



The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey

By Nilufer Narli*

The author analyzes the rise of the Islamist movement in Turkey and the bases of its popular support through four successive Islamist political parties-National Order, National Salvation, Welfare, and Virtue-which have tried to represent the Islamist cause. The author shows that, aside from the factor of religion itself, much of the party's appeal is based on specific socio-economic groups and regional factors, as well as strains arising from modernization. For a discussion of the evolution of Turkish party system and voting behavior see Ersin Kalaycioglu, "The Logic of Contemporary Turkish Politics," MERIA Journal, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September, 1997) By Nilufer Narli.

Beginning in the 1950s and peaking in the 1980s, a number of developments greatly advanced Turkey's modernization. These same events also transformed Turkish politics. The result was a confrontation between provincial/traditional and urban/modern cultures, new social classes, and the fragmentation of the conservative electorate from the 1970s onward. This same situation provided the environment for the growth of Islamist parties in Turkey taking votes away from their center-right competitors. (1,2)

Islamist political movements vary greatly among different states in their doctrines and strategies. (3) Turkey's groups have their own distinctive history. In Turkey, the Islamist movement emerged soon after the founding of the secular republic in 1923. (4) It was led by tarikat (religious order) sheikhs and professional men of religion, who lost their status and economic power when secular reforms abolished religious institutions. (5) Trying to stage revolts against the secular state in the 1920s and 1930s, it failed to gain wide support and was crushed by the authorities. (6) In general, though, Islamist groups stayed underground during the era of one-party rule, between 1923 and 1946.

With the transition to a multi-party system in 1946, Islamist groups formed covert and overt alliances with the ruling center-right Democratic Party (1950-1960). (7) After the Democratic Party won the 1959 elections, it softened secularist policies. With the provision of civil liberties by the 1961 constitution, Islamist groups began to operate legally (though their activities were still technically banned). (8) Until Necmettin Erbakan established the National Order Party (NOP), the predecessor of the three succeeding Islamist parties, in January 1970, Islamists had either formed conservative factions in a center-right party or had remained underground. With the NOP, however, the Islamists for the first time had an autonomous party organization through which they could campaign for their agenda. Since the NOP's founding, the same Islamist party has endured, albeit under different names: NOP (1970-1971), NSP (1972-1981), Welfare (1983-1998), Virtue (1997-) (see below).

The NOP largely represented Anatolian cities controlled by religiously conservative Sunnis, and the small traders and artisans (esnaf) of the hinterland. These groups had long waited to benefit from the state's modernization policies but had rarely done so, partly due to their own resistance to

modernization in the name of religion and tradition (e.g., female children were not often sent to school). In addition to the frustrated periphery, the NOP also represented religiously conservative people who were informal members of outlawed religious orders. These people formed silent but powerful pressure groups with a large network.

The NOP was shut down by the Constitutional Court on May 20, 1971-after military pressure-on the grounds that it violated the principles of laicism laid down in the Constitution (the preamble and Articles 2,19,57) and in the Law of Political Parties (Law No. 648 Articles 92, 93,94). (9) As a result, the National Salvation Party (NSP) was founded in October 1972 to succeed the NOP. With support from provincial merchants, the esnaf, and the covert network of two leading, informally-organized religious groups, the Nakshibandis and Nurcus, the NSP achieved a surprising electoral success in the 1973 general elections, obtaining 11.8 percent of the total vote, mainly in central and eastern Anatolia.

After its solid showing in the 1973 general elections, the NSP became a coalition partner in successive governments. First, it formed a government with the staunchly secularist People's Republican Party (CHP), led by Bulent Ecevit. Soon after, it managed to place its members in the bureaucracy, particularly the ministries that it controlled. Moreover, it succeeded in passing a bill that made theological high schools (imam-hatip) equal to secondary schools and enabled these school's often pro-Islamist students to attend universities. A large number of girls also enrolled in these schools. Many graduates have gone on to political power as Islamists in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., the mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayip Erdogan), and have formed a powerful pressure group.

Ecevit's coalition government collapsed following Turkey's July 1974 military operation in Cyprus to protect the Turkish-Cypriot community. The NSP then became a coalition partner in a new

"National Front" government on March 31, 1975, formed under the premiership of the center-right Justice Party (JP), led by Suleyman Demirel. This coalition also included the ultra-nationalist National Action Party (NAP) led by Alpaslan Turkes.

