Mihail Manoilescu
A Pioneer Thinker About the Uniqueness of the Kemalist Single Party

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MIHAIL MANOILESCU
(1891–1950)

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Introduction

KEMALIST IDEOLOGY has been one of the most debated ideologies, not only in Turkey, where it emerged, but also worldwide. Whether Kemalism, an ideology of the interwar period, was one of the authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies that dominated the period or was a democratic one has been at the top of the list of these discussion topics. This was because while Kemalism applied a single-party system, as implemented by authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies, it also adopted the principles of democracy in its constitution and took various steps towards democracy. Therefore, researchers have generally tried to separate Kemalism from other totalitarian systems such as fascism and communism and, while placing Kemalism among the authoritarian systems, have needed to explain its different and unique features. One such person who emphasized these features

of Kemalism was the Romanian politician and thinker Mihail Manoilescu (1891–1950). Manoilescu, who was known mostly for his corporatist and protectionist views in the 1930s, when Kemalism also emerged, grounded the political dimension of his economic system on the concept of a single party. Accordingly, Manoilescu, who made a study on single-party systems, made comparisons by addressing the different single parties that were prevalent during his lifetime and tried to reveal a general single-party theory. One of the systems that Manoilescu evaluated in this context was the Kemalist single-party system, which he separated from other single-party systems, placing it in a unique position. While various national and international research on Kemalism has included many different evaluations, Manoilescu's study has rarely been cited. For this reason, this article aims to both illuminate the views that Manoilescu put forward on Kemalism at a time when Kemalism was still valid and examine the effects of these views on the other evaluations made in the following years. For this purpose, the study first aims at creating a basis for the discussion by analyzing the political life of Manoilescu and his economic views. Second, Manoilescu's book on single parties is introduced and his views in the Kemalism section of the book are examined. Finally, the similarities and differences of these views with other approaches to the Kemalist single-party system are discussed. Thus, this paper aims to determine the position of Manoilescu's work in the literature on Kemalism.

Mihail Manoilescu: A Life Devoted to Corporatism

MIHAIL MANOILESCU, who was born in 1891 in Tecuci, Romania, studied engineering at the School of Bridges and Roads in Bucharest, graduating in 1915. After his graduation, he started to work as a technocrat in the Industrial Recovery Office and became the General Director of Industry in 1920. In this position, he started to build economic doctrines for Romania's development, organized industrial congresses, and published industry journals. He became the undersecretary of the Minister of Finance in 1926, and in this position he had the chance to implement his ideas. Between 1927 and 1930 he supported King Carol II in his bid to take the crown again, since he thought it was the only way to remove the Liberal Party from power. As a result of this relation, he was arrested in 1927 for conspiracy against the constitutional order. Nevertheless, at his trial he was not found guilty, and the trial made him the symbol of the anti-liberal and pro-Carlist movement. Manoilescu organized

a movement with some army officers to bring Carol back to the country. This was a success, and Carol became king in 1930. He served as the main adviser to the king and also became minister in three different cabinets. However, in 1931 he resigned from office and became the governor of the National Bank of Romania. But this did not last long, as he was dismissed by Carol after four months because he did not apply the king's decision to rescue Marmorosch Bank from bankruptcy. After this event he started to fall in his political career, yet he did not give up. He started to publish a journal called *Lumea Nouă* (The New World) and then founded a new corporatist party called the National Corporatist League. To make it a mass party, he collaborated with the Iron Guard, the fascist party of Romania. In 1935, this cooperation resulted in the establishment of a new party called All for the Country, and he became a senator in 1937 as a member of this movement.[1]

