



# International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)

ISSN 2307-4531  
(Print & Online)

<http://gssrr.org/index.php?journal=JournalOfBasicAndApplied>



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## Comparison of the Two Periods of Ismet Inonu Era in Terms of Religious Freedom (1938-1945 / 1945-1950)

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### Abstract

The term freedom has been a hot topic since ancient Greece throughout the known history and has been debated in every society. For that reason, it has been given many different definitions and has become on demand. On the way to this term throughout the history, different milestones were determined and different definitions were attached to it. When it came to the sixteenth century, sovereign states misused their authority so as to violate human freedom and the term gain some different aspects especially with deprivation of ownership after that time. When it came to Turkish Republic, since they had very harsh modernist understanding, the implementation became parallel with ideology. As a result, some new problems emerged especially in the scope of religious freedom. When Turkey's unique political atmosphere was taken into consideration, it gained different dimensions. At this point, after Ismet Inonu became the president in 1938, he tried to implement the previous modernist ideology with even more harsh methods. But there emerged violations of religious freedom in Turkey. In the rapidly changing world, the Second World War came with a new conjuncture and especially with the leading effect on the United States, the term "freedom" became hot topic again and Turkey also had to comply with this new era.

**Keywords:** Freedom; Religious Freedom; Ismet Inonu; Turkish Republic.

### 1. Introduction

The topic "freedom", has been debated since ancient times and different definitions were put forth concerning this term.

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One of the main reasons why people thought over this term very much has been the fact that the majority of people suffered from the deprivation of it. Since every society has their own dynamics, they went through different experiences and came with their own unique assessment. As a result, they had their own conceptualization.

## **2. Freedom**

Throughout the human history, the ambition of those who have power to reign caused the others to seek salvation from that situation. The ambition of the majority to save themselves from the above-mentioned situation was put into practice so intensively that this topic has been handled in the political literature as a mystical one and sublimed. Limiting the activities of those who have free will caused them to brainstorm on freedom to such a point that there has been accumulated vast literature about it [1].

When the concept "freedom" is handled from this aspect, different people came up with different definitions because, as it was mentioned, many different people thought over it. In very broad terms, it is a state in which an individual is not dependent on any other one but himself. In this situation, the individual decide upon his own way and he is free from outer effects and he is not compelled to do anything [2].

According to a different definition, freedom is seen as an individual's having the opportunity to choose how to behave with his own will free from others' intervention [3]. The philosopher John Stuart Mill who offered very important ideas about this topic defined it as an individual's living in a state in which he put forth his own right without hindering others to realize themselves and depriving others of their own rights. According to Mill, an individual self-development is the premise of the human happiness. In addition to these, meal and side of the freedom of an individual is not limitless and at this point he should shy away from limiting others' freedom. In brief terms, as long as somebody stay away from intervening other people's freedom and urging them to commit crimes, he shouldn't be limited in his free actions [4].

There is no standard definition of freedom because of the fact that it has gone through many different experiences in different societies and different times. For this reason, it has been taken as a controversial topic in political sciences. For instance, in ancient Greece, freedom was held as a term in which the citizens took part in the public life actively. In those times, individuals had the opportunity to realize their potentials by participating in the public life after having met their biological needs and financial requirements, which was seen as a kind of freedom in ancient Greece [5].

As for the classical liberalism, freedom was not taken as participation in the public life but it was emphasized that the most outstanding factor restricting human freedom is political authorities. This idea was especially expressed by Benjamin Constant and it was stated that when freedom is protected against intervention of the state and other individuals, it comes out as it is desired to be [6].

Isaiah Berlin also contributed to the definitions of the term. He classified freedom into two as negative and positive freedom. He defined negative freedom as the opportunity to choose and take action without being prone to any external intervention. As for positive one, it was defined as providing an individual with

participation in social and political life by giving him the opportunity to use the rights in these areas [7].

It should be stated that these two terms came into existence in the historical process. The idea of freedom was held as taking part in political life in ancient Greece and went through significant changes in historical process in accordance with the developments in the societies where it was defined. In ancient times, since the notion of getting others as slaves was highly developed, freedom was not seen as a wide term so as to cover everybody in the society so it was defined by taking upper-class people into consideration. But when it came to the Middle Ages, Christianity came with the idea that every human being was equal in the eyes of the religion, which could be seen as a new idea against the traditional slavery understanding. But in spite of these developments, the individual freedom did not become a preliminary point but the freedom of classes was brought to issue [8].