In the June 1977 general elections, the NSP suffered a setback, winning only 8.6 percent of the vote, but was included in the second National Front Government formed by Demirel after the elections. In July 1977 Demirel resigned, but returned to power in August, at the head of an almost identical coalition including the NSP, NAP and JP. However, Demirel was forced to resign again following defections from the JP in December. Ecevit formed a coalition government in January 1978, promising to deal with the economic problems and political violence that were increasing as a result of the clashes between left-right clashes as well as between Sunnis and Alevis. But JP's victory at by-elections in October 1979 deprived Ecevit of his working majority, and he resigned. In November 1979, Demirel formed an all-JP minority government with the backing of the NAP and NSP. In short, the NSP had quickly grown to become a regular member of government coalitions.

In the late 1970s, successive governments failed to solve the country's serious economic and political problems as antagonism between the radical left and radical right escalated into violent clashes bordering on civil war. The armed forces, led by General Kenan Evren, seized power in a bloodless coup and restructured the political system with a new military-drafted constitution in 1982. The leading parties, including the JP, NAP, and NSP, were banned from political activity.

On July 19, 1983 the Welfare Party (RP) was formed under the leadership of Ali Turkmen, in place of the banned Erbakan, replacing the NSP. However, Erbakan was eventually reinstated into Turkish politics and became the Welfare Party's leader. In the first general elections entered under Erbakan's leadership, in November 1987, RP received 7.2 percent of the total vote. In the

1989 local elections it polled 9.8 percent, showing signs of increased support in Istanbul and capturing municipalities in several districts. In the October 1991 general elections, RP formed an electoral alliance with the ultra-nationalist party of Turkes and together obtained 16.7 percent of the total vote. During this time the Islamist movement drew the support of larger segments of the population, the majority of which were moving from rural to urban centers.

One important strategy used by the Islamist movement was to develop an educated counter-elite as a base of support, especially by strengthening the Islamic stream in the educational system. During the post-1980 coup period, governments perceived Islamic education in the schools as a panacea against extremist ideologies. (10)

As Islamist supporters moved from provincial towns and villages to urban centers, they were more likely to gain access to formal education and opportunities for upward social mobility. Islamist groups responded to the needs and aspirations of the newly urban who might be university students, professionals, shopkeepers, merchants, or workers. The groups offered food to the needy, scholarships and hostels to university students, a network to young graduates looking for jobs, and credit to shopkeepers, industrialists and merchants. (11) Self-help projects conducted by women were particularly important to this endeavour. Financial assistance came from a newly formed Islamist business elite.

In the late 1980s, a new urban middle class and business elite emerged whose members often originated from provincial towns. Their parents were often self-employed small traders, small shopkeepers, merchants and agrarian capitalists. Some of them came from state employed families. Many provincial youngsters from this background moved to big cities where they had access to higher education. Since their graduation, many joined the urban middle class through employment in the modern economic sector,

which expanded in the 1980s as a result of economic reforms that replaced the statist economic model with a liberal approach.

The liberal and export-oriented economic development model adopted by then Prime Minister Turgut Ozal gave birth to a new business elite, also originating from a provincial background. This new model provided opportunities not only to the established business elite, but also to the small and medium businessmen in Anatolian towns. Some of them have developed their business there. Others moved to Istanbul, seeking opportunities for expansion in this new commercial center.

Originating from Anatolian towns, the new business elite desired to assert their provincial identity and preserve their values and traditions. Consequently, they have been called "Anatolian Lions" ("Anadolu Aslanlari"), differentiating themselves from the more urban, Westernized business elite represented by TUSIAD (The Turkish Businessmen's and Industrialists' Association, founded in 1971), whose members are the chief executives of Turkey's 300 biggest corporations. In contrast, the Anatolian Lions went under the leadership of the pro-Islamist MUSIAD and now challenge the established business elite.