Between 1938 and 1940, after a crisis in the multi-party system, King Carol II established a monarchic regime and tried to apply Manoilescu's corporatist views. He abolished all parties and presented single corporatist party called the Front of National Renaissance. Carol, due to the Nazi danger, started to change the regime into fascism and tried to have closer relations with the Nazis. In this process, the king wanted the help of Manoilescu and aimed to benefit from his close relations with the Iron Guard and Germany. In 1940, Carol appointed Manoilescu as the minister of Foreign Affairs. The new government, including Manoilescu, tried to avoid the Nazi danger through some new implementations that favored Nazi ideology and anti-Semitism. However, this did not prevent Romania from losing some territories. As a minister, Manoilescu signed the treaty of Vienna that caused Romania to lose Northern Transylvania (30 August 1940). Due to the unrest in the country, King Carol abdicated the throne and Manoilescu also lost his position in the new government, although he supported the new National Legionary State that supported the Nazis. After the liberation of Bucharest, on 12 October 1944 he was arrested due to his previous political activities such as supporting the fascist government and the signing of the Vienna Treaty. He was indicted as a war criminal, but he defended himself by saying that he had never accepted a political alliance with the Nazis or Italy, although he maintained close ties with them. He claimed that, as a foreign minister, he had tried to resist Nazi invasion but was not successful. At the trial he was found not guilty and was freed. However, after the communists took the power in Romania, he was arrested again in December 1948 and then died on 30 December 1950 in a communist prison.[2]

The political career of Mihail Manoilescu involved very different political movements in Romania: at times he was a partner of King Carol II, while at

others he allied himself with the extreme nationalists. Therefore, he could be labeled as an opportunist due to these very different political choices. However, the reason behind these sharp shifts was his desire to implement his corporatist doctrine in Romania. This objective was his ambition, and it was the main motive of his various political shifts. His corporatist views also enabled Manoilescu to leave a notable legacy despite his unsuccessful political life. His economic and political views on corporatism impressed various politicians and also had serious effects on the developing countries of the Third World in the course of time.[3]

Corporatism was the main element of Manoilescu's ideas, and he devoted himself to building an integral corporatist system. He believed that corporatism would become the ideology of the new century, just as liberalism had become the ideology of the nineteenth century, and that it could solve the political and economic problems of his period. He criticized partial corporatist ideas that suggested corporatist institutions only in economics and rather suggested a total corporatist approach. Therefore, his corporatism also included non-economic corporations such as the army and the church. For him, corporations were the only legitimate basis for political power, could not be subordinated to the state, and should therefore enjoy autonomy. He thought that Italian fascism was not successful for this reason, since the state tried to control all the corporations. The corporatist state should only help autonomous corporations and coordinate them. His preferred corporatist system also envisaged a monarchy rather than the formation of a republic. In this political organization, the king would lead the corporatist system, and the other main political actor would be the corporatist parliament, which should be above all parties.[4]

The other significant theme of Manoilescu's economic views, besides corporatism, was his theory of protectionism. He claimed that just like the exploitation of workers by capitalists, the agricultural countries were exploited by the industrial ones. Therefore, developing countries, in order to avoid unfair international exchanges, had to use protectionist measures and also had to work together. He also associated this unfair situation with the Great Depression and emphasized its negative effects on unindustrialized agricultural countries. Due to this view, in order to overcome such drawbacks, Manoilescu believed that the main economic objective of developing countries should be industrialization. Accordingly, he gave more emphasis to the industrial than the agricultural sector and suggested a state-directed economic program that would focus on import-substitution industrialization.[5]

Manoilescu's Book on Single Parties and an Atypical Example of Single Party: the Republican People's Party of Turkey

Apart from corporatism and protectionism, the third and maybe least known dimension of Manoilescu's ideas was his single-party theory, which will be the main focus of this study, with its chapter on the Kemalist single party. Although in his book on corporatism Manoilescu mentioned a corporatist parliament that would be above multiple parties, later he changed his ideas and moved from a kind of democratic understanding towards totalitarianism in his book *Le Parti Unique* (The Single Party), which was published in 1936. For him the single party would be a key instrument for his corporatist ideology as it constituted the political dimension of his theory. He believed that a single party that represents the whole nation could play a leading role in a corporatist state.[6]

In his book, Manoilescu emphasized that while the main characteristic feature of the nineteenth century was political pluralism, the new century had been characterized by political monism. Therefore, he claimed that the single party together with corporations were the two essential political institutions of the twentieth century and that these two together would advance humanity. He thought that a general theory of single parties, which was the new sociological phenomenon of his century, had not been formed, and with his book he tried to fill the gap in this field. In his book, he described the single party as a political party that controls all the political activities in a country whether by law or de facto rule and thus forms the main organization of the regime. He referred to the Communist Party of the USSR, the Republican People's Party of Turkey (RPP), the National-Fascist Party of Italy, the National Socialist Party of Germany, and the Portuguese National Union as the main single parties of Europe in his time. He pointed out that these parties were from different countries and had distinct characters, since the Russian single party represented communism, the Italian party represented fascism, the German party represented national socialism, and the Turkish party represented Kemalism. For him this showed that single-party systems were used in various countries and in various regimes. Although none of these parties had emerged under the same circumstances, he believed that these parties had some common features and tried to establish a single-party theory by focusing on these similarities.[7]

