

Why the CHP does not care about the economy ?

Wednesday 20 June 2007, by [Taha Akyol](#)

The Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal accepts the existence of a widespread opinion in the country regarding his party that "they cannot run the economy well." But of course he says this is wrong.

Indeed, the CHP all along identifies itself with the "republican values," rather than economic policies. CHP prioritized "economic and social" factor only once in the 1970s, during the "Left of the Center" movement and it is the only time the party won the highest number of electoral votes.

We see that again today, CHP's main focus is about "values". CHP nominates Nur Serter as its parliamentary female candidate. She is such an interesting name in the world of "values"; however, the same CHP does not have equally interesting names from the world of economy in its body.

As a former CHP member and the Minister of Economy, Kemal Derviş, even did not make it there ! Former President of the Central Bank Mr. Süreyya Serdengeçti would have been a sign that the CHP could "manage the economy very well." But Serdengeçti refuses to involve in politics.

In the upcoming elections, CHP will join the race with the "values" again. The statement, "We do not compromise Republican values for the sake of the economy" is a sententious form of CHP's way of thinking in the matter.

Significance of the economy ?

Another data to reflect how economy is given secondary importance in such understanding lays in the following suggestion made by Jacobin writer Özdemir İnce (a columnist for Hürriyet):

"The Republicans should unite, whether they are leftist or rightist!"

All right. But what kind of economic policy they will apply if they unite and come to power?! Would the economy be so trivial ?!

Similar approaches for long give rise to the opinion "they cannot run the economy well" in society.

Baykal knows these very well. He was emphasizing economic and social issues in the period during which he defended the "New Left". Back then, I was supporting him with my articles. Today, CHP seems to conduct a campaign trail as contender of the "values" but "bashful" about economic and social policies. If it happens, CHP will not receive the votes expected because people prioritize the economy...

The CHP genes

Priority of a real social democrat party is economic and social issues along democracy. In the 1970s, the "Left of the Center" claiming the said priorities received 42 percent of votes; plus, Turkey back then was a more closed society.

Today, society's development level is higher and expectations are more effective. Should not the CHP take stand with a bunch of priorities before electors ? But I think perhaps the "CHP genes" are not suitable enough for this.

The researcher Tevfik Çavdar who founded the Social Democratic Party (SODEP) together with Erdal

İnönü, son of the second President İsmet İnönü, ascertained: While Turkey and the world suffered a lot by the economic depression in 1930, only 49 articles about the economy were published against 147 articles about the “language and history” in the Ülkü magazine, the State Party’s official press organ.

Of course, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk delivered great speeches reflecting the significance of the economy and “statism” was applied at that time. However, the line of CHP has always been “cultural revolution” as its fundamental ideological priority.

Kemalist historian Sina Akşin as well accused of the Democrat Party prioritizing economic development, naming it a “partial counter revolution”!

It was the priority of that period, but today some certain matters such as production, investment, trade, profit, productivity, competition, finance, technology, employment are more important than ever before. And people, rightfully, side with the political parties that are familiar with the economy and prioritizing it.

Sources

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