MUSIAD, the Association of the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen, was founded on May 5, 1990 in Istanbul by a number of young pro-Islamic businessmen: Erol Yazar (12) who was the president until May 1999, Ali Bayramolu who replaced Yazar in May 1999, Natic Akyol, and Abdurrahman Esmerer. The first letter of its acronym, "M" is commonly perceived as standing for "Muslim" rather than for *mustakil* ("independent"). The founders of MUSIAD aimed to create an "Islamic economic system" as an alternative to the existing "capitalist system" in Turkey.

This goal, though, remained only a slogan. The group's membership reached 400 in 1991, 1700 by 1993, and 3000 in 1998. (13) Its members' companies' annual revenue is US \$ 2.79 billion. Members are active in most sectors of the economy, particularly in manufacturing, textiles,

chemical and metallurgical products, automotive parts, building materials, iron and steel, and food products. There are also several powerful Islamist finance houses. MUSIAD aims to increase its membership to 5000 and number of branch offices from 28 to 40 by the year 2000. (14)

WHO SUPPORTS THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENT?

The Islamist movement is an outlet to express political dissatisfaction with the existing order on the part of the geographical periphery and specific social groups and classes with grievances or different interests. At least five types of relationships are represented here: center-periphery conflict; class cleavages; regional cleavages; Islamist-secularist conflict; and sectarian antagonism (i.e., Sunnis vs. Alevis).

The country's central government and main institutions are led by military officers, senior bureaucrats, notables, and industrialists. Those living or belonging to groups based in peripheral areas have been subjectively and objectively distanced from power.

Thus, we see a progression in which specific socio-economic and regional groups in the periphery have backed a succession of parties over time in order to voice their grievances. During the 1950s, the Democratic Party, in opposing the centralist elite represented by the People's Republican Party, represented the people of the periphery, including peasants and provincial bourgeoisie as well as the discontent of Islamists and religiously conservative people dissatisfied with secular policies.

In the 1960s and 1970s, its successor, the Justice Party, was also sensitive to Islamic demands in the electorate, while representing newly emerged bourgeois elements--agrarian capitalists, big capital, the provincial bourgeoisie--as well as peasants and petty traders. Thus, it was different from the center-right political parties that represented

the big capital and urban middle class in the Western Europe.

While peasants and petty traders had voted for the Justice Party until the mid-1970s, by the 1973 general elections, the Anatolian esnaf and some segments of the religiously conservative provincial lower and middle classes switched to the National Salvation Party. Clashes between the left and right in the 1970s, however, became the central feature of political life in that era and led to military intervention in 1980. The Justice Party and other parties were outlawed.

In the post-coup period, the Motherland Party came forth to represent the center-right. Rather than representing only bourgeois classes, it had to represent a diversified electorate. It included a conservative faction representing the religiously conservative provincial bourgeoisie and new urban classes, and a liberal faction representing an urban managerial class expanding as a result of Ozal's liberal economic model. In this coalition, the Motherland represented Islamists and moderate ultra-nationalists, on the one hand, and adherents of liberal democratic values, on the other hand.

The Motherland was able to keep such an ideologically diversified electorate together until the late 1980s when the True Path party, which had a strong hold on some rural sectors, challenged its base. In addition, Motherland was subverted by the Islamist and ultra-nationalist parties. Consequently, the Motherland electorate was fragmented. The culmination of this political change came in the 1999 election with a reduced Motherland and True Path vote, and a strengthened pro-Islamist Virtue party, ultra-nationalist MHP, and a small but growing pro-Kurdish HADEP. Given this fragmentation, the winner was the Democratic Left Party (DSP), combining a nationalist rhetoric with liberal democratic values.

The migration of many people to cities--where they found upward social mobility--since the 1950s often meant merely transforming rural poverty into urban

poverty. In the cities, immigrants suffered from substandard housing conditions and lack of infrastructure. They constituted a new periphery whose members are often economically disadvantaged, culturally disintegrated, and politically isolated. Their social rage has fostered extreme political tendencies since the beginning of the 1970s. In the 1970s the revolutionary left articulated its political discontent and anti-regime sentiments. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Islamist movement took on this role.

