list such as Yıldırım Aktürk, Hüsnü Doğan, Mehmet Keçeciler, and Erol Aksoy were vetoed by the National Security Council (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 181; Akyol, 2009: 99), on May 20, 1983, the petition for the foundation was submitted and the party was officially established. The following statements were made by Turgut Özal in the preface of the Motherland Party program announced in 1983. (<https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/handle/11543/603?show=full>): *“MOTHERLAND PARTY was founded on 20 May 1983 and took its place in the political life of our country. The symbol of our party is the map of Turkey covered with honeycomb and honeybee. HONEYBEE refers to diligence, and HONEYCOMB means making our beloved homeland prosperous even to its farthest corner. In our program, the issues of our country and what we think about their solutions are expressed in a short, clear, and concise manner. Our aim is to create a political picture that will make Turkey a developed and modern country free from political fights by ensuring people to join around this program. We are a nationalist, conservative, and socially just political party relying on the free-market economy based on competition. For this purpose, we invite those who believe in our program, regardless of their previous political tendencies. This party serves the people. We believe that we can serve our nation in the best way, and we hope that Allah Almighty will help us in our endeavors.”*

In Article 1 of the general principles section of the Motherland Party program, the aims of the party are stated as follows (<https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/handle/11543/603?show=full>): Motherland Party is a political party which

- ✓ considers national sovereignty and supremacy of the nation, national unity and integrity above all else,
- ✓ Believes that the manifestation of the will of the nation and the establishment of national sovereignty can only be possible in a free democratic order where the free vote of the people is essential,
- ✓ Considers basic human rights and freedoms indispensable,

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- ✓ Assumes the understanding of “Justice is the basis of property”,
 - ✓ Adopts nationalism and loyalty to national and moral values as a principle,
 - ✓ Aims to reach the level of contemporary civilization in the direction of the principles and reforms of the great leader Atatürk, the founder of our Republic,
 - ✓ Believes in social justice and equality of opportunity with the view that “the main issue is the happiness of individuals and society”,
 - ✓ Envisages the acceleration of economic development, the elimination of unemployment and poverty, and the generalization of welfare by reducing the income distribution differences,
 - ✓ Considers the entrepreneurial power of individuals as a basis in economic development,
 - ✓ Sees educating our young people, who are the guarantee of our future, as civilized individuals who are loyal to the ideal of modern and developed Turkey, who have adopted our national and moral values, have scientific thought, and display love respect and tolerance towards everybody, as the main goal of national education,
 - ✓ Considers persuasion, compromise and respect for ideas as the only way in the democratic political struggle, and aims to reach the ideal of free, independent, developed, reputable, great and powerful Turkey. We consider it our indispensable duty to work and struggle for taking and implementing all kinds of social, economic, administrative, legal, political and other measures in order to realize the issues stipulated in this program and in the light of the principles specified in this program, and we see it as the reason for our being a political party.

As can be understood from the program of the Motherland Party, it wanted to bring the Turkish nation out of political and ideological conflicts and to reconcile it around economic development. It would achieve this by embracing the whole nation. This party, designed and created by Turgut Özal as a synthesis of the country, led the people into thinking about not only today but also the future by realizing the economic and political transformation which was seriously needed in a period in the history of the Republic of Turkey (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 338).

Elections: The Rise and Fall of the Motherland Party (ANAP)

Turgut Özal, who was the architect of the January 24 Decisions and successfully served in the offices that guided the economy for many years, managed to establish his party despite all the obstacles. The newly formed party would have the opportunity to measure

the favor directed towards it in the public thanks to the ballot boxes in such a short time as five and a half months after its establishment. Seven parties applied to participate in the elections. These parties were The Motherland Party led by Turgut Özal, the People's Party led by Necdet Calp, the Nationalist Democracy Party led by Turgut Sunalp, the Welfare Party led by Necmettin Erbakan, the Social Democracy Party led by Erdal İnönü, the Conservative Party led by Alparslan Türkeş, and the Great Turkey Party led by Süleyman Demirel. However, only three parties were allowed to participate in the elections by the National Security Council. Accordingly, the Nationalist Democracy Party led by the right-wing Turgut Sunalp, the People's Party led by Necdet Calp from the left, and Özal's Motherland Party could participate in the 6 November 1983 elections.