When it came to the seventeenth Century, freedom of the individual became a hot topic and the very nature of the states which were a big barrier in front of freedom were started to be discussed. During the previous eras, freedom was a problematic issue because individuals used to restrict the rights of other individuals, but after that time, the restriction of the states were at issue. The notion of positive and negative freedom types developed under these conditions [7].

It is clear from the different conceptualizations about freedom throughout the history that this topic has been discussed very much in political literature. After it is discussed very much and is given many different definitions, an important point has been reached in which some different concepts emerged such as excessive toleration which opened a new path to the limits of freedom. Then people started to discuss the criteria of sensible freedom and its limits. Since excessive freedom is an individual's behaving as he wishes, many drawbacks of this kind became another hot topic because it is clear that it could give harm to others so a new way of understanding started to develop insisting that this kind of freedom should be restricted. When the topic is looked into from this point of view, it could easily be stated that only the anarchists can comply with it. At this point, the idea which asserts that only the ethically true behavior should be set free started to develop. Since this idea was held very commonly, many laws are made by states in order to hinder misuse of freedom [1].

In the understanding of liberalism about freedom, individuals are seen of the greatest importance but Jean-Jacques Rousseau viewed it from different perspective and came up with the idea that society is more important. According to Rousseau, freedom should be handled as ability of human beings to control and determine their own futures. As a result if people contribute to reconstruction of state and society directly and continually then they could be seen as free. After all of these statements, Rousseau asserts that freedom could be defined as an individual's submission to what emerges from society's common sense. When Rousseau gives the rationale behind this idea, he states that while the selfish nature of individual is open to many undesired misdeeds, the products of the common sense of the society are perfectly applicable and reflect the real common will of the citizens. What common sense of the society produces is much more sensible than what an individual produces [9].

As for Marxist understanding of freedom, it also has something to say about it like liberalism. But there is difference about who to prioritize. While liberalism sees the individual in the first place, Marxist understanding

puts forth that society is to be given more importance between those two. According to Marxism, the fundamental means rendering freedom is social structure rather than individual rights issue. Marxism firstly handles the notion by defining the private property. First of all, it rejects the idea of private property and asserts that the private property should be confiscated by the state. It also claims that when private property is ended in a society, the alienation process will also be brought to an end. As a result of it, human beings will start self-actualization in a real environment inspiring life to those desired result. So they will have an opportunity to unveil their real nature. On the other hand, in the societies having different classes, there are different groups like bourgeoisie and proletariat, or the oppressing and the oppressed, which will result in exploitation and alienation. In addition to these, Marxism states that the classical understanding of freedom obliging a state where there is no oppression is not adequate on its own. At this point, human beings should lead a life in accordance with human dignity in all forms of social life. When people do not find a suitable environment to meet their social and economic needs, it is impossible to mention any freedom. Moreover an environment in which people are able to develop their skills and personalities is in the scope of what is defined with freedom [10].

### **3. Religious freedom and the situation in Turkey**

Another side of the freedom is religious freedom which has also been a huge problem especially in some countries like Turkey. Religious freedom can be defined as people's free will to believe in a religion or not to believe, to worship as they wish in their religion, to fulfil the requirements of their religion, to give and get religious education. When people have the rights to do these things without any external oppression, then it is possible to mention religious freedom [11].

It could be asserted that religious freedom was not at issue in European countries as much as in Turkey in the twentieth century. Since it turned out to be a crucial topic in Turkey, it is easy to come across some violations especially by the state and law force.

After the Tanzimat era, secularization process accelerated, which lead to more interest to western culture. As a result of this, many people went to Europe to continue their education. After they turned back to their homeland, they tried hard to disseminate their westernized ideas to the society. It should be stressed that these intellectuals were not only the supporters of western ideas but they were also characterized with western lifestyle. Since they were the educated divisions of the society, they found the opportunity to prevail in the politics of the Ottoman State. These people had the intention to modernize the whole society in terms of western lifestyle by using the state as an efficient means. For that reason, they first aimed to revolutionize the old customs [12].

Those in Turkey who were deeply affected by western ideas maintained their loyalty to positivism for many years which firstly emerged in France. At the first glance to positivism, it is apparent that this notion gives an exclusive importance to scientific findings and is strongly against traditions and religion [13].