Conflict caused by regional economic imbalances in the 1990s and the sectarian antagonism between the Sunnis and Alevites (15) have further complicated the political tension. Corruption allegations have aggravated social rage and mobilized people to turn to radical parties and groups challenging the system. The result has been the political polarization and radicalization of the electorate whose votes for the center-right and center-left parties have progressively declined since the late 1980s. (16)

The socio-economic background, political aims, and interests of those supporting the Islamist movement are diverse. (17) They include the large university student population, especially upwardly mobile youths who must compete with the established urban middle and upper-middle classes; members of the unskilled young urban sub-proletariat whose number has increased with the migrations and a higher level of unemployment ; and some from the state-employed petty bourgeoisie, proletarianized by falling real wages and high inflation, particularly since the early 1990s.

As noted above, there are also some supporters from sectors of the new middle and upper classes. In Anatolia, there are also sectors of ultra-nationalists who have embraced Islamist attitudes and a sizeable number of religiously conservative Sunni Kurds (18), who assume that an Islamic order could possibly bring solutions to the conflict in their region which has cost more than 30,000 lives since the early 1980s. (19)

As a result of these different developments which built a base for Islamist politics, the Welfare Party achieved success in the March 1994 local elections. The RP won 28 mayorships; 6 major metropolitan centers, and leadership of 327 local governments. Nationwide, the RP received 19 percent of the vote. In the 1995 general elections, it obtained 21.4 percent of the vote, gaining seats in parliament.

The RP formed a coalition government with Tansu Ciller's True Path Party in July 1996 which lasted one year. (20). Disputes between the two partners over legislation were intensified by a crisis created by Welfare Party mayors and deputies, whose anti-secular rhetoric and activities agitated secular public opinion. Erbakan's relationship with Muammar Qadhafi also made some suggest the Turkish prime minister might owe ultimate allegiance to Libya's leader, who also headed a secretive organization called the Islamic People's Command to which Erbakan also belonged. (21)

These developments exacerbated tensions between the military and the Welfare Party, which had been building due to disagreement over the expulsion of Islamist officers from the army in December 1996, the Welfare Party's attempt to sign a defense cooperation agreement with Iran, Welfare's call for lifting the ban on head-covering for female university students and civil servants, the dispute over building a mosque at Istanbul's Taksim Square, the Iranian-inspired Jerusalem Night (January 31, 1997) in the Welfare-controlled Sincan district of Ankara where anti-regime slogans were shouted, and Erbakan's reluctance to endorse the National Security Council's February 28, 1997 meeting that called for curbing Islamist activities.

The Welfare Party's anti-democratic position on several issues also disappointed secular public opinion. For example, Erbakan and Justice Minister Svekret Kazan made critical and insulting comments about people who took part in the "One Minute of Darkness for Enlightenment" civil protest in February 1997. (22) Welfare's support for

constitutional changes made some worry that it was trying to dilute the secular state. Women worried about the reduction of their rights. (23) The party's allegiance to democracy was also called into question. Islamist dailies including *Akit* and *Yeni Safak* were also severely critical of the January-February 1997 protest. Finally, there were many allegations (24) that the Welfare Party had connections with militant Islamist groups.

As a result, the tension between the military and the Welfare Party and the antagonism between the Islamists and secular public opinion escalated. This provided a legitimate framework to bring the Welfare Party to court in May 1997. Consequently, Erbakan was banned from politics and the Welfare Party was outlawed in January 1998 by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that it violated the principles of secularism and the law of the political parties. Moreover, on June 28, 1998, Erbakan was charged with defaming the Constitutional Court by saying that the Court's ruling had no historic value and would eventually rebound against those who had made it. (25) By dissolving the party, the ruling left more than 100 seats vacant in parliament and orphaned local administrations.

THE VIRTUE PARTY

A new party, the Virtue Party (FP), was founded by 33 former RP deputies under the leadership of Recai Kutan on December 17, 1997. At that time it had 144 seats in the parliament which it had obtained as a result of the switchover of the RP deputies. The party's conservative wing controlled by Erbakan elected the parliamentary group leaders before the reformist wing, led by then-Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayip Erdogan, could pull itself together. However, this did not end the power struggle in the Virtue Party between the party's young reformists and those loyal to Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the now defunct Welfare Party. It went on, and resulted in the resignation of four (Cemil

Cicek, Ali Coskun, Abdullah Gul, and Abdulkadir Aksu) of the reformists on July 26, 1999. Their resignation was interpreted as a move to form a new party given the fact that the Constitutional Court opened a closure case against the Virtue Party after the April 18, 1999 elections on the charges that the party was carrying out anti-secular activities and was the successor of the RP. However, they denied any plan to form a new party in their July 1999 press statements.