Just like the single-party idea is the least-mentioned part of Manoilescu's thought, the Kemalist ideology and its single-party experience is also less known than any of the other ideologies and single parties that were analyzed in the

book. Although there would be many studies on Kemalism and the Kemalist single party later on, Manoilescu's book was essential since it reviewed Kemalism while the latter was being impelemented. In his book, Manoilescu especially emphasized the atypical character of the Kemalist RPP among the single parties in Europe, especially compared to those that were fascist and national socialist. According to Manoilescu, the main distinctive element of the single-party regime in Turkey was that it was not a result of party disputes and fights that had occurred in other countries, because there had not been any liberalism and multi-party regimes in Turkey before it, and the single-party regime was not a reaction to these factors. The real motive behind the single-party regime was the struggle for national unity rather than anti-liberal views. The party was established in a period of national disaster, and its main objective was to secure the independence of the nation by driving the enemy out of the national territory. Therefore, the single party was not against liberalism, and it even faced an opposition in the first assembly, which directed the struggle for national unity, as at that time there were many different small groups. However, the party became a single party soon after the Treaty of Lausanne, which enabled Turkey to be independent.[8]

In his book, Manoilescu explained the historical evolution of the regime and frequently pointed out its unique character of not totally rejecting liberal ideas. For him, while the regime was using single-party mechanisms as a political institution, it also had some different features that could be attributed to liberalism. First of all, the single-party character of the regime could be understood from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's role. Because while Atatürk became the first president of the newly established republic, which was declared after the Treaty of Lausanne, he did not give up his position as president of the party and used both titles together. Therefore, the main political power in Turkey was no longer neutral and had precise control over politics. As a result, those in the political world started to be characterized as friends or enemies, and only friends could be active politically. Due to this policy, the first opposition party of the new republic, the Republican Progressive Party, was not able to survive long, as its deputies were expelled from the second assembly following the Kurdish revolt. After explaining the single-party character of the regime, Manoilescu then tried to emphasize its unique features. As he emphasized, although there was single-party rule, it did not occur as a result of the legislation. It was more of a de facto situation, and establishing multiple parties was not prohibited by the Turkish constitution. Moreover, unlike Italy or Germany, the revolutionary party neither conquered the state nor declared itself the single party. For Manoilescu, Atatürk used the single-party system first to ensure the unity of the country and then, after gaining independence, to build a nation by realizing his reforms.[9]

With these legitimizing comments, Manoilescu tried to show that the system was more of a temporary situation rather than a permanent one, since it was not reflected in the laws.

Manoilescu felt that the unique character of the RPP, which aimed at reconciling liberalism with a single-party system, could also be seen in some of its direct liberal attempts. He stated that Atatürk wanted to restore a multiparty system after the global economic crisis, as he proposed to his friend Fethi Okyar to establish a new party. However, the result was not successful, since the opponents of the regime used this opportunity for their aims. However, after this second party failure, the regime did not give up and tried to reach their goal by allowing sixteen independent deputies in the new assembly. According to Manoilescu, all of these attempts were very unusual and strange. The constitution in Turkey was actually liberal, and the sovereignty of the nation was fully exercised through an assembly with both legislative and executive powers. This kind of liberal understanding should have resulted in a multi-party system. However, it was not the case in Turkey, since it was still a one-party regime, and these kinds of features show Atatürk's work to be a forerunner of one-party political systems.[10]