The traditional and religious institutions in Ottoman State continually opposed to the modernist ideas and

developed a negative view to the westernized lifestyle in accordance with their religious beliefs but the secular elite felt oversensitive to their positioning and obliged to revolutionize the culture. It could be claimed that the more opposition they came across, the stricter they got. As a prevailing ideology, positivism urged the secular elite to take radical action towards the traditional ideas. In their political approach, they took the religion into consideration as a retarding factor, so they were dragged to such a point that they found restricting religious freedom as a way to their ideals [14]. From this point of view, they interpreted secularism as a restrictive tool and implemented their policies under the effect of this idea [15].

As the framework of secular ideology requires, one of the first actions of the founders of Turkish Republic came to effect as abolishing many of the religious institutions inherited from Ottoman State. Moreover, they started to set up new ones so as to be under the control of the state itself. In this respect, the law named as “Tevhid-i Tedrisat” which could be translated into English as “Unification of Education” was put into effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1924, several months after the foundation of Republic. As this law required, the traditional educational institutions, the madrasahs, were taken under the control of Ministry of Education. When it is taken into consideration that the Madrasah was an autonomous entity throughout the centuries in Ottoman Era, this appears to be a radical change [16]. On 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1924, namely 10 days later, the Ministry issued a circular letter and declared that the Madrasahs were abolished [17]. The exact reason why they waited 10 days after the law to abolish these institutions is that they firstly took all of the properties and the foundations of madrasahs under the ownership of the Ministry and then they only abolished these institutions. By doing this, the Ministry of education owned up all of the foundations and properties of madrasahs.

With the law above-mentioned, the Caliphate which was long-enduring institution in Muslim world was abolished together with madrasahs [18].

After İsmet İnönü was elected as a new president on 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 1938, a new era started in Turkey and religious freedom was violated very much during the first part until 1945. It could be asserted that, with this attack, İsmet İnönü aimed to revive the idea of revolution which faded away during the last period of Atatürk [19]. At this point, İsmet İnönü era was full of new developments.

### ***3.1 Religious freedom during the first period of ismet inonu era 1938-1945)***

İsmet İnönü had the idea that the revolutions of Atatürk were not well-established in the society and even many people showed reactions against them, so they felt that they had to be stricter to make these revolutions rooted to the society. When he decided to take these major actions, the whole conjuncture in the world was rather suitable for such steps because other countries were busy with the Second World War and İnönü was exempt from any supervision. Moreover the “zeitgeist” was also suitable for oppressive policies. As a result, not only did he restrict religious freedom but he also violated many other rights, even the freedom of press was threatened during that era [20].

The oppression came to such a point that it is not possible today to come across any of their policies in the archives of the press but only in those of the security units of the state.

The clear indication of restart of modernization movement in this era is that the humanist idea was re-adopted by the state and a new form of it as Turkish Humanism was created during this period. As for the original humanism, it was created in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and asserted that the god should be taken out of the center of the universe which was an idea developed in Christianity and human being should occupy there. In order to revive Humanism, the old Latin and Greek works were revised and the findings were put into the textbooks of the schools during that time. Furthermore, Latin and Greek were taught in high schools. Many translation offices were founded and western Classics were translated into Turkish and they were distributed to schools and public homes [21].

Although he did not intend to restrict religious freedom, he took it into consideration as a necessity in order to continue the cultural revolutions which were started by Atatürk and he was extremely decisive to go on that way [22].

The most eminent point of these restrictions is that they started to implement the old laws which were made during the first years of Republic and were not used after a while when the revolutionist ideas faded away during years. The government then was so harsh about these laws that those who did not comply with them were severely punished. There were some examples of those who were not in accordance with the requirement of the law of unification of education and even those who were still using old Arabic alphabet despite the fact that the compelling laws were made about it.

The government took some precautions against those and the security forces followed the unlawful actions in order to arrest and do what laws require. When these forces detected the people who have Arabic written works, they arrested them. What is more of astounding about this point is that the police officers also arrested those who had some parts of Holy Quran in their homes. The point that was much debated in Turkey is that Quran is different from other Arabic written works because it is the holy book of Islam and it is originally in Arabic language, but İnönü government did not take this into consideration and saw both of them the same [23].