Prior to the 1999 local and general elections, the Virtue Party set up an organization in all districts of the country, then began recruiting new members. (26) It renewed its membership profile. According to the law, a newly founded party that replaced a banned political party shall omit 50 percent of the total membership of the now defunct party. The Virtue Party went even farther and it renewed 60 percent of members who were recruited by the now defunct Welfare Party.

Along with renewing its membership, the Virtue Party has tried to rectify its image as anti-women and undemocratic. It recruited a number of highly educated, upper middle class modern women, for example, Nazli Ilicak and Prof. Dr. Oya Akgonenc. Women from lower social classes carried the party to power, and were able to participate in public life as result of the party. But, despite their contribution, they were not invited to be represented at the higher ranks. The Virtue Party appointed Ilicak, Akgonenc and Gulden Celik as female members of the Central Decisionmaking Board. Only Celik wears a head covering.

Both Turkey's leaders and the party's own supporters ask how the FP differs from the RP. The Virtue Party has signaled that it takes some new approaches. For example, the FP declared support for Turkey's European Union membership, a step the RP opposed for three decades. An additional change was the FP's appointment of two women-who do not wear headcoverings-to its Central Decisionmaking Board. The Welfare Party demanded its supporters

observe an Islamic dress code. Indeed, the FP has downplayed the headcovering issue altogether. Third, instead of mentioning the old party's "Islamic mission" its rhetoric emphasizes democracy, human rights, and personal liberty. (27) The FP presents the headscarf ban issue as a matter of human rights violation and suppression of personal liberties rather than as a matter of religion. (28)

Another change in the Virtue Party's rhetoric is its highlighting of the theme of "millet," (nation) as opposed to the RP's strong organic link between "millet" and "devlet" (state). The implication in the Virtue Party's stance is that the state should be in the service of the people rather than-in the RP's view-a holy state that stands far above the people. (29) The FP pledges to create a humanitarian state that meets the millet's needs without totally dominating it, a more democratic rather than more authoritarian state. This issue has become a dominant topic in articles published by Milli Gazette since January 1998, and several conferences discussed this question.

Another interesting development is the FP's position on the "Kurdish issue" is that the RP had not been hesitant to talk about Kurdish identity and the cultural rights of the Kurds without seeming to go further in backing bigger demands. The FP's chairman, Recai Kutan, spoke in favor of "cultural rights", announcing in August 1998, "It would be necessary to recognize some of the rights of Turkey's Kurdish identity. The right to educate and publish in the Kurdish language would have to be considered after discussions and a normalization period." (30) However, the FP became more cautious after the capture of the outlawed PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in February 1999.

The FP has tried to change its image in a number of ways. For example, rather than holding sexually segregated social gatherings, as they did in the past, it organizes dinner parties where men and women mix freely (e.g., Nazli Ilicak and Recai Kutan sang together at a dinner party in 1998). While such an endeavor alienates

religiously conservative supporters, party leaders understand the necessity of improving the party's image and making concessions.

Islamism has grown as a response to social, economic, and political discontent in Turkey, including foreign influences, urbanization, modernization, and secularization. The Islamist movement's upsurge, the growth of ultra-nationalism, and Kurdish ethno-nationalism has eroded the center in Turkey. The center-right parties have declined because they did not meet their constituency's needs or expectations, and also failed to absorb the compromising spirit of democratic liberalism.

In the context of modern Turkish political history, the Welfare and Virtue parties must be understood not only in terms of their specific Islamist ideology but also as the representative of specific social sectors reacting to circumstances. Equally, and partly as a result of this fact, the erosion of the center-right and increased support given to the Islamist and the ultra-nationalist parties has not yet created the danger of regime instability. (31) The nationalist secular majority in Turkey (32), supporters of the DSP and other parties, counterweight the Islamist and ultra-nationalist groups in both public life and in parliament.

