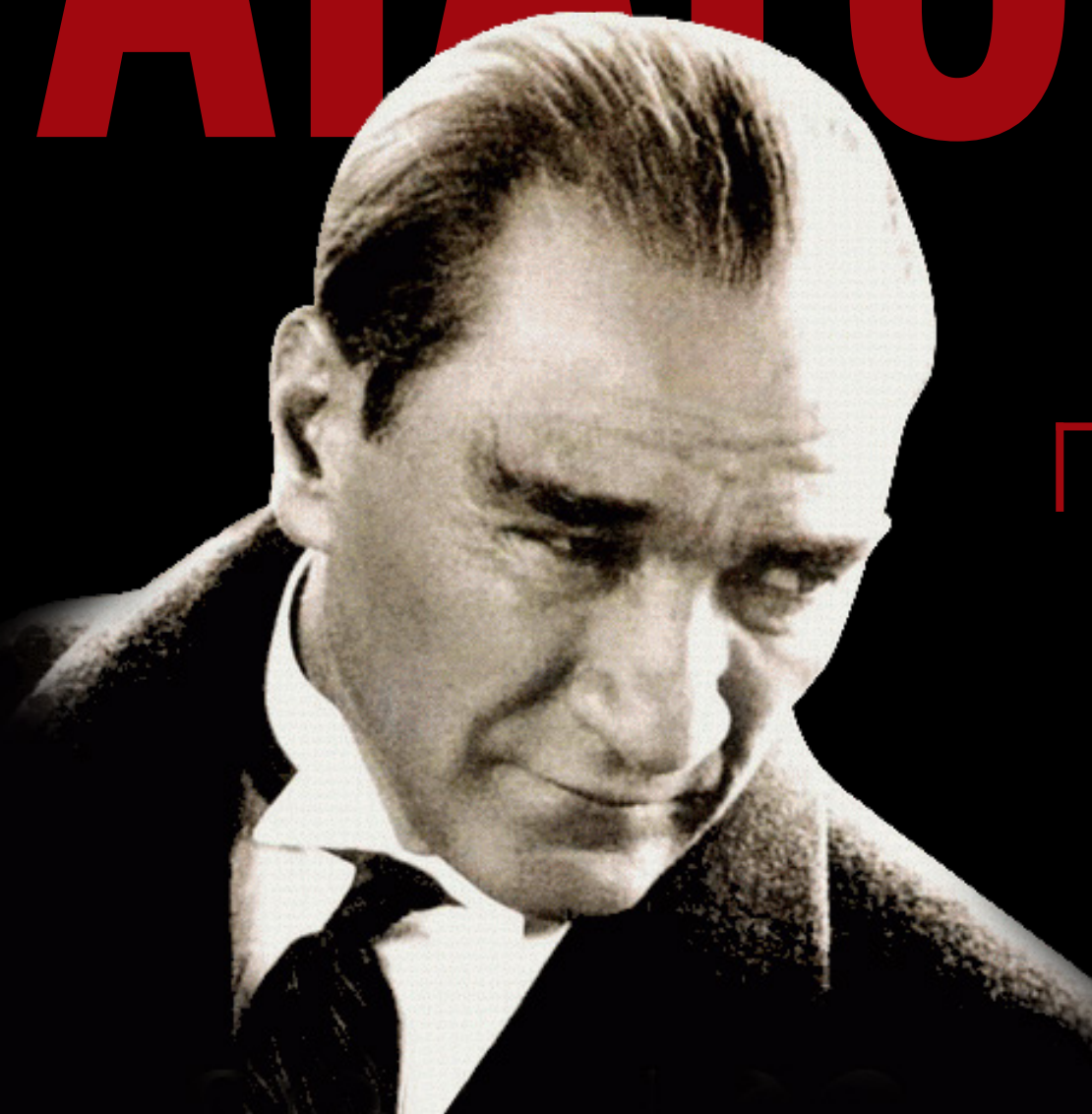


Voice of

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ATATÜRK SOCIETY OF AMERICA | FALL 2012

ATATÜRK



1881-∞

ASA Nominates Journalist
Mustafa Balbay for UNESCO's
World Press Freedom Day Award



*"A nation whose
judiciary power is not
independent cannot be
accepted as a state."*

— Kemal Atatürk, 1920

THE TRAGEDY OF
THE DESTRUCTION
OF DEMOCRACY IN
TURKEY

Police break up peaceful marchers, observing
Independence Day, Oct. 29, 2012





The Atatürk Society of America

Voice of

ATATÜRK

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REVERSAL OF THE ATATÜRK MIRACLE

Destruction of Secular Democracy

The year 2013 will mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic, and the establishment of a system that engendered honor and dignity for the first time to Turkish people individually and to Turks collectively. Atatürk, the architect of the system, had assured for them:

- The liberation from the Sultan's despotism and the realization of self-governance
- Liberation of Women — an elevation from second class citizenship to equality with their male counterparts
- Long held subservient during the Ottoman Rule, private citizens could now have their individual identities restored; and
- The emphasis accorded to science, knowledge, and reason, with a view toward the modernization of the country

Although Atatürk's program of reforms began formally with the establishment of the Republic, they had been taking shape in his mind since his youth. Ultimately the changes he envisaged were culled from his own environment and experiences, and especially in comparing his own life as an Ottoman subject with those of people in more developed Western societies. He had read about them, he had seen them in his visits abroad. He imagined a nation of fully independent people, emulating modern western lifestyles and values.

Moreover, Atatürk liberated the nation in two ways. First, he achieved victory over the occupying forces during the War of Independence, a feat he accomplished, against all odds, by resorting to cunning imagination, brilliance, and courage. And subsequently, he launched the far-ranging reforms, which he accomplished by a blend of superhuman wit, resolve, and natural leadership. All his reforms were achieved in less than a single generation — from the time he assumed power in 1923 until his early death in 1938. It is not surprising that no other national leader has even come close to accomplishing so much for his people in such a short time, especially in light of the prevailing economic hardships, and the absence of other enlightened comrades. [His creation was not the end product of group genius — of a Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton and Mason... all working in tandem, as it was in the creation of the United States — but of one exquisitely brilliant visionary... Atatürk himself.]

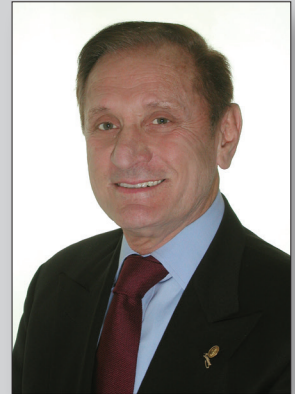
In embodying so many assets, Atatürk represents the unbridled pride of the Turkish nation. The system he put into place called for his people to be able to exude a spirit of Independence; of enlightenment and awareness; of science and reason; of a love of freedom and a resistance to imperialism; of championing human rights; and of embracing national unity and world peace.

Atatürk is not a political ideology. It is a worldview

As Turkey enters its 90th anniversary year, it is clear how far the current leadership in Turkey has endeavored to distance itself from Atatürk's ideals and principles. The secular democratic path laid by Atatürk began to atrophy after his passing in 1938. It increased in pace following the 1950 elections, as Islam, generally dormant during his administration, began to grow in the public. This development, however, accelerated after the 2002 elections with the AKP coming into power.

The AKP began by systematically and patiently infiltrating the normally secular national institutions, placing its own people in positions of authority. Meanwhile, the secular authority's complacency (and most certainly a level of incompetence) played conveniently into the hands of the AKP. Now they are on course to reverse Atatürk's Miracle, the magnificent order he had established with the 1923 revolution replacing the Islamic Ottoman government with a secular

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Hudai Yavalar

Chairman, Founding President

"It appears now that the long-term aim of the AKP is the restoration of Sultanate, and the expunging of Atatürk from the collective memory of the populace."

10th of November — A day to Mourn

For the past 74 years the date “10 Kasım” (“November 10th”) has been a day of mourning associated with the death in 1938 of Kemal Atatürk, the greatest leader that Turkey, or any other nation produced in the 20th century. Indeed, it was in distinguished psychiatrist Arnold Ludwig’s 2002 book, “King of the Mountain,” that Atatürk received the single highest ranking of any of the 2300 national leaders serving in the century. In Ludwig’s objective assessment, Atatürk edged out the defining leaders of a pair of nations with populations over 100 million — Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the only United States President elected to four terms, and Mao Zedong, the founder of Modern China and Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. In Atatürk’s case, after an unrivaled military career, he had founded the Western leaning Republic of Turkey, instituting sweeping social and economic reforms. Operating with a dictum, “Peace at home, peace in the world!” he established a secular system that lasted the better part of a century.

In this issue of Voice of Atatürk, the Atatürk Society of America (ASA) recognizes the occasion as a day of mourning also for secular democracy itself in Turkey. For the past ten years since the Adalet and Kalkınma Party (the AKP) came into power, heralding itself as “Moderately Islamic,” it has been systematically reversing each of Atatürk’s reforms, and in an ever-quickenning pace. Recently, their misdeed culminated with the conviction of over 300 high-ranking military officers, along with close to 100 journalists.

In this issue of the Voice of Atatürk, the prominent academic, Professor Dani Rodrik at Harvard’s Kennedy School, writes about how these hapless individuals were convicted on demonstrable trumped up charges. I had previously characterized the effects on the AKP’s attack on the military as the “emas-culation of the military.” Dr. Rodrik, in a Washington Post Op-ed article, used a more appropriate metaphor, calling it the “decapitation...”