In parallel with these, and there were many others in different parts of the country who were still teaching Arabic alphabet and the Holy Quran. The security forces also arrested these people and sent them to courts of law. Moreover, there was another revolutionary action in the first years of Republic. It was the law about clothes which required everybody to get dressed as the modern life requires. These revolutionary laws compelled people not to wear traditional clothes but new ones. In order to comply with the modern European lifestyle, the government also made laws about caps and hindered the traditional ones. When it came to the İnönü era, these laws were also implemented very strictly and the security forces arrested the people who were not dressed in accordance with these laws. Furthermore, the Ministry of Inner Affairs banned some women's wears in 1935 with a circular. In the framework of this circular, the police detected the women not obeying these rules and took them in detention. But when the police followed this case very closely, the number of people not obeying these rules declined in time [23].

During Atatürk Era, a ban was put on the citation of Athan-a call to five times prayer in Islam- in Arabic. But throughout the country, there were many cases in which people did not comply with the given rules and cited

athan still in Arabic. These cases were again strictly followed by the security forces and the unlawful actions were fined very harshly by the police. But since the old laws did not come up with certain punishment with these crimes, different course offer two different punishment types [23]. In order to overcome this problem, and you love was made in 1941 and certain type of punishment was determined. Some articles of the Turkish Penal Code numbered as 4055 were changed and those who cited athan in Arabic were sentenced to imprisonment for three months or fined with 10 to 200 Turkish Liras in the new laws [24].

One of the most outstanding things that was implemented in Turkey during this era was that the chairing people of the religious sects were arrested and sentenced with very harsh imprisonment. Even the state organs used very destructive propaganda about these people in order to make him unpopular among the public. They especially underlined that these kinds of religious currents were very harmful to the society and these sects were continually misusing the divine feelings of the ordinary people [23].

During this period, İsmet İnönü viewed the religion as a barrier to modernization like the other modernist ideologies and tried to oppress religion and he started new revolutionary movement. As liberalism asserted as a negative thing for the state to use all of the opportunities to restrict freedom, İsmet İnönü confirmed these ideas and used the state as a restrictive tool of religious freedom. But it should be stated that the first aim was not to restrict religious freedom but revive the revolutionary movement which started in the first years of Republic.

### ***3.2 Religious freedom during the second period of ismet inönü era (1945-1950)***

It should firstly be stated that this new period was directed by totally new paradigms so there were radical changes in the policies of the governments. The oppression which was strictly implemented in the previous period was for the aim to modernize the country in terms of western world. But there emerged ahistorical dilemma even a discrepancy of the modernist movement in Turkey at that point. Because after that time, as the real representative of Western world, the United States of America did not find Turkey is a democratic country and forced it to change its institutions as the democratization process in the whole world required. In other words, the policies which were implemented in order to westernize were not seen in accordance with Western idea by a Western country and the government had to change all of them radically. After the Second World War, the United States led the free world towards democratization and Turkey had to comply with the new prevailing paradigm in the world.

When Turkish government started to change very much in their policies and removed oppressing atmosphere in Turkey, the United States contributed very much but it was not the only reason for Turkish government to change its long-lasting old implementations. Another compelling factor was Turkey's neighboring country, the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, the world divided into two poles and the Soviet Union led the second. During Atatürk era, Soviet Union had very close bonds with Turkey, but after they defeated German troops around their city Stalingrad in 1943, they started to change their attitudes towards Turkey [25].

After that, is a Turkish authorities started to feel concerned about Russia's probable attitude. They also assumed that Russia would invade the whole Eastern Europe and other countries would not try to hinder its actions. At

that time, another one of the main concerns of Turkey was that England and the United States were forcing Turkey to take part in the ongoing war [26].

The worrisome developments peaked when the Soviet Union started to express its demands clearly. During the Potsdam Conference held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1945, Stalin drew special attention to their problems with Turkey and in order for these problems to be solved; he asserted that Turkey should leave the cities Kars and Ardahan to them, even more worrying, they demanded something else. Their demand was over Bosphorus, which was formulated as having the same rights with Turkey. But when England and the USA did not endorse such an offer, Russia asked for a base in Dedeagac (Alexandroupolis) in Greece in order to take control of the region. But England and the United States chose to postpone the issue so as to handle later [26].

