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Islamist Turkish Politician Necmettin Erbakan and His Short Biography

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Turkish politician, prime minister, academic, and founder/father of the National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi), born in Sinop on October 29, 1926. He took his BA from Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Istanbul Technical University. He received a Ph.D. in engineering from Rhenish-Westphalian Technical University of Aachen, West Germany, and then returned to Turkey to teach at the Istanbul Technical University, becoming a full professor in 1965. He was influenced by Mehmet Zahid Kotku and the Naqshbandi Sufi community. He worked in industry and in 1969 he was elected as Chairman of Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey.

The National Vision Movement was founded by Necmettin Erbakan and his friends in 1969 so as to transform Turkey into an Islamic state. Erbakan led the movement and shaped its anti-secular and anti-westernization viewpoint. The movement rejects violent revolution, but actively promotes orthodox Islamic values, morality, and education, as the foundation of national economic power. It advocates close relationships with other powerful Muslim states with the ultimate goal of uniting them through economic cooperation, and eventually forming an Islamic military union like N.A.T.O. According to its motto of "Just Order (Adil Düzen)," it calls for a productive, free-market economy— without interest—as the best way to support the oppressed.

The National Vision has had a significant impact on modern Turkish politics and a series of conservative political parties have represented this movement since the 1970s. However, many of these parties have been banned by either the Constitutional Court or military administrations for opposing secularism with the exception of the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi-SP)—which has remained active.

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In 1969, he became active in politics, winning election to parliament from Konya. He founded the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi-MNP), the first party of the National Vision Movement, in 1970. But the Constitutional Court banned the MNP in 1971 for opposition to secularism. He later became leader of the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi-MSP), which gained sufficient electoral success in 1973 to form a government in coalition with the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP), in which he became a deputy prime minister. He greatly influenced the Turkish Cyprus Peace Operation of 1974. He also served a deputy prime minister of the Nationalist Front Coalition Governments consisting of Demirel's Justice Party (Adalet Partisi-AP), Türkeş's Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP) and MSP in the late of 1970s.

In the September 12, 1980 coup d'état, Military officials banned the MSP and barred Erbakan from politics for 10 years. Thanks to a 1987 referendum that allowed banned politicians to re-enter politics, he became the leader of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi-RP), which gained significant success in elections in the 1994 Local and in the 1995 General Elections. In 1994, while Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who would later become the Prime Minister and the President of Turkey respectively, became the mayor of İstanbul, the other party candidate won the mayoralty of the capital city of Ankara. After 1995 elections, he formed a coalition government with the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi-DYP) and became the first Turkish prime minister with an Islamist background in June 1996. He made his first foreign visit to Iran. He then moved quickly to form Developing-8 (D-8), with member states including Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan, as an alternative to the Western- dominated Group of Seven (G-7). On the other hand, the so-called "post-modern coup" military memorandum of 1997 forced him to resign in June 1997, and the Constitutional Court banned the RP and again barred Erbakan from politics for 5 years in January 1998. In 2000, the court also banned the following Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi-FP), provoking a split into two factions: the traditionalists formed the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi-SP), while reformists like Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, established the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve KalkınmaP artisi AKP). During this time, due to his political ban and old age, Erbakan stayed in the background. Erbakan became politically active once again in 2003, after the end of ban, and was elected as chairman of the SP. In 2008, he was sentenced to two years and four months imprisonment for irregular expenditure of the RP funds, called the Lost Trillion Case, eventually served under house arrest, and then pardoned by President Abdullah Gül. He died in Ankara on February 27, 2011.

His followers have been in power in Turkey since 2002 and his influence on Turkish policy has still continued.

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