Turgut Özal expressed his views on the 6 November 1983 elections as follows: *“We prepared really well for the elections and I had no doubt that we would win the elections. Maybe there were quite a few of our friends who were doubtful, but I don't know, let's call it a feeling or a hunch. We thought we would get quite many votes, we would be in power alone. As a matter of fact, that day, towards the end of the election propaganda, it started to appear. In other words, the people were trying very hard not to express their opinion, perhaps because of the emergence of the military administration's tendency to support a particular party. In other words, it was as if they were hiding us from the public”* (Barlas, 2000: 59-60).

On the way to the elections of 6 November 1983, an important development took place in determining the fate of the election and the tendency of the voters. The election debates of the party leaders, which started on television screens for the first time in the 1983 elections, became a very important turning point for the three parties that were allowed to enter the election. These public debates on television screens significantly increased Özal's popularity and familiarity in the public eye. Unlike other party leaders, Özal was displaying a discourse that was more liberal, more democratic and more distant from the putschists on television programs. For these reasons, there was an increasing interest from the public towards the Motherland Party. Özal's party was seen as a hope of salvation from the economic bottleneck and high inflation, rather than the parties supported by the military (Çölaşan, 2008: 198).

As the election date approached, the military administration, realizing that the public's interest in the Motherland Party had increased greatly, wanted to intervene in the course of events indirectly. On November 4, 1983, two days before the elections, President Kenan Evren clearly targeted the Motherland Party, even though he did not name it in his speech on radio and television. This situation was publicly interpreted as the soldiers wanted people to vote for MDP leader Turgut Sunalp, and this comment was also right. Contrary to expectations, this intervention caused the masses to approach the Motherland Party more sympathetically (Akyol, 2009: 107). Despite all difficulties in the elections

that took place two days later, the Motherland Party won the absolute majority in the Turkish Grand National Assembly and became the first party by taking 45% of the votes.

While Turgut Özal and the Motherland Party were the undisputed winners of the election by making a big surprise contrary to expectations, the loser of this election was the Nationalist Democracy Party, which the soldiers openly supported and expected to win the election. Public interest in the election was enormous and there was a record 92.30% participation. The people showed their attitude against coups, that is, soldiers, by going to the ballot box and using their votes. In this success, the fact that ANAP was a new and unworn party with a progressive vision and that it followed a compromising, unifying line without ideological discrimination between people was also an important factor (Keçeciler, 2014: 87).

In the Motherland Party, which unexpectedly came out as the sole power in the elections, now the debates whether ‘the authority to establish a government will be given or not by the military administration?’ began. In this uncertain and tense environment, Turgut Özal was finally assigned by President Kenan Evren to form the government on 20 November, after 14 days from the elections. Finally, the government of the Motherland Party under the Prime Ministry of Turgut Özal, who took office on December 13, was formed. Along with the winning of the power alone by the Motherland Party in the first election it entered, the decade of Özal started in which Turkey was irreversibly transformed in socioeconomic terms. The voting rates and the number of deputy seats won by the Motherland Party in the general elections from the date of its establishment on May 20, 1983, until the 2002 general elections, when it was excluded from the parliament, are as follows (<http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/milletvekili-genel-secim-arsivi/2644>):

Election Year	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2002
Rate of votes	45.14	36.31	24.01	19.65	13.22	5.12
Number of Deputies Won/ Total Number	211/400	292/450	115/450	132/550	86/550	0/550

