

Below paper was presented during
PIONEER OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: ATATÜRK
Two-day International Conference at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J.
Organized and presented by:
The Light Millennium and College of Arts and Letters at Stevens Institute of Technology
<http://www.lightmillennium.org> - <http://www.stevens.edu>

ATATURK'S REFORMS EMPOWERED TURKISH WOMEN

AND

SET EXAMPLE FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD

A look at the remarkable transformation of a Nation



(UN's MDGs Set up for Turkey starting in the 1920s by Ataturk)

BY ATATURK SOCIETY OF AMERICA (ASA)

www.ataturksociety.org

April 20, 2013

Authors are:

Aynur Uluatam Sumer

Ilknur Boray – ASA Board Members

Presented at the Conference by:

Ceren Olga Sayan

4731 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC, 20016, www.ataturksociety.org

Pages

Table of Contents.....	
I. I. Introduction.....	3
II. II. Status of Turkish Women Before Ataturk's Reforms.....	4
III. III. Ataturk's Reforms : His Philosophy and Ideals.....	5
I. IV. The Change From a Theocratic and Religious to a Democratic and Secular State: The New Turkish Republic.....	5
V. Women's Rights and Equality.....	6
VI. Rise and "Relative" Decline in the Status of Turkish Women.....	7
VII. Ataturk's Reforms and Other Islamic Countries.....	8
VIII. Conclusion: Ataturk's Ideals and Reforms will Set Example to the Developing World in the 2000's and Beyond.....	10
SOURCES.....	12
APPENDIX: Check List of Ataturk's Reforms.....	13

ATATURK'S REFORMS EMPOWERED TURKISH WOMEN AND SET EXAMPLE FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD

I. I. Introduction

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938), the founder of modern Turkey, "was one of the greatest men of the 20th century. His leadership gave inspiration to the Turkish nation, farsightedness in the understanding of the modern world, and courage and power as a military leader. It is without a doubt that another example cannot be shown indicating greater successes than the birth of the new Turkish Republic, and ever since then Atatürk's and Turkey's broad and deep reforms undertaken, as well as the confidence of a nation in itself". These were the words of John F. Kennedy on the 25th Commemoration of Ataturk's death. Indeed, Ataturk was a great soldier, an incredible strategist and a brilliant statesman - one of the greatest leaders of our era.

Kemal Ataturk was a Lieutenant Colonel in 1915 and, at Gallipoli (the Dardanelles), he led the Ottoman forces to victory against the Allied forces. The next year, he was promoted to General at the age of 35. He then was awarded high ranking posts in the military chain of command until 1919. When the World War I ended, according to the Treaty of Sèvres signed, the Ottoman Empire was completely divided and occupied by the Allied forces. Kemal Ataturk defied the Ottomans' orders and built a small army to fight for Turkish independence. Between 1919 and 1922 Kemal Ataturk and his army, successfully fought off foreign forces and ended foreign occupation. This was the Turkish War of Independence (Kurtulus Savasi) to which the entire nation, men and women, contributed. The Treaty of Lausanne, which recognized the current boundaries of the modern Turkey, was signed on July 24, 1923, after seven-months of deliberations. And on October 29, 1923, the first Turkish (Grand) National Assembly announced the establishment of the new Turkish Republic, and elected Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as President.

As the first president of the new Republic, Kemal Ataturk led one of the world's most effective modernization campaigns ever. He was well ahead of his time; he prepared an extraordinary reform strategy to the finest detail, in order to create the new *modern and secular state* that exists today. **He said that "As an advanced and civilized nation, we will live in the midst of contemporary civilization... Those nations which insist on the maintenance of irrational traditions and irrational beliefs, do not progress"**. As part of his strategy, he launched a program of revolutionary social, political cultural, and judicial reforms. These reforms included the separation of religion and state affairs (***secularism***); introduction of modern, contemporary education; co-education for boys and girls; a new alphabet; equal rights for women, and the introduction of Western legal codes, dress, and calendar.

A great statesman, leader and reformer, Kemal Ataturk converted a backward, illiterate, Islamic society to a modern, secular (laic), educated and progressive State, governed by the rule of law. He pursued a foreign policy of neutrality, establishing friendly relations with Turkey's neighbors. Atatürk's Turkey became an example of hope

towards independence for many emerging nations around the world. He was admired as a pioneer of national liberation. 29 nations around the world followed his example and gained independence. And today, in 2013, Atatürk's principles and reforms still represent the most suitable social and political enlightenment movement which can contribute to the future of Muslim countries.

