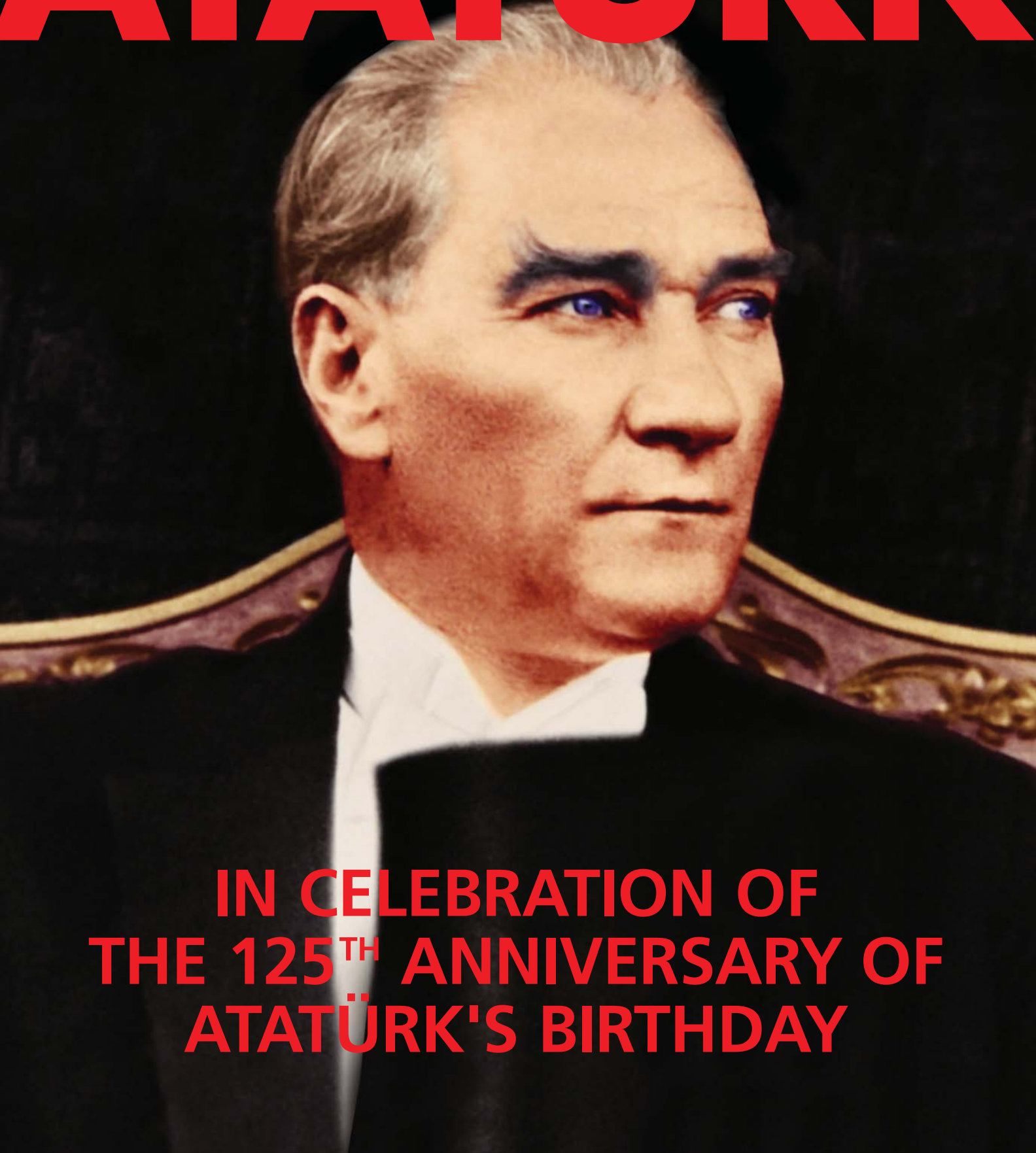


*Voice of*

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ATATÜRK SOCIETY OF AMERICA | SPRING 2006

# ATATÜRK



IN CELEBRATION OF  
THE 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
ATATÜRK'S BIRTHDAY



## The Atatürk Society of America

4731 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington DC 20016

**Phone** 202 362 7173

**Fax** 202 363 4075

**E-mail** ataturksociety@earthlink.net

**www.ataturksociety.org**

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## ASA MISSION STATEMENT

The Atatürk Society of America (ASA) is an independent non-profit organization founded in Washington DC in 1995 with the objective of promoting Atatürk's political legacy.

ASA understands Atatürk's political philosophy to be:

- Sovereignty belongs to the people. People alone administer people. Public sovereignty cannot be shared with any other authority, including a religious authority.
- Rational education ensures absoluteness of public sovereignty rationality in politics.
- Science leads to progress. Doctrines, including religious ideologies, hinder progress.
- The contemporary civilization is the common heritage of mankind. All nations must participate in it through progress. The universality of civilization means peace at home and peace in the world.

Towards this objective the ASA organizes scholarly lectures, provides research fellowships, develops a resource and reference center, and makes representations regarding the importance of Atatürk's political philosophy for international prosperity and peace.



*Voice of*

## ATATÜRK

**Managing Editor**  
FERHAN KILICAL

**Design by**  
SITKI KAZANCI

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**Hudai Yavalar**  
**Chairman, Founding President**

**A**s we enter the fifth month of 2006 and Atatürk Society of America's (ASA) 11<sup>th</sup> year, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our members and supporters for their tireless efforts over the years on behalf of the organization and its ideals. ASA continues to forge ahead, increase its membership, reflecting the renewed interest in the organization and its mission of spreading the vision and ideals of Kemal Atatürk. We elected a new board in January, headed by President Timur Edib who took the helm from departing Metin Camcigil. We thank Camcigil for his service and for successfully leading the organization for six years.

As we ponder the situation of unrest in the Middle East, and contemplate how the world would have been different if Atatürk's reforms had been implemented in the Middle East and the region, we note that over the years, many organizations, authors, and others recognized the tremendous leadership qualities of this historic figure, and worked to properly honor him.

This year we will honor the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Atatürk's birthday, and we will commemorate it at the historic House Cannon Caucus room on Capitol Hill with one of Atatürk's most well known supporters, former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Soon after he became Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich in 1994, while addressing GOPAC (The Republican Political Action Committee), offered Atatürk's reforms as an example of how enormous change is possible with inspired leadership.

*"In the mid-1920's Kemal Atatürk was in the process of modernizing Turkey. He was faced with an enormous problem. The Ottoman Empire had collapsed, the Turkish people had been driven back within the boundaries of what is now modern Turkey, they had an enormous crisis of psychology, they were a backward country and yet they knew that their future lay in modernization and understanding the European world and the industrial world better.*

*And he reached the conclusion after considerable deep and painful thought that writing in the language pattern they had written in no longer would work, and that they had to change literally the basic script of their language to a western script. He then decided that the only way to make that change was to do it suddenly and decisively, that if you tried to do it over a ten year period, the elite would learn it, no one else would learn it, and you rapidly would have a two tiered society, and you would have an enormous social division. A very poor country, with very few resources, less than ours. Their Gross National Product was less than our federal department of education.*

*He said we have to enlist every educated Turk, and we have to turn the nation into a classroom. And in six months time they transformed Turkish society. It is one of the great heroic acts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was done without violence, without secret police. It was done without locking people up. It was done by an act of inspired emotional and moral leadership by someone who was regarded as the savior of the nation and who people genuinely believed would give them a chance for a better future.*

*Atatürk is the reason that Turkey is in many ways the most modern of all the Islamic countries, and the most open to new ideas and new opportunities despite its tremendous internal pressures."*

Atatürk was also revered in international organizations. In order to commemorate a previous milestone, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in 1976 UNESCO members were given a recommendation that "All of the projects UNESCO works on today originate from Mustafa Kemal." The suggestion was that on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday the 152 members of UNESCO should celebrate Atatürk at the same time.