At first, the USA seemed to agree with the offer Russia made about Bosphorus, but later they realized that Russia did not keep any of the promises they had already given during the war. Moreover the USA also started to feel worried about Russian expansion over Eastern Europe. Russia had already promised to withdraw from Iran and Eastern Europe but after the war they did not step forward to keep their promises, which led the USA to changing their attitude towards Russia. Moreover, England tried hard to convince the USA that if Russia was given what they desire, then Turkey would be put in a defenseless situation. When this proposition made sense to the USA, they started to take preemptive cautions against Russia [27].

After 1946, the USA started to implement containment policy against Russia. Just after the implementation of this policy, the cold war which affected the whole world later started and especially the eastern and western parts of Europe were taken under control of these two powers [28].

Later on, Russia started to come up with the idea that they had to defend Bosphorus together with Turkey because Turkey had not been able to prevent German vessels from passing Bosphorus during the war. Turkey, at that point, clearly comprehended that it was impossible to defend on its own against Russia and they willingly decided to be a member of free world led by the USA with a resolution taken in the Parliament on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1946 [29].

There were some other compelling factors which urged Turkey to approach the Western World. After the World War II, the USA decided to give financial aid to the European countries in the framework of Marshall Aid and included Turkey as well, which created a binding effect for Turkey to choose its side. Furthermore, in the framework of Truman Doctrine, the USA decided to give military aid to Greece and Turkey to defend themselves against Russia and its prevailing ideology, Communism. Since Turkey had problems with Russia, they eagerly welcomed the military aid and felt more bound to the USA [30].

Meanwhile in Turkey, the ruling Republican People's Party brought some policies into implementation, which caused much discontent among the public. In order to soothe the feeling of anger directed to them, they tried to make a law about land ownership and wanted to share the lands of the rich to the poor. But there were the landlords in the party itself and they started to oppose İsmet İnönü. Although there was not any opposition party in the country, their intention created an opposition movement in the party. After these developments, the power



of the party diminished [31]. After that time, opposing ideas started to be more outstanding in the party. During that time, Adnan Menderes started to oppose the government and on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1945, he and some other politicians declared that the country needs more democracy and the government should give way to it but the authorities knew that it was just a start to new opposition. These people demanded not only more democracy but some changes in the party statute so as to give way to more flexible structure [32].

İsmet İnönü was on the one hand exposed to much pressure in inner politics and on the other hand Soviet Russia was another threat for him. Moreover when they needed to get help from the USA, they came up with some obligations to Turkey about democratization. As a result of these, Turkey was obliged to go through a way that had no alternative. Since İsmet İnönü felt that they had to change radically, he started to use different initiatives as opposed to their previous period. For instance, as the president, İsmet İnönü had the authority to assign the prime minister. Although he chose Recep Peker for this, he did not grant him with the vice chairmanship in the party because Mr. Peker was known for being a militant secular and the party needed softer policies so as to comply with the new developments [33].

But there were some others who interpret these developments in a different way. During the Second World War, Şükrü Saraçoğlu government got worn out because of their policies. During that time, all of the male people were summoned to military service and the government put some extra taxes on people. Furthermore, there was a real problem or famine all over the country. Since all of these developments took place during Mr. Saraçoğlu era, İnönü felt obliged to change the prime minister and brought a new face. According to these interpretations, İnönü chose Mr. Peker in order to be a strict face and he had the role of being a soft policy-maker. As a result, they wanted to balance the situation with these two characters [34].

But all of these Greek oceans we're not sufficient to hinder the demands for more democracy and the results came out so as to be opposed to what the ruling party expected. There were even some members of parliament in the ruling party who asked for Religious Freedom and they started to express their opinions publicly. These people argued that there was the biggest danger waiting in front of the door, threatening the future of the country. According to these people, the threat itself was the prevailing ideology all that time, namely Communism. They also argued that the religion could be an antidote against communism. The most outstanding figures at this point in the ruling party were Muhittin Baha Pars and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver who insistently asked for more religious freedom [35].

Mr. Tanrıöver made a speech in the parliament and expressed that Greece had some catastrophic developments in their fight against communism and so did Iraq. Just because of communism, Brothers were fighting in China. He also insisted that in order not to experience the same things in Turkey, they should take very urgent precautions and had to bring up their children in accordance with the Zeitgeist. According to Mr. Tanrıöver, their religion, namely İslam, had a function to hold the nation together throughout the centuries. If they did not want to experience any catastrophic incidents, they should hold of the religion tightly [36].