Atatürk's memory was honored by the United Nations and UNESCO in 1981, on the centennial of his birth.

II. **II. Status of Turkish Women Before Atatürk's Reforms**

The Ottoman Empire, the predecessor to the modern Turkish Republic, was a *theocratic* regime *with Islam* comprising a central part of the governmental affairs. From the early days of the Empire, Islam was the Empire's official "state" religion. The Sultan, head of the Empire, also served as the *caliphate*, the Islamic spiritual leader.

Before Atatürk's reforms, peasant women were working, helping their husbands in the farming fields; while the women who lived in the cities were not permitted to work. In some areas, women were allowed to earn a living, on condition that their work did not involve association with men. They could work in the family businesses, such as helping to run a bakery, or earn money by knitting, embroidering, or weaving carpets.

The first movement to gain social and educational rights for women started right after the Ottoman reformation movement of "Gulhane Hatt-i Humayunu" (*Tanzimat Fermani*) in 1839. The emancipation of women was advocated by a handful of intellectuals, including woman writers and poets. These movements expanded among the big cities of Anatolia but hardly reached the rural areas. As the women who lived in the big cities were exposed to more western ideas, the need for schools catering to girls became more apparent. The first girl's junior high schools were established, and the first women's periodical entitled "Terakki" (Progress) was published in 1869. The first Teacher's Training College for Women was opened in 1870. And in 1915, for the first time, the University of Istanbul admitted women in a separate department for the training of secondary school teachers. During the Balkan War (1912-1913) and the 1st World War (1914-1918) some Turkish women entered labor markets, municipal and administrative services replacing the men who went to the battle field. They also took jobs in hospitals doing voluntary work.

The Ottoman Empire existed for 623 years, from 1299 until 1922. The legal system of the Empire was based on **Islamic Sharia law** and **Islamic traditions**. There were *Sharia* courts in the Empire's legal system, with religious experts as judges, who interpreted and applied *Sharia* law. All new legislation the government passed had to conform to *Sharia* law. As such, *Sharia* was like a modern-day constitution, supreme to all of the laws in the Empire. In fact, the Ottoman Empire had no constitution until 1876, almost six hundred years after its formation. Even then, the Constitution of the Empire was not the supreme law of the land, since it declared that "sovereignty was given to the Emperor by God", reiterating that God's word was supreme.

Under the Islamic tradition and the *Sharia Law* women were not given equal rights and were expected to "hide" themselves. The underlying argument behind this Islamic tradition, imposed not by *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book), but by the male dominated clergy, was highly demeaning to both women and men. Under the Islamist Tradition and Sharia Law women were encouraged (if not forced!), to *wear veils* and cover themselves, to remain at home, to be "mothers and wives" only, instead of being equal partners in

modern life. They had minimal inheritance rights; whereas, men had ample rights in every area, including the right for *polygamy* (up to four wives), and the unilateral right to divorce their wives by simply uttering the word "divorce". Women were segregated from the mainstream society. They were mostly illiterate. These women could not, therefore, contribute to the economy or to the overall development of their countries.

II. **III. Ataturk's Reforms: His Philosophy and Ideals**

Ataturk was one of the most sweeping reformers of the modern history. His long-lived dream was to create *a secular republic* after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. He wanted, **"to elevate the Turkish people to the level of contemporary civilization"**. These were his own words. Although Ataturk wanted to form a secular regime, he was not an enemy of religion. Nor did he want to paint a "Western face" on Islam. As Dr. Andrew Mango, who wrote a biography on Ataturk, noted " Ataturk's aim was not imitation of, but participation in a universal civilization and culture".

This was the fundamental ideal upon which Ataturk based his sweeping reforms. He replaced religious Sharia law with the Swiss Civil Code; introduced modern, secular education; banned Islamic robes, fez and the veil; adopted western clothing for himself and required these for the others; stressed the importance of western ideas of free-market economies and human rights; and, strongly defended girls' education, gender equality and women's rights. The Turkish women were given right to vote in 1934, only 14 years after the USA (1920) and several decades earlier than Switzerland (1971).

II. **IV. The Change from a Theocratic and Religious to a Democratic and Secular State: The New Turkish Republic**

Secularism separates state affairs from religion. The secularist movement in Turkey appeared mainly as a protest at the tyranny of religious fanaticism. Ataturk declared Turkey a secular republic, even though Islam was the state religion. He said, "The religion of Islam will be elevated if it will cease to be a political instrument, as had been the case in the past." Ataturk and the Republic's leaders were very careful not to attack Islam as a faith. The principle of secularism was not meant to be a new notion or a new religion to replace Islam. The whole purpose was to open the gate for a reformist Islamic thought and a modern state.