*continued on page 4*



*continued from page 3*

Suddenly, the Swedish delegate stood up and said:

"There are many statesmen in the world, are we going to celebrate all of their birthdays this way?" To these sarcastic words, the Russian delegate jumped up to his feet, pounded the table with his fist, and said the following to the delegates from 152 member countries:

"Maybe our young delegate will remember that Atatürk is not just any world statesman, forget commemorating him for one year, every country should look to him for a solution to every problem." Mustafa Kemal is the one who can inspire these words. What happened next? For the first and only time in UNESCO history, there were no dissenting votes, nobody abstained from voting, and 152 countries signed the resolution. On the day of the signature, the Swedish delegate took the microphone and said:

"I have examined Atatürk, I apologize to all of the countries and will be the first to sign."

That magnificent document says;

"Who is Atatürk; he is a superior individual who made efforts on the path of international understanding, cooperation, and peace. A reformer who realized extraordinary reforms, a leader who fought against colonialism and expansionism, the unequivocal statesman who was respectful of human rights, a pioneer in world peace, and who never made the distinction of color, language, religion, or race throughout his life, the founder of the Turkish republic."

His work and philosophy, I would argue, are even more relevant and significant today. Had his principles of secularism and democracy spread like wildfire through the region, would we have the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan? I doubt it.

In addition to the new look for our newsletter and the May 19 commemoration with Speaker Gingrich, we held an April 26 panel discussion at Georgetown University, titled "Atatürk's Reforms as a Response to Radical Islam."

As Atatürk Society, our responsibility is to forge ahead and spread the message, principles and philosophy of one of the most revered leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We abide by his adage "Peace at home, peace in the world."



**Timur Edib**  
**President**

**W**elcome! On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I welcome you to the Atatürk Society of America and our reformatting *Voice of Atatürk*. I am honored to have been elected as the President of this wonderful organization as we enter our second decade of providing a platform for the promotion of Atatürk's principles and vision for world peace. I need to say that I couldn't be happier about working with such a dynamic, energetic and committed Board of Directors. Each member brings their own unique insights and experiences, each has already given more of themselves than I could have expected, and all are equally committed to the need to promote the life work of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Past President, Mr. Metin Camcigil, for his years of service to this Society. It is my sincere hope that I will continue to receive his counsel during my term and continue to build on his work and vision.

During my term and under my stewardship, we will work to continue the work of my predecessors, to continue to integrate new ideas and new technologies for furthering the objectives of our Society, and above all to continue to be a strong voice promoting Atatürk's legacy. In the coming year, the Atatürk Society of America will work to increase our outreach to other organizations throughout the World, and will continue to build strategic alliances with other associations committed to Atatürk's principles for promoting world peace.

As we celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Atatürk's birth, Let us remember his accomplishments during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and help others understand that through Atatürk's principles for reform, we can continue to find equality and peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Only in a truly open, democratic and secular society can there be true peace. We must all work to ensure the absolute right of equality for women, and we must strive for promoting an enlightened society by fostering literacy and education throughout the world.

Atatürk's gift to humanity is without parallel. As De Vinci was to art, and Einstein was to math, Atatürk was to social science. Atatürk created a commonality of purpose, without relying on anything more than an understanding of the basic principles of humanity. He empowered and motivated the individual to give all of themselves for a common cause, by respecting both one's history and one's future. Without invoking God, without invoking guilt, without invoking fear, without invoking hate, Atatürk established a nation almost a century ago that today remains as a model for the world to follow. Sharing this legacy is why I decided to become the President of this Society. I ask for your continued support and trust in the coming days and years, as we work to share not only our history, but to keep our promise to Atatürk. Together, we can keep Atatürk's legacy alive, and we can help bring world peace.

Welcome and thank you.

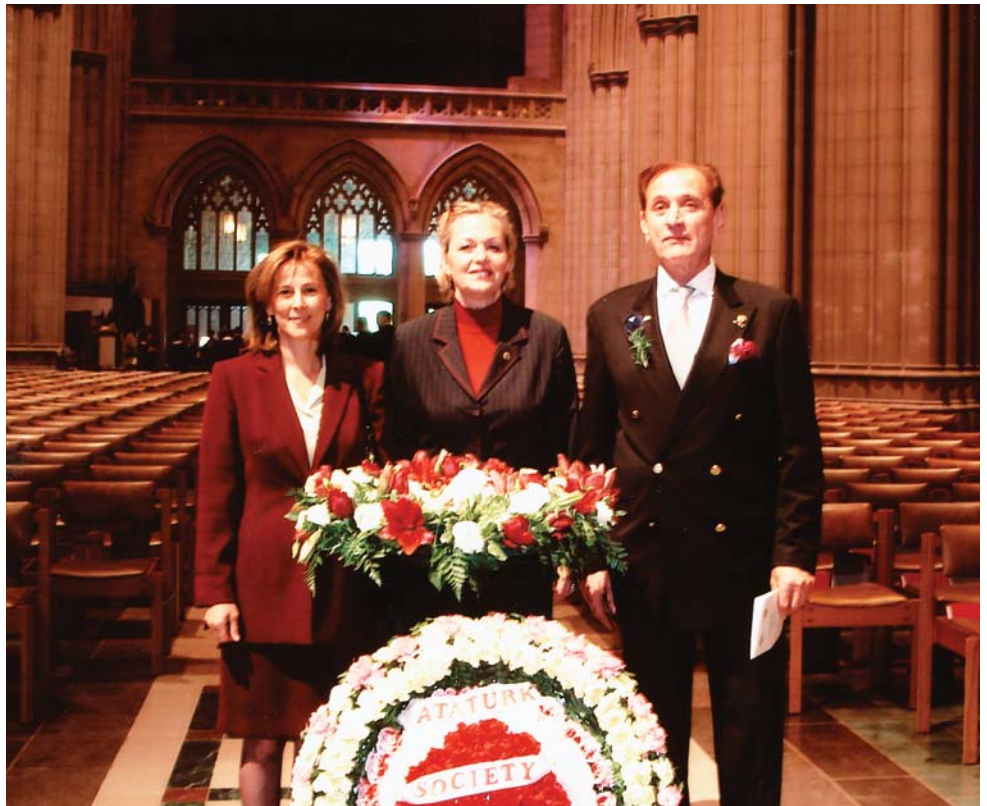






## Anzac Day Commemorative Service

**O**n April 25, 1915, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on Anzac Cove at Gallipoli Turkey at 4:29 am. This landing has been commemorated ever since in Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. This year, just like in the previous years, a commemorative service was held at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC to remember those who made the supreme sacrifice both in the Dardanelles campaign and in subsequent conflicts. The service included prayers, hymns and a speech by New Zealand Ambassador Roy Ferguson. Turkish Cellist Efe Baltacigil was among the performers. Atatürk Society of America was represented at the service by Vice President Filiz Odabas-Geldiay, Chairman Hudai Yavalar, and Treasurer Mirat Yavalar.



## "Atatürk's Reforms as a Response to Radical Islam"

**O**n April 26, 2006 Atatürk Society of America organized and held a Panel Discussion at Georgetown University, Washington DC, titled: "Atatürk's Reforms as a Response to Radical Islam".

The panel was moderated by Timur Edib, President of the Atatürk Society of America; Panel speakers were Prof. Bulent Atalay, an ASA Board member who teaches at the Physics Department of University of Mary Washington; Prof. David Cuthell, Director of the The Institute for Turkish Studies; and Prof. Clive Foss, History Department, Georgetown University

After a brief introduction by Timur Edib, each panel guest took turns talking about different aspects of Atatürk's Reforms and their effects in Turkey and in the Middle East. Prof. Cuthell talked about the current affairs of the country and the history of the Republic in general. Prof. Atalay, after explaining the reforms in order, emphasized the conditions the country was in during the implimentation of these reforms. And Prof. Foss did a comparative analysis of the implementation of some these reforms in Iran and Egypt.

