

*Voice of* OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ATATÜRK SOCIETY OF AMERICA | SUMMER 2011

# ATATÜRK



*Atatürk's Immortal Words in an Anthem for Anzac Day*

*An Interview with Muazzez İlmiye Çığ*

*Good Will Gestures in Thessaloniki*



ATATÜRK'S 130TH BIRTHDAY AND MAY 19 YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION AT THE TURKISH EMBASSY FEATURING LECTURE BY PROF. EDWARD J. ERICKSON



## The Atatürk Society of America

Voice of

# ATATÜRK

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# ATATÜRK AND TURKISH YOUTH

**W**hy have I always considered myself a contemporary of Atatürk's? I live in the present, yet I share the goals and ideals of Atatürk's youth. I believe in science, technology, modernity, human rights, secularism, and progress.

Atatürk dedicated May 19 as Turkish Youth Day shortly after the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923. First and foremost, Atatürk was a reformer of Turkey at all levels. He knew that in order for the new country to survive and prosper, it had to sweep away all traces of the old mentality, undergo substantial reforms in politics, administration, and social structure, embrace science and technology, and reject superstition and the shackles of religion. Atatürk stated, "For us, the measure of time should not be thought of in terms of the past century's lax mentality, but our century's conception of speed and action." With 56.2 percent of the population under 25 years of age, he knew that youth was the future of the new Republic.

Years before the establishment of the Republic, while visiting madrasa (religious) schools across the country, Atatürk witnessed something that had a profound effect on his views for the future. He saw children squatting on bare dirt floors, with teachers in turbans requiring them to memorize the Koran in Arabic before teaching them how to read and write in Turkish or do arithmetic. These children were brainwashed rather than taught critical thinking skills, a reminder to him of his early childhood, before he convinced his father to send him to military school. Unfortunately, madrassas continue to exist in Turkey, and have increased in recent years to reach their largest numbers in Turkish history.

In the early years of his rule, certain influential Turks, even Atatürk's friends, wanted to preserve the Ottoman ways of the past, but Atatürk would have none of it. He knew he had to struggle against the stifling atmosphere of old mental and social habits and theocracy. He knew the country needed to adopt modern ways and make a sharp, even painful, break from old habits. He sought the abandonment of Ottoman Sharia (Koranic) law, and the adoption of Swiss and Italian legal frameworks. The brightest legal minds, seeking refuge from the brewing storms of Hitler's Europe, flocked to this young Republic and assisted in this endeavor.

Valuing knowledge, Atatürk recognized two obstacles blocking intellectual growth for his citizens. First, the sultans and the Ulema had banned printing presses for centuries after Europeans had invented them, both for political reasons and so as not to jeopardize the handwritten script of the Koran. Second was the high rate of illiteracy: 95 percent of men were unable to read and write at the time the Republic was established, and almost all women were illiterate. At that time, out of 12 million Turkish women, only 532 girls were in primary and middle schools, and 242 girls were in high school. For this reason, Atatürk abandoned the difficult Arabic script and adopted the Roman alphabet, dramatically decreasing the illiteracy rate in a short period of time.

Increasingly confident Turkish youth emerged from these reforms, later becoming members of Parliament and achieving high office in the new government. After the 1934 law which granted women the right to run for elected office, 20 female teachers, who graduated from the schools established by Atatürk, were elected to parliament. This was the highest percentage of women elected to parliament in the Republic's history.

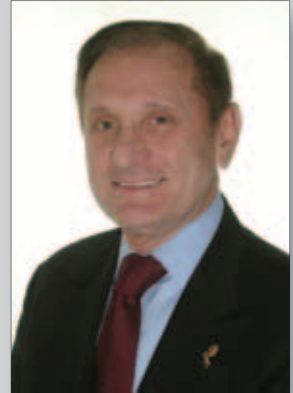
Atatürk knew the importance of engaging the future early in the life of a child. He dedicated the date of April 23 to children and the date of May 19 to youth, to inculcate them with modernity and ensure that they carry out the vision of a new secular and democratic Republic.

Atatürk described Turkish youth by saying,

"My understanding is that youth are those that have accepted Turkish reforms and ideas, and will transmit them to future generations. In my view, a twenty year old Islamic radical is old, and a seventy year old idealist is young. This is my understanding of Turkish youth." This is why in his 1927 speech (Büyük Nutuk/Söylev) which lasted six days and forty and a half hours, Atatürk entrusted Turkey to Turkish youth. He declared:

"Oh, ye Turkish youth! Your foremost duty is to preserve and defend forever Turkish independence and the Turkish Republic. "

The Atatürk Society of America keeps this spirit alive today.



**Hudai Yavalar**

*Chairman, Founding President*

*"Atatürk knew the importance of engaging the future early in the life of a child. He dedicated the date of April 23 to children and the date of May 19 to youth, to inculcate them with modernity and ensure that they carry out the vision of a new secular and democratic Republic."*

### TURKEY NEEDS ANOTHER ATATÜRK, NOT ANOTHER SULTAN

**A**fter proving himself to be invincible on the battlefield, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk resurrected Turkey from the smoldering ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Through a plethora of reforms — political, social, cultural, economic, legal and educational in nature — he transformed a lethargic, illiterate Islamic society into a dynamic, literate secular Turkish nation with Western values. Most importantly, he championed women's rights and a frame of mind for a country of science and reason over superstition and dogma. And a grateful parliament of the republic he created bestowed on him the honorific title, Atatürk, "Father of the Turks."

In 2002, the distinguished psychiatrist, Arnold Ludwig, published his exquisitely researched book, *King of the Mountain: The Nature of Political Power*, profiling 1941 leaders from 199 countries in the 20th century. Concentrating on 377 of the leaders about whom abundant information was available, he proceeded to grade them. Among the top twenty leaders, Winston Churchill was ranked nineteenth, Charles de Gaulle sixth, Franklin Delano Roosevelt second, and Atatürk first.

Recently, on June 12, a general election took place in Turkey, and the ruling Islamic AK Party (AKP) was re-elected. Before the election Western media, including that in the United States, had been trumpeting the message, "Wouldn't it be great to have a moderate Islamic state as a model for the entire Middle East," even though this party had made it clear that following the election it would immediately begin to overhaul the Turkish Constitution. The media is beginning to herald a more sobering note: "When Iran's revolution happened and the Islamists took over in 1979, everyone knew it," wrote Barry Rubin, "...in contrast Turkey's revolution has been a stealth Islamist operation... [and] Western governments have failed shockingly to understand what has been going on." Another journalist, Niall Ferguson, wrote, about the party's leader, "His ambition, it seems clear, is to return to the pre-Atatürk era, when Turkey was not only militantly Muslim but also a regional superpower."

While there is room to make some revisions in the Constitution in order to better serve Turkey's citizens and improve human rights, we fear that AKP's proposed changes threaten the founding principles of the secular state. We are afraid that the innocuous and altruistic language of an "era of reform" espoused by AKP include changes that will put the country in an inexorable and irreversible path to governance by Islamic Sharia Law, and for the first time in its eighty-eight year history allying itself with the East against the West. What a tragedy this realignment represents — a tragedy for human rights in general, and women's rights in particular.

The effects of the policies of the present government in Turkey are seen in a number of recent developments:

- The numerous high level military officers and journalists incarcerated and held for trial on trumped up charges. What the AK Party fails to understand, or perhaps it understands fully, is that in a democratic society disagreeing with a government's policies peacefully is not a crime, but for a government to put individuals on trial for disagreeing with it is. In short, Democracy in Turkey is fast evaporating.
- The attenuation of women's rights, including an unprecedented rise in crimes against women. A February 2011 issue of an authoritative daily in Turkey reported that in the last seven years, there has been an increase of 1400% in gender based killings. A clear reason is the change of mentality. Such murderers began to get lighter sentences based on laws that protect men in cases where the courts find that they were provoked by their wives or girlfriends. Under the AKP government, women wearing head covering increased four fold, while women in the workforce dropped from 36% to 25%.