But Mr. Peker gave another speech as a response to Mr. Tanrıöver and expressed that while trying to cure an illness, they would give way to another illness, which was Sharia, religious rules to govern the country.

According to Mr. Peker, while they were trying to find an antidote for a poison, they would create another poison for the county with the Sharia [36].

This speech was generally seen as an opposition to the religion, but when the content of the whole speech is carefully examined, it will be understood that his real intention was much different from how it was interpreted. The secular elite in Turkey always had the fear that there would emerge some people in the country and they would misuse the religious feelings of the public. In this way they would gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. What they feared more was that those who asked for legitimacy using the religion would initiate to change the regime into a religious one. Mr. Peker, when he opposed to the demands for religious freedom, got the same fear. They also thought that the revolutions which were made during Ataturk era were not well-established in the country and such an initiative to give more religious freedom could lead to some undesired developments.

When Mr. Tanrıöver proposed religion to cure the social problems, Mr. Peker came up with another offer. According to him what is beneficial to the society is the Nationalist idea itself. When people are tied to each other with nationalistic and patriotic ideas, their desire to hold the society together will come true. It is clear here that the idea of establishing nationalism instead of religion which came to existence in western world was alive in the thoughts of the secular elite in Turkey. Since the western world had some problems with religion, they wanted to find another notion to serve instead of it. As a result of many developments, they established nationalism as a means to hold the society together. Throughout these processes, the western world developed a new idea of ethics out of the realm of the religion in the secular idea. Even before, Machiavelli suggested ideas to separate politics from religion and it gave positive results in history. By this way, the effectiveness of religion in politics diminished. As new developments took place, religion lost its place in every part of the life and some other notions occupied instead of religion [37]. Mr. Peker's speech was a perfect example of the historical process of which place religion was expected to have.

Mr. Peker, having very harsh ideas, continued to be the Prime Minister until 9th of April, 1947 and had to resign because of much pressure on him, especially coming from outside the country because the Marshall aids were at issue at that time and they required some liberal models to be implemented in Turkey and Mr. Peker was certainly not the right person for this [38].

After that, Hasan Saka was assigned the Prime Minister twice by Mr. İnönü and he held the chair until 14th January, 1949 [39]. According to What Tahsin Banguoglu quoted, Mr. Peker was not eager to democratization in the country but Mr. Saka was totally different. Even more, during Saka period, religious people were given a special importance. There were some extraordinary ideas during that time to open new courses to teach religion effectively. Even Mr. Banguoglu guesses that this idea of opening courses to teach religion was put forth by İsmet İnönü himself. It is possible to see some clashes in the party between the two wings one of which asks for more freedom and the other insists on restrictions for the sake of the maintenance of the revolutions. But what the Zeitgeist requires brought the freedom supporters to the foreground. As a result, some commissions were established in the party and they decided to put religious lessons in the last two years of the primary schools, to open some religious schools, to establish a faculty of theology in Ankara. According to Mr. Banguoglu, a

revisionist period started for the first time in Turkey [40].

Although they decided to give more religious freedom and put religious lessons to the primary schools on 19th February, 1948, they did not start any initiative when it came to 8th December, 1948. So this issue was brought to the parliament and the Minister of Education was questioned about it. After it was brought to issue, the Ministry started to put the religious lesson for the last two year students of the primary schools as an elective course two hours a week [41].

In 1947, the Ministry of Education declared a circular and allowed ordinary citizens to open courses to bring up imams and to give seminars to increase the religious knowledge of the public. The point that draws attention here is that the state took everything under control up to that time and deserved to be named as a totalitarian state but all of a sudden, they changed radically and gave permission to civilian initiatives to take action. But the state put forth some obligations such as the textbooks. It was obliged for the books to be endorsed by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the seminar programs would be determined by the Ministry. Even so, all of these could be seen as important developments for a state which implemented totally different policies during the previous years. The ministry put forth some other restrictions for the sake of the public, for example giving an education which is probable to lead to awakening the feelings of hatred and to distort the solidarity of the whole nation were prohibited. The book named as “Müslüman Çocuğun Din Kitabı” which could be translated as “The Religious Book of a Muslim Child” by Reşat Şemseddin Sırer was published so as to be used as a textbook in these courses but it was much criticized because of its content [40].