As the speakers discussed, Atatürk's reforms in the fields of law, education, economy and society paved the road towards new traditions of secularism and the separation of religion and state. Atatürk believed that in order to reach the level of modern civilization, continuous renewal and progression were necessary. Today, as a result of this philosophy and the great achievement of laicism, Turkey represents the model of political and social development for the future of Muslim countries. This brought the panel discussion to the question of: "In the context of the Middle East today, can we look at Atatürk's reforms as a model to bring peace to Middle East?" This very complex and challenging question was also presented as the starting point of an essay contest which is a branch of this panel discussion. The purpose of the essay contest is to encourage good research and strong writing skills. After each panel guests' presentations, the floor was opened to questions.



**H**istorical Gazi High School in Izmit, Turkey was among many buildings that were damaged in the earthquake of August 17, 1999. The rebuilding of the High School has been completed. The new Library at the school is a gift from the Atatürk Society of America. ASA also donated books and computers to the library.



ASA donated gardening tools and machinery again this year to the groundskeeping facilities of the mausoleum of Atatürk at Anitkabir in Ankara. ASA has made the same type of donation in the past to help maintain and beautify the mausoleum grounds.



## A LOVE STORY LENT A HELPING HAND BY KEMAL ATATÜRK

*My father, General Kemal Atalay, the Undersecretary of Defense, had taken his annual holiday so that he could be with us. I was visiting my parents with my wife and two very young children. Just three years earlier on a visit to Washington, DC my father had seen our daughter, Jeannine, then not quite a year old and just beginning to walk.*

**By Bülent Atalay**

**J**une 23, 2005, the cruise ship, *Crystal Serenity*, on which I am serving as a special topics lecturer, docks in Thessalonica, Greece's second largest city. At the turn of the 20th century, as "Selanik," it was the Ottoman Empire's second largest city. The streets of the ancient city are poorly laid out; there is no grid with a north-south and east-west bearing. Like most old cities, it has evolved according to the natural topography of the land, with a citadel perched on its acropolis. Worse yet all the signs are in Greek, and although, as a physicist, I know the letters

and can sound out the words, I have no idea of their meaning.

My wife, Carol Jean, and I, along with two friends from the *Serenity*, Stephen and Linda Young, are in search of Atatürk's birthplace, 17 *Apostolou Pavlou*, located next to the Turkish Consulate. To get our bearings, we drive up to the acropolis of Thessalonica, where the ancient Byzantine walls still stand, restored; but with time running out to return to the ship, we are nearing a frenzied state. Quite suddenly we happen upon a young boy, an apprentice to an automobile mechanic, who senses our frustration, and in lucid English, asks if he can help us. When we tell him the address, he responds that he does not know the place himself. But then he strolls over to his boss. They discuss our plight. When he returns, he tells us that they will lead us in their own pickup truck.

The distance turns out to be no more than a mile through serpentine streets, but it takes twenty-minutes to negotiate the distance through the virtually impenetrable rush-hour traffic. Then as Stephen shoe-horns the rental car into a tight spot, I jump out and begin a mad jog up the street, in search of Number 17. Midway up the next block, perhaps a hundred yards away, is the two story frame house that I have seen in faded, old pictures, the upper story cantilevered over the lower, evocative of the 19th century houses one sees in Istanbul. Atatürk's house at last! And the narrow street, where my grandfather, Ismail Hakki, as a young boy, played with Mustafa Kemal, his closest childhood friend, who would go on to rescue Turkey,

then set on a seemingly inexorable course to disintegration. A grateful parliament of the republic he created would later bestow on him the appellation, Atatürk, "Father of the Turks," then proceed to retire the title permanently, lest someone else try to adopt it.

Later that afternoon the *Serenity* sails east, on a course south of the Athos Peninsula, with its colorful monasteries. Early in the morning the following day the ship slows down to allow a pilot to board and guide us up the Dardanelles. I stand on the top deck, surveying the magical panorama. Sailing up the 46-mile straits, it is impossible not to be moved by the spirit of these hallowed lands, witness to spectacular drama. On the starboard side, and not more than a few miles away, lie the ruins of Troy, the legendary city destroyed in the mid-13th century BC by the Mycenaean Greeks. Almost eight hundred years later the Persian King Xerxes lashed his ships together, creating a pontoon bridge, and crossed the Dardanelles on his way to invading Greece. And another hundred years later still Alexander the Great repaid the favor, constructed his own pontoon bridge, and crossed over to Asia, taking the first step in his relentless bid to conquer the world. Six hundred years ago the Ottomans began their isolation of Constantinople by stretching chains across the straits. Finally, a mere one hundred and seventy years ago at the same spot the Romantic poet Lord Byron, an exceptionally strong swimmer, crossed the Dardanelles, known for its treacherous currents. Consumed with classical Greece and its fertile mythology,



Atatürk's birthplace at 17 *Apostolou Pavlou*, maintained by the Turkish Consulate in Thessalonica.



Byron was reenacting one of Leander's nocturnal crossings, in order to visit his lover, Hero, living on the other side.

On the portside, the Western shore, stand prominent monuments of the Turks, the French, and the British, honoring an unknown soldier lost in the Gallipoli Campaign. The land is literally pock-marked with numberless trenches. It is here that hundreds of thousands of troops — Turkish and ANZAC — faced each other in 1915. And when it was all over, a half million young troops, evenly divided between the two sides, had lost their lives. The smoke of battle — bullets and cannon shells — turned the sky opaque at midday. Perhaps because of the shared misery, the two sides came to respect each other to the point where, it is said, a daily coffee and smoke break would take place, allowing the soldiers to climb out of their bunkers in relative safety. But when they returned, if as much as a hand showed, it would be shot off.

Oxford educated poet, Rupert Brooke, was here. Having romanticized warfare in his earlier poetry, he died not in battle, but on the way to battle, of sunstroke just two days before the Battleship Hood delivered the troops to the area. "Rupert Brooke is dead... [his] life has closed at the moment when it seemed to have reached its spring-time," wrote Winston Spencer Churchill, in his obituary for the young poet. And indeed, Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who had originally master-minded the scheme — to sail up the Dardanelles, take control of Istanbul, and then strike at Germany from its "soft underbelly." The failed campaign led to Churchill losing his job.

On the facing hills on the portside, one sees a flat white figure — an image created in limestone of a soldier clutching his rifle with one hand, signaling his comrades to follow him into battle with the other. Next to it, spelled out in limestone markers, one sees Atatürk's immortal words, "Pause Traveler. This is where the heart of a nation stopped, and from the smoldering ashes sprung a new nation."

And then one also remembers the deeply comforting, profoundly gracious words with which he addressed the families



**Image of a pair of bullets that collided in the air. The bullets were discovered by a farmer, plowing his fields decades after the war. Naval Museum, Canakkale.**

of the fallen Aussies and Kiwis:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and Mehments to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours... You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

— Kemal Atatürk

Atatürk's poignant message is inscribed in the Turkish Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Gallipoli, and it is inscribed on the Atatürk Memorial in Canberra. It is no wonder that in distant Australia, there is still a sense of kinship for Atatürk and the Turks — enemies, but fellow witnesses to the unspeakable horrors of trench warfare — and, conversely, a resentment of the British politicians who sent a generation of their young men to fight and die in a land half-a-world away. For the Turks, the Australians, and the New Zealanders Gallipoli would forever be regarded as the moment when they gained their national identities.

Through the generations, my family has demonstrated an almost idolatrous admira-

tion and affection for Atatürk. His pictures abounded in my parents' home in Istanbul, although only in one picture is my father, then a young second lieutenant, seen with Atatürk himself. Certainly a unique, iconic national hero, he made a small, but critical contribution to my family. He served as catalyst in the marriage of my own mother and father.