In another article, engineer turned-restaurateur Cem Özmeral of Columbus, Ohio presents a thoughtful historical essay, “Atatürk and the Villager.” He laments the state of affairs in Turkey under the present AKP, but points to the unfortunate dichotomy in the social fabric that has existed in Turkey ever since Atatürk died. He writes that the secular politicians long neglected the development in the social infrastructure of Anatolian majority. There is the “we the enlightened secularists” vs “they the unenlightened religious”. Modern education was simply not made accessible to villagers. And now under the AKP, “Imam Hatip Schools” (religious high school) are being built in greater numbers than are traditional secular high schools. Clearly, the secular politicians following Atatürk dropped the ball.

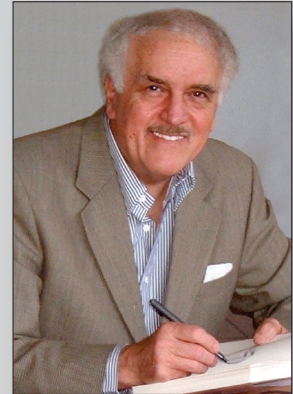
Metin Camcıgil’s article represents a second historical essay, the subject: one of Atatürk’s dramatic social changes, the introduction of the Latin Alphabet into Turkey to replace the “Old Turkish” (or Arabic) alphabet written from right to left. Under the AKP, the “Old Turkish” appears to be coming back. Early in 2009, I gave a talk, “Leonardo and his Turkish Connection,” at the Turkish Cultural Center (TCC) in New York City about my new book†. Following the talk, the staff, comprised of young and enthusiastic workers, gave me a tour of the spacious offices of the TCC. The course being taught as Turkish in one of the classroom was using the Arabic Alphabet.

The past 12 months have seen a frenzied pace of activity by the Atatürk Society. Exactly a year ago in November 2011 Dr. Austin Bay, retired military officer/ author/syndicated journalist, gave a talk sponsored by ASA. The venue for Dr. Bay’s talk was Johns Hopkins University’s Krieger School, and the topic, his new book, “Atatürk: Lessons in Leadership from the Greatest General of the Ottoman Empire.”

For the commemoration of the 19th of May, ASA hosted Hon. Oktay Ekşi and his wife, Dr. Aysel Ekşi. A Member of Parliament from Istanbul, and previously a longtime journalist with an impeccable reputation for credibility, Mr. Ekşi had gained a reputation as the “Walter Cronkite of Turkey.” During his visit he met with a pair of Congressmen, members of the Turkey Desk, was hosted for lunch by the Director of the National Press Club. The culmination of the Ekşis’ visit to Washington came with the insightful talk Mr. Ekşi gave at the Cosmos Club. Excerpts from his talk are included in the present edition of the Voice of Atatürk.

Atatürk Society is an apolitical organization dedicated to promoting the ideals of Atatürk, a secular democracy governed by science and reason, rather than religion and dogma. We see the reversal of these secular principles as a genuine tragedy for Turkey. They were promulgated by Kemal Atatürk, the greatest Turk of them all, who stands alone at the pinnacle of the ranking of all national leaders of the 20th century, and we see the present developments as a giant step backwards. **AKP is proving that the description, “moderate Islamic,” when it comes to governance, is an oxymoron, a pair of mutually contradictory words.**

† Leonardo’s Universe (National Geographic Books, 2009)



Dr. Bulent Atalay
President, ASA

“Without Atatürk there would be no Turkey now! The AKP, in suppressing national holidays, do justice neither to the memory of hundreds of thousands of Turks who perished in battles to save the nation, nor to the worldwide perception of Islam.”

Lecture by Dr. Austin Bay on his new book on Atatürk

On the 73rd year anniversary of Atatürk's death, Atatürk Society of America held an event to commemorate Atatürk's incredible life and accomplishments on November 15, 2011 at the John-Hopkins University, Krieger School in Washington, DC. The highlight of the event was a lecture by Dr. Austin Bay, a professor, syndicated columnist and the author of an outstanding new book on Atatürk titled *ATATÜRK: LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE GREATEST GENERAL OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE*. The foreword notes of his book were written by General Wesley Clark. After the lecture, Dr. Bay answered questions raised by the audience, gave an interview to Turkish media and signed copies of his book.

Dr. Bay is a retired Colonel (Armor) from the U.S. Army Reserve; author of many books and designer of two war games. He teaches at University of Texas, works as a radio commentator and consults in a technology firm.

In 224 pages of his book, Dr. Bay summarizes Atatürk's military triumphs, his rise to power and reforms to transform a backward society into a secular modern one. Dr. Bay further states that "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a Muslim visionary,

revolutionary statesman, and founder of the Republic of Turkey. The West knows him best as the leading Ottoman officer in World War I's Battle of Gallipoli—a defeat for the Allies, and the Ottoman empire's greatest victory. Gaining fame as an exemplary military officer, he went on to lead his people in the Turkish War of Independence, abolishing the Ottoman Sultanate, emancipating women, and adopting western dress. Deeply influenced by the Enlightenment, Atatürk sought to transform the empire into a modern and secular nation-state, and during his presidency, embarked upon a program

of impressive political, economic, and cultural reforms. Militarily and politically he excelled at all levels of conflict, from the tactical, through the operational, to the strategic, and into the rarified realm of grand strategy. His ability to integrate the immediate with the ultimate serves as an important lesson for leaders engaged in the twenty-first century's great military struggles. He became the only leader in history to successfully turn a Muslim nation into a Western parliamentary democracy and secular state, leaving behind a legacy of modernization and military and political leadership."



PHOTO COURTESY OF İBRAHİM TÜRK

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS | CONTINUED

continued from page 3

democracy. It appears now that the long-term aim of the AKP is the restoration of the Sultanate, and the expunging of Atatürk from the collective memory of the populace.

Every democracy has detractors to help protect the rights of the individual and highlight government infractions when and where they occur. But precisely to counter any opposition, Prime Minister Erdoğan's party proactively jailed 93 journalists, more than those jailed in China and Iran combined, a disgraceful distinction! The international media has reported blatant human rights violation. Among these is the incarceration of more than 300 members of the Turkish military, accused of an alleged coup plot, and convicted on fabricated charges. The Turkish military had originally been charged by the constitution to preserve Turkey's secular governance. The military's emasculation is part of Erdoğan's master plan.

We find now that the populace in Turkey is severely polarized,

severely divided [paralleling, but far exceeding in degree, what is happening in the United States]. The opposition to the AKP is in fear of having their telephone and internet signals tapped, their messages misconstrued, and used against them. In this climate of fear, ordinary people refrain from criticizing Mr. Erdoğan's government. The new educational reforms, "4+4+4" system, paves the path for students educated in Islamic schools to gain legitimacy, and enter the educational mainstream, as well as to assume leadership in the armed forces which had hitherto been secular.

Throughout history, the followers of darkness, and that is what fundamentalism in the name of Islam or any other religion ultimately represent, have been unable to reverse the path of progress. The Atatürk Society is an apolitical group, strongly endorsing a secular democracy, as promulgated by the greatest Turk of them all. We feel deeply that Atatürk's views are timeless and will ultimately prevail.

Did Microsoft steal its fonts from the Turkish army?

By Dr. Dani Rodrik

After The Turkish court that sentenced more than 300 officers on coup plotting charges in September apparently thinks so.

The Turkish military has long set the ground rules for Turkish politics, and this was hailed as a landmark trial. Many saw it as the centerpiece of a democratic, mildly Islamist government's long overdue reckoning with the army's misdeeds.

If the charges in the case are to be believed, misdeeds there were aplenty. Prosecutors had in hand CDs, apparently from 2003 that contained detailed military plans to destabilize the country and dislodge the newly-elected AKP government from power. According to the documents in the CDs, General Çetin Doğan, then commander of the Istanbul-based 1st Army commander, and his collaborators had prepared horrific operations, including the downing of a Turkish military, the bombing of two mosques, and the targeting of Armenian intellectuals, in order to lay the groundwork for the coup. They had drawn up lists of journalists and politicians to be arrested, selected a new cabinet, and even prepared an economic program for the new government.

The trial was marred by irregularities from the very beginning. The CDs were never properly authenticated beyond the date and author information in the metadata. A report that found the documents could not be traced to military computers vanished. Exonerating evidence uncovered by the prosecutors was placed under seal and hid from the defense. The presiding judge, who had ruled previously in favor of some of the defendants' requests, was replaced two days before

the trial opened. The pleas of defendants who proved they were out of the country on the dates they supposedly authored the documents met no response. A growing list of anachronisms and other inconsistencies in the documents was passed over. Meanwhile pro-government and Gülenist media had a field day, spreading rampant disinformation about the case and the defendants.

But the real shocker came when the court finally provided digital copies of the incriminating CDs to the defense, nearly two years after they had been delivered to the prosecutors. American, German, and Turkish forensic experts hired by the defense were able to establish conclusively

that the CDs had been forged.

And here is where Microsoft enters the picture.

The centerpiece of the prosecution's case is a MS Word document, titled "Operation Sledgehammer." This document, which gives the case its name, describes the rationale for the military takeover and the broad contours of the plan. It carries the date December 2002 and is has General Doğan's name underneath. On the face of it, there is nothing in the digital file that would contradict this information. The metadata shows a last-saved date of December 2002 and the putative author to be General Doğan's chief of staff. (Doğan retired from the



army in late 2003.) The CD on which it is found was apparently burned in a single session on March 2003. The document is written using the Arial font and was saved in MS Word 1997, both of which were widely in use in 2003.

Yet when forensic experts looked more closely at the document with a Hex editor, which shows all the binary information on the file, they made a discovery that revealed that the metadata had been tampered with. In plain sight on the raw file was a reference to “Calibri,” a font that Microsoft introduced with Office 2007 as the new default font for Word, and was first released to the public in mid-2006. The only explanation for this anachronistic reference was that the file had been worked on with Office 2007 before it was ultimately saved in an earlier version of Word. It was clear that “Operation Sledgehammer” could not have been produced and burned onto a CD in 2003.