When the 'Arab Spring' first erupted in the Moslem countries of the Middle East — Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Algeria — an exceptionally well-versed politician, Senator Mark Udall (D, Colorado) observed, "What they need is another Atatürk." Unhappily, Turkey itself needs another Atatürk, not another Sultan.

Warm regards,  
Bulent Atalay  
President, ASA



**Bulent Atalay**

President

*"Among the top twenty leaders, Winston Churchill was ranked nineteenth, Charles de Gaulle sixth, Franklin Delano Roosevelt second, and Atatürk first."*



## Board of Directors

ASA elected its latest Board of Directors in January, 2011. We are happy to announce the following individuals and their positions:

*President*, Bülent Atalay;  
*Vice-President*, Filiz Odabas-Geldiay;  
*Treasurer*, Mirat Yavalar;  
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*Junior Advisor*, Abby Bowman

## VISIT TO THE CAPITOL HILL

**O**n Wednesday, March 9, 2011, the newly elected ASA President, Dr. Bülent Atalay, and Vice-President, Filiz Odabas-Geldiay accompanied by Congressional Liaison, Esra Alemdar, visited Congressman Stephen Cohen (D-Tennessee) and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina) who are members of the Caucus on US-Turkish Relations at the US Capitol. The ASA representatives met with each member of the Congress for an hour. This was an exploratory visit to present ASA's new board and strengthen the relationship between the members of the Congress and the ASA. ASA hopes to be regarded in the future as a resource body on matters related to Atatürk and Turkey.

In these meetings the ASA representatives were able to voice the members' concerns about the AK Party's deliberate actions to destroy Atatürk's creation, the secular, modern Republic of Turkey.

Describing itself as a "conservative party advocating liberal market economy," the AK Party won elections in 2002, and gradually began to reveal its hidden agenda. First, characterizing the Republic as a "moderate Islamic country," then describing its action as "a revolution," it began to purge those they identified as "anti-revolutionaries." They effectively neutered the army, the very guarantor of the secular modern state, and recently accelerated the arrest of journalists and military officers on drummed up charges. The global implication is an increased polarization of the world, with Turkey slipping away from Western sphere of alliances, becoming a provocateur instead of a negotiator.

ASA is hoping to meet with other political leaders such as Senator Mark Udall, Democratic Senator from Colorado, an abiding proponent of Atatürk and his vision. When discussing the



latest developments in Egypt with Chris Matthews on MSNBC's "Hardball" show, Senator Udall, observed, "What's needed in the current situation is another Atatürk." Clearly, Senator Udall is a man with an incisive historical sense.





ASA President Bulent Atalay, Mrs. Carol Jean Atalay, ASA Vice President Filiz Odabas-Geldiay, Turkish Defence Attache Murat Yildirim, Mrs. Papatya Yildirim, ASA chairman Hudai Yavalar, ASA Treasurer Mirat Yavalar

# Atatürk's Immortal Words in an Anthem for ANZAC DAY

*Carol Jean Masker Atalay*

I was excited at the prospect of attending the ANZAC Day Commemorative Service held on April 26, 2011 at the Washington National Cathedral. I could not imagine a more auspicious setting than this magnificent architectural edifice perched on the highest point in Washington, and visible for miles around, as the site to honor the heroes of Gallipoli. These are the young men who were brought from Australia and New Zealand to join the allied forces fighting against the Turks. And simultaneously it was to honor those brave Turkish soldiers who fought so valiantly to prevent the Allies from expanding their foothold on the peninsula, and subsequent occupation of the entire country. After eight months the outcome turned out to be a stand-off — no measurable ground was actually gained, and yet half a million young men, almost evenly divided

between the two sides, were left killed or wounded. The campaign launched by the British and French to capture Istanbul, to gain access to a sea route to Russia, and most importantly to strike Germany from its “soft underbelly,” proved in the end to be ill conceived, and ill fated. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, who had masterminded the plan, lost his job following the campaign.

It was on my first visit to Turkey in 1967 that I became aware of the importance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Under real threat of partition and absorption by invading powers, Turkey would survive thanks to Atatürk's leadership. He would lead the ragtag Turkish forces against the Allied forces in Gallipoli, and then against enemies in the southeast and southwest. Following military victories, he would serve as the architect of the modern secular republic. Emblematic of the reverence with which they would hold him would be the title bestowed on him by the Parliament, “Atatürk,” “Father of the

Turks.” My mother-in-law used to speak about Atatürk’s significance for Turkey, describing him as, “Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln rolled into one.” This metaphor remained with me, but I came to understand its full significance only gradually as I became aware of his military victories and his wide range of reforms following the wars.

The weather on the morning of April 26th was beautiful —sunny and bright. Inside the Cathedral we took our seats while people continued to file in. Australian and New Zealand officers were in full dress uniform, as well as the Turkish officers who attended. Australians wore a sprig of rosemary on their jackets, while New Zealanders wore a poppy as symbols of remembrance on ANZAC Day. The service began with the entrance of the Color Guard, followed by the National Anthems of Australia, New Zealand and the United States, sung by Donna Balson. His Excellency The Honorable Kim Beazley, Ambassador of Australia to the United States gave the ANZAC Day Address. The ANZAC Day Commemorative Service ended with the reading by the Right Honorable Mike Moore, past Prime Minister and present Ambassador to the United States from New Zealand, of the elegy inspired by the sonnet, “For the Fallen,” by the Oxford educated poet, Laurence Binyon (1869-1943):

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.

The audience’s response: WE WILL REMEMBER THEM...  
The Ambassador’s remark: LEST WE FORGET.  
The audience’s response: LEST WE FORGET.

In the program Atatürk’s letter to the mothers of fallen ANZACS was rendered into an anthem for ANZAC Day, composed in song format by Graham Ashton, and sung by the soprano soloist, Donna Balson. The experience was incredibly poignant! Atatürk’s letter, written in 1930, fourteen years after the cessation of hostilities in the Gallipoli campaign, was overwhelmingly generous, and had to have been deeply comforting to the women who lost their sons in the campaign:

*“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 in this land they have become our sons as well.”*

— Kemal Atatürk

These words are inscribed in the Turkish Memorial to the Unknown Soldier in Gallipoli, and inscribed at the Atatürk Memorials in Canberra, Australia and in Wellington, New

Zealand. It is no wonder that in distant Australia and New Zealand, 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.

After a moment of silence, the service concluded with Reveille and a blessing by the Vicar of the Washington National Cathedral, The Reverend Jan Naylor Cope.

Recently, a pair of blogs appeared in the ‘NewsWatch National Geographic Series, “Remembering Gallipoli — Anzac Day 2011,” reporting parts of the foregoing text. It was followed soon after by a comment from Peter Wall, a reader in Sydney, Australia, “It was impossible to read your poignant and heartfelt note without tears rolling down my cheeks. Each time I read Atatürk’s letter to the mother’s of our fallen sons it reminds me of the unbreakable bond between our two countries that will remain forever.”



Australian Ambassador Kim Beazley



# Atatürk's 130th Birthday and May 19 Youth Day Celebrations



Ambassador Namık Tan



Ambassador Namık Tan and Prof. Edward Erickson

**M**ay 19, 2011 signified many events; the Youth Day, (19 Mayıs Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı), the 92nd Anniversary of the start of the War of Independence (Kurtuluş Savaşı) and the 130th anniversary of Atatürk's Birthday.

Collectively, the Atatürk Society of America, the Association of Turkish-Americans of DC and the Turkish Embassy organized an evening of celebrations to commemorate these events which was held at the Turkish Ambassador's Residence. More than 130 guests attended, including

members of the diplomatic community, US Congressmen, a Nobel Prize winner in Physics, members of the National Geographic Society and military attaches of Australia and New Zealand.

This was the first time in many years in which the Turkish Embassy took part in the Youth Day celebrations. The Turkish Ambassador Namık Tan reflected on the importance of this day with a speech in which he said, "We are here today because of Atatürk's accomplishments... Atatürk is everything to us." The highlight of the evening was the presentation by the guest speaker, Prof. Edward Erickson from the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA who gave detailed historic accounts of the Gallipoli campaign and Atatürk's involvement as a Lieutenant Colonel and the commander of the 19th Infantry Division of the Ottoman army.



ASA President Bulent Atalay, Former Congressman John Tanner, Mr. Howard McCollum, ASA Chairman Hudai Yavalar, Mrs. Mirat Yavalar, Former member of Congress Charlie Melancon



## Atatürk Societies Worldwide Oppose Changes to the Constitution

In the hopes of preserving the secular character of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk Societies of the United States and the United Kingdom have prepared a three page media alert in English and Turkish opposing any attempts by the AK Party to change the founding principles of the Turkish Constitution. The media alert is being distributed to various newspapers and online news websites, and will be viewable on ASA's website. The document expresses ASA members' deep concerns over the plans of the ruling AK Party to overhaul the Turkish Constitution. While there is room to make some revisions in the Constitution in order to better serve Turkey's citizens and improve human rights, we fear that AKP's proposed changes threaten the founding principles of modern Turkey as a secular state. Cloaked in the innocuous and altruistic language of an "era of reform," their changes will put the country on an inexorable and irreversible path to governance by Islamic Sheria Law.



Prof. Edward Erickson

It was Atatürk's 34th birthday on May 19, 1915 when the biggest Ottoman offensive was launched. The 19th Infantry Division was very successful during the fighting and this led to swift advancement of Atatürk's military career in the army. Before the end of the campaign, Atatürk was promoted to the rank of Colonel. On the contrary, due to the failure of the Allied forces, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George and, the First Admiralty of the British Navy, Winston Churchill were forced to resign. Both men had been fatally mistaken to believe that the Turks would be an easy target and that minimal force would be needed for success. The Gallipoli campaign will be remembered as the last gentlemanly battle for the chivalry and respect both sides had shown towards each other.

We, at Atatürk Society of America, thank Professor Edward Erickson for his educational and entertaining lecture and Ambassador Namık Tan and his wife Mrs. Fugen Tan for hosting this event at the Ambassador's residence. We plan to hold additional events this year and hope to see our cherished members once again. ►

## ASA's New Website

We have renovated our website to better serve our members and the general public. The web address remains the same, [www.ataturk-society.org](http://www.ataturk-society.org). Besides being aesthetically more appealing, the new website displays additional information about Atatürk, his life and accomplishments and ASA's past and current activities. Also, it enables one to become a member online and track membership status and payment history. We hope you will visit our website soon and give us feedback for additional improvement. ASA wishes to thank Berkay Demirkan for his hard work and dedication improving our web side.



# The Historical Meaning and Significance of May 19

*Dursun Atılgan*

President, Federation of European  
Atatürk Societies

**A**fter the defeat in First World War, our nation's army had been disbanded, its weapons taken away and our land was divided by foreign powers from one end to the other. In the true sense of the word, sad and dark days had started in the entire

country. On the other hand, worried for self preservation, those who had dragged our country to war had fled abroad. Those who held the destiny of the country, were worried about saving their own thrones. As a natural result of the circumstances facing it, the nation felt hopeless and the patriotic people felt helpless. These harsh circumstances were accepted as though they were destiny. Hopelessness and helplessness, like a dark night had settled into

hearts and minds. Freedom was expected from another direction, from another place....

It was while these extraordinarily harsh circumstances governed, Mustafa Kemal who landed in Samsun on May 19, 1919, turned history's biggest hopelessness into hope. The National Struggle He started in Samsun was not only the start of war of independence. It was the start of the road to independence and freedom and later on to a republic and democracy. What needs to be emphasized is that it was the first step, in what we describe as a whole made up of its rings, of the Turkish Revolution

When the War of Independence was won, and the rings of the chain of revolution were added one by one, on October 15-20 1927 Mustafa Kemal gave the historic Big Speech, which was thought to be the day of reckoning with his people, in the great hall of the TBMM. At the beginning, he summarized the general conditions that the nation and the people had been subjected to. Then at the end of the speech, after he explained the history of our Freedom and Founding, he called on the Turkish Youth to own Turkish Independence and Turkish Republic forever.

This is the essence of Atatürk's Call on the Youth:

There may be internal or external enemies who will want to take away the full independence we won under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, the republic which depends on the people and is made up of the people, the value system which was brought about along with the republic and all our gains. In fact, because of their common interests, these enemies may join forces. Turkish youth, don't ever





permit them, don't stay out of politics, don't be indifferent about the future of the nation you're a member of and make sure you assume responsibility...!

In this sense, one of the most important reasons for Atatürk to constantly assign duties to the youth is biological: Because when the time comes for him and his friends to physically bid farewell, it is the Turkish youth, our future, our reassurance, and tomorrow's leaders, who will take on the duties to keep the Turkish Revolution, Atatürk's Principles and Atatürkist thought in the hearts and minds of the next generations.

The evidence of his deep affection for the youth, his boundless trust and appreciation are countless. Let's give two examples: Gifting 19 May, 1919 to the youth and these unforgettable lines "Despite everything, we are walking towards enlightenment. The power that keeps alive this belief is not just the endless love I have for my great country and my people; even in today's darkness, immorality, and quackery, it is because I see a YOUTH that is looking to spread enlightenment only with the love for the country and truth."

Attention must be paid that Our Great Leader Atatürk, who has no counterpart in history, did not declare this meaningful



day only as "Youth Day" he described it as "Youth and Sports Day." He wanted the youth to spend their youthful years healthy and deliberately.

Starting in childhood, the Turkish Youth's being raised to be mindful of and to have high level of political knowledge

of the issues of national identity, full independence, the Turkish Republic whose foundation rests on National War of Independence, to give importance to reason and knowledge, and to contribute to the world peace is the fundamental duty of the state. ▀

## A Special Exhibition and Presentation by Yüksel Oktay in New Jersey

**A**n Exhibition of Photographs, Posters and Books was held and a Presentation on the Life of one of the Greatest Leaders of the 20th Century was made at the Hunterdon County Public Library in New Jersey on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the birth of a towering figure of the 20th Century and the Creator of Modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The presentation lasted for two hours where the life of Atatürk, the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and his contribution to humanity were explained. Close to 40 people attended the presentation and many questions were asked, including several related to the present situation in Turkey.



# Muazzez İlmiye Çığ



*Muazzez İlmiye Çığ was born in 1914. She graduated with a degree from Teacher's High School (Öğretmen Okulu) and taught elementary school between 1931 – 1936 in Eskisehir. She was accepted to Ankara University, Faculty of Language, History and Geography in 1936. She studied in the Department of Hititology and graduated in 1940. Among her professors were Hans Gustav Guterbach and Prof. B. Lansberger, who escaped the Nazi oppression and took refuge in Turkey.*

*Mrs. Çığ worked at the Istanbul Archeology Museum as a Cuneiform Tablet Specialist for 32 years. Her husband M. Kemal Çığ was a Specialist in Turkic Languages and an Art Historian and worked as a director at the Topkapi Museum. They have 2 daughters.*

*This interview took place in May 2011 at Mrs. Çığ's home in Istanbul. Her home has a serene and comfortable presence and is filled with memories of her life. She is very energetic and still very enthusiastic about getting involved in causes she strongly believes in. She is an inspiration to people from all ages and walks of life. Her books about the Sumerian civilization have a big following, and she is admired by many for her devotion to the true meaning of Atatürk's ideals.*

*By Ilknur Boray*

**ASA – You were in elementary school during the War of Independence, and you are among the first generation of children who grew up with the energy and excitement of the revolutions of the Republic.**

**In your book titled “Civi Civi Soker” (One Nail Pulls Another), you write about your memories from your childhood until present. What were the 1920's like for you and your family?**

We lived in Eskisehir during the 1920's. We were in a town called Pazarcik when the 1st Inonu Battle started. When the Greeks occupied the area, our parents didn't allow us to go outside. The Greeks stayed in our town for three more days. The streets of that small town were littered with the empty meal cans of the Greek army. Our soldiers had only Bulghur wheat to eat which was cooked in Konya in big batches and sent around in wooden chests. The Greek army had proper uniforms and boots, on the other hand our soldiers had old uniforms, hardly anything to cover their feet.... Hardly anything to eat....Still they managed to

win that battle. How did they do this?! I'm still amazed. That is what I call the love of motherland.

Our soldiers established headquarters at the elementary school where my father taught. My father became Colonel Ismet Inonu's orderly. I still remember what he wrote about those days. When Inonu was told that the enemy was escaping, he stomped his feet and said “Don't tell me they are escaping, we are going to finish them right here!”. And that is exactly what happened. The amazing thing is that our army didn't have any weapons. Because there was an agreement to release weapons even before the Agreement of Sevr. The British and the others collected all the weapons, they seized the armory in Istanbul. There was nothing left! Still, we won the 1st and 2nd Inonu Battles. But the soldiers were distraught and there were no more resources left. Atatürk, as wise as always, decided to pull the army all the way back, which would make the enemy follow them and get away from their bases. This gave our troops time to recover, and they won again. That is when Atatürk requested

authority for supreme military command. His request was granted by the Grand National Assembly. He immediately made an announcement to the public, asking for donations to support the war efforts. Everyone was asked to give 40% of what they owed, to be paid back after “the victory.” His friends were astonished at his confidence. “What victory?” they asked. But the public believed





him and gave with their heart and soul. They really gave whatever they could. My family hardly had anything to give because we were immigrants and we kept running away from the enemy with all the others. We would go from one town to the other riding donkeys, hopping on trains.... But even people like us, people who didn't have any material things to give, worked side by side. The whole nation worked. Women sewed shirts, knitted socks for the soldiers. People made knives out of metal pieces... whatever they could... We won the Battle of Sakarya, then Dumlupinar. Now some call these "rebel wars."

How can they even suggest that? Of course at the beginning people started to form small groups to protect themselves against the enemy attacks. But Atatürk immediately recruited those people who were willing to fight to the army. This was the spirit of War of Independence.

**ASA – What was it like to teach in Eskisehir, during the formative years of the Republic and apply Atatürk's reforms into daily life?**

I started teaching in 1931. The conditions were better for my group than the teachers who started before us. I would like to point out that there was a great interest in education then. Partly because there were many children who lost their fathers in wars. Their mothers, especially mothers of girls, desperately wanted their daughters to get an education. I was lucky that my father didn't go to war because he was a teacher. But my best friend's dad died in the war, and her mother who was a very conservative and religious person, let her daughter go to another city to attend university. There was such a courage in those days. Now people ask me "Did people really believe in Atatürk's reforms?" I tell them that if the people didn't believe and accepted them wholeheartedly, the reforms and Atatürk's ideals would not survive this long. People were ready for those changes. Now when I look back and think about all the things we quickly adjusted to, I am amazed!

Atatürk was always honest. He never lied to the nation. He paid back all the money he borrowed from the people after the victory as he promised. He did everything he promised to do. That is why the nation always trusted him. The only ones who didn't believe him and didn't want to accept the changes were those who earned a living through the Madrasahs. There were more than a thousand of these theological schools around the country in 1924 when they were ordered to close. There were three major changes that happened in 1924. These were 1. The abolishment of the Ottoman Empire 2. The abolishment of the Caliphate 3. The abolishment of Madrasahs.



*There was such a courage in those days. Now people ask me "Did people really believe in Atatürk's reforms?" I tell them that if the people didn't believe and accepted them wholeheartedly, the reforms and Atatürk's ideals would not survive this long.*



Atatürk decided to go on a tour around the country and test the reaction of the nation after these changes took place. He started on the Black Sea coast. People showed tremendous love, respect and support to Atatürk everywhere he went during that tour. He was welcomed with so much love. It was magnificent.... in one town a couple of imams from the crowd asked him to reopen the madrasahs. Atatürk told them sternly "never again!" The crowd went wild in support of his answer, which confirmed to Atatürk and his friends that their decision was supported by the majority.

**ASA- You were among the first students of the German professors who escaped the Nazi oppression and took**

**refuge in Turkey. What was it like to be a student during the formative years of University of Ankara? What were the challenges both for the German professors and students?**

That was a very positive and interesting experience. We didn't know German, and the professors had translators. The professors were required to learn enough Turkish in three years, so they could teach without the aide of translators. They were very instrumental in establishing the first universities in Turkey. My professor of Sumerian Culture (or Sumerology) was upset that there were no text books in his field. Then he heard there was a collection of library books for sale in Germany, having belonged to a professor who passed away. He asked if our university could purchase them, and they were immediately bought and brought to Turkey. After that all the other German professors requested books, laboratory facilities... Whatever they asked for they got it. Nothing was spared. How did our government manage to do all these things in those days? The Turkish government did not borrow any money from anybody during the formative years. This is something I think a lot about these days. I stay up until late hours thinking about this. The National Assembly was formed in 1920 in Ankara. The budget was zero! The nation was poor. What did we import, what did we export? Just a little bit of hazelnuts and maybe few other things... Furthermore, we were paying the debt of the Ottomans. On top of that, even though we didn't loose in the 1st World War, we were paying the debt of the Germans. All this time we were building factories, schools, opening universities.... How did this all happen? Doesn't this prove that if we could properly use the taxes that are collected at the present time, this country could have so much potential. When Ismet Inonu was in charge those days as the Prime Minister, he promised not to let anyone spend government funds recklessly. And he was very careful about monitoring

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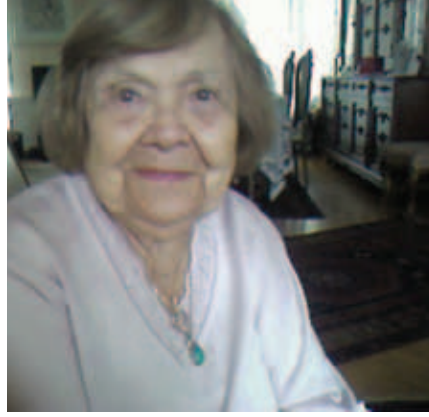
# Muazzez İlmiye Çığ

*continued from page 13*

that. There were a lot of bids for government contracts those days. Ankara was being rebuilt. New roads, bridges, tunnels were being built all around the country. It's still mind boggling to me, the way they handled all this so successfully.

**ASA – When you started working at the Archeology Museum in Istanbul, you found thousands of cuneiforms, kiln tablets from the Sumerian civilization, as well as tablets and artifacts from the Akadians and the Hitites in storage. Is it true that you have spent most of your career sorting and cataloging these archeological finds?**

Yes, it is true. Those kiln tablets were the ones that were collected from the digs in Iraq after 1890. Those areas were under the Ottoman rule then, and according to an agreement that was prepared by Osman Hamdi bey (founder of the Archeology Museum in Turkey), everything from the digs were divided into half between the people conducting the dig and the Ottoman government. In a way I'm glad that some of those tablets ended up in other people's hands. At least they were analyzed and read. We still do not have proper studies in this field. After graduating from university, a friend of mine and I started working at the Archeology Museum. There was already another graduate from our faculty, a German archeologist at the museum, who was also trained by our professors. Apparently, when he first started and saw all the tablets in storage, he requested proper facilities to clean and sort them. The museum immediately sent a chemist to Germany to be trained in proper ways of handling these ancient kiln tablets and other artifacts. Meanwhile, they built a laboratory inside the museum. They were still building the laboratory when we started working there. Unfortunately, there has been hardly anything added to the museum since then. That German



archeologist did so much for the museum. We became responsible for everything when he left the museum. My friend and I decided right away to clean, organize and catalog all these tablets until the last one, no matter how long it would take us. We were not going to retire without finishing this task. And we accomplished it.

**ASA – You have written many books about your research on the Sumerian Civilization. You also have discovered many similarities between Sumerians and the Turks. Your books have a big following. Many people say that your writing style makes historical facts more interesting.**

My first goal in writing those books was to introduce and explain the Sumerian civilization to the common people. And I feel that I accomplished that. My readers are from all ages. 14 of my 17 books are about the Sumerians. I'm working on one more book right now, and it's about to finish. I have 3 books on other subjects. One is about the Hittites, one is about Atatürk, and the other one is about my reactions as a citizen. Most of my books are in a story form. For example, there is one about Sumerian literature, another one about the daily life of the Sumerians. One of my recent books is called "The flood in Sumeria, Turks in flood" (Sumer'de Tufan, Tufan'da Türkler) which explains some of

the Sumer-Turk connections. I wish I had more time to write. But I'm still content with what I'm able to produce.

In 1988 at a convention in the United States of America, during my speech about my studies, I mentioned that some of my professors were refugees from Germany. I talked about their request, including a letter by Albert Einstein, to the Turkish government asking for consideration of accepting these refugee educators and scientists, and how Atatürk accepted their request and invited them to Turkey. As a result a new beginning was created for them and for our universities. The participants at the convention, especially those with a Jewish background, were very interested. Apparently not many people were aware of this matter. My speech was copied and sent to more than 100 Jewish groups. It was also published in many publications.

**ASA – Do you think that the arguments and deviations related to the secularism concept are wearing out the structure of the Republic?**

I always talk about the fact that we accomplished a huge revolution. A kind of revolution that was never seen in history. We did the Renaissance that was done in Europe 400 years earlier; we did an industrial revolution just like they did in the 1800's; in the French revolution there was a huge Empire which came to an end, we did that kind of revolution too.... Then we changed all the measuring units, clocks, calendar system, our clothing styles and traditions, education.... We changed our laws, the code of civil law, the equality between men and women....

These are astounding changes. It was not easy to adapt all these, but the people accepted them with enthusiasm. These changes wouldn't take place if the people resisted them. There were some of course, the conservative religious types who earned their living through



the madrasahs. And they secretly started a rebellion movement, claiming that the religion was being targeted. There were even some in Atatürk's own party, Republican People's Party, who couldn't fully adapt to all the changes. After Atatürk died, towards the 1950s, those whom I call the "spider heads", those who didn't understand the concepts of Atatürk's revolutions clearly, started going wayward. In the name of democracy and dreaming of more votes, they turned to the religious conservatives. That is when Atatürk's statues were attacked. They closed the village community centers (Koyevi) and public community centers (Halkevi) the only cultural and instructional institutes for many people. Koran courses and later on religious leader-preacher schools (Imam Hatip Okulu) were opened instead.

I didn't know about some facts until recently. There were boarding schools for Koran courses. They educated 3,000 girls for 3 years, all expenses paid. Boys too. Unfortunately all of these youngsters were raised with values against Atatürk and his revolutions. One young lady who was educated with such principles wrote a book recently. Her name is Hatice Akca and the book is called "I have Things to Say" (Soyleyeceklerim Var). I met her, and she said that she skipped some details in order to not hurt some others who were in her position.

Lately, the opposing point of view, those who are against Atatürk's ideals are gaining more strength. Of course this has been going on since the 1950's. In other words there is a counterattack against our big revolution. It is almost unbelievable, what they have accomplished so far. Atatürk never banned religion. My mother, bless her soul, was a very religious woman, and she was uneducated. But when secularism was adapted, she said to me: "Look how willing these people are to put their religious ways aside. It is as if Atatürk ordered them to ignore religion." Because there were those who were not

real believers. The society rules forced them to live and act that way. Suddenly some opportunists started talking against religious beliefs. But the government immediately published a law stating a punishment of up to 3 years in prison for those who spoke or acted against religion. Those pretenders had to shut up. Atatürk was very firm about the realization of

secularism. This is how secularism got firmly established. But now these new generation pretenders came about with new ideas! They ban alcohol!

People fool themselves and their god while they think they are fooling others. This is the greatest dishonesty, the greatest immorality and the greatest disrespect to religion in my opinion. ▀



# War of Independence

## 26 August – 9 September 1922

By Hudai Yavalar

Following their loss to the great European powers in World War I, the Ottoman Empire and its ally, Germany, had to agree to an unconditional surrender. For the former the terms of the post-war agreement effectively ended its 600-year old existence as an independent nation. Under occupation by the European Allies, the country found itself economically bankrupt; the morale of its citizens abysmally low, the people largely illiterate.

It was at this point that Mustafa Kemal embarked on a systematic program to salvage what was left of the country, now reduced to minimal resources, ragtag groups of dispirited fighters, and almost devoid of any armament. With cautious optimism and confidence borne of his unique vision, he took what would become a historic first step towards regaining independence. Sailing out of Istanbul secretly with a group of trusted friends, he landed in Samsun on May 19, 1919. It was his 38th birthday, exactly four years to the day after he had launched a tactical night raid on the invading ANZAC Forces in Gallipoli, setting into motion what would become an insurmountable barrier for the invaders, critical in stopping further advance.

After Samsun, he journeyed to Sivas and Erzurum in Eastern Turkey, and organized resistance groups. By December 27, 1919 he had relocated his headquarters to the sleepy town of Ankara, near the diagonal center of the Anatolian mainland.

At the Ottomans' last parliamentary meeting in Istanbul on March 16, 1920, a British force stormed the Parliament Building, killing 11 military police,

arresting many MPs and sending them off to detention on the island of Malta. This was meant to deter any opportunity of the Turks to re-establish a government. On April 23, 1920 Mustafa Kemal convened a new parliament in Ankara, a body comprised of remnants of the Ottoman parliamentarians as well as of newly elected members. Beset by domestic turmoil, especially instigated by the clerics, the belligerent opposition by the Sultan to the new Parliament, and without a standing army, Mustafa Kemal turned to the populace. Through what must have been akin to New England style town hall meetings in the United States, he convinced the people that what was at stake was nothing other than their very survival. And he explained to them that only through excruciating sacrifice, superhuman diligence and unfettered perseverance would the ultimate goal of self-determination be achieved. For the first time in their history the Turkish people would be able to establish a state embodying their own ethnic identity, instead of the name of the six-hundred-year old Osman Dynasty.

On May 15, 1919, Greek forces, with strong encouragement from Britain, invaded the Anatolian mainland at Izmir, and in the following three years penetrated within 50 kilometers of Ankara. But there, on August 26, 1922, the invaders faced the brilliant tactician, and battle-hardened general, Mustafa Kemal himself. The battle, and the war, ended with the defeat of the Greeks on September 9, 1922. While Mustafa Kemal finally took the opportunity to relax in Izmir, panic gripped the British government in London. At a cabinet meeting on September 11, Prime Minister, Lloyd George, declared, "Britain must not shirk from

taking on Mustafa Kemal!" Although Lloyd George had the support of the Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, previously embarrassed in Gallipoli, he had neither the support of the public, nor of a key ally in France. Echoing the anti-war popular mood, the British Daily Mail came out with the banner headline, "Stop This New War!" Lacking public support for another ill-conceived adventure, Lloyd George resigned from his post as Prime Minister.

The initial peace negotiations took place in Mudanya, a western Turkish port, on October 3, 1922, bringing together the representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Turkey at the home of a Russian merchant. Atatürk's perennial right-hand man, Ismet Inonu, represented the Turkish side. Afterwards, on October 27 the Allies invited Turkey to a peace conference in Lausanne, Switzerland that began on November 20, 1922. Leading the delegation was again Ismet Inonu, but this time accompanied by the anti-unionist politician Dr. Riza Nur, and as advisor, the Chief Rabbi Nahum. With the signing of the Lausanne Treaty on July 24, 1923, the negotiated settlement ultimately secured international recognition for a fully independent Turkish state for the first time in history. It also established the borders of the modern Turkish state, resurrected from the remains of a crumbling empire.

The historical watermark came on October 29, 1923, when Mustafa Kemal proclaimed the new Republic, and was elected its first President. In his acceptance speech, he vowed, *"I will work diligently and sincerely, hand in hand with my colleagues, forswearing any belief that I could function without their personal help. Supported by the love of the nation, we shall march forward together. The Turkish Republic will be happy, prosperous and victorious."* ▀



# Remarks for May 19

**W**ar leaves behind ruins; the struggle to share resources and conflicts of national interest leave behind wars.

And as an empire that grew from a small core in one of the world's toughest regions to a vast sovereignty that expanded far beyond ran out the war- and struggle-laden final centuries of its life span and collapsed, what remained behind in the geography of Anatolia was, using Eisenhower's timeless phrase, a "legacy of ashes" and the last battle that was to take place on these ashes was perhaps the longest, most daring and stunning war this land ever saw.

May 19 is the first shot across the bow in this all-out war.

And it's not surprising that when Atatürk chose as his birthday the beginning of this war that was fought and won not only with guns but also with pens, not only with ammunition but also with knowledge, not only with battlefield maneuvers but also with the building blocks of a revolution; he saw May 19 as the bearer of news, both of the independence of his nation from invaders occupying all but a few corners of his country, and of the victory of enlightened thinking over inequality, dogmatism and backwardness as it rose in rebellion to centuries of ignorance and neglect.

That is why the gift of May 19 was given to the young generation that symbolizes the country's future, creativity and forward thinking.

At this point it is imperative to emphasize what May 19 and the youth really symbolize.

The Turkish war of independence was fought in abject poverty against domestic enemies, foreign enemies and conspiring collaborators. When the singularly miraculous nature of and the military genius behind this war is considered, it is often possible to easily overlook

the evolution of the principles that founded the basis of the Turkish Republic and the revolutions whose outlines Atatürk was setting out to sketch on May 19.

But what the intelligent, agile and ethical "youth" was trusted with was not just the nation's full independence, but especially the irreplaceable bases of the Republic: The principles and revolutions –yes, not 'reforms' toward 'bettering' what was accustomed to, commonplace and official, but 'revolutions' that gave way to fundamental upheavals and firm change.

On the day that is known as Atatürk's Birthday, the duty of the young generation is, both in Turkey and abroad, to guard the principles of the secular nation-state guided by educational and scientific progress based on the principles of positivism, rationalism and the enlightenment; and to be the best representatives of it as modern, exemplary individuals.

As our daily struggles continue, there will be days, the foundations we watch will seem to falter; there will be days, weakening of hope will set in; there will be days, conditions will push us towards pessimism. But the dynamism and leaps that took place in the past, the victories and gains that were born on May 19 are not all isolated phenomena that belong alone to that era. If that were true, we would have nothing to learn from the past except how virtuous we once were and how far from our goals we have now fallen. But here's how Atatürk ends Nutuk: "The strength you need, is in the noble blood in your veins."

Happy "Youth Day", and Happy Atatürk's Birthday, to us all.

*Burak Sahin – May 19, 2011*

## 19 Mayıs Konuşması

**S**avaş yıkıntılar bırakır geride, kaynakların paylaşılması, çıkarların çatışması ise savaşlar.

Dünyanın en çetin coğrafyalarından birindeki küçük bir çekirdekten çok ötelere yayılan devasa bir egemenliğe erişen imparatorluk da ömrünün savaş ve çekişmelerle dolu son yüzyıllarını tüketip çökerken Anadolu coğrafyasında geriye kalan, Eisenhower'ın klasik deyimini kullanacak olursak, bir "küller mirası" idi ve bu küller üzerinde gerçekleşecek son savaş, belki de bu coğrafyanın gördüğü en uzun, en amansız ve en çarpıcı savaş olacaktı.

İşte 19 Mayıs, bu topyekün savaşta oktan çıkan ilk yaydır.

Ve şaşırmamalı ki Atatürk, yalnız silahla değil kalemle de, yalnız mühimmatla değil bilgiyle de, yalnız cephe manevralarıyla değil bir devrimin yapıtaşlarıyla da verilen ve kazanılan bu savaşın başlangıcını doğumgünü olarak seçerken; 19 Mayıs'ı, hem ulusunun topraklarının neredeyse her köşesine çöreklenmiş işgalcilerden bağımsızlığının, hem yüzyılların geri kalmışlığına başkaldırarak yükselen aydınlık düşüncenin eşitsizlik, doğmacılık ve gericiliğe karşı zaferinin müddecisi olarak görüyordu.

Bu yüzden ki 19 Mayıs, ülkenin geleceğinin, yaratıcılığın ve ileri düşüncenin simgesi olan gençliğe armağan edilmiştir.

Bu noktada 19 Mayıs ve gençliğin neyi simgelediğini vurgulamak gerekiyor.

Yokluk ve olanaksızlıklar içinde, iç düşmanlara, dış düşmanlara ve çıkar peşindeki işbirlikçilere karşı verilen bu bağımsızlık savaşının benzersiz mucizevi yönü ve arkasındaki askeri deha düşünüldüğünde; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin temellerini oluşturan ilkelerin evrimi ve Atatürk'ün daha 19 Mayıs'ta yola çıkarken anahatlarını kurgulamaya başladığı devrimler kolayca gözardı edilebiliyor.

Oysa zeki, çevik, ahlaklı "genç"lere emanet edilen, salt ulusun ve ülkenin tam bağımsızlığı değil, Cumhuriyet'in vazgeçilmez temelleri olan ilke ve devrimler –evet, alışılmış, yerleşik ve yürürlükte olanların 'iyeleştirilmesine' yönelik 'reformlar' değil topyekün değişiklikler ve köklü yeniliklere yolaçan 'devrimler' dir.

Atatürk'ün doğumgünü olarak anılan bu günde gençliğin görevi, yurtiçinde ve dışında, yol göstericisi pozitivizm, rasyonalizm ve aydınlıcılık ilkelerine dayalı eğitim ve bilimsel ilerleme olan laik ulus-devletin temellerine sahip çıkmak ve onun en iyi temsilciliğini, çağdaş, örnek bir birey olarak yapmaktır.

Bireysel uğraşlarımız sürerken gün gelecek, bir yandan gözlemlediğimiz temeller güçlükler içinde görünecek, gün gelecek umutsuzluk basacak, gün gelecek koşullar bizleri karamsarlığa itecektir. Ama geçmişte gerçekleşmiş devrim ve atılımların, 19 Mayıs'la dünyaya gelen zafer ve kazanımların tümü o döneme ait, yalıtık oluşumlar değildir. Öyle olsaydı geçmişten, bir zamanlar ne kadar faziletli olduğumuz ve şimdi amacımızdan ne kadar uzaklaştığımızdan başka öğreneceğimiz bir şey olmazdı. Oysa Atatürk, söylevini şöyle bitiriyor:

"Muhtaç olduğun kudret, damarlarındaki asil kanda mevcuttur."

Gençliğin Günü, ve Atatürk'ün Doğumgünü hepimize kutlu olsun.

*Burak Sahin – 19 Mayıs 2011*



Burak Sahin was system analyst at Northrop Grumman Corporation between 1998-2010. Now he is working for Biometric Scientist at Daon.

# Clash! Followed by Crash!

*"We who admire Atatürk will never let his powerful legacy die, not only because it has been proven to work successfully and not only because of the powerful economic and social benefits so evident to all."*

Joseph Drew, Ph.D.  
University of Virginia  
Editor in Chief, Comparative Civilizations  
Review

**T**he major world civilizations increasingly strike against each other in the Twenty First Century, we are warned, and the results threaten to rain down devastation on all sides.

Even worse, if there is a ceaseless oscillation in the history of civilizations, a warp and woof to their movement, as thinkers from Ibn Khaldun to the modern Arnold Toynbee have argued, today

we might be said to be living through a universal period of retrenchment. Given the inevitable rises and falls, we could be now at the very nadir of civilizational movement: from such a viewpoint, contemporary civilizations are pulling into themselves.

It may well be that the major world civilizations, while focusing only or principally inwardly, within their boundaries, grind out the reverse on their borders: along these peripheries, the aggressive edges inevitably sharpen. Hatred and hostility flourish between peoples, and few who favor peace see an easy road ahead for those lands and nations caught in the

interstitial areas, lodged most unfortunately between the craws of civilizational intolerance and misunderstanding.

Nowhere in the world does the clash of civilization reveal itself more powerfully and nastily than in the Middle East. Here the Western Civilization, the Islamic Civilization, and the Byzantine Civilization strike up against each other, and generally the result is not often conducive to peace and toleration.

But for the past century or so, an answer to this confrontation has loomed over all the discord. It is one which lies in a land athwart the meeting of Asia, Europe, and Arabia. The key to success held there is not hard to discover, for it is found in the bridging philosophy and efforts – in the undying legacy – of one of the greatest men ever to live and rise to power in the Twentieth Century. This inheritance is that given to the world by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Seventy years after his death, the words of Atatürk continue to ring loud and clear today, serving as a guide for both external and internal national policy

Atatürk is, of course, remembered worldwide for his dramatic reshaping of Turkey. Out of the remnants of a once great continent-striding empire, the Ottoman, he singlehandedly sparked the successful fight to build a new, modern, Western, secular, egalitarian, thriving Turkey. What Atatürk did for Turkey indelibly affected the life of his country. And this was significant for all, true with no group more than for its Jewish population. In the first census of the Turkish republic, held in 1927, some 81,454 Jews were registered, half of them in Istanbul; this is out of a population of roughly 13.5 million. Yet Jewish life, thanks to Atatürk, was active at all levels of Turkish society. Shortly after his revolution, Jews began





to renounce their foreign nationality, become Turkish citizens, and relinquish the claims connected with their rights as a minority. Secularism and inclusion seemed to be on the march.

One aspect of Atatürk's attitude toward the Jewish people has been seen in recent scholarship on the in-migration of Jews from Western Europe after the Nazi takeover of France and other countries. In 1933, for example, Atatürk invited a number of Jewish university professors to move to Turkey, enabling them to escape persecution. This set the pattern and eventually thousands of other Jews escaped the Holocaust in time, thanks to Turkey.

Inevitably, though, Atatürk is also remembered around the world for his dramatic reshaping of international affairs in Turkey's part of the world. Let us bridge the chasms which divide humanity, he told his contemporaries. He wanted to have friendly relations with all his neighbors. His motto: "Peace at home. Peace in the World."

Nowhere has this been more in evidence than in regards to Turkey's Jewish neighbor, the State of Israel. Although a predominantly Moslem country, Turkey recognized the State of Israel *de jure* in 1949, Jews were permitted to emigrate, and ships were even placed at the disposal of those who wished to move to Israel. The spirit of Atatürk led to heightened association between the two countries. Both held themselves out to the world as vibrant and thriving, Western in orientation, lands where the values animating the Western world are incorporated and respected. Israel has built a democratic, free, educated, debate-based, cosmopolitan, and vigorous face; so, too, has Turkey. Over the past few decades they have cooperated economically, militarily, and socially – with hordes of Israeli tourists descending on Turkish lands each summer.

One reason: Walking around in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus several years ago, I heard the city band playing in the central square. The music for the evening's performance: Mozart, Bach, and



"Fiddler on the Roof." Similarly, in Israel one finds many sites dedicated to Atatürk: a park, a monument, a street name. These countries have been friends for so long because, in a part of the world where autocracy, consensus, and lethargy are found too often, Turkey and Israel have been forward looking for years. They have been two Western-facing democracies, each democracy respecting the other.

Unfortunately, there are those who, even today, strive to destroy systematically each aspect of Atatürk's work, domestic and foreign. No doubt some wish to attempt this all at once, perhaps others will try to do so by imperceptible yet ceaseless cutting motions. They have been especially busy trying to wreck Turkish secularism and to destroy the friendship between Israel and Turkey.

But the fact is that the work of Atatürk cannot be destroyed, for he laid the foundations with the skill of a master mason, and, as a result, his country has emerged one of the powerhouses of the modern world. Turkey, an active member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for half a century, continuously rises as a

world economic power. Simultaneously over the years it has become a dramatic bridge between the East and the West. It has shown that a country can be secular and democratic, European, and yet of the Islamic civilization. It has become, therefore, an arbitrator amongst warring nations, a builder of the peace in a part of the world where forces of negativity seek principally and endlessly, to exacerbate tensions along civilizational peripheries.

We who admire Atatürk will never let his powerful legacy die, not only because it has been proven to work successfully and not only because of the powerful economic and social benefits so evident to all. But we will do so also because the civilizations of the world need Atatürkism in an age of strife. As these giant structures that have animated history rub uncomfortably against each other, Atatürkism becomes ever more central everywhere. Minus his legacy, the world might not know and see the way out – with it, failure is only one option while success much more likely.

Long live Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the principles of the Turkish Republic he inspired. ▀

LONG TIME ASA MEMBER  
AND SUPPORTER

## Dr. FİKRET ÖZKÖK Inaugurates Atatürk Culture And Art Center Dedicated to His Parents

**O**n July 23, 2010 the Nimet and Bekir Özkök Culture and Art Center opened its doors in Akcakoca, a town 20 miles between the Ankara-Istanbul highway on the Black Sea with a population of 30,000, swelling to over 100 thousand in the hot summer months.

The Center houses the Henry Lazarus Atatürk Collection, about one hundred of Atatürk's unpublished, priceless pictures. Turkish and Atatürk flags hanged down from most of the 78 windows around the house during the festivities.

Participating in the ceremony were Dr. Fikret Özkök on behalf of the Özkök family, Mayor Albayrak, the Governor of Duzce, and Members of Parliament.

Bekir Özkök, a native of Akcakoca, joined Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha in February 1920 after running away from the Military school in Istanbul. He was appointed by the Ankara Government to command 80 soldiers in and around Akcakoca. Following the final victory of independence, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by the Grand National Assembly.

The house was built in 1924 by Ali Keser Usta and completely renovated. It is the newest tourist attraction in the region and a tribute to Atatürk and his heroism. ▶



Dr. Fikret Özkök is receiving an award.



# Good Will Gestures in Thessaloniki

*The Greek Ministry of Culture announced its unanimous decision to designate the house at the corner of Apostolou Pavlou and Aghiou Dimitriou Street in Thessaloniki a “historical monument.”*

On May 20, 2011 The Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Culture announced its unanimous decision to designate the house at the corner of Apostolou Pavlou and Aghiou Dimitriou Street in Thessaloniki a “historical monument.” The three-story house replete with a courtyard is the birthplace of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It was here that the Founder of Modern Turkey was born in 1881, and where he spent his youth. Again it was here that he met with close friends to plan the establishment of a free and independent nation.

According to the archive records in Thessaloniki (Selanik) the house was built sometime before 1870 by a teacher named Hadji Mehmed from Rhodes, and Atatürk's father Ali Riza Efendi rented it from the owner. Mustafa Kemal lived in this house until 1888. After the Balkan War, Thessaloniki was seceded to Greece in 1913, and the title of the house was transferred to the Greek Government by its occupant, Atatürk's mother, Zübeyde Hanim. The Greek Government subsequently sold the house to a Greek family.

In 1935, the Thessaloniki Municipal Council was magnanimous in donating the residence to the Republic of Turkey as a gesture of goodwill. The house was evacuated on February 19, 1937 and its keys were presented to Thessaloniki's Turkish Consulate, which has been its caretaker since. The ground floor shops that had been created by the earlier owner were removed, and the house restored to its original state, including its yellow exterior paint. The Turkish Foreign Ministry and the National Education Ministry decided to convert it into a museum. In 1950 additional restoration work was carried out, and although some

of the furniture was authentic, lost pieces were replaced with period furniture from Atatürk's Mausoleum in Ankara and from the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul. On November 10, 1953 the house was finally opened to visitors as “Atatürk's House.”

Atatürk passed away on November 10, 1938 at Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul at the age of 57. His death was mourned not only in Turkey but throughout world. After his death and since, there have been endless studies and assessments carried

out, resulting in universal praise of his leadership and accomplishments, including the following statement by the Greek newspaper Katimerini:

*“Each nation erects statues to those who have guided it to victory in war and prosperity in peace. But Türkiye will have to quarry mountains to find stone for its statue of Atatürk. For here was a man who aroused the admiration of friend and foe alike, a genius whose loss is felt not only by Türkiye, but by the entire civilized world (Katimerini, Athens).”* ▸



# Commemorating May 19th as a Historic Day in The Republic of Turkey

## HON. STEVE COHEN (Extensions of Remarks - May 23, 2011)

· Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a historic day in the Republic of Turkey. On May 19th, while Congress was in recess, the Republic of Turkey and Friends of Turkey commemorated the 92d anniversary of the launching of Turkey's national campaign to establish an independent nation by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Turkey also celebrates May 19th as the birthday of Atatürk.

· During his lifetime Atatürk was able to lift a country from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and build a secular democratic nation located at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East. His reforms were widespread including political, social, legal, educational, and economic. Some were monumental such



HON. STEVE COHEN  
OF TENNESSEE  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Monday, May 23, 2011



as abolishing the caliphate and the sultan, recognizing equal rights for men and women, adopting a new alphabet and adopting secular law. Atatürk had a vision for the country, one of a pro-western secular and democratic state in which the rule of law would prevail. He swiftly but steadily advanced toward that goal with the confidence of a born leader and the

support of the Turkish nation.

· Atatürk championed women's rights, and believed that education and scientific training was the key to advancement not only for the individual, but also for the country. During his tenure, women were encouraged to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and enter into politics.

· The legacy of Atatürk is even more evident today, as the Arab Spring leads to dramatic changes in the Middle East and North Africa. There are lessons in Turkey's history which can be applied to the current situation around the world. With the right leadership and determination, democracy can take root and lay the foundations for a prosperous future in the region. ▀

## In Fond Memory of Mehmet Münir Atagün and Dr. Arnold Reisman

One of ASA's longest and most loyal members, Mehmet Münir Atagün was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1922. A graduate of Istanbul University's Economics Department in 1952, he married Dr. Mutlu Urcun the same year, and enrolled in Boston University to complete a Doctorate degree in Economics. The couple had two children, Dr. Mehtap Aygün and Mert Atagün.

Mehmet Münir Atagün was a businessman devoted to his grandchildren; Cenk, Serra, and Talia Aygün and Merih Atagün.

He was a casualty of Alzheimer's and related complications. He will be missed by ASA and all our members. We send our condolences to his family, and will keep him in our thoughts.



It was with sadness that ASA learned of the death of Arnold Reisman on April 11. Dr. Reisman had harbored a genuine admiration and affection for Atatürk's Turkey. Known as "Arn" to close friends, he had been a multifaceted in his interests and contributions to society — an engineer, writer, artist, professor and much more. Above all, he was a devoted family man whose survivors include his wife, three of four children, 11 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Born in Lodz, Poland in 1932, Dr. Reisman was a Holocaust survivor, and a refugee to the United States at 14. Receiving the bulk of his education in the US, including a Ph.D. at UCLA, he taught for 26 years at Case Western Reserve University, with stints as visiting professor in Turkey, Israel, Hawaii and elsewhere. He was the author of 300 articles and 24 books, several about Turkey's mutually benevolent relationships with Jews.

Members of ASA band together to convey heartfelt sympathies to his survivors.





# Join Today!



Membership in ASA is **US \$50** for a calendar year or for a portion of it. 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 in the Executive Board, receiving the **Voice of Atatürk**. Active participation in ASA activities is encouraged.

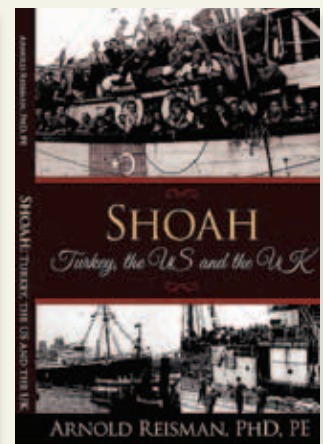
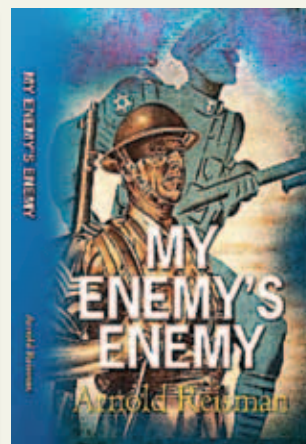
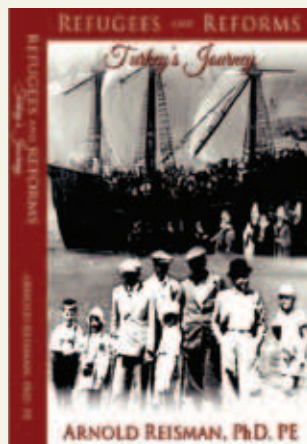
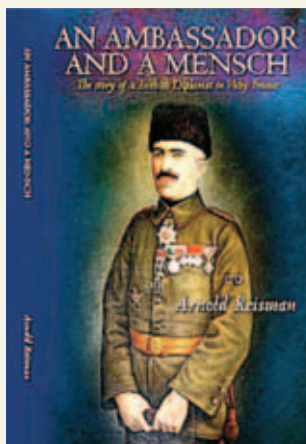
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Four new books by Arnold Reisman, are welcome additions to Jewish literature, each one focusing on specific events that impacted the lives of the Jewish people. *An Ambassador and A Mensch*: The story of a Turkish Diplomat in Vichy France relates the heroic deeds of Behic Erkin and his staff who

saved thousands of Jews in both occupied and Vichy France. Against the will of Berlin, Vichy, and Ankara, they placed their careers and lives in jeopardy. *Refugees and Reforms: Turkey's Journey* details the impact that European scholars and scientists had on the creation of the modern Turkish Republic.

Discarded by the Nazis, their lives were saved by their invitations to Turkey. Along similar lines, *Shoah: Turkey, the US and the UK* compares each country's efforts to save lives during one of humanity's darkest hours. *My Enemy's Enemy* tells the story of the various all Jewish units in the British army,

starting with the Zion Mule Corps and ending with Israel's statehood. Dr. Reisman uses archival documents and pictures from various sources to support the work in all of his books. Please see [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for all his books.







The Kozak Plateau is a large area between Ayvalik and Bergama. When a nature lover named Suhan Sen was walking in the area., he saw a large rock on the side of the road, and decided that it would be a meaningful location for an Atatürk statue. He found the owner of the property, named Yucel Koray, who was so impressed with the idea, that he donated the location. The Sculpturer was Dr. Tankut Oktem.