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NOTES

1. For the voting behavior of the Turkish electorate, see Ersin Kalaycioglu. 1985. "The Turkish Political System in Transition in the 1980s". Current Turkish Thought.

Vol. 56. (Istanbul): 2-38; Ersin Kalaycioglu. 1994. "Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey: Changes and Continuities in the 1990s". *Comparative Political Studies*. 27, 3: 402-424; Ergun Ozbudun. and E. Tachau. 1975. "Social Change and Electoral Behaviour in Turkey: Toward a Critical Realignment". *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 6: 460-480; Ergun Ozbudun. 1980. "Turkey" in J.M. Landau, E. Ozbudun and E. Tachau, eds., *Electoral Politics in the Middle East: Issues, Votes and Elites*. London: Croom Helm. Pp. 107-143; Sabri Sayari. 1978. "The Turkish Party System in Transition". *Government and Opposition*. 13: 617-635.

2. Turkish modernization began in the 19th century with the Tanzimat reforms. The Young Ottomans' ideas of constitutionalism, parliamentary government and secular education and the ideas of the Young Turks on a modern nation state provided the intellectual framework of the Turkish modernisation.

3. For the definition of the Islamist and the differences between the radical and moderate Islamists, see Nilufer Narli. 1996. "Moderate Against Radical Islamicism in Turkey", *Zeitschrift Fur Turkeistudien*. 1/96. Zentrum Fur Turkeistudien. Essen University: 35-59.

4. The history of the Islamist movements goes back to the 19th century Ottoman rule. In the context of the paper, the author focuses on the Islamist movements in the Turkish republic.

5. Tarikats had been banned in 1925. Then they went underground and they were organised as secret brotherhood groups. In the 1980s they discovered new strategies to organise themselves as legal entities. They have established foundations under various names, which enable them to operate legally and have avenues of fund raising.

6. For example, Kozanli Ibrahim and his friends' revolted to demand Arabic Ezan on February 1, 1933 in Bursa; Sheikh Halit' declared himself as Mahdi in December 1935 and a series of bloody insurgencies led by his son Sheikh Kudus; and Kayserili Ahmet Kalayci proclaimed a new religious

order in Iskilip and consequently, incited the public in 1936. See Cetin Ozek. 1986. *Devlet ve Din* ("State and Religion"). Istanbul: Ada Yayinlari. p. 498.

7. Particularly, the Nurcus adopted the strategy of forming alliance with a centre-of-right political party. They approached Adnan Menderes, the chief of the Democratic Party. As they saw his responsiveness to the Islamists, they call him, as "Musluman Menderes" and supported him in the 1950 general elections. They expected Menderes to restore Islam and, even include Said-i Nursi's Risalei Nur articles in the school curriculum. See Cetin Ozek. 1986. p.544.

8. For further details on the strategies of the Islamist groups, see Nilufer Narli. 1996. "Moderate Against Radical Islamicism in Turkey", *Zeitschrift Fur Turkeistudien*. 1/96. Zentrum Fur Turkeistudien. Essen University: 35-59.

9. Bihterin Dinckol. 1992. 1982 Anayasasi Cercevesinde ve Anayasa Kararlarinda Laiklik ("Laicism in the Constitutional Context and in 1982 Constitution"). Istanbul: Kazanci Hukuk Yayinlari. p. 179.

10. For the Islamist student movement and associations, see Elizabeth Özdalga. 1997. "Civil Society and its Enemies: Reflections on a Debate in the Light of Recent Developments within the Islamic Movement in Turkey" in Elizabeth Özdalga and Suna Persson, eds., *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*. London: Curzon. pp.73-84.

11. For the mobility of the peripheral groups to urban centers and gaining access to secular education, see Yilmaz Esmer and Muge Gocek. 1995. "Boundaries of Religious Fundamentalism in Turkey", Survey conducted in Istanbul and Konya in 1994. Paper presented at Bogazici University, May 1995. For the Welfare Party's mobilization of this newly urbanized social groups by providing them some moral and material support, and in turn, obtaining their electoral support in the 1994 local and 1995 general elections, see Sencer Ayata. 1996.