Digital fingerprints of MS Office 2007 are in fact all over the documents on the incriminating CDs. In addition to Calibri, there are references to the font Cambria and various XML schemas first introduced with Office 2007. In one egregious instance, an Excel file was saved in Calibri so that the font is visible to the naked eye. The forgers apparently forgot to save the document in an earlier font.

All these documents carry last-saved dates from 2002-2003, appear to have been authored by officers on duty at the time, and were burned on CDs that were apparently finalized in March 2003. But the references to Office 2007 leave room for only one conclusion: these documents were in fact prepared years later on backdated computers, with the intention of framing the officers on trial.

Not surprisingly, when these findings were presented to the court, they met the same stony silence that had met earlier indications of forgery. Turkish law allows courts to disregard forensic evidence presented by the defense. Only forensic reports obtained by the court itself carry weight. And the court pointedly refused to assign its own experts on the matter.



*The evident framing
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the kind of country Turkey
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allies.*



By now, even hard-core supporters of the prosecution have had to accept that the evidence in this case is deeply flawed. They no longer talk about the obviously fabricated mosque-bombing, jet-downing, or assassination plans. They have shifted their accusations instead to the contents of a contingency planning seminar held under General Doğan’s supervision in March 2003.

The anonymous informant who passed on the forged CDs bundled them with authentic material, including voice recordings from the seminar. The seminar focused on the army’s response to what was called a “worst-case scenario:” rising tensions with Greece compounded by domestic disturbances in the forms of an Islamist uprising. The proceedings reveal an open secret, namely that there was a strong undercurrent of antipathy among the military towards Tayyip Erdoğan and his party.

Many now use snippets of those conversations to argue that they constitute ample evidence of a coup plot on their own -- even if the digital Sledgehammer documents themselves are set aside. Never mind that there was no reference to Sledgehammer or any coup in the seminar; that the seminar was attended by observers from the high command in Ankara; that the prosecutors did not attribute any criminal activity to the seminar itself; that the bulk of those found guilty had nothing to do with the seminar; or

that most seminar participants were not even indicted.

General Doğan’s two superiors at the time, the commander of the land forces and the chief of general staff, were two key witnesses who could have provided useful testimony. The prosecutors claimed that the former had thwarted the Sledgehammer coup, without even bothering to question him. In public, both denied any knowledge of Sledgehammer, but said there had been irregularities in the way the seminar was carried out. The defense repeatedly asked that they be called in as witnesses. The court refused. Did I say this was a kangaroo court?

My wife Pinar Doğan and I have been detailing the Sledgehammer fraud since the CDs first surfaced at the beginning of 2010. Cetin Doğan is my father-in-law, and we obviously have a personal stake in the matter. But our concern extends beyond this specific case and the 300-plus innocent individuals who have been found guilty in a sham trial. The evident framing and massive judicial misconduct on which the Sledgehammer case rests shines a bright light on the kind of country Turkey has become under Tayyip Erdoğan and his Gülenist allies. Reminiscent of periods of military rule, the judiciary has turned into a tool for settling scores and remaking Turkish society and politics. The wave of entrapment has so far ensnared military officers, journalists, politicians, Kurdish activists – indeed opponents of all stripes. In a system that can put you behind bars because of a Word document with your name on it, no one is safe.

The defendants in the Sledgehammer travesty have at least one thing to look forward to. Their guilty verdict means they must have developed Calibri, Microsoft Office 2007’s default font, years before Microsoft says it did. Sorry, Microsoft, you have been caught out. You owe these officers billions of dollars. ▀

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Dani Rodrik’s weblog
Unconventional thoughts on economic develop-
ment and globalization

ANZAC DAY 2012

As in past years, several of our members attended ANZAC Day (April 25) at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The event commemorated by the Australians and New Zealanders represents a defining time in both nations' history, when hundreds of thousands of young soldiers were transported to fight in the ill-conceived Gallipoli Campaign, a brainchild of Churchill. Until recently, the campaign represented a defining time in Turkish history as well, with Atatürk-led Turkish Forces defeating the ANZAC Forces. But the Gallipoli Campaign is increasingly denigrated in present day Turkey.

At ANZAC DAY (April 25, 2012) Hon. Mike Moore, the New Zealand Ambassador, gave a short speech at the National Cathedral. In his remarks he acknowledged the small Turkish delegation present, namely members of ASA.



ANZAC Day, April 25, 2012, was celebrated in faraway Australia, with a parade honoring the fallen soldiers at Gallipoli. Once enemies, the Aussies, Kiwis and Turks now view each other with admiration and respect, unified by Atatürk's immortal words, "Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... you have become our sons as well."

ASA Nominates Journalist Mustafa Balbay for UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day Award

The Atatürk Society of America nominated journalist Mustafa Balbay for the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Award 2012. The ceremony is held annually on May 3 to inform the international community that freedom of the press and freedom of expression are fundamental human rights. This day is to remind people that many journalists brave death or face jail to bring daily news to the public. Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev won this year's award.

Mustafa Balbay is a Turkish journalist and author imprisoned since March 6, 2009 and in solitary confinement since February 28, 2011. He faces double life sentences and another 16-18 years imprisonment. Mr. Balbay is accused of "attempting to destroy the Government and the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey" and of "fraud on official documents related to State security". He is accused of participating at high level meetings with academics and army commanders with an aim to destabilize the Government.¹ Mr. Balbay rejects claims that he has relations within the alleged Ergenekon organization and that notes allegedly written by

him have three different versions in the indictment.

At least seventy other journalists in Turkey are incarcerated as prisoners of conscience under the Ergenekon plot. The mysterious Ergenekon case has become the largest and most controversial judicial investigation in recent Turkish history. Hundreds of people, mostly opponents of AKP including the high-ranking Army officers, famous journalists, writers, artists, university professors, and heads of modern, secular civil societies have been detained and imprisoned.



Judge Işıl Karakaş at the The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) stated in Nov. 2011 that "Since the AKP government took power in Turkey in 2003, Turkey gradually became the country with the highest number of decisions for violations in the field of press freedom and freedom of expression. Turkey is

followed by France with ten violations whereas this figure exceeds two hundred for Turkey."

¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, The Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, April 2012

A Memorable 2012 Youth Day Celebration

Atatürk Society of America held a festive event for the Turkish-American community to celebrate the Youth Day, “19 Mayıs, Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı,” commemorating the start of the Turkish War of Independence on May 19, 1919 and Atatürk’s 131th birthday, traditionally accepted as May 19. The celebration was held at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. The highlight

of the evening was the lecture by our guest speaker, the Honorable Mr. Oktay Ekşi, current member of the Turkish Parliament (CHP) and legendary journalist who came from Turkey to give detailed accounts of the current state of affairs in Turkey. He is uniquely qualified for this position since he was vice chairman and founding member, and later president of the World Association of Press Councils

(WAPC). He also served as founding chairman of the National Committee of International Press Institute in Turkey.

During the celebrations, the Atatürk Society of America presented Mr. Oktay Ekşi with the “Free Press and Democracy Award” for his exemplary work in advocating democracy, secularism and modernism in Turkey. Mr. Ekşi will share this award with his journalist colleagues who



Mr. Oktay Ekşi



Mr. Oktay Ekşi and Founding Chairman Mr. Yavalar



Burcu Kurkan



Mr. Oktay Eksi and Dr. Aysel Eksi



Ms. İlmiye Çığ
Historian, Archaeologist



Mr. Turgut Ozakman
Writer, Historian

are currently unfairly serving jail sentences for freedom of expression charges.

Two other awards were presented in absentia to a pair of historians living in Turkey. The absentee recipient of the "History and Literature Award" was Turgut Özakman, a prominent writer,

historian and lawyer. The absentee recipient of the "Secularism and Civilization Award" was Ms. Muazzez İlmiye Çığ, a historian, archaeologist and strong advocate of secularism. Dr. Aysel Ekşi accepted the two awards on behalf of Mr. Özakman and Ms. Çığ.

During the ceremony, Burce Kurkan from the University of Maryland gave this year's presentation of Atatürk's address to the youth, and Mr. Berk Vural, also a student from the University of Maryland spoke on behalf of Turkish American youth about the pride and confidence inspired by Atatürk and his accomplishments.

The cake-cutting ceremony was followed by a dinner for participants of this year's events.

National Press Club Visit to Draw Attention to Press Freedom Restrictions in Turkey

During Mr. Eksi's visit in Washington, Mr. John Hughes, a member of the board of the National Press Club organized a luncheon in Mr. Ekşi's honor on May 16, 2012. The guest had the opportunity to brief his hosts on a variety of press freedom concerns including: The detention of at least 70 secular journalists, most detained on manufactured charges, while the real reason is their criticism of the Government, and especially Prime Minister Erdogan; use of the tax collectors, levying extremely heavy charges to "punish" media owners who allow stories to be printed critical of the Government;



Mr. Oktay Eksi and Dr. Aysel Eksi with ASA Board Members

and pressure on employers to fire journalists and editorial writers who don't tow the party line. In addition, freedom of expression is seriously curtailed when journalists use self-censorship to avoid losing employment or facing criminal charges.