## THE DRIVE DOWN THE PENINSULA

I have been through the straits, as well as on both storied shores many times, but the visit just the day after seeing Atatürk's birthplace in Thessalonica makes the experience of sailing the straits on this occasion utterly unforgettable. I remember a visit in 1967, when Carol Jean and I, accompanied by my mother and father, drove down the Gallipoli Peninsula from Istanbul. My father, General Kemal Atalay, the Undersecretary of Defense, had taken his annual holiday so that he could be with us. I was visiting my parents with my wife and two very young children. Just three years earlier on a visit to Washington, DC my father had seen our daughter, Jeannine, then not quite a year old and just beginning to walk. This time in Turkey he would meet our son, Michael Kemal Atalay, who had just turned one and was beginning to walk. But on this excursion to Canakkale, we left the children with my grandmother at the army resort in Fenerbahce, Istanbul, which we were using as home base. And it was on our lengthy drive down the Gallipoli Peninsula that my father first told us the story of his father, Ismail Hakki, and the family's "Atatürk connection," how he and my mother met, and the circumstances of their marriage.

My grandfather fought in those trenches for eight months, through the better part of 1915. A photograph was taken of his battalion during a break in the action. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of the ANZACS, he briefly traveled to Edirne (Roman Adrianople) on assignment, and while there, on January 1, 1916, had a photograph taken of himself. He inscribed on the back of the photograph in old Turkish (right-to-left), "To my dear aunt, I have survived eight months of action in



It was in 1990 that I first came across the photograph. Carol Jean and I had visited the Naval Museum in Çanakkale as we had just started out on our drive to Troy. In the crowded group portrait my grandfather is standing in the back row, wearing a dark fez, and identified by the dark oblique line. In the photograph's caption, we could read his identity *Istibarat Binbasi* (Communication Officer, Major) Ismail Hakki." (Right) Ismail Hakki (1881-1916). Photograph dated January 1, 1916.

Gallipoli. I will soon leave for the Eastern Front, there to face the Arabs and their recalcitrant English leader."

Just before leaving for the Eastern Front, he visited the small town of Biga, lying to the east of Çanakkale and Troy. He went to see his young family, ensconced in the town since shortly before the war began. There were his wife and three young children, two years apart in age – the oldest, a daughter; the middle, a son; and the youngest, another son — my father, "Mustafa Kemal" — named after Ismail Hakki's childhood friend, and in accord with his wishes. (Last names were not introduced into Turkey until 1934. It can make genealogical research a hopelessly difficult task.)

After only a day or two with his family, however, Ismail Hakki had to leave again, this time to fight on the Eastern Front. There he would die, fighting against the Arabs and their "recalcitrant" English leader, T. E. Lawrence, who would become known as Lawrence of Arabia. My grandfather's body would presumably be interred somewhere in southeastern Turkey. According to the tradition prevailing in the family, Atatürk had his aide-de-camp carry my grandfather's handgun and sword back to Biga and presented to my grandmother, along with Atatürk's promise that after the war he would find the family and see to their needs. But even before the war ended, my grandmother and her children

moved to Istanbul, where they could get help from close relatives.

#### ALIN YAZISI (FOREHEAD INSCRIPTION)

Growing up in Kadıköy on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, my father and his older brother, Muammer, both aspired to make their careers in the military, following in the footsteps of their late father. Just a few weeks apart they reported to the military recruiting office, had their interviews, took the military college's entrance examination, and they both passed. My father presented some dubious documentation showing him to be two years older than he actually was. When they underwent physical examinations, my uncle passed with flying colors; my father, however, was told that he suffered from a heart murmur and could not be admitted. His hopes dashed, he staggered around dejected, tears streaming down his cheeks. After wandering listlessly for some time, he found himself at a ferry dock. The ferry was just pulling away from the dock. My father used to say, any other time, he would have just jumped onto the ferry, as he had done numerous times before, but that day it was not to be — it was not "written on his forehead!" That day it was not his fate to take the ferry and go home. He was a lifelong believer in fate — "If it is written on your forehead, it will come to pass," he would always say. He sat on a bench on the pier, utterly disheart-

ened. Then suddenly an elderly gentleman appeared, and sensing my father's despair, stopped and queried, "What is the matter, son?"

My father answered that he had always hoped to become an officer, but he was denied admission to the academy. The man appeared genuinely sympathetic. Attempting to console my father, he remarked, "There are so many different professions, and a good looking, clean cut young man like you should be able to become or do anything you set your mind to. You could become a doctor, an architect, or even a diplomat. You have a distinguished demeanor." My father, his voice breaking, responded, "My greatest wish in the world was to become a soldier, just as my father had been." Without raising his eyes from the ground, he continued, "But I've just been told that I am suffering from a heart murmur that will keep me out of the academy." He still had the x-ray film in a folder tucked under his arm, which the older man suddenly noticed. At this point, the man revealed to my father that he was doctor — a professor at the medical school. "May I see the film," he asked. Then removing the film from its sleeve, he held it up to the sunlight, and studied it for a full minute, squinting, scanning. Then, with a smile, he told my father, "Let's go together to the hospital."

When they got to the hospital a medical board was in session. That did not stop the old man. He barged into the room, my father right behind him. Again, he removed the film from the sleeve and held it in front of a light box. "Gentleman," he announced, "...you have made the same mistake again. There is nothing wrong with this young man's heart." He went on to explain their misdiagnosis. To make his point, he placed his stethoscope on my father's chest and listened for the characteristic sounds of a heart murmur. "There is no swishing or whistling, beyond the normal 'Lub-Dub' sound." He reiterated, "Classic misdiagnosis!" It turned out that this remarkably kind man was in reality one of the most senior physicians on the medical school faculty and a one-time instructor to most of the other physicians in the room.



The peaks and valleys of that day's emotional roller coaster ride — missing the ferry, meeting the professor of medicine, having the faulty diagnosis corrected, and being admitted into the military college — “were all written on his forehead!”

Thereafter, my father would always have an abiding admiration for physicians, and especially for those in cardiology. He lived into his nineties, and he spoke with bursting pride of his grandson, Michael Kemal Atalay, who would earn combined MD/PhD degrees at Johns Hopkins in cardiac imaging, in advent of doing medical internship at Harvard as “Dr. Dr. Atalay.”

Built in 1845 on the Asian Shore of the Bosphorus, the military college, Kuleli, is an unusually prepossessing building that derives its name from the two prominent flanking towers (Figure 4). The years at the academy were successful for both brothers. They enjoyed their time, they studied hard, and they made lifelong friends. Many would also accompany them in their rise through the military ranks. Both brothers were successful athletes, starters on the school's soccer team, my father as left wing, his brother as the high-scoring center forward. Father would often speak of his brother, about his extraordinary prowess on the soccer field. But in academics it was my father who would excel and leave a mark. He graduated in the class of 1930. Not long afterwards, at an engagement party for his close friend, Nüzhet Bulca, he

would meet the guest of honor, none other than Kemal Atatürk, the beloved President.

As my father recalled the memories of that day thirty years earlier, Carol Jean and I remained transfixed. My mother, who, of course, had known the story all along, was just happy that I was learning about it. But then I interrupted, asking rhetorically, “You told him then that you and your brother were the sons of his oldest friend, İsmail Hakki?” “No, I couldn't...” he said, “I didn't want any favoritism. If Atatürk had found out who I was, he might have taken me as an aide, and I would never have been able to prove myself.” (He was modest. He was shy.)