In the last part of his analyses, Manoilescu tried to focus on showing further features of the RPP that made it different from the other single parties in Europe. For him, in the Turkish one-party system, unlike in Italy or Germany, the party was not a third entity that was added to the nation and the state and did not have an autonomous character. Moreover, unlike fascist or national socialist regimes, it gained its legitimacy through parliamentary scrutiny. In this sense, state bodies were being used like they were in liberal regimes. Membership in the party was also not as strict and close as it was in Italy or Germany and looked more like it did in liberal regimes, since any Turkish citizen could be a member of the party. The party did not have its own army, nor was there a military discipline in the party. All of these features showed that the party was different from the fascist and national-socialist single parties. However, Manoilescu thought that the party should have more doctrinal sincerity in order to be understood better. Although the relation between the party and the state in fascist and socialist regimes was clarified with legislation, this type of clarity was not seen in Turkey; therefore, the position of the party within the state could not be exactly understood. However, besides this, he believed that being the first non-communist country to have a single-party regime was also an important achievement.[11]

Throughout the chapter on the RPP in *The Single Party*, Manoilescu tried to show the unique attempts of the RPP to reconcile a single-party regime with liberal elements. Although he appreciated these attempts, he also complained about their uncertainty. However, a closer look at the Kemalist regime and its

ideology can also show us that uniqueness and uncertainty were also presented as the key characteristics of Kemalism. In one speech, Atatürk replied to the criticisms that the regime did not look the same as liberalism or socialism and adopted the motto "we look like us." This motto continued to be promoted by the ideologues of the regime through the Atatürk era and was used very often. This uniqueness also had a very strong connection with the uncertainty feature, which was evaluated as being non-doctrinarian. For its ideologues, as a result of being a flexible ideology rather than one as strict as other doctrines, Kemalism had a pragmatic character. It was argued that this pragmatism also enabled Kemalism to harmonize different elements that seemed hard to reconcile, and this made the ideology quite unique. Moreover, with this flexibility, it was believed that Kemalism could adjust to changing conditions and survive for a very long time in Turkish political life.[12]

A Tutelary Party Enabling the Transition from a Single-Party Regime to a Democracy

Manoilescu's evaluation of the Kemalist single-party regime was one of the first studies on this system, and his remarks, especially on the regime's unique character, also played a pioneering role in later studies. Famous political scientist Maurice Duverger's well-known book about political parties is one of the most important studies in this sense. Duverger, who referred to Manoilescu and emphasized that the first analysis of the single party was done by him, also shared his views on the RPP's unique position among single parties. According to Duverger, most of the single parties were at first competing in a pluralistic system. However, when they took power, they started to show a totalitarian tendency, and, as a result, a single-party regime had occurred. But Duverger emphasized that some single parties did not have this totalitarian tendency, and the best example of such parties was the RPP. For Duverger, this attitude resulted from the RPP's democratic ideology, which had a pragmatic character and contained features similar to nineteenth century liberalism.[13] So, like Manoilescu, Duverger also mentioned the RPP's aim to reconcile liberalism and a single-party regime through its flexible understanding.

Duverger and Manoilescu have other common views regarding the RPP's characteristics. Duverger also pointed out that the single-party regime in Turkey was more of a de facto and temporary situation. According to Duverger, although one party had been participating in the elections, the political democracy principles of general will and national sovereignty were acknowledged in

the laws. On the other hand, the single-party regime did not have any doctrine, and it consistently stressed that this regime was a temporary necessity. A multi-party system continued to be considered ideal, and several multi-party initiatives were tried and independent deputies were elected over time. All of these facts show Atatürk's approach towards pluralism. Moreover, he stated that the RPP also did not include any structures such as the cells and militias of totalitarian systems; did not focus on practices such as uniforms, parades, and harsh discipline; and kept party membership open to everyone, including members with different opinions within the party.[14] Therefore, just like Manoilescu, Duverger also thought that with these features the RPP's single-party regime did not look like other such regimes.

Apart from these commonalities, Duverger made an important generalization in the conclusion of his book and placed the RPP in a different position. Duverger divided single-party systems into two basic groups: systems where at first pluralism was seen and then a one-party regime was established as a reaction, and single-party systems occurring in settings where there were already non-pluralist types of governments. According to Duverger, in this second group the single party tried to demolish the traditional structure and had more democratic features with a revolutionary character. The single parties in the USSR and Turkey were good examples of this group. Duverger also divided such single parties into two in terms of accepting the single-party system continuously or temporarily. For him, it was obvious that those who saw the single party permanently were anti-democratic. The RPP had shown that it had not intended the single-party regime to be permanent by transferring its power in the 1950 elections. In this respect, he believed that Turkey represented a good example of intellectual rulers preparing a backward society to become a democratic system.[15]