Visit with Members of Congress on Capitol Hill

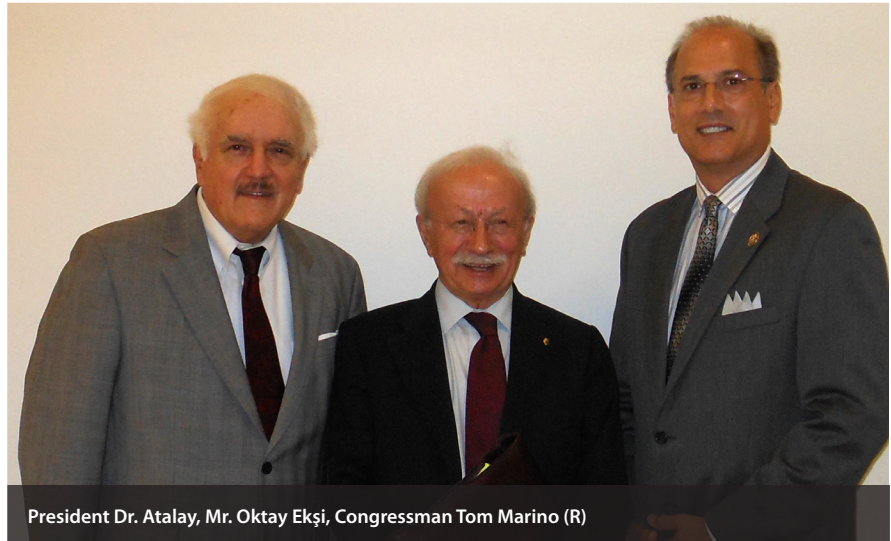
Mr. Ekşi went to the US Congress where he met with some of his US counterparts, including Congressman Mike Turner (R-OH), Chairman of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and Congressman Tom Marino (R-PA), Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He informed them of the dire state of the freedom of expression and press under the AKP government in Turkey. Furthermore, Mr. Ekşi was interviewed by the Voice of America. You may watch the interview which was shown on the TGRT News Channel on May 18 on Youtube.

Our honorary guest, Mr. Ekşi has long been an eloquent champion of democracy, secularism and modernism, evident in the wealth of his achievements. He has held numerous prestigious positions prior to his election as a member of the Parliament, among these: an immensely influential columnist; general manager of Hürriyet News Agency; chairman and charter member of the Turkish Press Council; vice chairman and founding member, and later president of the World Association of Press Councils (WAPC); founding chairman of the Basın Enstitüsü Derneği (National Committee of International Press Institute).

Mr. Ekşi holds a degree in journalism from Ankara University and an Honorary Doctorate from İstanbul University. He is also the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Middle East Technical University. When the current Prime Minister was highly insulted by one of his articles in 2010, Mr. Ekşi resigned from Hürriyet, ran for a seat in the Parliament (from the opposition party, CHP) and easily won. ►



President Dr. Atalay , Congressman Mike Turner (R), Mr. Oktay Ekşi



President Dr. Atalay, Mr. Oktay Ekşi, Congressman Tom Marino (R)



Mr. Oktay Ekşi and Barış Ornarlı

The Honorable Oktay Ekşi's Speech at the May 19, Youth Day Celebration

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased and honored to be here with you. I extend my sincere gratitude to you for coming, and particularly to Dr. Bülent Atalay and the Members of the Board of the Atatürk Society of America for organizing this event that I will regard as a life-long honor.

Today is May 19th, 2012...

I am very happy, because I am among people who know the significance of May 19th, and still celebrate it as a national holiday, a day that the Great Atatürk conferred on Turkey as the National "Youth and Sports Day".

I would like to quote a few words from Cem Ryan, an American who lives in Turkey, who understands the significance of May 19th to highlight the essence of this day.

"19th of May is a day that belongs to the youthful heirs of the secular revolution, not to the government. It is a celebration of their responsibility to protect the republic from all enemies, both foreign and domestic. As Atatürk said at the Sivas Congress in September 1919: "Youth, all the hope and future of the fatherland depend on you! Our motto is one and unchangeable: INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH!"

19th of May is such a day, a day of remembrance and recommitment. It is a day for us all to be reborn. And that is precisely why the government seeks to eliminate this vital day of celebration and reaffirmation. (...) In January, it banned the nationwide use of stadiums for 19th of May ceremonies claiming that it might be too cold for the children. Imagine it being too cold in May."

The allied nations who were victorious in the war deployed troops all over the country, with heaviest concentration in the capital city of İstanbul and in İzmir. They were finally implementing their centuries-old plan of carving up the Ottoman lands and leaving a small section of Anatolia for the Turks. For Turks to succeed under these conditions — I would venture, without exaggerating — an army would have

been required that was 10 times larger than what was available.

Against all the internal and external forces, however, the impossible was achieved under the leadership of Atatürk, with the rag-tag army that he was able to mobilize. And with this he proceeded to lay the foundations of a new, independent, and secular Turkish Republic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As everyone knows and accepts, the United States of America is a "great" nation. And great-nations exhibit an important trait: Their allies are determined by their domains of influence and not by their geographical borders. In light of our histories we have been allies with you for a long time. Your present ally Turkey, however, is not the ally you have known in the past.

One of the individuals who best understood Atatürk's Turkey is the Honorable John Grew, the first US Ambassador to the newly established Turkish Republic.

In 1928, Mr. Grew, in his memoirs entitled, "Turbulent Era" writes that Atatürk's reforms are necessary for the nation to become more civilized and at least one generation must be raised to cement these reforms in the society.

In fact, after Mr. Grew made this statement, four generations were raised in Turkey. However, the threat shown by those against Atatürk's reforms have not subsided. The enemy of the reforms gave a misleading perception of the reforms being against Islam. Furthermore, some conservative political parties used religion and supported the enemies of the reforms to win the votes of the conservative electoral base. The resentment against the modern Republic grew during former Prime Minister and President Turgut Özal's government in the 1980's. Today, such enmity is at its peak.

In present day Turkey there have been no direct insults expressed towards Atatürk YET! There are no suggestions of pulling down his statues or taking down his pictures from the walls of government and private institutions. However, something that is being done at every

opportunity, without saying anything malicious about Atatürk, is keeping only the name of the secular Republic while systematically converting it into an Islamic Republic.

How do we know this?

Among all the attributes of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and his government, the most important one concerning Turkey today as well as Turkey in the future is that Erdoğan himself is a zealot Muslim, his devotion bordering on fanaticism. The debate regarding a Secular system versus Sharia (Religious Law) has been going on for the last two hundred years in Turkish society. Erdoğan, however, is a strong advocate of Sharia in this debate.

I quote him in his own words:

"Even if the skies and the earth open up and floods and volcanoes rain on us, we will not return to secular governance. Islam is my reference."

"One cannot be a secularist and a Muslim at the same time. You are either a Muslim or a secularist, but not both."

"It is meaningless to stand like a [mindless] statue, pretending to show respect for Atatürk instead one should pray." (May 12, 1994 the newspaper Hürriyet)

"All schools will be turned into Religious Schools" (September 17, 1994, the newspaper Cumhuriyet)

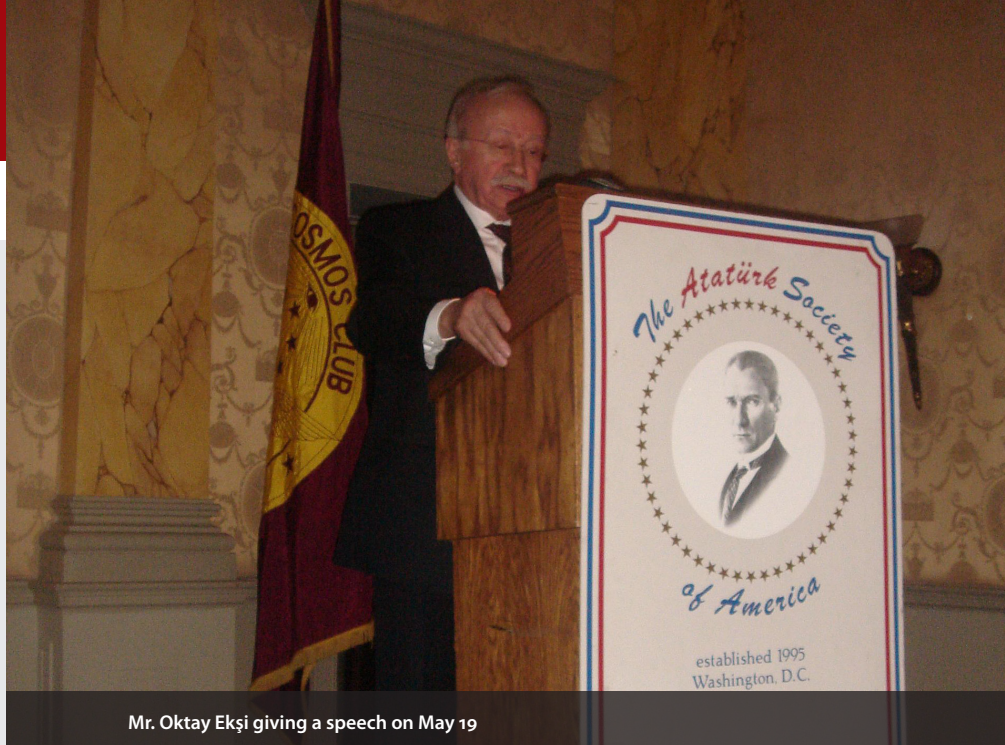
"Thank God 99% of Turks are Muslims. Accordingly, 99% must say, 'Thank God for Sharia.' I am for Sharia. And Sharia is synonymous with Islam, offering the very Rules of God." (November 21, 1994)

"I claim, people cannot be secular. As a matter of fact, our constitution states: 'The Turkish Republic is secular not that Turkish citizens are secular. Secularism cannot preempt Islam.'" (July 10, 1998, the newspaper Hürriyet)

"We gave into Western immorality, to DRINKING AND GAMBLING"

"Our purpose is to nurture a religious and VINDICTIVE youth."