The decline of the Motherland Party, which was the only dominant party in the country from 1983, when it first entered the election, until 1991, began with the loss of the referendum on lifting the political bans in 1987 with a very small difference of votes, it deepened when Turgut Özal left the leadership of the party in 1989 and became the president. Until this date, arguments increased among the party cadres gathered around the undisputed charismatic leader Turgut Özal, and the conflicts of leadership and authority deepened within the party organization. After the party lost its founding leader, it quickly began to lose both popular favor and power in the assembly. The names of the leaders of the Motherland Party starting from the date when Turgut Özal officially left the party leadership on 31 October 1989 are as follows (https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anavatan_Partisi#Genel_ba%C5%9Fkanlar%C4%B1):

Name	Election Date	Date of Leaving Office
Turgut Özal	20 May 1983	31 October 1989
Yıldırım Akbulut	31 October 1989	15 June 1991
Mesut Yılmaz	15 June 1991	27 November 2002
Ekrem Pakdemirli (By Proxy)	27 November 2002	11 January 2003
Ali Talip Özdemir	11 January 2003	13 December 2003
Nesrin Nas	13 December 2003	25 November 2004
Halil İbrahim ÖZSOY (By proxy)	25 November 2004	2 April 2005
Erkan MUMCU	2 April 2005	25 October 2008
Salih Uzun	25 October 2008	31 October 2009

Turgut Özal: Climbing to the 864-Altitude Hill

The official process of the presidential election was started in the first session of the 20th assembly of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on October 20, 1989, 20 days prior to the end of the term of the current President Kenan Evren. Only Motherland Party deputies attended the election session upon the boycott of other parties (Arcayürek, 1989: 152-153). Burdur Deputy Fethi Çelikbaş also applied for the Presidential candidacy. Considering the quorum ratios to win the Presidency at that time, the total number of members of the TGNA in that period was 450, the two-thirds majority was 300, and the absolute majority was 226.

CANDIDATES	1st Voting (20 October 1989)	2nd Voting (24 October 1989)	3rd Voting (31 October 1989)
Turgut ÖZAL	247	256	263
Fethi ÇELİKBAŞ	18	17	14
Null	17	9	8
Invalid	3	2	0
TOTAL	285	284	285

None of the candidates could get two-thirds majority vote stipulated by the law in the presidential election voting that would determine the 8th President of the Republic of Turkey. In the third vote held in the first session of the 24th assembly on 31 October 1989, in which the absolute majority vote would win the election instead of the two-thirds majority vote, Turgut Özal got 263 votes and became the new President. The opposition did not participate in the voting process, Turgut Özal was elected only by the votes of the deputies of his own party, who held the majority in the parliament, and officially started his new duty on 9 November 1989.

After the founding and charismatic leader of the Motherland Party, which was in power, assumed the post of Presidency, the agenda of the country was locked on who would be the new party leader and as a consequence, the prime minister. Turgut Özal, as a result of some negotiations he made during this process, brought Yıldırım Akbulut as the leader of the party he was the founder of, who had a calm personality and thus would not

object to his intervention in government affairs (Mangırcı, 1999: 169). However, things develop contrary to expectations. Especially the opposition parties launched an intense criticism campaign, claiming that Özal, despite the termination of his relations with the Motherland Party officially, continued to lead the party in breach of the constitution, was involved in government affairs because he did not break his organic bond, and Yıldırım Akbulut condoned it (Akyol, 2009: 315). In this process, as Yıldırım Akbulut, who was very worn out, could not dominate the party and especially he did not support the president's ideas in the atmosphere of the onset of the 1st Gulf War looming, Mesut Yılmaz became the new president of the party and the new prime minister of the country at the party's third major congress held on June 15, 1991.

The most important event that enabled Turgut Özal to be active in politics and the country's agenda was the neighboring country Iraq-based Gulf War that started on August 2, 1990, and ended on February 28, 1991, during his Presidency. As he tried to actively manage the policy that Turkey would adopt during the war, he experienced problems particularly with the opposition parties, the government of his own party and especially with the Chief of General Staff Full General Necip Toruntay (Birand & Yalçın, 2001: 439-442). The most important argument of the opposition was the concern that the proactive strategy that Özal wanted to implement could drag Turkey into the war. Özal, who saw the Gulf Crisis as an opportunity for Turkey, consulted with opinion leaders in the region during this period and sought to obtain various big gains in the oil-rich regions in northern Iraq (Barlas, 2000: 126-131).