Besides Duverger, other political scientists who wrote studies on political parties have also analyzed the Turkish experience in their books. Samuel Huntington and Clement Moore, like Manoilescu and Duverger, had similar thoughts about the Turkish single-party system. Huntington contended that Turkey was a good example of the change from an exclusionary one-party system to a competitive democratic system because, although the Turkish single-party RPP maintained an exclusionary system in political life during the first years of the republican era, it did not choose to become a dominant party after the Second World War, rather allowing opposition parties to compete with it.[16] According to Huntington and Moore, Atatürk's exclusionary regime was a tutelary one and, although partially achieved, it aimed at the social and economic modernization of its people. As a result of this modernization, the shift from the exclusionary system to a multi-party system was successful.[17] Both Huntington and Moore thus highlighted the temporary character of the single-party regime in Turkey. For them the RPP

did not want to be single party forever and instead used this system as a tool for preparing the nation for a modern democratic system.

Unlike Huntington and Moore, other researchers have not had such positive opinions about the Turkish single-party system. One of these analyses came from Giovanni Sartori, who questioned the tutelary regime theories about Turkey. Sartori accepted the view that Turkey seemed to be the only example of an endogenous transformation from monocentrism to pluralism. According to Sartori, Atatürk's two unsuccessful attempts at pluralism by allowing opposition parties and the successful shift to democracy in 1945 can be used in order to prove this theory. However, he thought that the real reasons behind this change were rather external and economic. He also claimed that in the absence of any external pressure and economic dependency on Western aid, President İsmet İnönü could easily have moved back to unipartism. Therefore, although he did not deny that the RPP had democratic aims, he suggested that this fact was not strong enough to verify that the transformation had occurred spontaneously, given the real reasons behind the change. He also stated that the liberalization of a monocentric system by lessening oppression is a completely different thing than free polity, since it requires very different principles and mechanisms. According to him, Turkey, which could not interiorize these principles, had faced similar situations due to military coups, and the democratic transition could not be completed, as the struggle for democracy in Turkey was ongoing.[18] Another negative evaluation came from Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, who argued that although the Turkish tutelary regime had tried to prepare the country to become a democratic regime, it had been hard to establish democratic patterns and the tolerance of different views inside the country under this system. Therefore, this deficiency caused political problems after the shift to democracy occurred and made it difficult to sustain a real democratic regime.[19]

Other than foreign studies, some local researchers have also commented about the Turkish single-party regime and evaluated its atypical character. According to Ergun Özbudun, the RPP was one of the first examples of adopting a non-totalitarian modernizing single-party system. It used a tutelary regime that attempted to modernize the traditional society through an authoritarian, single-party system. He believed that, as opposed to totalitarian and authoritarian single parties, the RPP looked more like to European liberal parties. Like Manoilescu, he also stated that the Turkish Constitution of 1924 followed the tradition of nineteenth century liberal constitutions and was based on democracy and civil rights. However, as he pointed out, although there was a liberal democratic constitution, the applied policies were authoritarian. However, he thought that the regime never became totalitarian, and the eventual shift to a pluralistic system was realized as a result of this understanding.[20]

Another similar analysis that used the tutelary and de facto single-party regime terminology was made by Tarık Zafer Tunaya. He first made a distinction between de jure and de facto single-party regimes. He then evaluated de facto single-party regimes and stated that these regimes usually adopt a tutelary character. For Tunaya, these kinds of regimes could often be seen after periods of depression and used single-party systems as a bridge to achieve democratic order. In fact, although there were no obstacles to the establishment of different parties in the constitutions of these regimes, other parties could not be established due to the de facto situation. Therefore, the existing single-party regime was not de jure but rather de facto. Due to this character, these types of parties also did not have a homogenous structure and contained their opponents within their own ranks. Moreover, they did not have a totalitarian understanding and tried to prepare the country to be a democratic system after an extraordinary situation. However, the promise of a transition from a single-party regime to a multi-party regime generally could not be met. After this generalization, Tunaya reviewed the case of the RPP, which he said had the characteristics of being single and inclusive since its establishment and had implemented a temporary dominant party system at first. In this period, the elements in the constitution were actually frozen, and a one-party system was implemented instead. The mechanisms intended to balance power had disappeared and pluralism was ignored, but it was believed that it would arise again at the first opportunity. However, this situation had never been accepted as a consistent one and rather had been evaluated as a temporary phase in the transition to democracy. Then, in time, unlike many parties, the RPP kept its promise and accomplished a successful shift. Therefore, Tunaya believed that this significant improvement put the RPP in a unique position when compared to other single-party regimes.[21]