The foregoing statements clearly reveal



Mr. Oktay Ekşi giving a speech on May 19

Erdoğan's core beliefs.

I said earlier, "America's present ally Turkey is not the ally you know!"

Last March, Erdoğan, with that mindset seen in his quotes, passed legislation in Parliament requiring Public Schools to offer "elective classes" in the Quran and on the life of the Prophet Mohammed. Although described as "electives", they become de facto "required classes", because of prevailing peer pressure, and pressure from teachers, who in turn feel pressure from the government. Educating the youth in the Quran, specifically in "elective" religion courses, will prepare a generation of individuals who will seek to govern the nation according to tenets of Islam thereafter.

Mr. Erdoğan's plan "... to transform secular schools to religious schools" (the newspaper Cumhuriyet, September 17, 1994) is right on course. In time, 80-90% of Turkey's population will comprise Erdoğan's electoral base. Of course, if the 'religious and vindictive youth' he creates can turn around and devour its creators, only then Erdoğan would be able to realize what he has done.

It is reasonable in progressive, and predominantly Christian countries to say, "Where is the harm for a person to learn about the Scriptures of his own faith, and about the life of the Prophet who brought the Scriptures?" This may seem sensible in Christian societies that have long come to terms with the separation of Church and State, but it is entirely different in Islamic societies, where the religion is regarded not as a moral code, but a legislated code, the Law. Thus, the Mosque still strives to take over the reins of government. There is no separation

of Mosque and State.

Islam controls all aspects of a practicing Muslim's life, from prenatal to postmortem. Secularism cannot exist where there is Sharia. These systems of governance are mutually exclusive. If the national religion is Islam, then Islam must be the law of the land. The fanatic Muslims are UNFORGIVEN ENEMIES of Atatürk and his principles of secularism. They can never forgive him for separating Mosque and State.

Earlier, I promised to explain the reasons zealot Muslims are still unable to openly attack Atatürk. In the past, the civilian governments had behaved cautiously, knowing that a secularist Turkish Army, dedicated to preserving Atatürk's legacy, was keeping a watchful eye. But now, the influence of the Armed Forces has disappeared. The reason Atatürk has not yet become an open target is that Erdoğan sees the majority in all sectors — the judiciary, academic, media, the business world — all except the religious sector, is still devoted to Atatürk. Atatürk still stands tall in their minds. And his tomb, Anıt Kabir, is overflowing with in ever growing numbers of visitors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
again, I will quote Mr. Ryans on the state of affairs in Turkey:

"Consider conditions today (...)Labor unions bludgeoned to submission. Culture ignored. The arts devalued. Artists abused. Dramatic theater collapsed. A brutal police force forever attacking the citizens with pepper gas, clubs, water cannons. (...) The thoroughly disreputable Turkish judicial system where electronic eavesdropping, forgeries, secret witnesses, tampered evidence and political

meddling pollute the law. Consider further the rampant jailing of all opposed to this socio-political nightmare. The purge and collapse of the army..."

As for plight of media in Turkey:

During his December 2009 visit to the United States, Prime Minister Erdoğan gave a speech to students at Johns Hopkins University, in which he claimed, "The Turkish press enjoys more freedom than the American press."

However, a number of watch dog organizations, for example The Committee to Protect Journalists, and Freedom House, both based in the US; the International Press Institute, the European Federation of Journalists, and Reporters without Borders, all based in Europe; — without a single exception, choose to disagree. They reveal the truth that the Turkish Press is under unprecedented pressure, beyond anything seen before. According to a new report by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) the number of journalists under arrest in Turkey nearly doubled since 2011 to present, from 57 to 95.

I offer you a few examples:

When journalist Ahmet Şık announced the title for a prospective book, "The İmam's Army," on which he had been working on, he was arrested. This happened even before the manuscript was submitted for publication. It was assumed by the government that the book was going to target Fethullah Gülen Hodja, the leader of the religious organization. Ahmet Şık spent an entire year in prison effectively on trumped up charges.

A similar experience befell journalist, Nedim Şener, the 2010 recipient of the prestigious, 'Press Hero Award' of the International Press Institute. He was in jail for a year, without any tangible reason, without any evidence. Nedim Şener's real crime was also to publish a book exposing the Gülen Group's questionable goals, specifically the placement of its members in government establishments.

Certainly there are countless other issues in speaking about Turkey. I extend my heartfelt thanks to you for listening..." ▮

The complete copy the of Mr. Ekşi's speech can be found on the ASA's website, www.ataturk-society.org.

Nationalism *à la Turca*

"Solidarity, which is the lifeline of national security and the motor force behind national development along the contemporary universal civilization, is undermined."

By Metin Camcıgil
Former ASA President

Many important events took place in Turkey's historical calendar between 29 October and 10 November. November 3-5, 1914 are the dates Russia, England and France declared war on the Ottoman Empire drawing it into WWI; October 30, 1918 is the day of Mondros ceasefire between the warring parties and the start of occupation of strategic points in the Empire by the victorious Allied Powers; November 7, 1919 is the day the Turkish national liberation movement held first elections for a National Assembly (NA) independent from the Sultanate; November 1, 1922 is the day the NA abolished the Khalifate and Sultanate; October 29, 1923 is the day

the NA declared the republican regime; November 1, 1928 is the day of adoption of Latin script by the NA to replace the Arabic script (one of the most important reforms to challenge the nation for joining the contemporary civilization); on November 10, 1938 Atatürk died.

Therefore, there are many things for Turks to recall and reflect on at this time of the year. I chose to reflect this year on the most important of the reforms and in fact the driving force behind all of them, the "Turkish nationalism". Nationalism was a reform in Turkey, because it did not exist in the second half of the long existence of the Ottoman Empire. "Turkish nationalism" was a reform that made the other reforms possible on the path to modernization (joining the contemporary civilization)*. Furthermore, I find this subject

topical, because the current Islamist administration is claiming to be nationalist. The administration may be assuming this role in order not only to attract the votes of nationalists in the country, but also to find a solution to the Kurdish insurgency, to the Pheneriote Orthodox Church's efforts to gain ecumenical status, and to the increasing demands by Alevis for recognition.

However, we need to consider and learn what this Islamist government means by nationalism. Based on the Government's past and continuing record, I assume that their nationalism must be for the recreation of the Ottoman style nations, millets. They must believe in the ummet/millet system of society (panislamist view), to conform to their Ottomanist domestic and foreign policies, regardless of their public rhetoric. Their actions prove without a doubt that their aspiration is to establish a political and economic leadership over the Muslim countries in the Middle East and Africa. They have already succeeded in reinstating Ottomanism in Turkey by re-interpreting the secular and democratic principles of the state, by re-engineering the social and judicial systems. There is no reason why they cannot succeed in reintroducing the millet system by way of reinterpretation of nationalism. The current international events are such that Turks and the international community are all ready to accept such an interpretation.

A cursory look at the history of "Turkish nationalism" would be sufficient to verify this view. Seljuks, later Ottomans, kept their Turkish character from the 12th to the 16th century as they were expanding. When the state assumed the religious





mantle of khalif after conquering Mecca in 1517, it started to pursue a policy based mainly on religion. Having spread over a large mass of land and sea, the Empire consisted of numerous different nations, cultures, and religions. The masters of the Empire, who were charged with holding it together, were co-religionists, ummet.

I feel obliged to emphasize or explain some of the terms because politicians and some commentators have the habit of twisting the meaning of certain words for their own purposes. Non-muslims, who were at the service of the state were “nations”, millet. The identity of citizens was recognized by their religious affiliation, not by their language, nationality, or land. Turkishness was forgotten, even suppressed, for fear of inciting nationalism among many nations living within the Empire. Religious leaders were well aware that a society based on religious foundation made people subservient to the state, unquestioning adherence to religion impeded people from believing in themselves, thus owning the state. Whereas, a society based on the notion of national identity works with the principle of people’s sovereignty over the state.

Turkish intelligentsia in the Ottoman Empire rediscovered their Turkishness in the 19th century. The first Ottoman Constitution of 1876 stipulated in its

Article 18 that the State’s official language was Turkish, and in Article 57 that the parliamentary debates were to be made in Turkish; an Executive Order in 1894 mandated the teaching of Turkish in all schools, including foreign schools. That was the century in which nationalism and nation-state concepts spread around the world as a result of the American and French popular uprisings for freedom, individual rights and equality. Nationalism became the social bond. Millets in the Empire also could not be kept isolated and away from this current. It was natural for them to rally around their national identity, and to seek independence with the help of countries dedicated to ending the Ottoman hurdle in the way of the modernizing world. This trend included several co-religionist Arab nations, despite the fact that Ottomans served as their protective guardians for about 400 years. So much was the reliance on ummet system: Nationalism had trumped religion. Turks in the Empire were left empty handed. “The Emperor was naked”. The intellectuals in the Empire and some sultans began in 1830s to embrace Turkish nationalism in order to rescue the crumbling Empire. But, the religious community upset every modernization attempt with violent oppositions.

It was not until 1920 that Turks finally realized they had to dislodge religion from

its pedestal to be able to reclaim their own identity, reinstate the sovereignty of the nation, and to catch-up with ever-advancing contemporary civilization. They made a historically unprecedented élan to embrace nationalism in order to fight a war for their independence, and thereafter to start on a path to contemporary modernization, all within a period of twenty years. Drastic and dramatic changes were like instating peoples’ sovereignty (secularism, republican regime), solidarity for independence (nationalism), individuals’ rights, freedom and women’s equality (populism), starting up a new industry with state assistance, the adoption of a latin script that opened the society to the world culture and science (progress). The type of nationalism (called Atatürk nationalism) that was the formidable force behind all this incomparable achievement, was based on history, not on ethnicity, chauvinism, nor religion. Public solidarity based only on nationalistic feelings was what carried Atatürk to the liberation victory, and energized the people to reforms.