A few years later he would take the examinations that would gain him acceptance into the Army War College and the status of Kurmay. He could now realistically aspire to attain the highest ranks in the army. ☒

*The writer, Bulent Atalay, is a professor of physicist and an artist. The article about his family's connection to Atatürk is excerpted from a book that he is writing as a testimonial to his late father, Orgeneral Kemal Atalay. His website appears at <http://www.bulentatalay.com>*

*The Kokdemir Family; My parents meeting at the officer's club; A second meeting with Atatürk.*

## MILESTONES

### APRIL

April 01, 1921

2nd İnönü War Victory

April 03, 1930

Acceptance of Women's Rights to Enter Local Government Elections

April 10, 1928

Accepting the Principle of Secularism to the Constitution

April 15, 1931

Foundation of Turkish History Institution

April 20, 1924

Recognition of New Constitution

April 23, 1920

Opening Day of the Turkish Parliament

April 23, 1920

National Sovereignty and Children's Day

### MAY

May 19, 1919

Atatürk's Visit to Samsun and His Famous Speech Declaring the Independence War

May 19, 1919

Remembrance of Atatürk; Youth and Sports Day

### JUNE

June 01, 1928

Acceptance of New Law to Ban the Use of Arabic Letters

June 12, 1937

Atatürk's Donation of Personal Assets to the Turkish Nation

June 21, 1934

Acceptance of New Law Requiring Surnames

June 21, 1919

Amasya Speech to Gather People for the Independence War

**Kuleli, on the Anatolian Banks of the Bosphorus, seen in a 19th century engraving.**



## **Address by His Excellency Roy Ferguson** *New Zealand Ambassador to the United States*

### **Anzac Day Commemoration, Washington National Cathedral, Washington DC Tuesday, 25th April 2006**

*Ngaa mate, ngaa aituaa*

*Haere, haere, haere*

*Ki te hunga ora,*

*Teena koutou, katoa*

*The dead and those we mourn today.*

*Farewell their spirits, farewell, farewell.*

*To the living, greetings to you all.*

**A**t hundreds of ceremonies at home, in Turkey, in Europe and throughout the world, Australians and New Zealanders mark this most sacred day in their respective histories. It is a privilege and an honour for me to address this gathering in this magnificent Cathedral.

Ninety one years ago in the early morning, 13 ships carried the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps – the Anzacs – towards a landing on the Turkish coast. Further north the 1st Australian Division were already ashore. On one of the ships a 24 year old New Zealand mill hand from Mangapehi, Richard Ward, wrote in his diary “this will no doubt be the greatest day in our lives”. These words conveyed the expectations and confidence of young men from the far-flung outposts of Empire. They were part of a bold strategy to seize the Dardanelles, knock Turkey out of the war and relieve pressure on the Western Front. They were determined to write a new page in the history of the Empire. At the same time they were proud to be New Zealanders or Australians.

The reality, we all know, was very different. The day did not turn out as expected. The ANZACs landed on an impos-

sibly rough piece of terrain and were met by a highly professional Turkish Army. By nightfall Richard Ward would be the only unwounded senior non-commissioned officer in his Company. He was promptly promoted to Lieutenant and made acting Company Commander. When he called the roll on 26 April he found only 34 out of the Company strength of 226. Individual leadership and initiative at all levels made the difference between success and failure in those first few days at Gallipoli.

In the nine months that followed, the Australians and New Zealanders experienced the horrors of trench warfare; the chaos, the disease, the human sacrifice and despair. Young men from the farms and cities became professional soldiers – by trial and error – and at great cost. The ANZAC legend was born as Australians and New Zealanders lived and fought side by side. As the Australian historian CEW Bean wrote of one set of battles early on in the campaign:

“Day and night Australians and New Zealanders had fought together on that hilltop. In this fierce test each saw in the other a brother’s qualities. As brothers they had died, their bodies lay mingled in the same narrow trenches, as brothers they were buried. It was noticeable that such small jealousies that had existed between Australians and New Zealanders in Cairo vanished completely from this hour. Three days of genuine trial had established a friendship which centuries will not destroy”.

Amidst defeat there were moments of unforgettable bravery; for New Zealanders we remember Chunuk Bair and those three days from the 8th August 1915 when Colonel Malone and the Wellington Battalion held the heights that overlooked the ultimate objective; the straits of the Narrows down below. But the summit was recaptured by the Turks. And four months later the campaign was over when the ANZACs were evacuated.

It may seem strange that a military defeat should play such a large part in the history and identity of two countries. And



in our commemorations we should not forget that over 21,000 British soldiers died at Gallipoli; 10,000 Frenchmen; 1,500 Indians and 50 from Newfoundland. Or that at least 87,000 Turks died defending their homeland.

Part of the reason Gallipoli holds such a special place in our history was undoubtedly the staggering losses the ANZACs suffered. Over half the Australians who fought became casualties and 8,700 died. For New Zealand the proportion was even worse; nearly 90% became casualties and 2,700 were killed. This was a dreadful toll for any nation, but particularly for two countries with such small populations. A generation of our finest young men were gone. Few families would not have been affected.

It was a loss of innocence, the first bleeding of young nations. Yes Australians and New Zealanders had fought earlier in the South African wars, but this was the first introduction to the horrors of twentieth century war and for the men, part of their first great overseas experience.

Out of these terrible sacrifices a new sense of nationhood was born; for Australians, for New Zealanders and for the Turks. Kemal Atatürk, became the founder of modern Turkey. Between the Antipodeans and this ancient land of Turkey there grew a profound respect. Atatürk summed up the reconciliation in his famous words:

“Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... you are lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours.... You the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now living in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well”.

Alas it was not to be the last experience of war for Australia and New Zealand. The horrible carnage of the First World War was succeeded by the even more terrible realisation that this was not, after all, to be the war that



ended all wars. Again and again for the rest of the century, in another world war and in conflicts in the Pacific, Asia and in the Middle East, New Zealanders and Australians have fallen in defence of other countries' integrity and their own values and ideals. In Gallipoli we had come of age. We had

been confronted with the stark reality that our remoteness does not isolate us from the tide of world events. We realised that even small countries can make a significant difference. And so as the years have passed we have accepted unhesitatingly the responsibilities of good international citizens.

In the twenty-first century we face the scourge of a different but no less fundamental threat; that of global terrorism. The call to service remains.

ANZAC Day is a time to remember and reflect. Those who know warfare best; those who have taken part do not celebrate war on occasions like this. On the contrary, they dwell on more fundamental values to do with the meaning of life itself. And so should we. Courage, comradeship, responsibility to others, duty to country and to the principles we value, endurance and a dogged determination to do the best we can through the most testing and frightening of trials; these are the qualities we should celebrate on ANZAC Day. This is the heritage we should cherish.

Here in Washington we recall the bonds that were forged with the men and women of the American armed forces; firstly on the Western front – and then in countless other battles down the years, to preserve a world of freedom and choice.

We remember with gratitude all those who have served. We remember today those who continue to serve; whether in Iraq, in Afghanistan or in our own neighbourhood in the Solomon Islands .

For freedom and all its virtues can be lost by simple indifference.

But who, remembering the ANZAC story, will stand by and allow that to happen? ☒

## A Campaign to Donate Books to Libraries

**T**he ASA Executive Board has launched a campaign to donate to local libraries books on modern Turkey. The Board was motivated by the oft observed fact that local libraries and school or university libraries are very poor on up-to-date books on Turkey. ASA members are expected to respond enthusiastically to this campaign.

Members are invited to order the four books currently available to ASA for a donation of \$90, including shipping and handling, and donate them in turn to the libraries in their neighborhood. They will, of course, benefit from tax deduction.

The books are **Atatürk**, by Andrew Mango, **The Atatürk Revolution**, by Suna Kili, **Turkish**

**Woman**, by Ayse Cebesoy Sarialp.

You may also wish to donate to your community library books on modern Turkey you may have in your own library and may not need any longer. By taking part in this campaign you would be supporting the better understanding of Turkey by the public.