An analysis of all other studies on the RPP case shows that, although they were done after the transition to democracy was realized, they also have many similarities to Manoilescu's, who wrote his remarks while the RPP was still a single party. Thus Manoilescu's early emphasis on the RPP's tendency towards democracy and political liberalism becomes more meaningful. He pointed out the unique character of the RPP and, without labeling it a tutelary party, tried to explain its elements. Later researchers used assertions similar to Manoilescu's, but because they had seen the transition to democracy phase, they tended to identify the RPP as a tutelary party. Therefore, it can be argued that Manoilescu's early remarks on the RPP have been transformed into a tutelary regime theory in later studies.

Conclusions

SINGLE-PARTY systems played an important role in the thoughts of Mihail Manoilescu, who tried to guide developing countries that had not yet completed their industrialization process with protectionist ideas and defended a corporatist ideology in this context. The single party, capable of representing the whole nation, would naturally be different from the parties in Western democracies and also should not be similar to parties in totalitarian systems. Because, compared to the single parties in developed and industrialized Western countries, the single party in undeveloped countries would both ensure unity in society and mobilize this unity in a corporatist system towards the goal of rapid industrialization and development. Although it did not fully adopt a corporatist system, Kemalism, which resembles it with its solidarist elements in political and economic terms, was probably seen as an attractive option for Manoilescu, with its one-party model. Therefore, Kemalism, with its economic and political elements, appears to have been evaluated by Manoilescu as the realization of his ideas. The original structure of Kemalism, which reconciled democratic and authoritarian practices, was also considered essential by Manoilescu. This because while Kemalism adopted democracy as an ideal, it also opposed the conflictual content of the democratic system that disrupted the integrity of Western societies. For this reason, without following an exclusionary method, Kemalism brought together different segments of society, which should come together in line with a purpose, and thus aimed to eliminate the negativities of democracy. However, while doing this, it did not transform into a totalitarian system. Thus, although its positioning contained some uncertainties, Kemalism was a model that was quite suitable for the party order that Manoilescu envisaged for developing societies.

These determinations made by Manoilescu for the 1930s would remain valid, even though Kemalism evolved in a completely democratic direction over time. Famous political scientists such as Duverger and Huntington would analyze the evolutionary process of the Kemalist single party in a context similar to Manoilescu's in their studies on political parties. Since these authors asserted their views after Kemalism's transition to democracy was completed, they mostly focused on this transition process, but even so they reached almost the same findings that Manoilescu had reached when describing the characteristics of Kemalism in the 1930s. In examining the tutelary party theory, which they used while drawing attention to the different and original position of Kemalism, it can be seen that the content of this theory was in line with Manoilescu's com-

ments. Consequently, it emerges that Manoilescu, who is known to have had an influence on other politicians and economists with his corporate ideas and economics, actually also had a remarkable effect with his single-party analysis. ❑

Notes

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Abstract

Mihail Manoilescu: A Pioneer Thinker About the Uniqueness of the Kemalist Single Party

Mihail Manoilescu (1891–1950), known for his corporatist and protectionist views in the 1930s, also tried to develop a single-party theory. He wrote a book with this purpose, examining the existing single-party systems at that time, one of these systems being the Kemalist one-party system in Turkey. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on Kemalism by addressing this under-recognized assessment. In this context, the main focus of this study is whether Manoilescu's assessment of the Kemalist single party was unique and how he influenced assessments that came after him. Therefore, an analytical evaluation method was chosen, and both Manoilescu's book and other studies were analyzed comparatively in this regard. This research concluded that Manoilescu contributed to the literature on Kemalism by making appropriate determinations.

Keywords

Mihail Manoilescu, Kemalism, Republican People's Party, single-party system, tutelary party