Unfortunately, this relentless modernization process based on national solidarity lasted only for a very short period of approximately twenty years. Having realized this feat about one hundred years later than the Western world did, Turks

continued on page 21

Atatürk and the Villagers

"Who is the 'effendi' [the steward and master] of this nation? Well, Turkey's backbone, indeed, the ultimate master of the land is the 'köylü' — the peasant, who produces our food, and fights our wars." — Atatürk

By Cem Özmeral

Today there seems to be a concerted effort by the present government of Turkey to erase the memory of Atatürk from people's minds. People like me who were raised with Atatürk's secular principles and reforms that serve as the foundation of the Turkish Republic sense a disturbing development, especially on the occasion of National Holidays.

These holidays — April 23, "Children's Day," dedicated to the children and marking the founding day of the Turkish Parliament; May 19, "Youth Day," commemorating Mustafa Kemal's landing on the Anatolian soil and launching the War of Independence against

the nation's second President. İnönü's name has been dropped altogether from history books. Under the guise of the new educational program, the new elementary education system "4+4+4" was introduced that requires children under six to enroll in schools that facilitate their entry into religious programs. Meanwhile, at high school level, "Imam Hatip Schools," with religious curricula designed to produce "imams" ("clerics") are being built in greater number than are traditional secular high schools.

We describe ourselves as "enlightened," but what have we done? Have we made modern education available in the smaller villages and hamlets in Anatolia the way Atatürk had intended for us to do, and indeed as Atatürk's Minister of Education, Hasan Ali Yücel, had attempted to do early on? Have we helped sufficiently to tackle poverty, and have we respected the common man's culture and traditions? Or have we simply put distance between ourselves and them, drawing a distinction,

"We the educated, they the ignorant;" "We the Westerners, they the Easterners;" "We the secular, they the religious..."

Atatürk's Intent

Today there are people who regard the Turkish peasant and the Anatolian people, who Atatürk had called "effendi," the "master of our Nation" as somewhat inferior. Some politicians in the government are good examples of this observation. Once in a while, you will witness on television, an ordinary citizen making a complaint no more serious than raising his voice to the official; and he will immediately be silenced by the security and possibly be humiliated by the official. The charge: "The official represents the government and no one can talk back to him." A second group is comprised of many of us, "the enlightened," who profess superiority to the Anatolian people and their traditions, culture and beliefs. Despotism abounds in both: there is little room for communication, for listening and trying to understand the other.



occupying forces; August 30, "Victory Day," marking the final defeat of the occupying forces; and October 29, "Republic Day," coinciding with the announcement of the birth of the new Turkish Republic — are all secular in nature. In recent years, their observance has been systematically suppressed, resulting in a gradual waning of enthusiasm in the populace.

The government has been imposing new regulations on state ceremonies, military celebrations, laying of wreaths at national monuments and even visitations to Atatürk's mausoleum on national holidays. As chapters about Atatürk's reforms are gradually being removed from textbooks, even greater indignity has befallen İsmet İnönü, Atatürk's closest comrade in arms during the War of Independence, and his successor as the



In these two photographs Atatürk is seen listening intently to the citizens, his constituents. His face shows the concern of a father who feels the frustration with his child's problems.



Atatürk's own poignant pronouncement regarding the köylü appears in a March 1, 1922 speechⁱ:

"Who is the steward and master of this nation? Well, Turkey's backbone, indeed, the ultimate master of the land, is the "köylü," the peasant, who produces our food. For seven centuries we have sent him to distant lands and asked him to shed his blood, and leave his bones. But we took his opportunities and wealth from his hands and wasted them. Despite all his contributions, all his sacrifices, we denigrated him shamelessly, arrogantly. He has been deprived to this day of equal access to formal education. He is entitled to more prosperity, more happiness and greater wealth than the rest of us. The foremost priority of our educational policy should be to reform our current educational system." The Turkish Grand National Assembly's economic policies should strive toward rectifying the injustice done to the peasant.

What we need to do here today is to evaluate Atatürk's words, and put them in the context of the present time, as well as in today's environment, and ask ourselves what we have done since his death seventy-four years ago. It is up to the reader to ponder to what degree educational reform has hitherto been brought

In this photo, Atatürk is seen sitting on a low hassock, surrounded by a group of köylü. He is sitting at the same level, listening to their problems, and commiserating with them.



to the Anatolian hinterland.

Cevat Dursunoğlu reports on an accidental meeting between Atatürk and a group of Anatolian "köylü," that is at the same time poignant, and thoroughly revealing of Atatürk's values.ⁱⁱ

"The date is July 3, 1919. General Mustafa Kemal, the revered hero of the Gallipoli Campaign, arrives in Erzurum. He is greeted by General Kazım Karabekir and his staff in Ilica, a town 15 km to the south of the city. There, under a willow tree, he is served coffee, and they proceed to discuss the crucial steps that must be taken in order to save the country. Meanwhile, the sun is seen setting over the hills to the west, creating a sky of burnished copper. Suddenly, the silhouette of a group trudging along the crest of the hill appears just above the ridge, reminiscent of a statue cast in a dark metal. Slowly the group comes into full view. It's a caravan comprised of 20-30 men, women and children. The head of the caravan is an old man, his weatherworn face revealing his age as well as the effects of the searing sun and howling wind of the Anatolian plateau. He is supporting a full white beard that spills over his barrel chest as well as a woolsack draped over a shoulder. And with a shepherd's staff he is clutching in his fist, he resembles more a mythical god from an Eastern fable than an all-too-ordinary mortal.

When the caravan reaches the willow Mustafa Kemal stands up, and invites the leaders to join his own group under the tree. After the exchange of welcoming remarks, he asks them whence they come and where they're heading. The old man responds, "When the Russians first came, we had to abandon our homes and make

our way to the southern plains of Çukurova... and now we are returning home."

Mustafa Kemal, listening to the account of the old man regarding the hardships in the approaching winter in Erzurum... and especially the dangers they face when they reach home, probes further, —"Was it impossible to live in Çukurova?"

—"Oh, no!" responds the old man, "Çukurova was like paradise. If you plant [a single seed] in Çukurova, you sow a thousand. Our living there was superior to even that of the Sultan... but we've heard that a lowlife [a government official] has promised Erzurum to foreigners. [We are returning to fight.]"

These words of resolve coming from the old man bring tears to Atatürk's eyes. After the group departs, Atatürk turns to his men and remarks, "How can you possibly fail with these people?"

Ultimately, is it not that exquisite synergy, that mutual adoration and respect between Atatürk and the köylü that brought the Turks victory in their War of Independence!

POSTSCRIPTⁱⁱⁱ

I wrote this article on August 30, 2012, in large part in order to ask some soul-searching questions of ourselves, and especially to ponder the dichotomy of "we" vs. "they." ▮

SOURCES:

- i Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Türk İnkılap Enstitüsü Yayınları, İstanbul 1945; Seri Konferanslar, Robert Kolej Yayınları, İstanbul 1964.
- ii Çeşitli Cepheleriyle Atatürk.
- iii For a more comprehensive version of the article in Turkish, see: Atatürk'ü Anlamak.



BUILDING A NATION

At the opening of the İstanbul Metro rail system in August 2012, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan referring to the lyrics of the patriotic song “We weaved the motherland with iron threads” taken from the patriotic hymn “The 10th year anthem”, he said: “What did you weave? You haven’t woven anything at all. We are the ones weaving Turkey with iron threads now.”

Below is an answer to this comment by an ASA member:

In Turkey there is a patriotic song called the “10th Year Anthem/ Onuncu Yıl Marşı”. It was chosen as the winning anthem at a competition for the 10th year celebrations of the republic. The lyrics were written by Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel and Behçet Kemal Çağlar, and it was composed by Cemal Reşit Rey in 1933. Atatürk wrote one of the verses of this anthem, and it is the very verse that says “We weaved the motherland with iron threads”. The original verse was: “Smoke is fuming on every hill around the country”; Atatürk changed it to honor the accomplishments of Behic Erkin, the founder of the State Railroads, and its first General Manager between 1920-1926. Atatürk and Behic Erkin were very close friends since 1907 and worked together during war and

peacetime to build the Republic. After adding the new lyrics to the anthem, to praise the successful advancement and expansion of the railroad system, Atatürk told Mr. Erkin: “Your labor is expressed better with this verse”. Behic Erkin played one of the most important roles in the Independence War by running the railroads flawlessly. And the words Atatürk chose describe that incredible work and development so well. Unfortunately, PM Erdoğan chose those very words to mock, words which carry such an important message; the only verse of any anthem written by Atatürk. By doing so, disrespectfully and foolishly, he triggered loud reactions from the media and citizens all over the country, reminding him and the nation the well documented facts.

The AKP government’s actions, PM Erdoğan’s denial of Atatürk’s place in the history, and the current economic picture of the country, often reminds one of “The Emperor’s New Clothes” a short tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The tale is about two weavers who promise an Emperor a new suit of clothes that is invisible to those unfit for their positions, stupid, or incompetent. When the Emperor parades before his subjects in his new clothes, a child cries out, “But he isn’t wearing anything at all!” This tale is remembered and used a lot in social situations as well as political ones when the obvious truth is denied by the majority, despite the proof of their own eyes, especially when declared by the government.

The 10th Year Anthem is almost as precious as the National Anthem to any Turk. If all ages of Turks still sing it with enthusiasm and pride, it is because they can still feel the energetic remarkable transformation and accomplishments that took place during those first 10 years. Today’s technological world is dramatically different from the world of 1923. And yet, there is so much to be learned from looking back to the remarkable transformation the Turkish nation went through in such a short time.