## INTERVIEW WITH ATATÜRK BIOGRAPHER, ANDREW MANGO

*Andrew Mango served as the head of the Turkish department of the BBC news agency for 40 years. During this time, Mango observed the developments in Turkey. He recently wrote a biography of Atatürk.*

**M**ango, the second Englishman to write a biography of Atatürk since Lord Kinross, is standing on the political experiences of Atatürk. Mango, who wrote regarding the state of Atatürk's reforms and democracy in Turkey today, had said he will write the story of a political movement rather than a life story. According to Mango, the Atatürk biography that Lord Kinross wrote, although widely read in England, was written 30 years ago and no longer reflects Turkey, because, as well-known historian Acton Lorel says, "history is always contemporary history." The writer describes the aim of his book by asking the questions, "What was Atatürk's vision? What happened? How did it happen?"

Mango answered Cumhuriyet's questions like so:

**You said that your aim in writing Atatürk's biography is to find his vision. What do you think Atatürk's vision was?** Certainly, Atatürk was envisioning a modern country. There is a one word response to the question of where such a country was: France. France was always an example for Turkish intellectuals. French cultural secondary schools had been established. The only foreign language Atatürk knew was French. The French revolution and republic were examples for Atatürk. Human rights, a united state, a single language, and the removal of regional differences were all factors that affected Atatürk as he was establishing the Turkish republic. It is not surprising that France was taken as an example. In that period, thinking of a



civilized country, France was the single example, and when envisioning a philosophy that would form the foundation of a revolution, it was French positivism. British positivism is experimental, and German positivism is more romantic. French positivism is definite, it will prove true. French values were universal values. In taking France as an example, Atatürk took a universal value system and had it adopted by the Turkish people. Turkey was never France, it could not be.

**You are looking for the answer to the question of what the state of the Turkish vision is today. The radical religious movements and developments in a direction similar to that are almost completely**

**oppositional to Atatürk's vision. What do you see as the primary reason for these developments?**

I'm at the beginning of my research; nevertheless, if you ask me, the primary agent is the population boom. The phrase Atatürk repeated most, "modern civilization level", was not just describing an intellectual frame. It was also aiming at a level where people live in a way that brings material satisfaction. With the population boom, reaching this level has become very complicated. The population is not booming in Cankaya or Levent, it is booming in less developed areas.

**Today, in some circles, criticizing Atatürk is interpreted as evidence of readiness to get into the political arena. By the same token, Atatürk is often accused of being a dictator. What is your evaluation of this?**

Beyond a certain point I do not take these criticisms seriously because these allegations come down to anachronistic mistakes. For instance, questions like, "Was

Atatürk a democrat?" are asked. These types of criticisms bring to mind a statement by Mussolini: directing the Italian people is both difficult and unnecessary. During that period, establishing a representative democracy was not possible and was not necessary. Representative democracy, in that period, was stuck in a corner of northern Europe. Those

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that accuse Atatürk of being a dictator forget that in Europe, during that period, there were dictators everywhere. For that period, Atatürk was not a special case.

However, there were import differences between them. No dictator that came about during that period was later embraced. Embracing them would be an eccentric act. The exact opposite occurred in Turkey. The interesting thing was that those who embraced him were the youths.

As a matter of fact, the youth were like a social class in Turkey. Not only the generation that reformed, but the generation after them adopted Atatürk's reforms. For example, after Inonu became president and tried to take Atatürk's picture off of the money, the youth protested. When Karabekir's book criticizing Atatürk came out, the ministry banned it due to pressure from the youth. There is a group that embraces Atatürk now as well. We call them "the enlightened". Evaluating Atatürk as a dictator is wrong. In my opinion, as the English say, he is a "founding father". Instead of comparing him to Hitler or Mateksas, he should be compared to George Washington or Petro.

**In addition to his being embraced, another way that Atatürk should be separated from Dictators is that he worked to transfer the newly formed republic that he adopted.**

Right. Some get bored and turn away from reforms. But there is no place to turn back to because as Atatürk said, "civilization is one". Manners of living differ, but civilization is one. It is interesting that Atatürk would make this point because other dictators spoke of other civilizations. For example, Hitler mentioned the "German civilization", whatever that means. Or, Metaksas would speak about a "third civilization", the Hellenic civilization, the Byzantine civilization, and a third civilization that he would form. It is certainly funny, because there is only one civilization on earth and every

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society, as their possibilities allow, contribute to this civilization. Like the Sun Language theory, approaches that fall outside of this understanding are also little tricks. These came about as a way to give the Turkish people the morale to contribute to civilization. For instance, didn't Atatürk know that the new alphabet was the Latin alphabet? In actuality the purpose was for Turkey to integrate with this one civilization.

**Since there are developments contradictory to reform, is there something that Atatürk or his establishment missed?**

Atatürk and his advisors thought that if individuals were educated in a clear and complete manner a modern country could be created. However, educating people is not enough. Organization is very important. There is a subject that stands on modern anthropology today. In the past, the west was ahead because of access to knowledge. Today distribution of knowledge is completely provided, but the West is still relatively stronger. Today, modern anthropology is investigating why the West is ahead. The reason for this is being able to make organizations work. An established government, the settlement and foundation of all types of organizations, and the functionality of these organizations, is ensured not through the efforts of individuals but by societal norms. This is the

ability that Turkey lacks.

**This deficiency of Turkey has empowered the stance of religious movements in opposition to reform. However, France, who serves as an example for Turkey, is also facing this danger.**

Today there are two major fronts against Turkey's secular system; the radical religious, and the divisive front. France experienced this war also. Political parties divided along the lines of being either secular or anti-secular. In the last period, conservative parties' attempts to increase aid to religious schools were met with reactions and were prevented. At the same time divisiveness became a significant problem for France. Regional differences were lifted, and a unified state was established. Attempts were made to erase local dialects. There was a desire for the same language to be spoken everywhere. In fact, there is an example from a minister responsible for education that the English mock. The French education minister said, "I want to feel that in every school in France, every child in every class is turning the same page of the same book at the same time". When this quote was repeated, it was mocked. The problems France faced are being faced by Turkey today.

**What would you say about the country you have been observing for 40 years?**

When you don't know a country very well is it easy to describe. But if you have been living in a country for 40 years, your friends and acquaintances come to mind and it becomes more difficult to say something. The only thing I can say is that Turkey is a country that is changing very rapidly. ☒

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## NATION BUILDING-THINKING LIKE ATATÜRK

*The latter day nation building operations, whether conducted under the UN auspices or by a U.S. lead coalition, seem to concentrate on the introduction of constitutional democracy. Such operations assume that any multi-ethnic or sectarian society can or must live in a pluralist system.*

**By Metin Camcigil**  
Former ASA President

Strangely, the notion of nation building did not develop, as one might expect, together with the UN's Trusteeship concept right at the UN's inception. It started a little later as an offshoot of the UN's peacekeeping operations, after the 1956 Suez crisis. It is also indicative that it did not become an international concern during the disintegration of the Soviet Union but did during that of Yugoslavia. This note reviews the nation building methods used thus far with that of Atatürk.

The latter day nation building operations, whether conducted under the UN auspices or by a U.S. lead coalition, seem to concentrate on the introduction of constitutional democracy. Such operations assume that any multi-ethnic or sectarian society can or must live in a pluralist system. Since the Western communities are governed by pluralist systems they consider what is good for them must be good for all others. Yet historical and cultural peculiarities of some fractious societies may not allow pluralism. The insistence on the introduction of pluralism may in fact destroy some cultures by protracted violence and/or circumspect oppression within fractious societies under the disguise of democracy. Democracy strengthens tribal differences for example in Afghanistan, and sectarian feelings in Iraq.