It would not be an exact inference to claim that only the international affairs compelled İsmet İnönü to change in this way. In parallel with these, the inner developments in the country also forced the governments to take their position on behalf of the democratization and more freedom. Especially the oppressive policies during the Second World War distort the image of the ruling party in the eyes of the public. For that reason, the opposition party which was also founded after the Second World War continually stressed that point in order to batter CHP. Moreover, since the next elections will be in accordance with what democracy requires, they had to take the demands of the public into consideration [40].

One of the interesting developments during this second era of İnönü was that Şemseddin Günaltay was assigned for the prime ministry on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1949. What is intriguing at this point is the identity of Mr. Günaltay. He was brought up in the religious environment and completed his career around religious affairs. He became the dean of the Faculty of Theology in Istanbul. During that time, he gave lectures about the history of Islam and Islamic law. From 1914 to the foundation of the republic, he was a teacher in some Madrasahs. He taught there the history of religions and Islamic Philosophy. He also wrote some articles in the Islamist newspapers and magazines before the Republic. But it should also be stated that he was never in line with traditional Islam and had some revolutionary ideas [42].

The person having such an identity was chosen as a prime minister in a party which has a different identity, which shows that the normal flow of the history went through radical changes during this era and many settled paradigms were in the course of radical changes. It is also possible to interpret these developments as

investment to the coming elections. But even so, all of these developments imply that the pressure on the government came from out of the country, otherwise those who had the control of all of the organs of the state would not change their policies which stem from their identities so easily.

Mr. Günaltay submitted his government's program to the Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1949. It included some arrangements according to which the citizens would be able to give religious education to their children. What makes this program unique is that it was the first government of the Republican era which put religious education to their programs [43].

Another point that draws attention here is that the ruling party took some decisions to give freedom to religious affairs in 1947 in their convention but they put them into action just after two years during Günaltay era during which imam-hatip schools-religious schools to educate imams-opened, the faculty of theology was found in Ankara. Moreover the Chairmanship of Religious Affairs was put through some arrangements so as to make it more functional [44].

Although they gave way to religious freedom, some of their policies show that they still had problems with the religious sects in the country. They had been afraid of these sects since the foundation of the Republic and tried to put barriers in front of them in many different ways, especially propagating that they are detrimental to social life and human development. Towards the end of their government, they changed the article numbered 163 of the Turkish Penal Code, which stated that any initiative to try to change the regime of the state and found a new one in accordance with religious codes, namely Sharia, is forbidden [45].

On the one hand they opened the way to religious freedom; on the other hand they tried to take the strict control of the religious sects of which they were rather afraid.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Freedom became the issue when the authorities and those who had the power demanded to take control of other people. And these demands went further, you turned into a problem. The freedom issue was handled differently in different societies as different developments required. As a result, different societies came up with different explanations of freedom.

When this issue handled particularly in Turkey, those who founded Turkish Republic had the desire to modernize all of the country but they chose to be oppressive towards the public in order to speed up the process of modernization, but this kind of idea resulted in restrictions of freedom. The Ottoman experience showed this secular elite that the traditional and religious environments resist very much against modernization. Because of this kind of experience, they had very strict attitude towards religion and they violated the rights of religious environments very much.

The process of modernization slowed down towards the end of Atatürk era. But after İsmet İnönü became the president in 1938, he wanted to revive this process and at the cost of modernization, he did not hesitate to restrict religious freedom. But the conjuncture changed very much after the Second World War felt obliged to

give way to religious freedom. But it could be stated that they were not very willing to take such actions. What compelled Mr. İnönü to take such actions were not only the developments in the outer world but also the opposition which became stronger in time. As a result of these, the government reluctantly removed the restrictions and when they were trying to make new arrangements to give more freedom, they stepped forward very slowly and carefully. Firstly they changed the governments, then they took some decisions which were not immediately implemented and they waited for the developments. After they saw that many things were changing in opposition to their position, they gave way to freedom in the country.

When they realized that the oppressive desire they already had was not possible to implement, they had a policy change. At first, as they were trying to modernize the whole nation, they wanted to revolutionize many aspects so as to lead to cultural changes in public. But later, especially after the Second World War, they changed their policies very much and made some arrangements to protect the regime against those whom they had already considered as the enemies of the regime they founded, namely the religious sects.

As a result, it could be said that they did not give way to religious freedom at their own free will but with the enforcement of the outer developments which took place out of their control in all over the world.

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