It is absurd to compare investments made 89 years ago by a war-weary country to those made today when technology is so much more advanced and the country is much wealthier and better





educated. The iron webs of those days were the symbol of freedom, of sacrifice and patriotism of the citizens of a young nation, and represented the victory against imperialism..... They were built with Turkish capital, by Turkish experts, technicians and workers. PM Erdoğan must have forgotten that those words were written 80 years ago. The metro rail system which PM Erdoğan is so proud of is 21.6 km long. Compare this to the 4559km of railroads in 1923 which reached 8,637km by 1933.

To look down on the accomplishments of a nation of 12-13 million people who survived many wars, yet accomplished so much with very little resources condescending, discourteous for a politician, and doesn't make any political sense.

Politics in Turkey today became so extreme, to the point of being untruthful. It is sad to see a high official of a nation to distort the well known and much respected facts, instead of being proud of them. The current government has much to emulate from Atatürk's record. It should learn from history rather than attempting to rewrite it.

There can be no doubt that this progressive era of great accomplishments reinforced faith in human progress and changed the character of relationships between Turkey and its neighbors. In 1934, Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, nominated Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize, and commented that "in the life of a nation it is very seldom

that changes to such a radical degree were carried out in such a short period of time." Atatürk's slogan "peace in the country, peace in the world" shows his dedication to spread his humanist ideas not only in his war torn country, but beyond, to all peoples of the world.

"There can be no political independence without economic independence, and the national sovereignty should be supported by financial sovereignty" Atatürk said in his opening speech at the İzmir economic Congress in February 1923. He emphasized the urgency of obtaining self-sufficiency for Turkey without the aid of foreign capital. He said "Economy is the strongest foundation, the only and real strength, in order to reach total freedom" ▀

To be a Woman in the World and in Turkey

By Dr. Aysel Ekşi

Dr. Aysel Ekşi, an adolescent psychiatrist with numerous published works, is a graduate of the Medical School of Ankara University. Dr. Ekşi is also recognized as a formidable advocate of secularism and women's rights. She is one of the founders of Çağdaş Yaşamı Desteklemek Derneği (ÇYDD) and the first President in 1989. ÇYDD promotes women's progress in society and has overseen the granting of more than 100,000 scholarships; and the building of 36 dormitories, 54 elementary schools, one high school, and five pre-schools. ÇYDD continues to educate the public at its six centers throughout Turkey. Dr. Ekşi is married to Hon. Oktay Ekşi and has two children and two grandchildren.

Dr. Aysel Ekşi wrote the following article titled "To be a Woman in the World and in Turkey" during her stay in Washington, DC in May 2012 for the members of the Atatürk Society of America.

Women around the world...

Discrimination against women starts at birth for a girl, and continues all her life in many countries around the world. And throughout her life, compared to a man, a woman encounters many problems that are caused by being poorer, having a low social status, lack of education and the attitude of society.

Let's give some examples. Two thirds of the 876 million adults who are illiterate in the world are women. Women earn less than men in many countries and the wages of women laborers are 30 to 40 percent lower compared to men who do the same job. In developing countries, 63 percent of women around childbearing age are anemic because of malnourishment. Every year more than 40 million women have abortion and they are forced to have half of these procedures done under unhealthy conditions. Every year more than half a million women lose their life during pregnancy or birth.

About one of every four women in the world is a victim of violence. Violence against women is a breach of human rights. These injuries, sexual assaults, and ill treatment incidents are

increasing compared to previous years. 1975 and 1985 were accepted as the Year of Women. In July 1985, during World Women's Conference, it was emphasized that violence exists in different dimensions in every country and this must be prevented. It was discussed that in each society there was a need for a national court which should follow the violence matters. And again in 1985, the United Nations emphasized the need for taking precautions against all kinds of violence, by accepting the "Agreement to Prevent All kinds of Discrimination against Women".

Fortunately, the majority of women are becoming more conscious about improving their positions in the society in the 21st century, and they are becoming more organized. They want to have the same rights and opportunities as men, both in education and other services.

Women in Turkey...

In light of these assessments, women in Turkey share the same despair that most of the other women experience in the world. Women who live in Turkey of the 2000s have to eliminate all kinds of violence in the family, as well as to overcome backwardness in education, employment, health and the social fields. According to the latest statistics, only 81 percent of our women are literate, 19 percent is still illiterate. In other words, one in every five women today never received any type of education. When we look at participation in workforce, it is seen that the percentage of women who are graduates of higher education is 70 percent, while the participation of those who didn't graduate from high school is 22 percent. Number of working women is 6.7 million. But every 58 women out of 100, who are assumed to be employed, work without being registered at any security institution. Percentage of off-the-record (unregistered) workers is 58, while the percentage of unemployed women is 13.

Most of our women's problems are not just because of lack of sufficiency in the field of education and employment. We also have wounds like "honor killings" in the social field. It is hard to believe, but according to various researches, 20 percent of women live in common-law marriages. This means they are the second wife or

"kuma" in Turkish. Most of the time this is the only solution for uneducated and unemployed women.

Another problem in the social field is the issue of "child brides", young girls who are forced to get married before they are even 15 years old. According to the Population Research Institute at Hacettepe University, there are more than 5 million child brides in Turkey. This percentage climbs up to 40 - 42 in the East and Southeast. In those regions, 32 out of 100 marriages are child-bride cases. The risk of death during pregnancy and birth is five times more for 10 - 14 year old girls, compared to 20 - 24 year olds who face the same risk.... The subject of scores of children that are born of uneducated mothers is a serious problem that needs to be addressed urgently in our country.

As physical violence, sexual assault and ill-treatment cases against women are increasing around the world in recent years, unfortunately, women in Turkey are also experiencing the same negative treatments. According to some findings of a research done by the Prime Ministries Family Research Institution, in 39 percent of families there is physical violence, and there is verbal violence in 53 percent of the families. These findings were projected into our domestic law, and as a result, the "Family Protection Law" was accepted on January 14, 1998, and additions and changes to this law were made in 2007. While there were 3207 applications in 2001, three years after the law was put to force, this number has been increasing every year at a rate of almost 100 percent.

Consequently, the government must do its part, and provide the necessary support and security to protect, shelter, provide economic empowerment, and jobs to women who are victims of violence. The most difficult part of applying this law is providing shelter to the victims of violence.

Women in Turkey are experiencing the problems that are mentioned briefly above. Furthermore, they are struggling not to compromise secularism, and keep on living as citizens of a

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Nationalism à la Turca

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encountered another setback due to changing circumstances in the intervening period. German nationalism and dictatorship dragged the world to a disastrous WWII. The international community condemned nationalism. The Nazi style racist nationalism attached a stigma to the very important and useful social fact of nationalism. Yet, there is no point in continuing to vilify and bash nationalism because of a short-lived aberration in history (1930-45). Nationalism is a natural and historical fact arising from the social need for solidarity. Nationalism gave life to many countries in the world, and it continues to do so in many countries under more politically correct names, like patriotism, national interests, etc. Nationalism is the natural binding element in a society, if removed it has to be replaced by some kind of social binding element. Religion lurking behind the curtain of history is always ready to jump in. And, it has; religiosity has been on the rise in many countries, west and east, since WWII.

Turkey also having started the process in 1940s finally put religion back on the pedestal in 2002 by electing the Islamist party to govern the country. True to the times, the religionists did not reverse the course to membership in universal civilization by Ottoman style uprisings and atrocities, but by modern day democratic elections. Nevertheless, the result was the same, a setback on the way to contemporary universal

civilization. This was yet another example of an almost two hundred year old wavering attitude (irresoluteness) of the Turks towards “nationalism”. Although reforms were achieved at a vigorous pace within the first twenty years of the Republic, reforms were not advanced, and not even maintained in the following sixty years. The religionists took advantage of the neglect and slowly but surely made inroads to Turkish politics. They crowned their hard work in 2002 by capturing power. Ever since, the religionists started diligently to meddle with the reforms, not to abolish them outright, but to redefine them according to their “book”.

It appears that the Turkish character is not conducive in sustaining nationalist solidarity. This may be due to Turks’ individualistic mentality and life style. Turks have never developed a tradition of community, a notion of social service, interdependence, and altruistic volunteerism. Therefore, casting doubt on nationalism, instead of promoting it, easily erodes and eventually will weaken solidarity within the Turkish society. Solidarity, which is the lifeline of national security and the motor force behind national development along the contemporary universal civilization, is undermined. This is a worse case scenario for a nation. Neither the international community’s current attitude towards “nationalism”, nor the current Turkish administration’s interpretation of it are

encouraging to avoid that scenario. One cannot help but ask the Turkish administration whether the justification for their foreign policy re-oriented from the West towards the South is based on the perfidious act of Arabs during WWI? Whether the current Turkish aspiration for leadership of the Muslim world is based on the facts of Ottomans’ rise or fall? What type of solidarity would they rely on, the nationalistic one that gave independence and contemporary civilization to them, or the religious one that did not help keep Ottoman Empire together?