We also seem to forget that democracy did not yet reach its perfection. There are still outstanding shortcomings in the plu-

ralist democracy. The contemporary civilization has been searching for ways to correct the wrongs of the democratic system since the mid 19th century. Great architects of democracy like Stuart Mill (On Liberty 1859, On Representative Government 1860), wrote, "the will of the people, moreover, practically means the will of the most numerous or the most active part of the people; the majority, or those who succeed in making themselves accepted as a majority; the people, consequently, may desire to oppress a part of their number; "

De Tocqueville (Democracy in America 1840) was concerned with the difficulty in reconciling individuality and liberty with democratic equality. He saw a great threat to liberty in democracy and democratic despotism: "the power of public opinion to suppress unpopular views." (W. Ebenstein, Introduction to Political Philosophy, Rinehart, 1952)

The influence by religious fundamentalists on public opinion, elections and on politics, as practiced by big businesses, is a perfect example of this pervasive problem in today's democracies. Education of the masses will have to precede an ideal democracy.

As civilization progresses more respect for international law between nations would be expected. And yet, the age-old diplomatic rule of "comity of nations" (comitas gentium) seems to have been forgotten on the library shelves. The age old bullying methods between nations still seem to be the currency in international relations. We condescendingly inculcate worldwide civility, tolerance, equality, free-

dom, and human rights. We are oblivious to the fact that none of these values and notions can be instilled by force. They are not enforceable, but teachable. Use of force only creates a counter force, an unintended and mostly undesirable antithesis. Germany is a good example in history of the adverse effects of external imposition of the concept of liberalism. French liberal ideas entered Germany with the Napoleonic invasion. Hence, Germans discredited liberalism as a national enemy. That sentiment became the source of Hegelian authoritarianism in Germany leading to two WWs. This example in history can explain today's reactionary feelings in the Muslim societies against the dominance of western culture in the contemporary civilization. At any rate, the term democracy implies the rule by and for the people, so it has to be brought about by the people. Democracy cannot be introduced by fiat.

The UN's nation building success in the Balkans is due to the fact that the nations with distinct national identities within Yugoslavia were artificially kept together under a federation. The disintegration of the federation achieved certain national unity in the newly formed states. The UN operation was not to maintain a multi-national Yugoslav unity. Conversely, in the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq the situation is diagonally opposite of the Yugoslav case. The U.S. intervention ultimately became one of nation building by trying to hold together these societies where there is no national identity, and to maintain law and order where there is no

national unity.

Iraq being an artificial state its people has no commonness of history or of ethnicity that could help them form a national identity or unity. Iraq was “created” in 1920 as a result of Britain’s manipulations over the spoils of WWI. As it is in other parts of the world also in the Middle East we are sacrificing lives and precious resources to clean up the messes left behind by the diplomatic manipulations of the retreating British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries. We may not have had the Iraq issue today if Britain had not gone against Atatürk’s vision during the formation of the Turkish Republic. Atatürk’s objective in defining the Turkish Republic’s national borders was to secure continuous peace by ensuring national unity within the borders as well as in the limitrophe countries. Population exchange between Turkey and Greece was the implementation of this policy. Atatürk insisted during the Lausanne peace negotiations not to separate the Kurdish areas of Mosul and Kerkuk from the bulk of the Kurdish nation included in the new Turkish boundaries. Unlike Britain he was not after the oil reserves of the area. Oil was not the top priority in those days, particularly not for Turkey, which did not even have economic awareness or infrastructure to be concerned with oil extraction. Historical records have proven that Atatürk had no territorial greed because of his concern over seeding the seeds of future conflicts between neighboring countries. Had Atatürk’s advice been heeded by Britain, Iraqi Kurds would not have been used, as Atatürk feared, for instigating unrest and terrorism in Turkey. Unfortunately Atatürk’s great vision was lost to the British paltry machinations.

The Turkish Republic did not inherit anything from its predecessor Empire, except for a treasury and a population devastated with five wars and innumerable uprisings instigated by foreign powers within the last forty years of the Ottomans. The Republic created everything anew from defining its boundaries to establishing the state authority, economy, etc. This was a real nation building, if there ever was one. It is also noteworthy that everything was achieved without any foreign aid,

advice, or interference, unlike today’s practices, and at the same time with the burden of repaying the Empire’s heavy international debts. The rise of the new Republic was made possible basically by a solid national unity.

Atatürk’s nation building was based on the European ideas and events developed during the period preceding him and dominated his era. Nationalism championed by the European countries for the purpose of disintegrating the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century constituted also the basis of the Turkish independence. Atatürk was the product of his period. His political philosophy was formed in the military of the decaying Empire. He formed a first hand knowledge of the sufferings and emotions of the soldiers coming from the heartland. His utmost objective became the elevation of a neglected people from naught to pride, to give them an identity, a reason and hope for life, peace and prosperity and to give them a chance to control their own future. Being aware of the fact that an ethnic nationalism would be a block rather than help in building the national unity and identity he became outspoken in denouncing the ethnic nationalism of the Union & Progress Party. On the other hand, he was aware that a national identity was indispensable to building the national unity, which in turn was fundamental to building the nation.

Ironically, nationalism was born in Europe and was spread worldwide by political and/or by military means but became undesirable by the Europeans themselves after the brutal application of the German ethnic nationalism in the heart of Europe. The emergence of the European Union further necessitated the elimination of nationalism from their vocabulary altogether. However, despite the bad rap that Germans gave to nationalism and despite the EU, national identity persists in the political structure of the majority of countries. Many countries in the EU still have to resolve their own nationalist problems, like the Flemish in Belgium, Corsican and Basque in France, Basque and Catalan in Spain, Irish in England. By simply discrediting nationalism the EU wishes for these problems to go away.

Another indispensable element in nation building is a strong leadership that can rally and secure the national unity. The leader necessarily has to come from within the society concerned in order for the leadership to be respected and effective. Any extraneous attempt to assert authority in a country by military power or economic impositions will only create or strengthen local religious, ethnic or ideological feelings. Where there is no national unity and leadership such notions will contribute to and may even hasten the disintegration of the country.

Prof. H. Ozdemir in his book titled *Atatürk’s Leadership Secrets* (Baskent Un. 2006) lists the following among the leadership qualifications of Atatürk \*:

- 1- Having a rational objective, and being courageous. Quoting Prof. S. Sinanoglu, Turkish Humanism, Turkish History Institute, 1988, “Civilization for Atatürk was unique, as it was for the Philosophes of the enlightenment period. He saw the civilization as the result of political, social, legal, economic, mental, moral, and cultural advancement. Since the civilization marks the ultimate point of human advancement, and there cannot be two most advanced points, societies fallen behind that point are deprived of civilization relative to the delay they incur.”
- 2- Devotion to the country and to the nation.
- 3- Receiving legitimacy from the nation, from the national representatives. Quoting Atatürk, “When I landed in Samsun in May 1919 I had no power at all. I only had a strong moral power filling my soul, which emanates from the high qualities of the Turkish nation. I set to work believing in that national power.”
- 4- Planning for peace as well as for war. Quoting Y.K.Karaosmanoglu’s observation made at a lecture on Nov. 10, 1953 that the Turkish Liberation War had two phases “I consider the reforms as the second phase of our Liberation War. We can call it the



phase fought without arms. Because M. Kemal fought to eliminate the past, to win the battle for renovation and civilization.”

- 5- Sharing thoughts with the nation, and listening to the nation. “He traveled in the country 448 times within 15 years between 1923-1938, an average of 30 travels a year with the contemporary transport means available.” Quoting Atatürk, “I convened the people in appropriate places. I told them to freely ask me questions. I spoke six, seven hours to answer the questions.”
- 6- Staying one step ahead of time armed with the knowledge of the past. Quoting Norbert von Bischoff, Ankara, 1936 “Life is superior to doctrine. Laws are made and changed by the people. This motive has been the basic principle of the pragmatic democracy of Turkey.” Prof. Ernst Hirsch, Atatürk Research Center

Journal, 1997, “Kemalism is more of a political movement than a specific type of regime. The point of departure was not an ideology. There was no guiding theory or pre-meditated philosophy.” Quoting Atatürk, “I am not bequeathing any dogmas, frozen and molded principles. ... To claim to have found some unchangeable rules is to denounce the dynamism of reason and science.”