12. On May 25, 1998 the State Security Court (DGM) prosecutor demanded the closure of MUSIAD for violating the laws governing societies and associations. The court also charged MUSIAD Chairman Erol Yerar (36 years old US-educated businessman) with "inciting hatred amongst the people" in a speech he made on October 4, 1997 criticising the law that brought restrictions on religious education. See Turkish Probe, May 31, 1998: 18. According to Turkish Penalty Code, Article 312-2, inciting hatred among people by making reference to class, race, religion, sect, and region differences is a crime and one who commits this crime shall be sentenced from one to three years of prison. It is worth mentioning that the Virtue Party introduced a bill asking the abolition of Article 312-2. In the speech, Yerar called for a "liberation struggle" and that constituted a crime according to the prosecutor. Yerar also likened to "dogs" the proponents of the law that extended compulsory education from five to eight years. He also described the new education law as the work of "non-believers" by saying, "uninterrupted education is certainly un-religious education" ("kesintisiz egitim kesin dinsiz egitim"). Yerar's hearing was held on June 29, 1998 in the State Security Court in Ankara. The prosecutor asked for a one to three year prison sentence for Yerar. At the hearing on July 29, Yerar denied his opposition to the eight-year compulsory education. Turkish Probe, May 31, 1998:12. However, MUSIAD was highly critical of the new arrangements in the education system and the closure of the middle section of the imam-hatip schools in its March 31, 1998 press Bulletin. MUSIAD Basin Bulteni, March 31, 1998, Istanbul. web: www.musiad.com. In 1999 May the court convicted Yerar and he resigned.

13. For the figures given above, see MUSIAD's publication, MUSIAD Bulteni. May-June, 1998. No. 29. p. 37. For the membership profile and activities of MUSIAD, see Special Supplement of the Turkish Daily News on MUSIAD, titles "MUSIAD in the US" (May 21, 1997).

14. It has branch offices in Ankara, Konya, Izmir, Kocaeli, Kayseri, Bursa, Balikesir, Gaziantep, Denizli, Kahramanmaraş, Adana, Karadeniz Ereğli, Samsun, Corum, Malatya, Sanliurfa, Cankiri, Bandirma, Diyarbakir, Bartin, Gebze, Elazig, Icel, Inegol, Adapazari, Eskisehir, ve Antalya.

15. For example, the Sivas incident on July 2, 1993 when 37 Alevis were burned as a result of the alleged arson attack by Islamists who were agitated by a speech delivered by Aziz Nesin According to press reports Nesin, speaking at an Alevi cultural festival, proclaimed the reign of the 1,000-year old Quran was over. See Turkish Daily News, July 5, 1993. Nesin had previously angered the Islamists by publishing excerpts from British author Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*)

16. Nilufer Narli and Sinan Dirlik. 1996. "Turkiye'nin Siyasi Haritasi" ("the Political Map of Turkey"), *Yeni Turkiye Dergisi*, No. 9, May-June: 125-151.

17. The profile of the Islamists is based on an empirical study of the author. Nilufer Narli. 1996. *The Islamist Movement, University Students and Politics in Turkey*. An unpublished report presented to the Ford Foundation.

18. Most Kurds are orthodox Sunni Muslims who belong to the Shaafi School, whereas the majority of the Turks belong to Hanefi doctrine as classified by the Islamic law. Kurds have traditionally been religious and involved in the various tarikats flourished in the Eastern Turkey. Tarikat leaders and sheikhs have always had a great influence on the Turkish Kurds owing to their feudal tradition. Sheikhs have been able to dictate decisions of great importance in people's lives. Along being a key element in social life, Islamic elements have political function too. Religious elements could be instrumental in political action. There are example cases confirming this hypothesis. The first two decades of the Republic witnessed several Kurdish rebellions (e.g., the Sheikh Said Revolt in 1925, Agri, Zile and finally Dersim in 1937) led by religious

sheikhs and tribal leaders. Islamic as well as ethnic sentiments triggered these revolts.

19. For information on Turkey's separatist Kurdish party, the PKK, led by the recently captured, tried, and sentenced to death Abdullah Ocalan, see Ismet Imset. 1992. *The PKK: A Report on Separatist Violence in Turkey 1979-1992*. Istanbul: Turkish Daily News Publications; and Henri J. Barkey and Graham Fuller. 1998. *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

20. MGK is a constitutional body. Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution establishes the MGK as a body evenly divided between five civilians (the president, prime minister, and ministers of defence, internal affairs, and foreign affairs), and five military officials (the chief of the general staff, the commanders of the army navy, and air force, and the general commander of the gendarmerie). The recommendations of the MGK have a priority in the legislation. Article 118 states: "the Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measure that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the country, and the peace and security of society.

21. For the details, see the article titled, "As If Troubles at Home Were Not Enough....", Briefing, April 2, 1997: 8. (Ankara).

22. The "One Minute of Darkness for Enlightenment" civil protest was a response to the public perception of corruption and injustice in Turkey. In 1997 it began with a call on citizens to turn their lights off at 9:00 PM every night. The scope of the protest got larger still as thousands of people went on the streets carrying candles, putting them out at exactly 9:00 PM and holding meetings to discuss ways of attaining their goal, an "enlightened" Turkey. It was largely supported by the centre-left parties, but was criticized by the Welfare Party, the ultra-nationalist party, and the True Path Party.

23. For example, they opposed the bill bringing protective measures against domestic violence, but it was passed by the parliament without the approval of the Welfare Party January 14, 1998. The protective order law protects women and children against domestic violence. For the Law (no. 4320) bringing protective measures, see Resmi Gazete, (Official Gazette). January 17, 1998. No. 23233. 22->

24. For example, there is an accusation that the former RP Minister Uevket Kazan and RP deputy Sevki Yilmaz organized sending 150 Turkish students to Islamic countries, 30 of them to Egypt to receive "Shariah commando" training. Yeni Yuzyil reported that a number of students connected with the now defunct RP had made confessions about being sent to Cairo's Al-Azhar University with false papers. These young people recount that in Egypt they stayed in houses belonging to the National View Organization and that they received armed training at the Hizbullah camps in Lebanon as "Shariah commandos". They stress that their aim was an armed struggle to set up an Islamic state in Turkey. See Yeni Yuzyil. March 1, 1998: 10. Cumhuriyet daily said, "for RP-linked foundation, the focal point in the investigation extending from Al Azhar to Hizbullah". Cumhuriyet, March 4, 1998 :1. Istanbul State Security Court prosecutor Nuh Mete Yuksel indicated that they are investigating the possible links with Hizbullah and the European National View Organisation (AMGT), which is considered to be a subsidiary of the now defunct Welfare Party (RP). Cumhuriyet also reported that the police are seeking three more AMGT officials. AMGT has many hostels and associations in Turkey and in the Western Europe, as well as in the Middle East. Cumhuriyet, March 4, 1998 : 1.

25. Erbakan made this statement on January 18, 1998 soon after the closure of his party by the Constitutional Court. See Turkish Daily News, June 30, 1998: A3.

26. For further information on the organisation of the FP, see *Turkiye'nin Oncelikleri ve Temel Goruslerimiz*

("Priorities of Turkey and Fundamentals of the Party"). M. Recai Kutan's Press Conference. December 17,1998. Bilkent, Ankara: Semih Offset.

27. University rectors agreed earlier in 1998 to enforce a secular dress code that bans wearing of headscarf in all universities. In January 1998 a government decree banned religious clothing, including the headscarf, for teachers, officials and students in all schools and universities. Universities and schools refused registering women students unless they submit ID photographs with bared hair and neck.

28. For example, the Virtue Party Chairman Recai Kutan said, "the headscarf ban was not a matter of religious belief but rather a human right issue." Quoted in Turkish Daily News, September 11, 1998: AII

29. This analysis is based on an examination of the leading deputies' speeches and the articles in Milli Gazete that is an organ of the Welfare Party-Virtue Party.

30. Quoted in Turkish Daily News, August 13, 1998: AI-AII.

31. Roy Macridis. 1987. Modern Political Systems: Europe. New Jersey: Prentice Hall International.

32. A recent survey conducted by Binnaz Toprak and Ali Carkoglu shows that even the religiously conservative people tend to support the separation of the state and Islam and they are not for an Islamic state. See Binnaz Toprak and Ali Carkoglu. 1999 "Turkiye'de Siyasi Islam" ("Political Islam in Turkey") a survey report submitted to TESEV Foundation, Istanbul. May 1999.