In the face of nationalist and religionist uncertainties in Turkey, Turks will be well served if they would remember that although they have been Muslims by choice for about one thousand years, they were born Turks by nature for at least four thousand years. Societies are composed of smaller social units, groups or communities (professional, local, racial, religious, etc.), also classes in societies are unavoidable; but, all these components need a binding element to be complementary of each other, in order to avoid clashes and be able to develop and live in peace. That binding element is solidarity; solidarity is what holds a society together. The type of solidarity determines the type and durability of a society. Solidarity based on national bonds is the most natural and durable. It becomes vitally important to reflect on this history for a nation who will soon be presented with a new social contract, the Constitution, re-written by the admirers and aspirers of the Ottoman ways. ▀

REFERENCES

- “The current administration has been showing a nationalist face since the last election. It dons a nationalist mantle in order to survive between the two nationalist groups appeared in the country because of a Kurdish movement surging in the last twenty years. It will achieve what the earlier ruling parties could not; it will assume Atatürk nationalism, however, with a redefined Atatürk nationalism” (free translation from “*Kimligimiz ve Niteligimizin Bekcisi*”, by the Author, sosyopolitikonu.blogspot.com, Sept. 2008)
- See S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, Cambridge U. Press 1976. O. Turkdogan, *Kemalist Sistem*, Alfa 1999. And, Bozkurt Guvene, *Türk Kimligi*, Remzi Kitabevi 4th edition 1996.
- Regarding the avoidance by late Ottomans the usage of the word Turks, although it was used by foreign observers, see T. Feyzioglu, *Atatürk ve Milliyetçilik*, TC 75 Yıl Armagani, TTK 1998, p.8; See also O. Turkdogan, , pp. 37, 38, 80, 254-257.
- O. Turkdogan, p. 47. About the rise of conscience and appreciation of the Turkish language during the late Ottoman era, see

O. Turkdogan, pp. 53, 76, 77.

- “There were reformers and reforms at crucial times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But even the most intelligent and perceptive of Ottoman reforms at this time adhered to the basic premise that the Ottoman system was far superior to anything that the infidel might develop” (S. Shaw, p. 175)
- “He (Osman II) believed the sole remedy for these conditions was to ‘Turkify’ both the palace and the Janissary corps. He also seems to have thought of moving the Ottoman government from the *devsime* center of Istanbul to some place in Anatolia where Turkish traditions and values would prevail, perhaps to Bursa or Ankara, thus presaging the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk by some three centuries. Janissaries broke into the palace (May 19, 1622) Osman deposed and later assassinated and Mustafa I restored to the throne. The reign of Osman II ended without any of his goals being realized; moreover the assassination of a ruling sultan set a new precedent that would be followed all too frequently in subsequent years.” (Shaw, p. 192, 193)
- “Opposition to the sultan (Selim III) had been building for a long

time. The Janissaries and others threatened by his reforms had been agitating since early in his reign. Opposition also came from the ulema, most of whom considered every innovation to be a violation of Islamic law. The revolt broke out in late May 1807 when the Janissary auxiliaries (*yamaks*) guarding the Bosphorus forts at Büyükdere, led by Kabakci Mustafa, assassinated a *Nizam-ı Cedid* officer joined as they went by thousands of Janissaries, ulema, religious students, and others to secure a *ferva* declaring Selim’s reforms illegal violations of religion and tradition and authorizing his deposition.” (Shaw, p. 273, 274)

The Istanbul Observatory built in 1575, only 32 years after the death of Copernicus, and four years before the birth of Kepler, was demolished by a *ferva* of the Seyhülislam (the high priest) as being against Sharia. (See, T. Feyzioglu, *Atatürk Yolu*, 3rd edition, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995, p.18)

“When geography classes were introduced in newly founded middle schools after the declaration of Tanzimat reforms sultan’s son-in-law, Sait pasha, told the sultan that showing maps in geography classes is an infidel practice, not allowed by Sharia law. We need to recall that the world’s famous map

was drawn many centuries earlier by the great Turkish seafarer Piri Reis in 1513.” (free translation by the Author from T. Feyzioglu, p. 26)

While Jewish, Armenian and Greek millets founded their printing houses between 1494 and 1627, a *ferva* for founding the first Turkish printing house was issued in 1727. (see T. Feyzioglu, p. 14)

“The principle of nation state defended by the Kemalist system has for its objective organizing and modernizing the society. “ (free translation by the Author from O. Turkdogan, p.113)

“If there were no Turks there would not have been Atatürk.” (free translation by the Author from a poem by Behcet Kemal Caglar, T. Feyzioglu, Atatürk ve Milliyetçilik, p.31)

“Turkey seems to have lost its rudder in the pluralist political storm. There seems to exist an uncertainty in Turkish national will, national unity, and national identity. A divided and confused society can no longer take control of its own affairs (democracy); the administration fills in the vacuum and takes charge with an iron fist (autocracy).” (Adulteration of National Identity, by the Author, sociopoliticalviews.blogspot.com, Sept. 2009)

Reflections of May 19, Youth Day by a Young Turk

"Atatürk's formation of a democratic republic cannot be our end state but only the beginning."

By Berk Vural

My name is Berk Vural. I was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and lived most of my life in the U.S. except for summers and two years, one when I attended kindergarten and another when I attended high school in the lovely western city of Izmir where my family comes from. It was during my second long stay as a 10th grader five years ago right around this time of the year when I experienced one of those few unforgettable days of my life. Looking out from our terrace in Gündoğdu Square in İzmir, I saw over one million people, included amongst them youth such as I, gathered in support of a secular state that formed the foundation of Turkey's democracy to date. I was overcome by emotion. A few days later on May 19th, I was reminded that as youth, we are entrusted with the solemn responsibility to maintain the pillars of democracy that had propelled Turkey to its modern state today in a politically tumultuous part of the world. A few years later, I was again reminded that those foundations of Turkish democracy not only served the Republic of Turkey, but extended beyond its borders to the Arab nations, serving as guiding lights of hope in the onset of the Arab Spring.

It was then that I realized that all of my education to date had an obvious purpose. I came to realize that as youth we are not only protectors of democracy for the Turkish Republic, but for humanity at large. My responsibilities to all of humanity around the world may have started with May 19th in Turkey but certainly extended beyond.

The joy of being empowered to use one's own mind and judgment to determine right from wrong instead of other's interpretations; the joy of exercising one's own conscious on what should be tolerable; the joy of being kind to those around me, to have tolerance for differences in opinion and derive strength from our diversity rather than condemning it; and last but not least, the joy of education, like the one I am acquiring at the University

of Maryland, that enables us to enhance our lives and lives of generations ahead – all of these joys and freedoms I came to realize in Izmir one day gave me the hope with which I stand before you today.

We, as youth, must work hard and strive to educate ourselves to the utmost extend we can – push boundaries of science, imagination, creativity, tolerance and kindness for the common good. Education in fields like science and technology will lead to world-wide prosperity by solving some serious problems facing the world such as global warming, energy shortage, epidemics of infectious diseases.

Therefore, governments & societies must support schools and scientific institutions without being oppressive and allowing free thinking,

creativity and innovations. As a great visionary, Atatürk has once said that "A military victory is insufficient for a true liberation. In our political life, in social life, in the education of people, science and technology will be our guide."

Atatürk's formation of a democratic republic cannot be our end state but only the beginning that will inspire us all to continue the hard work he started. The results of his hard work that came into fruition in the form of military victories, nation building and reforms enabled me to be here today as a Turkish-American with the confidence that I can too make a positive contribution in the world. For that, I would like to thank Kemal Atatürk, and the entire Turkish nation who united with him, to drive those positive changes in Turkey that benefit not only citizens of Turkey but also those of other nations in the Middle-

East, Central Asia, Africa and other parts of the world.

As a result, in light of the leadership we, the youth, need to carry forward from Atatürk, I can not possibly feel more proud today, on May 19th 2012, from claiming inheritance to the empowerment and responsibility that comes with being able to say: I am an ever more proud member of the Turkish youth!



Berk Vural



Celebration of National Youth Day and Atatürk's Traditional Birthday, May 19, 2012

To be a Woman in the World and in Turkey

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secular democracy.

The concept of secularism bears a vital priority in our country. Whatever was dreamed and tried to be realized in 1920's and 1930's young Turkey are assumed non-existent and are distorted, especially in the last 10 years. Moreover, these acts are carried out under the appearance of religious freedom and freedom of conscience, in the name of democracy, through utilization. Whereas, this cycle should have been the cycle of reconstruction by ending religious bigotry and adapting contemporary values. Our women should have demanded no compromise from secularism in any shape or form; they should have opposed fundamentalism and Sharia movements. But, alongside all these pessimistic pictures, we must also mention some promising fundamental changes about Turkish women.

1) As a result of studies that have been going on for 50 years, the new Turkish Civil Code was accepted.

Most important changes were made in the field of Family Law.

- Spouses were granted equal rights in the family.
- The concept of equality was also brought into the responsibilities.
- In the event of divorce or death of one of the spouses, equal sharing of goods acquired during marriage was accepted.
- Marriage age for women and men equally became subjected to the condition of completion of age 17.
- It was emphasized that women didn't need the permission of their husbands in choosing their profession, job or for continuing to work.
- Women were granted the right to use their maiden name along with their married name.
- Important changes were also made to the Law of Succession in favor of women.

2) The number of women Representatives in the Parliament were 50 as a result of 2007 popular elections. In the latest elections in 2011, 79 women Representatives entered the

Parliament. This means 14 percent of the 550 representatives are women. It is our common wish to see more women in higher percentages in the Parliament and to take part in decision making mechanisms.

3) The ideology of the republic gave big importance to benefit women in all levels of education. Therefore today, the percentage of women instructors is 39 percent. The percentage of women among all professors is 29 percent. Currently 5 percent of university presidents are women. Percentage of women deans are 15 percent. As far as receiving higher education, the occupations women reached are pleasing. For example, 37 percent of architects, 29 percent of doctors, 33 percent of lawyers are women. That means, approximately one third of university instructors and high-level professionals are women.

Today, in our country, as Turkish women and youth, we are very disturbed by the efforts of establishing moderate Islam. Our greatest assurance against this predominantly religious way of life and ideology is our youth and well-read intellectuals who are devoted to Atatürk's principles. ►



Beloved Atatürk, we will *forever* remain your disciples...