Özal, who was totally dissatisfied with the developments in the Motherland Party and the new direction in which the country evolved politically, considered to return to politics again, and even though he determined new strategies to implement when he returned, his lifetime did not allow this (Akyol, 2009: 462-466). President Turgut Özal, the 8th President of the Republic of Turkey, passed away as a result of a heart attack on 17 April 1993. Turgut Özal expresses his life briefly as follows (Binark, 2008: 47); *"I am a child of a middle class family. I was born in Anatolia, I am a person who believes in the line of fate in all my past. My fate gave me a pretty colorful life. When closely examined, considering the period I studied at various schools in various places and transferred to the state at the last moment, I started public service at the lowest level. Also, I started engineering. I gradually came to the position of chief, director, general manager, undersecretary, minister, deputy prime minister, prime minister and ultimately president. In all this line of development and destiny, I have struggled and worked hard to obtain the achievements in my life."*

With his days of office as a civil servant at various levels for many years following his graduation from ITU in 1950, his leadership and Prime Ministry of the Motherland Party, which started in 1983 and ended in 1989, his practices in the Presidency office,

which he successfully continued until his sudden and doubtful death in 1993, which still had many question marks, his vision, and his projects, be them implemented or not due to his untimely demise, Turgut Özal was a charismatic leader who left deep marks on the political life of the Republic of Turkey and enabled Turkey to be a modern country in economic, political and social areas.

Conclusion

Turgut Özal was a visionary and pragmatic leader who came from a simple family from among the people of Anatolia, exhibiting sincere behavior. Özal wanted to implement a liberal-conservative understanding of the country's politics by synthesizing the conservative values he acquired while growing up as a worldview with the liberal economic understanding of the era. He was the dominant leader personality at one of the cornerstones of Turkey's history, who left his mark on the recent periods of the Republic of Turkey with his efforts to modernize the cumbersome state structure, the management system, and underdeveloped economy model through his new rationalist methods. He correctly identified the changes in the world in the '80s, developing new trends, new blocks, and new commercial relationships and tried to ensure that Turkey would obtain a positive place with the network of relations he established out of this newly developing conjuncture.

Turgut Özal, who came to power after the constitution that took effect after the military coup of 12 September 1980 and the partially free elections, chose to solve the chronic economic problems of the country as his first target. According to him, a country that steadily gains momentum in economic development will have the opportunity to develop in the areas of modernization and democratization as well. In other words, he considered economic development as an indispensable and necessary precondition for political development. Therefore, in the early years of his power, he focused more on economic change and transformation. For this, he changed the Turkish Currency Protection Law and paved the way for exports. Even his innovative practices in the economic life such as the introduction of computers and faxes into daily life during this period, the proliferation of pagers, the increase in the number of home phones, the popularization of color televisions and the permission for private channels show us the type of perspective and vision Özal had.

In the development of this vision, the fact that he came from within the public, and that he received specialized training in the USA and gained experience by working in the World Bank and in the private sector enabled Özal to get to know the global economic system. Even when Özal was a bureaucrat, his first practice in the economic field was to try to establish a free market economy in order to encourage exports. Özal made many radical changes in the traditional structure both with the 24 January decisions

and during the period when he was in power with the Motherland Party and was the prime minister. Turgut Özal showed the success he achieved in domestic politics due to his unique approach and his pragmatic new approaches in foreign politics as well. As a politician who left his mark on the 1980s, the most important feature of Turgut Özal, which should be emphasized differently from other politicians, was naturalness that caused the people to love him. Özal abandoned the distant and cold attitude, which was considered a necessity of being a statesman according to the understanding of the period. The fact that he inspected the military units in shorts, that he showed that he listened to arabesque music despite its being banned on TRT, that he mixed with the public with his wife by getting rid of his armed bodyguards with his car, and that he displayed unusual behavior that the public had not witnessed before in politicians led to the development of great sympathy for Özal.

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