- 7- A realist and reasoned nationalism. Quoting Atatürk, “What I mean by a national policy is to work towards the nation’s and the country’s happiness and development with our own power and within our own borders, not to pre-occupy and hurt the nation with unrealizable haphazard desires; we also expect a mutual friendship, human and civilized attitude from the civilized world.”
- 8- Competing with the civilized world in all fields. Quoting Atatürk,

“Nations vary, but civilization is one. A nation needs to participate in this singular civilization if it were to advance. ... We cannot isolate ourselves. We will live in the contemporary civilization as an advanced and civilized nation. This can be achieved with science and technology.”

Atatürk remains the sole leader in history, who built a nation against all odds and with enduring success. Atatürk is still revered 68 years after his demise by the nation he built and became stronger and more prosperous than the one he left. Therefore, his method of nation building must be the paradigm. Whenever the international community makes attempts to nation building it will need “to think like Atatürk”. There is a saying in Norwegian whenever rational and clear thinking is needed, “To think like Atatürk”. On his 125th birthday we need not only think of him, but also think like him.

April 2006 ☒

## ASA Membership Form

Membership in ASA is US \$50 for a calendar year or for a portion of it. Students pay US \$10. Married persons may also register their spouse as full members without additional membership fee. Members' rights include attending the annual General Assembly meetings, voting for and serving on the Executive Board, receiving the quarterly bulletin, Voice of Atatürk. Active participation in ASA activities is encouraged.

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# WHAT ATATÜRK TAUGHT US

*Both the Turkish people and other Middle-Eastern people must study and learn why Atatürk made his reforms in Turkey.*

By M. Orhan Tarhan  
Former ASA President

The genius of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was to define the conditions of Europe's superiority to other nations and to use these same conditions to convert the Turkish society from a backward, illiterate, Islamic society to a progressive, literate, and laic nation. He thus saved Turkey from becoming non-survivable like the Ottoman Empire. He taught us that survivability in the modern world for any nation requires: (a) rational thinking and behavior, (b) exclusive secular education, (No religious schools) (3) complete separation of church and state (laicism), and (4) a democratic government system, among other things. He expressed that by the motto: "Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the people". These findings are timeless truths that any society should learn and apply. This lesson was already proven clearly by the end of Atatürk's life (1938). Still it was not correctly understood and learned by many Turks and by the world at large in the last 70 years.

This misunderstanding was partially caused by the fact that socialists hijacked Atatürk's Party, the People's Republican Party, after his death and started to propagate many socialist ideas as Atatürk's ideas. While Atatürk had no ideology, they invented something called Kemalism which fixed Atatürk's party platform of the 1930's as a new ideology. Actually Atatürk wanted to have constant change and progress to be always fit to survive in the modern world. Thus, Atatürk was not a Kemalist.

In Turkey, the generation who put its life in line to fight to get the basis on which the Republic was founded is now slowly dying out. Before the last of them closes his eyes, the young generation has

elected a religious government that came to power by promising that it will respect the principle of laicism. But this Islamic bunch can promise anything and do nothing, because Islam allows something called "takkiyeh" that says that it is all right to lie and cheat, as long as it is for the good of Islam. These people who came to power have also sworn on their honor to respect and implement the reforms of Atatürk when they were admitted to the Turkish parliament. They cannot serve what they consider the good of Islam and their word of honor at the same time and they seem to prefer serving Islam. The government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is now busy systematically dismantling Atatürk's reforms. He is making Turkey increasingly less survivable in the modern world. The country will still go on for a while with the inertia of the half-forgotten Atatürk revolution, and then, Heaven forbid, crumble like the Ottoman Empire.

It is regrettable that the other Muslim nations in the Middle East created from the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire did not see how Turkey was improving itself and was making itself survivable in the modern world using Atatürk's reforms. I think many of them saw the change in Turkey, but did not like laicism and the discarding of the Sharia. It was very important for them to train their male children in the learning of the Koran instead in a secular high school, not to train the female children at all, and marrying up to four wives.

That is how and why the Middle East is what it is today. It is mostly their choice and their decision. But those choices and decisions are usually the products of the kind of education these masses receive. If they go to religious schools, they will keep on sticking to the Saria, to the Koran schools, and of course to abject poverty,

because Koran training does not train them to do any money-earning jobs. Only if they go to secular schools, where they get a rational scientific education have they a chance to choose Atatürk reforms. Apparently they were too few of these secular schools and too few of those who chose Atatürk's reforms.

Thus, the only long-range possibility of rescuing these Muslim societies from abject poverty, is to wean them from their religious schools and to put them in secular schools where they can get a rational education with science and technology, and get the ability to think rationally and the capability of working in some money-producing jobs. Once the connection of secular schools with money-producing jobs is discovered, probably most people will start abandoning their Koran schools and join the secular schools. Only when a society has a majority of secular school graduates, can that society want to have Atatürk's reforms.

Both the Turkish people and other Middle-Eastern peoples must study and learn why Atatürk made his reforms in Turkey. Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Arabia were part of the same Ottoman Empire. Atatürk's reforms raised Turkey to a higher level than the others. The Atatürk's Revolution is only 80 years old. If Turks and every body else would learn and understand why Atatürk's reforms were necessary, then they certainly would not allow their leaders to lose their survivability (as the Case of Turkey) and they would urge their leaders to win their survivability for the first time as in the case of all other Arab countries.

People don't read history, even recent events that are just 80 years old. That is dangerous for them. The American philosopher Santayana said that those who don't learn history are condemned to relive it. ☒



# In The Eyes of the World

## GAZI MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK, THE GREATEST STATESMAN

"I obtained information concerning Mustafa Kemal from someone who knows him very well. When talking with Foreign Minister Litvinov of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, he said that in his opinion, the most valuable and interesting statesman in all of Europe does not live in Europe today, but beyond the Bosphorus, he lives in Ankara, and that this was the President of the Turkish Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk."

*Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America*

## THE GENIUS OF OUR CENTURY

The centuries rarely produce a genius. Look at this bad luck of ours, that great genius of our era was granted to the Turkish nation.

*David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom*

## ATA'S DEATH IS A GREAT LOSS

"Atatürk's death is not only a loss for the country, but for Europe is the greatest loss, he who saved Turkey in the war and who revived anew the Turkish nation after the war. The sincere tears shed after him by all classes of people is nothing other than an appropriate manifestation to this great hero and modern Turkey's Ata."

*Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom*

## A LEADER WITH GREAT UNDERSTANDING

"Mustafa Kemal was not a socialist. But it can be perceived that he is a good organizer, with great understanding, progressive, with good thoughts and an intelligent leader. He is carrying out a war of independence against those plunderers. I am believing that he will break the pride of the imperialists and that he will beat the Sultan together with his friends. ( 1921 )"

*Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Leader of the Russian Revolution*

## HOW CAN I NOT ADMIRE HIM?

"Pasha, how can I not admire you? I established a secular government in France. This government was overthrown by the priests with the help of the Pope's representatives in Paris. While you got rid of the Caliphate and established a secular state in the true sense of the word. Within this fanaticism, how did you make this society accept secularity? The great work of your genius was to create a secular Turkey. (1933)"

*Edouard Herriot, Former Prime Minister of France*

## TURKEY CAN BE PROUD OF ITSELF

"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... Without a doubt, those who have done these extraordinary activities have earned the attributes of a great man in the complete sense of the word. And because of this, Turkey can be proud of itself." (31 October 1933)

*Eleutherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece*