

# ATATÜRK

The Unveiling:  
The new Atatürk Statue  
in Washington, D.C.  
represents the first public  
monument in the United  
States honoring one of  
the greatest leaders of  
the 20th century.



The 90th Anniversary  
of the Turkish Republic

## MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK (1881-1938)

FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

THE WHITE STONE BUILDING BEHIND THE STATUE, PURCHASED UNDER ATATÜRK IN 1936, SERVED AS THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY UNTIL 1989. IT IS NOW THE EMBASSY'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE.

THE TWO CAPITALS, ANKARA AND WASHINGTON DC, BECAME SISTER CITIES IN OCTOBER 2011.

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## Mustafa Kemal'in Askerleriyiz... We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal...

*"There are two Mustafa Kemals. One, the flesh-and-blood Mustafa Kemal who now stands before you and who will pass away. The other is you, all of you here who will go to the far corners of our land to spread the ideals which must be defended with your lives if necessary. I stand for the nation's dreams, and my life's work is to make them come true."*

—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

### Believing secularism , democracy, science and technology

**T**he year 2013 marked the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic. And it was also the year of the most significant uprising in the history of Turkey. The chant "Mustafa Kemal'in Askerleriyiz" (We are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal), could be heard all over Turkey, in public squares.

In 2010 Fall Edition of Voice of Atatürk, on this same page, under Chairman's Comments, I finished my remarks with these sentences: "No wonder there is increasing alarm that Turkey has lost its way. It is time to relearn the lessons of Atatürk, for the sake of our children and grandchildren"

Our children, the third and fourth generation of Turks since 1923, took action, and started the "Gezi Park Protests", a massive civil uprising against the Islamist politics of the current government. What started as a peaceful sit-in at a public park in Istanbul became a nationwide show of unity and pride to protect Turkey's legacy as a democratic, secular country. The protesters, especially the younger generation of Turks, showed us and to the whole world, that the Turkish youth is committed to follow the secular path set by modern Turkey's founder, Kemal Atatürk.

The determined mind of the Turkish Youth will not let anyone reverse the progress made by Atatürk's revolutions. Young people of the nation are though, energetic and committed. Their inspiration comes from Atatürk's trust and belief in Turkish youth:

*Youth, you are the ones who support and maintain our courage. You will be the most precious symbol of humanity and civilization, love for the motherland and freedom of thought with the help of the manners and knowledge you are taught. The rising new generation, the future is yours. We founded the Republic, you are the ones to raise it and keep it alive.*

—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

The number of Turkish flags and Atatürk portraits keeps increasing at protests each time Recep Tayyip Erdogan retaliates with a new campaign. One of latest is the ban of the student oath, the Turkish pledge of allegiance, be recited at primary schools. This was the last straw in a chain of relentless campaigns by the government, which resulted in even stronger unity for a democratic Turkish Republic. Even the fans of the three major rivaling soccer clubs in the country came together during the protests. There was a 163% increase in the number of visitors to Anitkabir, Atatürk's final rest place and monument this year compared to 2012.

Turks all around the world took action in support of the same ideals. Turkish Americans in Washington DC , were among the worldwide supporters. They showed their solidarity with Gezi Parki, and marched and protested for democracy, freedom and justice in Turkey. I would like to thank Turkish Policy Center (TPC) for their leadership in organizing these events. And thanks to the many members of Atatürk Society of America, for their part in Washington Solidarity with Gezi Park protests. This was the biggest show of solidarity amongst Turkish Americans in Washington, DC, and those who came from all around the US. Hundreds attended to these historic gatherings at Lafayette Park in front of the White House 12 weeks in a row.

The 90th anniversary of the Republic marks another historical event for me personally. Something that I have been dreaming about since the first day I arrived in the US in 1958, the dream to see a

*continued on page 26*



**Hudai Yavalar**  
Chairman, Founding President

*"The determined mind of the Turkish Youth will not let anyone reverse the progress made by Atatürk's revolutions."*

## PROMOTING THE WORLDVIEW OF ATATÜRK

The Atatürk Society of America (ASA) is an independent, non-partisan group, of patriotic Turkish-Americans. Indeed, they are individually and collectively patriotic toward Turkey as well as toward their adopted country, the United States. The primary focus of ASA is in promoting the views of Kemal Atatürk, seen in the extraordinary reforms with which he imbued his creation, the Republic of Turkey— chief among them, the secular state and equality of genders.

The year 2013 saw a frenetic pace of activity for the ASA, as a short inventory will reveal:

- On March 27 ASA and TPC (Turkish Policy Center) jointly organized a panel discussion of three international journalists at the National Press Club. The general theme of their presentation was “Press Freedom & Rule of Law” (or lack of) in present day Turkey.

### ANZAC DAY

April 25 is commemorated as ANZAC Day throughout Australia and New Zealand, as well as by Australians and New Zealanders traveling abroad. And for many years members of ASA have been invited as honored guests at the National Cathedral where the Australians “Aussies” and the New Zealanders “Kiwis” take turns sponsoring the event. Atatürk’s deeply gracious and comforting words to the mothers of the fallen is always read aloud, and has even been set as an operatic aria that is sung by a leading soprano. Several of the officers of ASA were present for the occasion, seated immediately behind the Ambassadors of their respective nations.

This year I was personally unable to attend the National Cathedral event, busy giving lectures on an 18-day cruise from Dubai to Rome. One of the most elegant cruise ships, the Seabourn Odyssey was filled to capacity with 450 passengers. In commemorating ANZAC DAY, I was asked by the 79 Australian and 19 New Zealanders onboard to give a special talk to their group. I opened by greeting them on behalf of the Atatürk Society of America, and told them that my grandfather, Ismail Hakki, had fought alongside his legendary childhood friend Mustafa Kemal...just as their grandfathers had fought on the ANZAC Side. “In that campaign of 1915,” I mentioned, “...there existed rough parity in numbers between the soldiers of the two sides facing each other. But on this occasion,” I continued, “I found myself outnumbered 98-to-1.” Then, expressing my deep gratitude for being asked to address them on this solemn occasion, I handed out copies of Atatürk’s deeply moving “Letter to the Australian Mothers,” I asked them to join me in reading it aloud. There was neither a dry eye in the room, nor a pair of hands that missed applauding the incredible man who had written the letter.

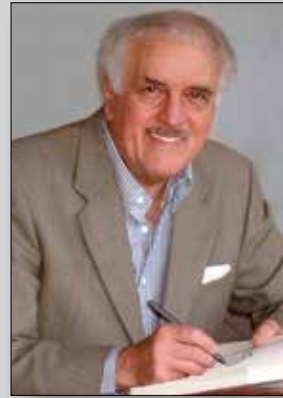
- On May 24 ASA sponsored a speech by the Turkish Member of Parliament Muharrem Ince representing CHP. The venue was the Cosmos Club on Massachusetts Avenue, where in the past countless Nobel and Pulitzer Prize Winners have addressed audiences. Hon. Ince, a physics teacher turned politician, is an unusually intelligent and articulate speaker. He delivered a forceful and eye-opening speech about the systematic dismantling of Atatürk’s Reforms during the term in office of PM Erdogan and his AK Party.
- On several Sundays in June-July members of the ASA joined a tumultuous group of Turkish-Americans walking in solidarity with the peaceful demonstrators at Gezi Park. On June 16, the group numbered over a one thousand marchers, all sharing a somber mood, walking from the White House to Capitol Hill.

### THE ATATÜRK STATUE PROJECT

At 9:05 am on November 10, the statue of Atatürk was unveiled as the newest public monument in Washington, DC. After a moment of silence, the hundreds of guests who had gathered outside for the unveiling stepped inside the Ambassador’s Residence for a brief, but dignified ceremony. Australian Ambassador Kim Beazley, who was away on a trip, sent his emissary.

Following the event, I was immediately on my way to Penn State to address the Turkish Students Association and to sit on a two-man panel discussing the “Reforms of Atatürk,” with Stephen Kinzer, Visiting Fellow of International Studies at Brown University, and former Bureau Chief for the New York Times stationed in Istanbul. It was gratifying that our messages appeared to complement each other strongly.

With fervent hopes for a Peaceful 2014, I wish you all a Happy Holiday Season.



Dr. Bulent Atalay  
President, ASA

*“The primary focus of ASA is in promoting the views of Kemal Atatürk, seen in the extraordinary reforms with which he imbued his creation, the Republic of Turkey”*



# A Defining Statue of Kemal Atatürk

*“The new statue of Atatürk represents the first public monument in the United States honoring one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century.”*

by Prof. Bulent Atalay

At a Board Meeting of the Atatürk Society in October 2012, the Founder of ASA, Hudai Yavalar, announced that the Society might have an exciting new project on its plate—the creation of a bronze statue of Atatürk to be placed on the periphery of Sheridan Circle, next to the Turkish Ambassador’s Residence at 1606 23rd Street, NW, Washington, DC. This would be the first public monument in the United States honoring the greatest Turk of them all, and coincide with both the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the secular Republic on October 29, 1923 and the 75th Anniversary of Atatürk’s death on November 10, 1938. Although no one on the Board had any direct experience with commissioning a monumental bronze, this immediately became an enticing project for those of us who genuinely revere Atatürk.

A full-size statue already stands on the grounds of the New Turkish Embassy at 2525 Massachusetts Avenue, but it is not readily accessible to the public, standing on raised ground and behind a massive wrought iron fence surrounding the Embassy. Moreover, it is in the style of Eastern European heroic statuary, made of fiberglass, and over-painted in bronze tones. We thought Atatürk deserved better. The Turkish-American architect Nuray Anahtar drew preliminary plans for the new statue to be placed at the center of



a semicircular balustrade, an indentation in the wall surrounding the Turkish Embassy’s Residence at 1606 23rd Street, NW, Washington, DC. What made the site unique was its location squarely in DC public space rather than on Embassy property. As such, the statue would represent the first public monument in the United States honoring one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century. The consensus of the Board of the Atatürk Society was to have Kemal Atatürk depicted in a timeless realistic style, with the medium bronze. Selecting the sculptor, closely overseeing the carving of the work, and procuring permits from a plethora of City Officials—the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), the DC Board for Public Spaces, and the Historic Preservation Commission—were some of the tasks facing us. We also had to make a decision regarding the age to depict Atatürk—a young military officer struggling with battle strategy and wearing



Atatürk, and although they might have their own preferences, they can immediately assess whether an image produced by an artist even resembles Atatürk. Here, deciding to go with one of the two younger sculptors turned out to be a crucial salutary decision. Jeffrey L. Hall, lived no farther than one-hour's distance from Washington, and he insisted that could he produce the finished art piece in roughly six months. We came to realize that he was always open to suggestions, and always willing to make changes. A few of us made at least a dozen visits to his studio in rural Virginia to oversee the latest changes, only to offer new suggestions. What we feared was the well-worn aphorism, "A camel is a thoroughbred designed by a committee!" What

a uniform replete with a "kalpak" (fez); as the new President of the Secular Republic that he founded, but still wearing a fez; in the early 1930s, still svelte, but an elegant modern man. We even debated how Atatürk personally would have wanted to be depicted. There was consensus in the Committee's decision: he was to be a thoroughly modern man, determined and exuding that legendary confidence. Finally, we had to have the final product produced in record time.

We had a small list of four talented sculptors to invite to the competition, one in Azerbaijan; another in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the other two, young local artists who lived within an hour of Washington, DC. The names were given to me by a

good friend, Lindy Hart, the widow of Frederick "Rick" Hart (1942-1999) one of the greatest sculptors of the last quarter of the 20th century. Rick had carved "Ex Nihilo" above the Western Entrance of the National Cathedral. Then a few years later, he had created the bronze statues of the "Three Soldiers" at the Vietnam Memorial, standing in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial — a realistic and extraordinarily powerful work. The two younger candidates had both worked for many years as Rick Hart's assistants.

#### JEFFREY HALL, SCULPTOR

For Turks, images of Atatürk are fixed deep in their marrow. They have all spent their lives communing with images of

gave us confidence, however, Jeff's legendary master, Rick Hart's description of his former assistant's skills, "...whose quality of work rivals any in history." Jeff knew nothing about Atatürk in advance. But as he immersed himself in the hundreds of photos and even old films that captured his subject's general demeanor and movement, he became as familiar with Atatürk's deportment as any Turk. Meanwhile, we watched as his subject came to life. Standing next to the 6'7" bronze statue, perched on a 3" bronze base, one can sense Atatürk's figure exuding that abstract quality of "heybetli," an unmistakable heroic presence.

As the author of a pair of books on Leonardo da Vinci (Math and the Mona

Lisa, Smithsonian Books, 2004) and Leonardo's Universe (National Geographic Books, 2009) I could bring suggestions based on my knowledge of the Renaissance Genius's own words. Leonardo in painting "The Last Supper," had emphasized the importance of the hands, "The subject should speak with his hands as much as with his facial expressions." From the beginning I frequently spoke about Leonardo's dictum regarding the importance of the hands. In Jeff's statue, Atatürk is depicted as a reformer/teacher, giving a speech — his left hand is holding a heavy book with the title "Nutuk" ("Speech"). The book is resting on his hip, but with his index finger holding his place in the book. The right hand captures the electric moment when he has paused, to make a point with his index finger. His intensity is seen in the details of the bulging veins.

Among other details, Jeff is seen to have captured Atatürk's "renkli gözleri" ("light colored eyes"). We all marveled at how a dark bronze statue could convey the illusion of light colored eyes. The irises are much shallower than they would otherwise be in depicting a subject with dark eyes. Among the accompanying photos, a white plaster bust, cast directly from the mold for the bronze, reveals this technique. Another subtle detail that few visitors would be expected to recognize is the direction of the stripes on Atatürk's tie. Mathematically speaking, these stripes display "negative slope" (upper left-to-lower right). This style of stripe is known as the "American Stripe." In distinction, the European striped ties always display positive stripes (lower left-to-upper right). In examining photos of Atatürk wearing ties, we found that his ties of choice had the American Stripe. One can only speculate about his ties being presented to him by the American Ambassador in Ankara, or one of the Turkish Ambassadors who once occupied the Embassy in Washington. The details also include the chain for his pocket watch, and in homage to his military days, his medal, partially covered by his right lapel.

The English poet William Blake (1757-1827) had once written the couplet,



"Mysteries will never cease; the Priest clamors for war, and the soldier peace." He could not have been more prescient, or more accurate, in describing Atatürk. The unrivaled military tactician and strategist, who was undefeated in the military campaigns that had consumed the first three decades of his life, becoming the greatest proponent for peace once he established the Republic of Turkey. In the semi-circular balustrade surrounding Atatürk's statue, we impressed into the walls bronze letters carrying his immortal words, "Peace at home... Peace in the World."

#### SHERIDAN CIRCLE

The address Sheridan Circle is at the top of any short list of prime real estate in Washington, with the Embassy Row of Massachusetts Avenue radiating east west from the circle. Several embassies line the rim of the circle. Along with the former Turkish Embassy (now the Ambassador's Residence) there is the Romanian embassy on the southern side, the Greek Embassy on the northeast, and the Embassy of Pakistan on the northwest. In front of a few of the embassies stand statues of prominent statesmen, including Greece's early 20th century Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, whose armed forces had fought Turkey until 1922, and who nominated Kemal Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934. The centerpiece of the circle is an equestrian statue of the

Union General Philip Sheridan, of the American Civil War fame. Although the equestrian statue, weathered naturally to a verdigris patina during the 105 years it has stood at the site, is extraordinarily beautiful in its own right, it is the sculptor of the statue, Gutzon Borglum, who is to be remembered. Borglum is much better known as the sculptor of the massive quartet of heads of Presidents at Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. The newest of the four Presidents, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt, was a good and colorful President, but he does not rise to the stratospheric prominence achieved by the other three. For Teddy Roosevelt the timing was right: he was the reigning President, he was unusually fond of the Wild West, and he was a friend of the sculptor.

The other three — Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln — are unrivaled as the greatest among the 44 Presidents in the history of the United States. The First President, General George Washington, unfaltering military leader who ultimately defeated the British, stands symbolically as the "Father of the Nation," The Third President, Thomas Jefferson, a brilliant theorist and political writer, authored the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson also strongly believed that religion was a personal choice that that should be free from government interference. Then there is Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President, who beyond anyone else held the United States together during the dark years of the Civil War. He authored the Emancipation Proclamation, although it would take the better part of a century for this proclamation to fully take root. Each member of this iconic trio is honored with an impressive edifice, his own National Monument in Washington.

Atatürk embodies the greatest assets of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln — military strategist par excellence; social, educational and economic reformer; statesman — Father of his Country — the man the distinguished professor of psychiatry, Arnold Ludwig, ranked Number One among all 2300 national leaders of the 20th century. ▮

# Turgut Ozakman's poignant final interview before his death

Historian and writer Turgut Ozakman was born on September 1, 1930 in Ankara, Turkey. He died on September 28, 2013 in Ankara. He was a Law School Graduate, but his interest in theatre and writing steered him in a direction which opened doors to a successful career in both fields. He started as a dramaturgy (script writer) at The Turkish State Theatre Company, and many years later returned as the General Manager to the same company; He was a Director, and General Manager at the Turkish Radio Television Corporation, and Script Writing Instructor at the University of Ankara Theatre department.

He has written many books, including 8 novels, 2 career books, 4 research books, more than 20 plays, 3 screen plays. His novel "Su Cilgin Turkler" (These Crazy Turks), which was published in 2005, became the best seller for many weeks, and the most selling book ever in Turkey. Currently it's at 397th print. Turgut Ozakman is survived by his wife Ayla, their three children and four grandchildren. In 2012, Turgut Ozakman received the History and Literature Award from the Atatürk Society of America. ASA Board member Ilknur Boray visited Mr. Ozakman at his home in Ankara on March 8, 2013, seven months prior to his death, to conduct this interview.

by Ilknur Boray

## You were born and raised during the early years of the Republic. What are your memories of those days?

I was born in Ankara, but we moved to Istanbul when I was three years old. First we lived in Cengelkoy, for about two years... Then we settled in Bakirkoy. Let me say that Bakirkoy was my mother's village... And if you ask me, Bakirkoy was a more advanced, more civilized place than Istanbul itself, during our childhood. Population was about eighteen/ twenty thousand people. Bakirkoy had a festival feeling in its entirety in those days. First of all, it felt like we enjoyed the new Republic more than anyone else. Our families, us, our schools... Everyone was so excited about what was happening in the country. It was such a remarkable period of time; just feels better every time I remember... Then, the World War II started and they closed the gunpowder factory in Bakirkoy, where my father worked. So, we left Bakirkoy and moved to Kirikkale, and I completed the last year of my Elementary School Education there. But there were not enough teachers at the Middle School; so, my aunt and uncle, who lived in Ankara said "send Turgut here." That's how I came back to Ankara. The High school known as Kurtulus High School now, was called the "1st Middle School for Boys" in those



days. There was no mixed education then. I'm talking about 1942's - 43's... Yes, there were some schools around Anatolia where boys and girls had to go to the same school because of lack of space; but the country was not ready for that yet... That was not the mentality. That happened slowly, it was absorbed slowly... Some of the things Atatürk did were reforms and some of them were revolutionary. Some took a lot of time to get accomplish. They sort of happened as a result of certain developments. There are no reforms that were done without talking to the public first. Nothing was done without the public's consent. As a matter of fact, if we'll go back to the abolition of the sultanate, many supporters of the sultanate were convinced that it was going to be the doomsday in Turkey after the ending of 600 years

of reign. Nothing happened... Furthermore, something else happened: All the tradespeople in Istanbul closed their shops, they declared that day Saltanat-i Milliye (National Sultanate) holiday, and celebrated this new beginning. Now, that made the supporters of the sultanate to stop and think... They also thought that it was going to be the doomsday when the Caliphate was going to end... There was not even one reaction... But, just in case, to be safe, they did not let the Caliphate and his family to board the train in Istanbul, at the main Sirkeci terminal. They drove them somewhere near Silivri, and boarded them there. Meanwhile, there was no reaction at or around Sirkeci terminal... No protest, no interest in their leaving... These are all recorded history. Therefore, those who are retelling the history of those days would be able to tell the true story if they have known these facts. Otherwise, they are betraying the truth.

**Many facts are being distorted. Some -so called- writers are rewriting the history. Facts about The National Freedom Movement and the meaning of Atatürk's reforms are modified shamelessly. Somehow, a certain part of the population -Islamist ruling party supporters- believe these made-up facts; while most of the population - secular, modern- are stunned by them.**

**This must be bothering you as well.** I put together all these lies in the book which was published under the title of "Vahdettin, Mustafa Kemal and the National Freedom Movement". And I answered all of them one by one. That book is 800 pages; the thickness of the book shows the great number of the so called "historians", and the amount of lies they have said. Those same historians realized that they were not going to be able to carry on with their lies, and became very quiet for about 10 years after the book was published... And now, again, a new generation is continuing with the same kind of lies... Some of them are affiliated with political parties. Let me tell you about the most recent one, if I may... Just yesterday, somewhere in Anatolia, a gentleman named Numan Kurtulus said "Turkish classical Music and Turkish Folk Music were banned and not played on the radio until the year 1950. We were only able to listen that type of music on the radio after 1950". Now, this person is a Professor... He is teaching Business and Management at a university... So, when you see his title, you would think that he is someone who reads and writes. But it is obvious that he does not know anything about our recent history. Someone whispers something to their ears, and these people write about it assuming that it's true. Let me correct that wrong information, and tell you the facts: Atatürk lightly touched the issue of Turkish Classical Music, during his opening speech of the Parliament in 1934. He said it was not at a level to be proud of. And really, in those days Turkish Music was almost like a decor in the bars and taverns... It was pretty bad. There was only one person who gave concerts: Munir Nurettin Selcuk. He had a following of concert goers who really liked and respected Turkish Classical Music. There was no mention of concerts other than that. Music was only in the taverns. So, after Atatürk's speech, the Ministry of Interior Sukru Kaya banned the broadcast of Turkish Classical and Turkish Folk Music on the radios. This ban lasted 1 year for Folk Music, and 2 years for the Classical Music. And during that period,

they started training singers at Ankara and Istanbul Radio stations. The radio buildings almost turned into music schools. All of our valued singers were trained there. During that ban, the artists evaluated their situation, pondered over it, collected themselves up, and found their real talents. They realized that there had to be a certain level in order to save our music. It is being criticized now, but that was a very beneficial ban for the salvation of Turkish music... A big punishment of silence... But albums were still available all around. They were playing albums on the record player at the Vienna Music Hall across from our house I remember well... It was not a violent ban. It was only for the radio stations (which there were only two at the time). Now I'm going to go back to how we started this topic, and ask that politician: "Why are you lying?"



Well, maybe he is not aware that this is a lie... "Why are you saying the wrong thing?" What a shame! He says this was "cruelty"... Come on you! If you are really interested in something, if you really like it, you will research to learn more about it. If this politician really liked Turkish Music, he would have easily found out the truth. We owe everything we have today to the establishment of the Republic. Especially to the first 15 years, the Atatürk period.

**Going back to your education: You went to the Theatre Institute in Cologne, Germany, after graduating from the Faculty of Law in Ankara. How this transition did from law to theatre took place? Did someone steer**

## you in that direction?

I went to Law School because it was in the field of social sciences. I wasn't planning to stay in the law field anyway. I was interested in the theatre even then. As a matter of fact, my first play was staged at The State Theatre Company while I was in my last year of studies at the law school. It was 1952, the name of the play was "Pembe Evin Kaderi" (The Fate of the Pink House). I did my lawyer internship and completed my military service after graduating from Law School. During that whole time I was researching theatre... What was it all about? It is easy to write your first play, but it is not that easy to write the second one. Because you start realizing the difficulties, hardships, the special touches... So, while I was getting ready for my second play, Muhsin Ertugrul (actor/director who was

the founder & head of The State Theatre Company) said "Go to Germany. I will find a scholarship for you". But he couldn't find that scholarship, and I had some difficult times without one, but nevertheless... I went to the Institute in Cologne for three semesters, which was two and a half years. Professor Nilsen was the founder of that department, the script editing... I don't think there is such a department now at the school. It was an excellent education. It wasn't really about script writing or editing, they looked at the scientific aspect of Theatre. But it was great, because I learned about Germany, this education broadened my horizons, and it added so much to my knowledge about the Theatre culture. Theatre is very important in Germany. When

I went to Cologne in 1954, The Cathedral was still in ruins. It wasn't repaired after the war yet. But they were rebuilding the train station, opera and the theatre buildings. First priority: the train station; second priority: opera & theatre...Now, you can't beat this kind of culture. They may lose the war, but they will still be the heavy weights in culture and politics. Recently, there were some angry reactions to an event that took place in Turkey, at the State Theatre Company. Some people argued that the State could not, should not own a theatre company...In Germany, the number of state and city owned theatre companies are around 200 or so...Plus, there are private theatre companies, and they receive financial support from the local municipalities or foundations. That's for sure...For example a private theatre company owned by Turks can survive in Hamburg or Berlin, because of the financial support they'll receive. Some of their plays may even be staged in Turkish....But arts, theatre will be supported no matter what...

Our people in Anatolia have been uneducated and ignorant for the last thousand years. How could it be possible to reset this ignorance and become civilized during the 15 years of Atatürk's presidency? If his work could have been carried out and continued with the same energy, maybe...But it didn't continue, it wasn't carried on there was no desire to carry it on... Places which could help the public, such as Community Homes (Halk Evleri), Community Rooms (Halk Odalari) were closed; Village Institutes (Koy Enstituleri) were also closed. But there was something which was the continuation of all those in some way; and it is usually forgotten...I'd like to mention that....Radio and Television was restructured and established as autonomous, according to the new constitution in 1961. Self-governing... No connection to the ruling government. I was appointed as the Head of the Broadcasting of Turkish Radio -Television (TRT) at that time. But I had a question for the general manager before accepting the position. I said "Sir, I will accept this duty only if we are going to broadcast in a nature that will fill the empty spot left by the community



centers and village institutes. Otherwise, I can't accept it". His answer was: "Accept it". And, that self-governing radio managed to broadcast programs that were able to inspire its listeners. There were some people who wouldn't accept the idea of autonomous at the beginning; mostly political arguments...But the people were very happy in general, there were no complaints about the programs. Some were not happy about the fact that the language used was new, modern Turkish, not the old Ottoman kind of Turkish... There were politicians such as Osman Bolukbasi, who didn't like our being unbiased, who later gave up...And at the end, this free entity status of TRT bothered those who were ruling the country. So, the self-governing status was removed, and TRT became a public corporation which was connected to the ruling power. Still, its neutrality is essential. But unfortunately, right now it is not unbiased. So, I believe a crime is being committed at the moment at TRT.

**You have concentrated on historical characters in your plays and novels, whether they are real or imaginary, since the very beginning of your**

**writing career. I mean Keloglan, by imaginary character, for example. And, later on, you got involved with the history of National Liberation Movement. It looks like all of your writing styles (history, plays, novels) were blended together in your most popular novel "Su Cilgin Turkler" (These Crazy Turks). In that, you created a very unique style of novel. Even though you were an accomplished and well known writer already, your writing career reached new heights with that historical work. How did it all come together in this novel?**

The information I was researching just began to expand while I was gathering the materials for the book. A small collection eventually became a big pile. It took me a while to decide what to do with all this information. Should I write a play? Should I do this, should I do that? Finally I reached two decisions, with the hope that it could be beneficial for the younger generation: 1. I shall only write about real events, only the truth. 2. I shall write it in the novel form, so it'll be easy to read. But it took me 3-4 years to find the final form. I wrote it one way, it didn't work...Tried

another form, didn't work...And at the end I decided on the format you have read. It is a parallel way of storytelling. The other side... Here, there, this side...All at the same time. Altogether, all connected in some way. And if you ask those who read the book fast, they say that it almost feels like they are reliving the National Struggle. This is something I heard from everyone who read the book in a short period of time. That book suddenly destroyed the conviction of "Nobody is reading books in Turkey, especially the young people read nothing..." It destroyed that belief, because the book came out in the middle of April, and in July it reached the 50th print, in September it reached the 100th print. It reached the 200th print before the year was over. This is something very unique, something that can't be matched around the world.

**It is estimated that it is the most sold book ever in the history of the Turkish Republic.**

That's for sure, and in my opinion it broke a World record in its own field. Suddenly we realized that if you put the right books in front of our children, they will read. I will never forget how teachers led the way and encouraged students to read this book. Everyone who knows me remembers that I wanted to be an author when I was little. In my childhood, a book by Resat Nuri (Guntekin) reached its 10th or 11th print. And since my dream was to write too, I remember thinking, how can one be such a superb writer? To accomplish this must be very difficult... I remembered those days of innocence when my own book print reached hundreds. Right now it's on the 397th print; probably there'll be one more print to reach the 400th. That will too be printed this year. This also shows how Turks are curious and willing to learn about their own "true" history. Ministry of Education should realize the facts seeing this, but they don't...Governments need to wake up, but they don't...Media should wake up, but they don't...Television stations need to wake up, but they don't...They just don't want to... A teacher, probably a religious

conservative teacher, said: "Don't bring this book to our school, it's like a bomb". They asked: "Why a bomb?" and he responded: "It will revive nationalism". These types of people are frightened to death of the nationalism concept. Why? The Freedom and Accord Party (Hurriyet ve Itilaf Partisi) during the truce, was also afraid of Turk, Turkism, Nationalism exactly the same way. But being afraid does not save anyone.

**When "Su Cilgin Turkler" came out, as part of your promotional book tour, you went to many schools; talked to students and young people. You also toured Anatolia, had discussions with your readers, you saw the immediate effects of the book. What kind of reactions did you receive?**

I always had the same driver when I was touring Anatolia. My driver friend and I made a calculation, and we decided not to exceed fifty thousand kilometers. Just by coincidence, this tour took place a short time before I had a major surgery. So, I had to be cautious. But I can assure you that we almost made it to all the cities in Anatolia. And there were still some other cities that we were planning to go next, but unfortunately my health didn't allow that to happen. There is such a joy in coming face to face with your readers. Families and people whose grandfathers were either martyrs or became veterans of the National Struggle come and hug you... They say: "That Sergeant Eyub you wrote about is my grandfather. How were you able to tell his true story?" The truth is that Sergeant Eyub is a prototype. There is not only one Sergeant Eyub! There is not only one soldier, but so many who had been through the same things...Those people found their families in the book. They saw their grandfathers' stories in writing. The National Struggle was an exceptional event. Now there are some psychopaths among us, who are against the National Struggle. No matter what stories they make up, what lies they come up with, the true legend just becomes bigger....You can feel that it is being admired more and more as an exceptional event as the years

go by. An awesome event! You don't have an Army you don't have any weapons, no ammunition, no money, no fabric to make uniforms... There is no sewing facilities even if you had some cloth materials; furthermore, you are so poor that you may not even find any thread to sew....An Army like this defeated imperialism! Some ask: "Where did they win against imperialism?" They won against the French in the South, and Greeks in the West. It was the British who supported the Greeks and supplied their weapons. It's their 18 million Pounds who kept the Greeks going. Those are the ones we defeated and after a three week battle Atatürk threw back into the sea. When we went to sign the treaty with the Greeks in the city of Mudanya, there was a British General sitting across from us (Turkish delegates).

**Turkish women carried those ammunitions in their bosoms along with their babies. The soldiers hardly had anything to eat. Still, so much was accomplished under those circumstances.**

From zero to victory! A National Struggle that had started from zero... The number of the enemies with weapons was 400,000. Think about what we had. But those in charge were very smart. Atatürk's military genius was incredible. He never went to fight in a new front without winning and finishing the job at another front. The Battle of Sakarya was the most dangerous battle. The enemy came all the way to Polatli, near Ankara...About 70 km. close... They were debating whether to move the Parliament to Kayseri, and even started to carry the archives. But then, Turkey stopped imperialism right in front of its door, chased it, and poured it into the sea. Now, I ask you, is it possible for Imperialism to forgive us? No... Is it possible for them to like us? No...Is it possible for them to talk about Atatürk in a respectable way? Well, if they do, those are the exceptional people in the society. But most of them think differently.

**Today is March 8th, it's celebrated as Women's Day around the world. Turkish women were given many rights as a**

**result of Atatürk's reforms. And even though there have been much advancement in women's rights, the situation we are in today can't be what Atatürk envisioned for the Turkish Women of the 21st century. What is your view on that?**

Advancements will take place again. There are always lows and highs...In France for example, the French got a taste of the republic after the revolution; they realized the importance of it, but the rule of kingdom came back at one point, and then they went back to the republic rule once again. They had the second, third, and fourth republic...Hopefully Turkey will not have an experience like that. Right now there is a halt...Going backwards...They say that this is a conservative government. I'm willing to be conservative if it is conserving good things. But the things they are conserving are making us doubt. We see what they really want to conserve. I mean, why is it not conserving Pet-Kim (the leading petrochemical company in Turkey)? Why is it not conserving PTT (The Postal service)? Why is it not conserving important foundations such as Sumerbank (was a Turkish bank and industrial holding

company), that were established by the state? All of these were established with the taxes our fathers paid. They claim that the state cannot own public assets. This is hogwash, a lie. Let me tell you this: the total average of England, France, Germany and the USA's public assets is 32%. They say in Turkey it is 0%, but that's not true... The percentage of our public assets during when we were most statist is 26%. Any word said after seeing these numbers will be a fairy tale. It'll be a tale, a delirium; it'll be a shame, and it'll be disrespectful to history.

**You were talking about the imperialist powers...And nowadays the country is under a heavy load of other powers because of foreign borrowing.**

They will come if you don't stand tall. The location of the Anatolian peninsula is so critical...I can't imagine how imperialist powers would not be interested here. They will wait, stop, and take a break...Just like it happened during the time of Atatürk...But after a while they came again...They stopped when they were resisted. But looks like it's easier to move around now. The new globalization concept became a good cover for

imperialism. So now people think that we'll be more civilized with the arrival of globalization. I think that's how they present it to the people...But these are huge political sins. Turkish people would not swallow these if they were vigilant. One needs to be educated to be vigilant. But just going to school to be educated is not enough. I mean, one may graduate from medical school, but it doesn't mean much if he doesn't know anything other than medicine. If he doesn't go to the theatre, doesn't read novels, knows nothing about poetry, not interested in history, has no social life; if he doesn't go to a nice restaurant with his family at least every two weeks or so, if he doesn't take his family out for a picnic on a nice day, if he doesn't enjoy going for a walk...What good does he do? These are one dimensional people. The number of one dimensional people has been increasing in Turkey. But it didn't start with the government who is in power now. This has been going on for thirty years. Unfortunately, we are among the countries who read the least. But still, if a book was printed 397 times, we can't say that they don't read.

**That is to say, if you'll give them the right books such as "Su Cilgin Turkler", they will read. What are you working on right now?**

Right now I'm working on a book for the 90th year of the Republic, which is about the Republic. I'm working on some projects related to the truce years. I want to simplify my book "Su Cilgin Turkler" for children. That book received great interest from middle school students. I want to make it easier for them to read and understand. There are so many things I'm working on and want to write, even though sitting in front of the computer and not moving around is bad for my health.

My whole purpose is to write the history of the Republic in a way that can capture the interest of young people and children. To write it in a way that they will like and read with interest. And of course, to acquaint young people with the life and ideals of Atatürk.



*"The basis of liberty, equality, and justice is the sovereignty of the nation"*

*Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*

## 90th Anniversary of the Turkish Republic

October 29, 1923, marks the day of the formation of the Republic of Turkey, under the inspiring leadership of the great Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It is the birthday of an independent, secular and democratic Turkish state. This year, in the aftermath of worldwide "Gezi Protests", Turkish people, Turks around the world, and friends of the Turkish Republic celebrated the 90th Anniversary of the Republic with great pride and enthusiasm on October 29, 2013. But there was also sorrow in our hearts, because of human rights violations in Turkey. It has been called: "the world's biggest prison for journalists". Hundreds of journalists, lawyers, academics and politicians, as well as dozens of generals and many army officials are in jails. Many of them received unfair verdicts in 2013, including 18 life sentences. This makes us wonder about the fairness of justice in Turkey.

On this 90th year, we must remember that Atatürk build the Republic on universal principles, and emphasized the vision of a united humanity. His vision of a modern republic consisted of not only cultural development and wealth, but also science, technology, civilization, freedom of thought and a free ideology.

His vision can be best described in his own words:

- ~ We are a member of the family of world civilizations. We will fulfill all requirements of civilization.
- ~ Bringing up a virtuous and powerful generation who relies on the fundamentals of positive sciences, who loves fine arts, and whose physical and mental talents, have increased and developed is the obvious desire of our main policy.
- ~ The Turkish nation is ready and resolved to advance, unhalting and undaunted, on the path of civilization.

Admiration towards Atatürk and his ideals has been steadily growing in Turkey this year, as it has been proved over and over by record number of people who visit his final resting place, Anıtkabir in Ankara. While the number of visitors was around 454,000 during the whole month of October in previous years, on October 29 Republic Day this year, 438, 451 people visited Anıtkabir in a matter of hours. This proves the admiration and respect of the Turkish people for Atatürk. The trust, love and respect for this great humanitarian is



growing as a reaction to Turkey's Islamist government's latest tactics.

In Washington, DC, American Turkish Association of DC (ATA-DC)'s annual Republic Day Ball was held at the Mayflower Hotel. With the contribution of the other local Turkish-American Associations to the organization of the event, this year the ATA-DC Ball had one of the largest attendances of the recent years. The guests recited the Turkish Pledge of Allegiance in unity, which was recently banned at primary schools by the government in Turkey. Folk Dancers from the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic performed colorful dances. Turkish American musician İlhan Ozulu enlivened the ball with his music.

This year, all around Turkey, the anniversary of the Republic was celebrated in many creative ways, a tribute to the "Gezi



Park Spirit". In Istanbul, the municipality of Kadikoy created a "Republic Tree" on a popular avenue, Bagdat Caddesi. There were 90 messages from 90 people on the Republic Tree, people who contributed to a contemporary, bright future of Turkey with their ideas, writings, musical talents, and plays. Here are some of those messages:

**ALTAN GÖRDÜM (ACTOR):** We are not going to let these prehistoric tree worms forage our 90 year old Sycamore tree.

**BEDRİ BAYKAM (ARTIST/JOURNALIST):** Republic, we are the strong and powerful leaves on your stable and bright body.

**BEKİR COŞKUN (JOURNALIST):** They planted the Republic into our hearts...it can only be taken back by ripping out our hearts...

**CAN ATAKLI (JOURNALIST):** Our Republic is

our torch it can never be put out by the middle ages mentality.

**FAZIL SAY (COMPOSER, PIANIST):** We were born as the children of a bright nation, and we will die that way.

**GENCO ERKAL (ACTOR):** What a strong Sycamore tree is our 90 yrs. old Republic! They have been trying to hollow out and dry up its roots, but somehow they couldn't destroy it. Because its soil is fertile, its sap is strong. It is reaching out towards immortality through the brilliant contributions and labor of our youth.

**GÜLRİZ SURURI (ACTRESS):** My homeland Türkiye, you became a nation with the establishment of Republic in 1923. I believe that you'll remain as a secular, democrat, libertarian, and peaceful republic forever and ever. Because it all suits us so well...

**PROF. DR. HAYRETTİN KARACA (ENVIRONMENTALIST):** As Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stated,

our homeland soil is sacred, it can't be left alone to its own fate.

**PROF. DR. İLBER ORTAYLI (HISTORIAN):** The combination of ignorance and intelligence for a ruler is inconceivable, and it will bring extraordinarily devastating results. On the other hand, Republic means being balanced, disciplined and in control.

**İLHAN ŞEŞEN (MUSICIAN):** This Sycamore tree may complete its life cycle one day, but the Republic: Never...

**KEREM GÖRSEV (JAZZ MUSICIAN):** These days, I'm honored and proud to be "Atatürk's youth", and a Turkish citizen.

**MELİH AŞIK (JOURNALIST):** In his address to the Turkish youth, Atatürk said "We established the Republic, you will cherish and keep it alive"... It takes great effort, courage and resistance to keep the

Republic alive....We have to be more courageous than those who want to destroy the Republic.

**MERİÇ VELİDEDEOĞLU (JOURNALIST):** As we are celebrating the 90th year of our "Republic", which saved us "Women" from being second class human beings; we have to be conscious of the fact that we need to claim ATATÜRK'S "LEGACY" with all our strength; because, as women, we will only be considered "Citizens" as long as the "Secular" "Republic" is alive!

**METİN AKPINAR (ACTOR):** Our "Republic" has been strengthened with secularism, Kemalism, and democracy...We can't give up this beautiful land...

**MUAZZEZ İLMIYE ÇIĞ (ARCHAEOLOGIST AND ASSYRIOLOGIST):** I'd like to offer my eternal gratitude to the honorable founders of our Republic: Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, who carried the Turkish nation from the dark middle ages to the 20th century civilization; to the parliament members who supported them, and to all of our martyrs who lost their lives for this cause. People from all backgrounds and especially our women are forever grateful to them. And I hope, will always keep these remarkable forefathers in their prayers.

**RUTKAY AZIZ (ACTOR):** Heartfelt greetings to the 90th year of our Turkish Republic... I have high hopes for a bright future *and I believe it with all my heart. Resist, my motherland's democratic, secular, patriotic, peaceful people!*

**SUNA KAN (VIOLONIST):** Republic is my life style. I would not have a career if it wasn't for Atatürk and the Republic. With my deepest feelings of gratitude to Atatürk and to all of his reforms.

**TİMUR SELÇUK (MUSICIAN):** A human being with morals, citizens with morals...productive, sharing, one who will not surrender to oppression.... That is REPUBLIC...

**TURGUT ÖZAKMAN (DRAMATURGE AND WRITER):** The mother of all developments, breakthroughs, and revolutions is the Republic.

**YILDIZ KENTER (ACTRESS):** Long Live the REPUBLIC!  
**YILMAZ ÖZDİL (JOURNALIST):** Let them squeeze compressed water as much as they want...Fear Not, it cannot be extinguished!



Writer, historian Turgut Ozakman, whom we lost in 2013, wrote the following in July 2013, as part of his 90th year message on the establishment of the republic: "Unbiased thinkers of the West call the National Struggle and the early Republican period "Turkish Miracle". I'd like to reflect on the first 15 years of the republic, the Atatürk era, in support of this impression."

The main target of this era was to reach the level of contemporary civilization, to share it and to contribute to it. The core of this universal civilization, which is shared by the humanity as whole -whether or not they want to - is science (+ technology) and arts. We had no right to overlook this fact, and drag behind.

Financial development and social/cultural development were carried out jointly during the Atatürk era.

- The rate of development of these 15 years is 10%,
- Rate of industrialization is 19%,
- The Iron and Steel industry was established,
- The Defense Industry was established,
- The Central Bank was filled with gold and foreign currency,
- Not a single foreign debt,
- The debt of the Ottomans was being paid according to an agreement,
- The airplanes which were built at the aircraft factory in Kayseri started flying in our skies,
- The first Turkish submarine's production started,
- Ports and Railways were nationalized,
- 3000 km of new railways were added to the existing 4000 km,
- Contemporary Laws were put in effect,
- All financial and moral barriers which limited women's rights were lifted, nationwide schools and community homes (for educational purposes) were opened (Village Institutes were opened eventually as well),
- Conservatories for art (music) education were established,
- University reform was realized,
- Secularism, which is the mandatory requirement for democracy and modernity was adopted,
- Factories were built all around Anatolia,
- Significant progress was attained in education, sports, and arts,
- An organized fight against contagious and common diseases was started and they were all restrained,
- Peaceful relations were established with all neighboring countries,
- Not a Penny was received from the West to aid all these developments,

nor any concessions were granted to anyone,

All these were completed successfully against all odds: inadequate revenues, lack of equipment, lack of sufficient numbers of educated experts, Turkish -Italian tension, revolt in Eastern Turkey, and of course, the crisis around the World.

Each of these developments and success stories are individual "epics" of civilization. To call this progress a "miracle" is not an exaggeration; it just does justice to the truth.

We have the responsibility of explaining and teaching the true meaning of "Turkish Miracle" to our youth; the village youth, town youth and those who are the city youth that are part of this miracle. We must raise them as devoted, conscious, and happy individuals who know and understand this miracle which is composed of the National Struggle and the concept of Republic.

This is the duty of every informed citizen."

We, as the Atatürk Society of America, take this duty very seriously, and we take pride in being part of the "Turkish Miracle" as we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Turkish republic. We are forever grateful to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. ▀



# CUMHURİYET ÇOCUKLARI CHILDREN of the REPUBLIC

*QUESTION: As a true "Child of the Republic", who was born and grew up in the formation years of the Turkish Republic, you carried the brilliant light of Atatürk's principles to this day; you reflected that unique energy to your surroundings. As we celebrate the 90th year of the Republic, could you please share with us how having the privilege of being a "child of the republic" affected and directed your life?*

by Ilknur Boray

**W**e asked this question to five respected intellectuals, all of whom contributed to the advancement of the Turkish society through their personal accomplishments. Their exemplary personal lives and careers have been a source of inspiration to so many people. They truly carried the brilliant light of Atatürk's principles to this day, through their positive attitudes, hard work and discipline. Here are their answers:

**Mrs. Muazzez İlmiye Cig**

**Born in 1914**



Mrs. Cig is an Assyriologist who specializes in the study of the Sumerian civilization. She worked as a specialist at The Istanbul Ancient Middle Eastern Relics Museum's Cuneiform Documents Archive for 31 years. Along with her two colleagues, she cleaned and categorized thousands of tablets from the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite civilizations; establishing an archive which consists of 74,000 tablets. Muazzez İlmiye Cig has written 17 books, 14 of them about the Sumerian civilization, and 2 of them about Atatürk.

I've lived through three wars, and witnessed the formation of the Turkish Republic when I was in elementary school. Atatürk was the savior of this nation, and he is the foundation of this republic. He gave us hope in a time of despair. My father named me İlmiye, hoping that I would be involved with science (İlim). I started teaching in 1931, and later became one of the first students of the University of Ankara. I owe that to Atatürk's educational reforms. In 1923, almost 90% of the populations were illiterate. But Atatürk had such courage; he went on a tour around the country and talked to the people. Gained their trust and approval before he started introducing all those reforms in every

field that affected our lives, from education to science; laws to arts... I always felt the spirit of Atatürk guiding me. My energy to this day comes from the confidence of those early years. The confidence that was installed in all of us by the strength of Atatürk's ideals. He was always honest; he never lied to the nation. Otherwise his reforms wouldn't survive. Atatürk separated the religion and state by establishing a secular democracy. There cannot be any democracy without secularism. Atatürk said that those who use religion for their own benefit are detestable. And now, 90 years after the beginning of those incredible Atatürk reforms, we are experiencing a counter-reform by the dark minds that he warned us about. The ruling party is opening its arms to sharia, and dividing our nation. They are trying overturning the secular system upon which Atatürk built modern Turkey. We have to open our eyes, teach our children about secularism, individual freedoms, the benefits of education and hard work, importance of science & arts, and make sure that they read and understand Atatürk's oration to the Turkish Youth. Those who ignore the true meaning of secularism and democracy will not be able to fool this nation. We, the Children of the Republic, will not allow them!

**ISMAIL TANSU**

**Born in 1917**



A retired Colonel of the Turkish Army, he was one of the officers who formed the core of the Special Warfare Department (Ozel Harp Dairesi) in the early 1950's. He also took part in the establishment of the Turkish Resistance Organization in Cyprus. He wrote a book about that, called "Aslında Hic Kimse Uyumuyordu" (Actually Nobody Was Sleeping), published in 2001, based on his recollections.

**The Great Nation and State of Turkey is Protected by The Great Leader Atatürk's Trust in Turkish people.**

I remember the first time I heard the name "Mustafa Kemal Pasha". I was 4 years old, my family just moved to Cankiri and one night we woke up to the sounds of horse carriages and tumbrels passing through the road in front of our house. The year was 1920... My father told us that these were going to Ankara, carrying immunity to Mustafa Kemal Pasha's soldiers. We heard that name mentioned often among family and guests who came to our house from that day on.

I heard a lot about The Battle of Sakarya, The Battle of Dumlupınar, and establishment of the Grand National Assembly in the years that followed. During my elementary school years, I started to understand better who Commander In Chief Mustafa Kemal Pasha was, and what were his great accomplishments.

We heard about the Hat Reform when my father came home wearing a straw hat instead of his regular kalpak (a high-crowned cap) one night in 1925. And my mother stopped wearing her large scarf and the veil around the same time. Reforms followed each other, and soon after we were celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Republic. I became an ATATÜRK Nationalist after reading his Address to the Youth, and hearing his now famous words: "The Turkish Nation is Patriotic, the Turkish Nation is industrious, the Turkish Nation is Intelligent, How Happy is one who calls himself a Turk!"

I had the honor of seeing Atatürk in 1936 from a close distance. I was a senior at Haydarpaşa High School, and heard that Atatürk was going to come to Istanbul to meet with the King Abdullah of Jordan, at the Haydarpaşa Train Station. I went there that day and tried to get closer to him, so I could look at his famous sharp looking eyes which everyone always talked about. I was able to stand right next to the rug that he was going to walk on, but I couldn't look into his eyes directly when he got off the train and came closer to me. I was fascinated by his imposing presence.

Atatürk was a great leader, unrivaled in the history of nations. Turkish people highly esteem the values of secularism and democracy which Atatürk upheld.

**Mrs. TURAN NECDET OZCAN**

**Born in 1919**



She worked as an English teacher until her marriage to her School Friend Namik Ozcan. They had a son and a daughter, and nowadays Mrs. Ozcan enjoys the close company of her four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

March 16, 1919....A young, enthusiastic preacher in tears is calling out to the occupation forces commanders and the others in the audience in an auditorium: "This is our homeland, because it is the resting place of our martyrs. This land belongs to us because it is ours, ours, and only ours!" After he steps down from the pulpit, a French commander who was in the audience comes to him and says "A nation with such dedicated youth will not become slaves".

That night the wife of the young preacher, who was also in the audience, gives birth to a baby girl. They call her Turan. The baby girl who opened her eyes into this atmosphere grows up walking in the light of Atatürk's path, with the same enthusiasm as her father. And a few years later, in her father's arms, she gets the chance to see the great leader when Atatürk visits Istanbul.

Atatürk knew my father, because together with Halide Edip Adivar, on every corner, on every stone, my father addressed crowds in Atatürk's presence many times before, during and after the War of Independence. My father worked at The Turkish Language and History Institution, alongside Atatürk, during the modernization of the Turkish Language. He also wrote a book called "How should we mend our language". He has another book called "Ghazi's Road", a book which contained Atatürk's speeches. A cherished memory I have of Atatürk is from the time when we lived in Giresun. My mother and I were watching Atatürk from a window at the Giresun City Hall, while Atatürk was addressing the people of Giresun from a balcony next to that window in 1924. That image was captured by a photographer, and later published in the local magazine called "İzlerimiz" (our tracks).

October 29, Republican Day was always celebrated with great excitement all around the

country. We went down to port of Uskudar to see the Navy fleet, and sang the 10th Year Anthem with great enthusiasm.

We woke up to a very gloomy, sad day on November 10, 1938...Atatürk, the father of the nation lost his life that morning. I remember Ghazi Mustafa Kemal with great fullness. The great leader carried through many triumphs and reforms; a true father to the Turkish nation

I am 94 years old. It's not easy to squeeze ninety four years into two pages. I don't expect the younger generation to feel the same enthusiasm that I felt growing up with the Republic. They can't feel it, because they didn't live in those early years. But I hope that they will not forget where we started and how far we came, and I hope they will make sure that it will not be forgotten.

**Prof. Dr. ALI ERTUGRUL**

**Born in 1923**



Trained as a Children's Diseases and Heart disease specialist, Prof. Dr. Ertugrul had significant contributions to the establishment and development of the cardiology department of the Hacettepe University Hospital (1958-65). In 1996, he went to Erzurum and spent three years build and establish the Medical School of the Atatürk University from the ground up. He was the establishing Dean of Eskisehir University Medical School (1969), Dean of the Medical School at Hacettepe University (1970-1975), and the establishing Dean of the Medical School at the University of Marmara (1982). He founded the Children's Cardiology Center at University of Istanbul's Institute of Cardiology in 1983. He has more than 120 scientific publications published in Turkish and foreign science journals.

I was born on April 1, 1923....The same year as the proclamation of the Republic. I'm a child of the republic.

I was born in Hemsin, and moved to Rize at the age of 5 because there were no schools in our town near the Black Sea. There were no income sources around that district for people to support their families, during the Ottoman rule. If I stayed in Hemsin, probably I would have been sent to become a baker in Russia, like many other children from our town. But with the establishment of elementary schools right after the proclamation of the republic, boys and girls both had a chance to receive an education in that district. The names of the new elementary schools in Rize were very meaningful: Liberation, Republic, Independence....The students learned about Atatürk

and his heroism at those schools. People of that generation have always been resourceful, because they learned to take care of their own problems at a very young age. We moved to Erzurum after I finished elementary school, because there was no middle school in Rize. And in 1942, I won a scholarship to the Medical School of University of Istanbul, and moved to Istanbul. During my childhood, there was only one doctor around where we lived and beyond...from Trabzon to the Russian border, including Hopa. We went to that doctor when I became ill with malaria. I was very impressed with his lifestyle...his house the way he took care of my illness and made me feel better...that's when I decided to become a doctor.

I grew up during the most difficult days of the young Turkish Republic. I remember all the hardships and suffering just like it was yesterday. There was so much poverty, and the Turkish people hardly had any access to medical care or doctors. The real, scientific medical care started with the proclamation of the Republic. Properly educated doctors graduated from newly established Medical Schools. Atatürk taught us to be efficient and creative. He emphasized the importance of education.

Every single government that came to power after Atatürk's death, helped create the so-called mild Islamist Turkey, by making concessions from all the progress he brought about. As Atatürk said in one of his speeches, we as the people must have control over our own destiny, if we want to better ourselves.

**Mrs. AYTEN HATICE ETI**

**Born in 1925**



The first woman bank director (Garanti Bankasi) in Turkey, poet, writer, painter; also known as "The Mother of Kadikoy", for her volunteerism in the Kadikoy district of Istanbul.

I was three years old when my father passed away in 1928. My mother and my whole family admired Atatürk. I grew up with the light and energy of Atatürk's charismatic leadership. I wouldn't be able to achieve many things in life without the strength and knowledge I received from Atatürk and his teachings.

We are more forward looking as the first generation of children of the Republic. Because of our devotion to the whole nation, the inspiration we got from Atatürk, and that special spark

within us, we were able to take risks, become leaders. We still have that energy to the present day. I helped establish 80 libraries, and they are all named Atatürk.

Those who forget all that Atatürk gave to this nation cannot be decent human beings. I can't understand how Atatürk's reforms and accomplishments can be denied. That is betrayal to our heritage. Especially these days, I understand why we need to appreciate him even more.

**Prof. Dr. M. ORHAN OZTURK**

**Born in 1925**



A well-known Psychiatrist, especially in the social psychiatry field; Prof. Ozturk taught at Ankara University Medical School and School of Social Sciences-Middle East Technical University in the early years of his career. He took an active role in the establishment of the Hacettepe University Medical School in Ankara (1964-69); and later in the establishment and development of the Department of Psychiatry at Hacettepe University (1969-1993). Publications: Over 90 articles or book chapters published in Turkish and English.

I remember my father (a first generation elementary school teacher of the Republic) taking me and my two elder sisters to Adana on the 10th Anniversary of the Republic. The inexpressible exuberance of the people, the ceremonies and the city of Adana lighted up all over at night became unforgettable events of our lives. I remember seeing Atatürk himself for a fleeting moment on the window of the train on his brief visit to Tarsus and Mersin in 1937. For me it was a too exciting event to remember his figure clearly.

For us as children, Atatürk was a great hero, a great commander and the savior of the country. As children and youngsters, we all felt great pride with him and with our nation. As I grew up, the whole idea of the Republic and of Atatürk grew in me as a heroic march of a medieval society toward a modern enlightened nation under the leadership of an enlightened genius. I see this whole process as a great and unique cultural revolution.

Now at my old age, although not entirely hopeless, I feel sorrow, anger and guilt for the current situation of the Republic and of Atatürk cultural revolution which my and the later generations have not been able to defend effectively. ▶

# Atatürk and Modernization of Turkish Music

by Aysegul Kus Durakoglu

**A**mong the prominent political leaders of the 20th century, not many articulated the significance of culture as much as the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Stating that culture was the foundation of the Turkish Republic, he advanced cultural reforms in conjunction with the political, economic, legal, social and educational reforms needed to further the newly formed Turkish Republic. For Atatürk, to create a unique Turkish identity with higher cultural and artistic values would only be possible by integrating the viable elements inherited from the ancient cultures of Anatolia with modern techniques and norms. Music, in particular, holds a special place in Atatürk's ideals to advance Turkish culture.

In a lecture at Izmir Teacher's College on October 14, 1925, they asked Atatürk if music was essential in life. This was his reply:

"Music is not necessary for life because life is music itself. If the matter is human's lives, music always exists since life without music is nonexistent. Music is the joy, spirit, and everything in life. However, we need to analyze the nature and types of music in our lives."

Atatürk was not a musician, nor an expert in music; but he was a leader with a vision who recognized the importance and relevance of music and the arts on the development and education of younger generations. He knew that music served as a unifying element at all levels of society and a medium for expressing individual and collective feelings and aspirations. He strongly felt the need to bring it to

higher standards by using western techniques combined with traditional elements. In a speech dated November 1st, 1934, Atatürk said:

"Friends, I know how you want our young generation to be advanced in all kinds of fine arts. In my opinion, Turkish music has priority and urgency in this respect. The measure for the transformation of a nation is to be perceived by the changes in its music."

For Atatürk the necessary changes for the transformation of Turkish musical culture could be made by applying Western polyphonic techniques to the monophonic structures of Turkish folk music. He emphasized the importance of Turkish folk music many times and suggested that it must be further investigated in its roots and integrated with western styles. However, this type of transformation could not be made by force, but only through training and persuasion. Following a performance of the Presidential Orchestra established by his order, he suggested that it was necessary to consider the people's musical needs and also train them to get used to Western music.

Atatürk greatly enjoyed western music and opened a society unaccustomed to Western sounds through an instructional approach of playing it on radio stations. For that, he was strongly criticized by Turkish music experts, saying that Atatürk was trying to ban Turkish music from radio stations and was favoring Western music. However, it was not Atatürk himself who banned Turkish music. When he said that the music played on the radio was not reflecting the true values of Turkish musical culture, it was banned by the

Internal Affairs' Ministry. Atatürk was always fond of Turkish music, especially folk songs from the Aegean region. That music made him feel very sentimental, and even moved him to tears.

Atatürk often invited musicians and composers like Ahmed Adnan Saygun to the presidential mansion to investigate the origins of Turkish music and how to integrate it with Western techniques. Saygun told him that the origin of Turkish music goes back to the music of Central Asian Turkic cultures; pentatonism was the foundation of Turkish folk music and was quite different from the Turkish classical music developed later by the Ottomans. In an interview from 1925, Atatürk asked the German journalist, Emil Ludwig, about the development of Western music in Europe. When he was told that it took about four hundred years to be developed, Atatürk's immediate reply was: "Well! We do not have that much time."

Right after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Atatürk did not wait at all! At such a devastating time, following the Independence War, there were 13 million people, almost no budget, no schools, hospitals, or restaurants in Turkey's capital Ankara. Meanwhile, Atatürk was sending young musicians abroad for musical training and was making plans to establish conservatories, orchestras, and opera houses throughout Turkey. First, the Musiki Muallim Mektebi was reestablished as Ankara State Conservatory, then the Dar-ül-Elhan (School of Melodies) in Istanbul became the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory, both providing Western classical music education. He also founded the Teacher's College and Educational institutions like Gazi University in 1925 to raise music educators rather than just performers and composers. Then, they would be able



to provide music education throughout the country. These were the main efforts of a leader who wished to take the new nation to a higher place of cultural diversity in the world.

Meanwhile, the first generation of Turkish composers was sent to Europe by Atatürk on state scholarship in order to receive their music education in Europe's finest music schools. Upon their return to Turkey, they conducted research on the modal and rhythmic structures of Turkish folk music, and recomposed them with Western techniques. They aimed to add a polyphonic character to the monophonic structures of Turkish melodies. This is how they were able to create a universal language that was based on Turkish musical tradition. Their goal was not only to reinvent Turkish music, but also to invest fully in developing musical institutions and educating many students.

In today's Turkey there have been at least three generations of composers who continue to grow in numbers and who have been internationally recognized for their contributions to Turkey's cultural advancement. The number of music institutions, including orchestras, conservatories, opera houses, and other

Turkish music and western music organizations has already reached hundreds throughout Turkey. ▶

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**BIOGRAPHY:** Turkish-American pianist Aysegul Kus Durakoglu has concertized as soloist and chamber musician nationally and internationally and has been featured in various festivals, radio and television programs. She began her musical life in Istanbul and received her Bachelor of Music degree at the Istanbul State Conservatory. As a recipient of a scholarship (established by Atatürk) from the Turkish Government, she came to the United States to pursue her graduate studies. She received her Master's from the Juilliard School and a Ph.D. degree with notable distinction at the New York University where she also served on the piano faculty. She has been currently serving on the full-time faculty of the Music and Technology Division of the Stevens Institute of Technology. Most recently, she released an album of Debussy's Twelve Piano Etudes; presented a chamber music performance at the Jazz at Lincoln Center; and, participated in the International Conference of the College Music Society in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

# MAY 19, 2013 Youth Day Celebrations

*Happy 132nd Birthday to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*

**A**tatürk Society of America's annual Youth Day "19 Mayıs, Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı" celebration, commemorating the start of the Turkish War of Independence, was held at the Cosmos Club, in Washington, DC on May 24, 2013. May 19 is also traditionally accepted as Atatürk's birthday. This year was the 132nd year of his birth.

Hon. Muharrem Ince, a current member of the Turkish Parliament (from the opposition party CHP) was the keynote speaker at this year's May 19th Commemoration of Atatürk and the Youth and Sports Day celebration. The

ceremony started with a welcome speech by ASA President Dr. Bulent Atalay. ASA Board member Mr. Burak Sahin spoke on behalf of the Turkish American youth, and Ms. Suna Zerwas gave this year's presentation of Atatürk's address to the youth. The event attendees were entertained by Ince's lively speech and recital of one of his own poems.

Following the celebration at the Cosmos Club, a dinner and a cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate Atatürk's birthday was held at the home of ASA founding president Hudai Yavalar and Mrs. Mirat Yavalar.

Following are some excerpts from Hon. Muharrem Ince's speech at the Cosmos Club:

"Today there are attacks on the Republic, there are attacks on the founding philosophy of the Republic. This is happening, because we have a nation of people who are different than the people of the past... Because, Turkish people of today are open to manipulation.... So many internet sites, so many cringing, partisan, biased (AKP-the ruling party- supporters) media; so many profit seeking NGO's...As a result of these, people are more open to manipulation. Now everything is open to discussion. Everything

from changing the borders of Turkey, to doing away with Anitkabir, to abolish the armed forces, giving the title of General to Abdullah Ocalan (imprisoned Kurdish Rebel Leader). These can be discussed in Turkey now. A youngster carrying a Turkish flag gets a beating from the police, while the one with a poster of Abdullah Ocalan is praised as a freedom warrior...The worst part is, there are television stations, internet sites, newspapers, profit seekers and partisans who justify this."

"AKP (the ruling party) is not in power because they are good; in my opinion they are there because we (CHP - the opposition party) are not good. We advocate religion instruction in schools to start at age 12. Why? Because abstract thinking starts after age 12. Heaven, Hell, death, God... a 4 year old cannot comprehend these. AKP says "No" They will start religion instruction at age 2, if they can. We tell them: "look, you'll be imposing if you'll start this at an early age. Families can impose religious teachings on their children, but the State cannot do that. That is not Secularism. To be considered a Secular State, religious teachings need to start after age 11-12"

"No matter how much you educate these people, whether they become a teacher, doctor, engineer, government minister, president; there is hostility against the Republic in their roots"

"There is no reason for us to fight with Syria. Why are we fighting? Why? I was in Hatay two months ago. There is no border anymore. The Free Syrian Army soldiers go to Syria and fight in the war during the day, and they cross the border and come back to Turkey to rest and take care of their wounds at night time. Turkey is not a Banana Republic! Where is the border? Our citizens died in Reyhanli, the intelligence gave information about the possibility of an attack, to the government, long before that incident. 73 Security cameras were broken all at the same time. Is that possible? Borders are the honor of a nation. Turkish borders turned into a colander, this is not acceptable. Syria is our neighbor; we do not have a war with Syria. Certain



subjects are internal business of Syria. Whatever we lived through during the Iraq crisis in the past, we are experiencing exactly the same things now relating to Syria. Turkey shouldn't take sides. Turkey shouldn't open its arms to armed forces who are opposed to the current regime in Syria. Turkey should not help them. This is not appropriate. It is against international law, it is

against morals. We know Esad is a dictator, but we also know how democrat is Tayyip Erdogan."

"Our party CHP wants peace, but we have concerns; we have concerns about this process, because everything is done without the knowledge of the parliament. Only the Prime Minister, Abdullah Ocalan and a few of his supporters know what is going on. We know that

there is the talk of Presidency for Erdogan, and freedom for Ocalan as part of their bargaining. The temporary silence of the weapons in Turkey doesn't mean that they are going to be silent for good. Turkey should expect even bigger problems if an agreement is not reached at the end of this "process".

We, at Atatürk Society of America, thank Hon. Muharrem Ince for his visit and lecture. It was a great pleasure to have him as our guest speaker on this special day.

To many Happy Youth Days, and Happy Atatürk's Birthdays, to us all. ▶



# OF PARKS AND MEN

(and Women and Children and Thousands of Voices Protesting Tyranny and Injustice)



by Burak Sahin

## It all started with a small park.

A small group of activists staged a sit-in at Taksim's Gezi Park in opposition to plans to replace the park; excessive police force against the peaceful activists caused tensions to escalate so rapidly that within only two days, Turkish people were staging almost 250 protests in more than 60 cities.

What at first appeared simply as environmental activism soon started showing the broad outlines of a widespread national protest against the government: The protests were in fact a spontaneous uprising against a perfect storm of overt nepotism, unprecedented corruption, rampant commercialism, lurking fundamentalism

and perhaps above all, an increasingly brazen authoritarianism.

The crass commercialism in today's Turkey indiscriminately replaces parks and forests, theater buildings and other cultural venues with shopping malls; what made the Gezi Park project so special perhaps was that the increasingly authoritarian Government was dictating another example of this commercialism with hints of nepotism to erect a symbol of the counter-revolutionary neo-Ottoman tendencies it no longer pretended to conceal: The park was set to be replaced by a reconstruction of the Taksim Military Barracks, or "Topcu Kislasi", that housed in early 20th century soldiers who rebelled, along with fundamentalists chanting "We want sharia law!"; against the establishment that was laying the roots of democracy towards

the end of the Ottoman Empire.

In 22 days of ongoing clashes, it is calculated that 7.5 million people joined the protests alone in Istanbul. Some of these people shouted demands of democracy donning makeshift gas masks and diving goggles as the police attacked them with pepper spray, tear gas and water cannons; some of them got together and joined thousands of others marching for freedom and democracy and against injustice and corruption; and some of them opened their windows at the same time every night to bang on pots and pans in protests.

The response by the police, local government officials and the executive branch exacerbated the situation at every stage of the protests; the police used excessive force as the protesters stood their ground peacefully, local government officials heightened tensions by acting as spokespeople of political powers and the PM himself tried everything in his demagogic toolbox, allegedly to assuage the protests if one is to listen to his supporters, but the net outcome was inflamed outrage and spreading demonstrations. The posters, signs and slogans too reflected this outcome; government officials' statements, blunders and plain insults immediately found their way, first to social media, then to the next day's posters, signs and slogans.

Never before has so much religious pressure been exerted on Turkish society; in the Gezi protests it wasn't only the oft-maligned and marginalized "secular elite" (that in fact has always been a fairly large swath of the Turkish middle class) that took to the streets and demanded

an end to the all-out invasion of every aspect of their daily lives; citizens of all ages, levels of education, ethnic backgrounds and ideological bends protested against (and ridiculed) the PM's suggestion that Turkish women have at least 3 children; severe restrictions on abortion and the assault on alcohol consumption.

In his first televised interview after the protests started, the Prime Minister literally said "whoever drinks alcohol is an alcoholic;" and regarding a highly restrictive new law on serving alcohol, asked: "why is a law enacted by two drunkards acceptable but something commanded by belief makes you uncomfortable?" This was perceived as a direct reference to the founders of the Turkish Republic and from the next day onwards, all protesters wore the label "drunkard" proudly, with posters, signs and slogans containing furious references to these remarks.

Turkey has a greater number of journalists in prison than any other country in the world; the control the government has over what is left of Turkey's corporate media took years to build, and countless lawsuits, tax fines, threats, firings, and a number of takeovers financed by government loans to businessmen promising favorable coverage.

It is true that in today's uber-connected world social media can be the best real-time source as world-changing events unfold in places where global news outfits do not have full-time operations; but in the case of Gezi protests the Turkish media was so thunderously silent that people had no choice but to turn to citizen reporters

that uploaded photos and videos "from the field".

On the first day of the protests social networking sites like Facebook, and the "menace which is called Twitter," immediately lit up and Turkish expatriates all over the globe started finding out about the events in Taksim in real time. And in the U.S., soon, hundreds of people were chanting and marching in solidarity with their brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Boston, New York and Washington.



Some of these were folks who had never taken interest in politics or current affairs in their mother country or their adopted homelands; some were close observers of the demise of secularism, freedom and justice in Turkey at the expense of an all-familiar façade of economic stability in a "moderately Islamic" country that was hoped to serve as model to her troubled neighbors in the Middle East. And many were sons and daughters of Turkey's '68 generation who lived through another period of turmoil when the left and ultranationalist right were

fighting against each other for the country's future. Having never carried a poster or a banner in a protest before or marched for anything, these people still shared something with everybody else who took to the streets in major cities across the U.S.: A love for Turkey and deep concerns for her well-being.

When people were attacked in Taksim, we took to the streets. When young people were killed we took to the streets. When a brilliant performance artist decided to "stand" in silence, so did we. When METU was attacked, we gathered to voice our support. And when thousands went to Silivri in preparation for the verdict in one of the most striking partisan witch-hunts in Turkey's history, we got together too, and marched against injustice.

Here in D.C., we made Lafayette Park, right next to the White House, our own Gezi. There were critics that confused the demand about U.S. support with a statement on lack of self-determination; what we did was simply to find the most visible area of the city, not just by its inhabitants but also visitors, and on some weekends march all the way to the U.S. Capitol, our voices echoing up and down the best-known streets and avenues of the capital.

We did demonstrations or came together in forums at Pershing Park every weekend for more than two months; sometimes we were alone in the U.S. and sometimes joined our friends in other cities; we held simultaneous demonstrations in multiple cities and broadcast one of them live on the web; this even led a local

*continued on page 27*



# A school and a memorial built on Atatürk's principals



**ASA** founding president Mr. Hudai Yavalar was born in Tokat. Together with his wife Mirat Yavalar, who was trained as an educator, he had a dream of building a school in his village. After careful planning and years of consultations with Turkish officials, the Yavalar family's gift of hope to the village of Kizilkoy became a reality. The groundbreaking ceremony took place in September 2011, and the project unfolded efficiently throughout the construction. Yavalar family would especially like to thank Mr. Erdogan Arslan, the Vice Principles of the school, who gave generously of his time to this project from the very beginning to the completion. The opening ceremony of the "Kizilkoy Ata Yavalar School" was held on September 25,

2013, with the attendance of the Governor of Tokat Mr. Mustafa Taskesen, Tokat Education Ministry Director Mr. Levent Yazici, and the other dignitaries. In his opening remarks, Mr. Yavalar said that his wish was to provide a better future for the students. Mrs. Yavalar told the students: "Our duty is to give you the educational opportunities that you all deserve. And your duty is to work hard and be good students; good citizens. We expect you to give back to your country, your families, and to the environment when you grow up. You are the true owners of this school". The school contains a music room and instruments, all donated by the Yavalar. Instrumental music instruction will start later this year.

A memorial to honor and celebrate Atatürk's reforms on education was built and dedicated as a gift to the Izmit high school by the Yavalar family. The "Atatürk Corner" is situated on a raised area in the garden, near the main entrance to the school building. In the center section is a bust of Kemal Atatürk, raised on a pedestal, and there are 6 granite blocks in the background. The inscriptions on the granite backgrounds all reflect Atatürk's thoughts about education. In addition to the memorial, a library honoring Mr. Nurdogan Ozdogan was established and donated to the high school by the Yavalar family. The late Mr. Ozdogan was a well respected teacher in Izmit, and ASA founding president Mr. Yavalar was a student of his in the 50's.

## American Friends of Turkey (AFOT) Embassy Lecture Series

American Friends of Turkey Embassy Lecture Series continued in 2013. As part of their programs, lectures and trips, AFOT held a public lecture at the Turkish Embassy Official Residence, in Washington, DC on November 12, 2013, under the Patronage of Ambassador and Mrs. Namik Tan. The speaker George W. Gawrych, Ph.D., latest book, "Young Atatürk, The: From Ottoman Soldier to Statesman of Turkey" was released on April 16, 2013. At the Nov.12 Embassy Lecture, titled: "Young Atatürk and the founding of the Republic", Professor Gawrych examined Atatürk's intellectual development from soldier to statesman and as the founder of the Republic.



## Two-Day Conference organized by The Light Millennium

The Light Millennium and The College of Arts and Letters at the Stevens Institute of Technology jointly organized and presented a Two-Day International Conference on April 19-20, 2013, sponsored by the Atatürk Society of America. The topic of the conference was: PIONEER OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: ATATÜRK. The two day conference closed with a Concert by pianist Aysegül Durakoglu and violinist Yigit Karatas. The Light Millennium and the Columbia University Turkish Student Association jointly organized a High Level Panel on "The Impact of the Lausanne Peace Treaty in the world-A celebration for the 90th Anniversary" at the Columbia University November 14, 2013.



## A Panel Discussion hosted by The Turkish Policy Center

The Turkish Policy Center (TPC) hosted a panel discussion, titled "Miracle or Mirage: Transitions in the Turkish Economy" on November 21, 2013 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The topic was the status quo of Turkey's economy: what is the current diagnosis and where is it headed? Are developments in the Turkish economy over the past years actually a miracle or mirage? What kind of impact, if any, did the recent protests in Turkey have over the economy, and are there any implications for upcoming elections? The panelists were: Steven Cook: Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations; Sebnem Kalemli-Ozcan: IMF, Senior Fellow / Professor of Economics, University of Maryland; Landon Thomas, Jr.: Economy and Finance Reporter, The New York Times; Khush Choksy: Vice President for Turkey and the Middle East, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Turkish Policy Center (TPC) is a non-political non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. It was launched on the 87th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, 29 October 2010. TPC's main goals are to enrich the policy debates related to Turkish-American relations; share the important developments in Turkey; bring new perspectives to long-term bilateral issues and focus on areas of potential cooperation. Atatürk Society of America is proud to be one of the panel sponsors of "Miracle or Mirage: Transitions in the Turkish Economy".

# You are strong, and you will speak what you truly believe in.

*"You, the Turkish youth! Your primary duty is to forever protect and defend the Turkish independence and the Republic of Turkey. These conditions and possibilities may appear unfavorable. The adversaries, who scheme against your independence and your Republic, may be the representatives of a victory without precedent in the World. By force or by ruse, all citadels and arsenals of our dear fatherland may have been taken, all of its armies may have been dispersed [ More distressing and more grievous than all these, those who hold and exercise the power within the country may have fallen into gross error, blunder, and even treason. You, the future sons and daughters of Turkey! Even under such circumstances and conditions, your duty is to redeem the Turkish independence and the Republic! The strength you shall need exists in the noble blood flowing through your veins."* —M. Kemal Atatürk, October 20, 1927

By Camilo Derya Rivera

**M**y name is Camilo Derya Rivera and I am a Turkish-American youth. I was born to a Turkish mother and a Puerto Rican father. I am highly involved and invested in my Turkish heritage. The above quote is from a speech Atatürk gave addressing the youth of the newly founded Republic of Turkey. He laid out the responsibilities and duties that the youth have to Turkey. He states it is the youth's duty to protect the Republic. The above quote is my favorite from Atatürk and one that I take to heart. It is very empowering, very enlightening, and one where the youth are of the utmost importance.

Atatürk gave us freedom. What is freedom? It is a human trait in all of us. The freedom to speak our hearts, to peacefully assemble and to express ourselves is a human right we all share. Yet it is often not recognized, especially in the youth. Often we are forgotten about. Our ideas are cast aside as being too idealistic some even saying extremist, but we are the future and we must be heard. The Youth will not quit, the youth will not shake with fear, but the youth will band together, the youth will stay strong, the youth will stand strong, and the youth will speak what we truly believe in. I practice this philosophy every moment I represent Turkey and the Turkish youth. In this vital time, when the youth are having their voices silenced, I ask you, the youth, to become civically involved in the Turkish-American community. I ask you, I implore you to engage in the Turkish-American community, and have pride in the freedom Atatürk represents.

In the end, I want you, the youth, to remember one thing. If you are ever in fear, if you are ever in doubt, if you ever believe that you simply cannot do it, remember, "The strength you shall need exists in the noble blood flowing through your veins." I want you to never quit, I want you to never shake with fear, but I want you to stay strong, I want you to stand strong, and I want you to speak what you truly believe in. ▀



Camilo Derya Rivera

# Panel Discussion on Freedom of Press and Rule of Law in Turkey

National Press Club, Washington, DC

On March 27, 2013 Turkish Policy Center (TPC) of Washington DC and the Ataturk Society of America (ASA) hosted a panel discussion titled “Press Freedom & Rule of Law in Turkey: Current State & Future Prospects” at the prestigious National Press Club in Washington D.C. This event had over 70 participants.

The introductory remarks were given by TPC President and Founder Yurter Ozcan. This panel discussion brought together a very-well respected group of journalists and analysts who have covered such issues. Susan Corke is currently managing

programs and conducting advocacy at Freedom House. She worked on Turkey during her tenure at the State Department. Baris Terkoglu, a news director at Odatv spent 19 months in jail in Turkey due to his journalistic activities prior to his release in September 2012. The trial asking for his imprisonment for 18 years continues. Gareth Jenkins, a British analyst who has been living in Turkey for over two decades, wrote the most-critically acclaimed report on the Ergenekon case in 2009 titled, “Between Fact and Fantasy: Turkey’s Ergenekon Investigation.”

You can read below the highlights of each panelist’s speech.

**Susan Corke, Director for Eurasia programs at Freedom House; Washington DC**

- Countries in the Middle East are looking at Turkey. Turkey, as a leader in the region and a global actor should be held to a higher standard and should set an example for the other countries in the region.
- If the idea of a “Turkish model” is realistic, then Turkey should look to address its own issues, starting with freedom of expression. Freedom House has lowered Turkey’s civil liberties rating, Committee to Protect Journalists reported that Turkey has the highest number of imprisoned journalists in the world. Many legal campaigns including Ergenekon seem to be politically motivated.
- The issues with freedom of press are directly tied to judicial independence and the judicial process. There are many shortcomings in the judicial process and in many legal cases of journalists and Ergenekon. The upcoming judicial reform package has a lot of work to do to address these issues.
- The attitude of the government towards journalists is another big issue. Firing of the critical journalists, the backchannel pressures on editors and publishers are known issues and make the media vulnerable to political pressure due to economic interests. This is the most worrisome part of the issue. A free press is first and

foremost a mechanism for peacefully voicing grievances, a way to expose problems to public scrutiny so that they can be resolved.

- As the recent controversy with Ambassador Ricciardone showed, Turkey has to be more accepting of criticism and acknowledge its shortcomings.
- The West has to make sure it supports the development of a stronger civil society in Turkey, and that Turkey’s EU accession process is still alive. The expectation of Turkey joining the EU has resulted in reforms and we should make sure this process continues.
- This is a moment of opportunity; both for the people and the leaders of Turkey. We need to see a real desire on the part of Turkey’s leaders to fulfill the country’s democratic promise. Only by seizing this moment to become a more democratic, more inclusive state can Turkey realize its potential and become a true model in the region and beyond.

To access all of Susan Corke’s remarks, please go to: <http://bit.ly/18w8QwT>

**Baris Terkoglu, News Director, Odatv, Istanbul**

- There are two big threats to democracy, rule of law and press freedom in Turkey: The first is Prime Minister Erdogan’s repressive policies. The second is the followers of Fethullah Gulen,

leader of a religious cult who is currently in asylum in the United States, illegally organizing in the police force and the judicial system.

- Erdogan publicly threatens journalists and media bosses. He calls out columnists, journalists and newspaper directors he doesn’t like, asking for their dismissal or asks his supporters to boycott newspapers who employ them.
- Many journalists and columnists who have opposing views with Prime Minister Erdogan either get fired, or get their articles censored.
- People who wrote about the illegal organization of Gulen’s followers in the police force, their use of illegal surveillance and creation of false evidence against defendants, were charged for terrorism. Anyone who talked or wrote about the involvement of groups tied to Gulen in legal cases such as Balyoz and Odatv was investigated. I, with other defendants I didn’t know, were charged with establishing a terrorist organization, because we were the target of the same group.
- The United States is ignoring the lack of rule of law and freedom of press because of its economic interests. The open support from the United States turned Turkey into a land of repression.

To access all of Baris Terkoglu’s remarks, please go to: <http://bit.ly/19uuGzx>

**Gareth Jenkins, Analyst & Author, Istanbul**

- There is no evidence that this illegal organization so-called “Ergenekon” ever existed. There is no evidence of a concrete coup plot. Much of the “evidence” in the indictment is self-contradictory, absurd and there are very strong suspicions that they have been altered.
- The same issue is evident in the Balyoz (Sledgehammer) case as well. There are strong suspicions of planting of evidence. The nature of evidence and conduct of investigation are dubious. There is also no mention of Ergenekon organization. All the “evidence” relating to the supposed coup is on just one CD. The fact that the entire investigation is based on a single CD burned in 2003 using Microsoft Office 2007, seems suspicious.
- There are very good reasons suspect all these legal cases are coming from a single source. Both cases look very similar in their nature, the personnel, the methodology, the lack of evidence and confessions.
- There are also a good number of reasons to suspect Fethullah Gulen to be behind these cases. All suspects are rivals of the Gulen movement, all the cases are revealed by journalists close to the movement, and that police and prosecutors leading the investigations are all close to Gulen.
- These cases intimidate everyone. People are afraid to be critical of the government and the Gulen movement. They fear tax fines, failure to get permits, or ending up in jail. ▶



## Of Parks and Men

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reporter to produce a short film whose lead actor was the lonely smartphone that heard our cries and carried them across the world.

Just as the AKP-BDP alliance, whose separatist proxies tried to appropriate the Gezi events for their own agenda and overwhelmed the public forums held in Turkey (it was reported that a group of 10-20 people in each forum accused other attendees of racism when they said “Turk”, of sexism when they said “man”, of ultranationalism and “coup”ism when they said “Silivri”); Turkish Americans too had their own protesters of the protests who attempted to brand the gatherings with their own mirroring version of this agenda. Some of these so-called democrats excluded the name of the founder of the Turkish Republic from their banners and ads, threatened to leave demonstrations when they heard Kemalist slogans, avoided protests supporting the wrongfully imprisoned intellectuals, scientists, journalists, politicians and

officers and overall chose to ignore the shared common demands of the protesters in Turkey and around the world. They in fact manufactured, intentionally or not, a whole new form of intellectual alchemy that read manageable anarchy and ultimately ideological nihilism from what was in fact purely diverse participation. The word “understanding” even gained a new sense of humor of its own, as this new brand of thinkers accused everyone else of “not understanding Gezi.”

While the protests continued, everyone, in Turkey and elsewhere alike, started to ponder what lies ahead. Concerned activists formed action groups to contribute to change in ways big and small. These groups raised money, organized exhibits and panels, collaborated to ensure fair elections.

A common demand that ricocheted from one Coast to the other and back was that Turkish Americans get an alternative voice to represent Turkey and the reality of Turkey; to Congress, to

local politicians, to the press and the American public. This “new” constituency demanding its own power was in fact always there, as were journalists and politicians dealing with Turkey that knew the truth, but chose to look the other way when events deviated from their agreed narrative.

What changed in the summer of 2013 was that this constituency was no longer willing to sit silently as an alternative reality was fabricated and maintained.

***It all started with a small park.***

And now, there are armies of people demanding change. Part of this change will be in the minds of those who thought “a devout Muslim with an Islamist past who had nonetheless evolved into a modern, pro-Western democrat” had “the potential to set a powerful example for the region”; part of it will involve mobilizing a greater constituency to enact this change and ultimately it will all lead to that one shared goal: Turkey has arrived at the stop, and needs to ride the streetcar back to light. ▶

## CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS | CONTINUED

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bronze statue of Atatürk in Washington, DC, became a reality on November 10, 2013. This statue became a symbol as the Atatürk Society of America’s gift to the Turkish American Community and to the Turkish nation for the 90th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. You can read more about the story of the statue on page.... Atatürk’s foreign policy was based on his famous epigram “Peace at Home, Peace in the World”. But in the 90th year of the republic, the (Islamic) Turkish government’s once successful “zero problems with neighbors” foreign policy based on their “Islamist Ideology”, turned into “lots of problems with neighbors” policy. Turkey’s

Middle East policy became a failure, and Amnesty International’s 2013 report “Gezi Park protests: Brutal denial of the right to peaceful assembly in Turkey”, further damaged Turkey’s image in the West. On the other hand, Turkish people’s extraordinary courage, creativity, and positive approach inspired the whole world during the unique 2013 demonstrations. They showed the whole world how to stand for their rights in peaceful solidarity. Their resistance gave hope for a better tomorrow.

***We are strong together, will stay strong forever....***