Until the Turkish Republic was formally established (October 29, 1923), the Ottoman Empire was still in existence, with its heritage of theocratic and religious authority. It was considered one of the most fundamentalist regimes at that time. The formation of the first Turkish (Grand) National Assembly on April 23, 1920, was the first important step in changing the *theocratic regime* of the Ottoman Empire to *a democratic government* where sovereignty belonged to the people. The Turkish National Assembly which was formed when the country was still under the occupation of the Allied forces was based on "the principle of equality of all citizens irrespective of their religion", in strict contrast to the governmental system of the Ottoman Empire.

The first step that the National Assembly took in forming a democratic regime was the adoption of the first Constitution of the Republic of Turkey in 1921. The 1921 Constitution (Teskilat-i Esasiye Kanunu) was the first to declare, repeating Atatürk's own words, that **"sovereignty is fully and unconditionally vest[ed] in the people."** **"Sovereignty could not be transferred to any other authority, including the religious authority"**.

These statements represented a strong departure from the former theocratic regime, where sovereignty was vested in *Allah* (God) and delegated to the *Sultan* (Emperor). With this declaration, the Constitution established that the Republic of Turkey would be a *democracy*, where the will of the people, as opposed to God's word, would determine the laws and regulations

The National Assembly, with Ataturk's leadership, introduced a number of protective measures, the most important of which was *secularism*, to prevent Islamic fundamentalism from ever dominating the governmental system again. This involved the complete separation of government and religious affairs and the adoption of a strong interpretation of the principle of *laicite'* (*secularism*) in the new Constitution.

The separation of state and religion required the implementation of fundamental changes in a society that had been under the rule of *Sharia* law for hundreds of years. Everything from clothing to the alphabet, from education to women's rights, all of which had been intricately intertwined with religion under the Ottoman Empire's rule, had to be separated from religion. In doing so, Atatürk and his supporters aimed to return the Turkish nation to its roots, and raise the nation to the level of contemporary civilizations. By implementing a series of modernization reforms, Atatürk and his supporters distanced the nation from the fundamentalist notions of Islam, which had plagued the nation for centuries. The **Sharia courts were closed** and the **Sharia law was replaced** with a secular civil code modeled after the **Swiss Civil Code** and a penal code modeled after the **Italian Penal Code**. This was followed by a thorough secularization and modernization of the administration, **with particular focus on the education system.**

The next step in the secularization process was a law that the National assembly passed in 1922 separating the Sultanate position from that of the caliphate and **abolishing the Sultanate** which represented the Ottoman dynasty (Nov. 1922). This reform ensured that religious and executive authority, which both belonged to the Sultan during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, would no longer be in the hands of the same entity.

Following the official establishment of the Republic in 1923, the National Assembly also passed two *reform laws* on March 3, 1924, which proved to be crucial in the establishment of a *secular order*. The first, and perhaps one of the most important reforms in the secularization process, was the **abolishment of the caliphate position**. Thus, on March 3, 1924, the National Assembly abolished the position of the caliphate, which had been a part of the nation for four hundred years.

The National Assembly passed another important law on March 3, 1924, which closed religious schools (*madradas*) and brought all educational institutions under the strict control of the secular state.

II. **V. Women's Rights and Equality**

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, in his public speeches around the country, Ataturk emphasized the urgent need for legislation **which would bring equal rights to women.**

In a speech in 1923 he said " **There is a straighter and more secure path for us to follow: This is to have Turkish women as our partners in everything, to share our lives with them, and to value them as friends, helpers and colleagues in our scientific, spiritual, social and economic lives. Women are the pillars of the**

society and wellspring of the nation. They must bring up, and educate strong new generations but, they can only perform these tasks if they themselves are enlightened. Turkish women must be well educated, virtuous, dignified and capable of gaining respect in the society”.

A well-educated woman, capable of being equal partner in life, contributing to both family and the society with dignity and self-confidence, was Ataturk’s vision for Turkish women. With this vision, he introduced the following reforms:

O Emphasis on Girls’ modern contemporary education and **making primary education compulsory** (*MDGs 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education*);

O Making modern, contemporary schools **co-educational** so that girls could attend the same schools with boys (*MDGs 3.A: Eliminate Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary Education*);

O Abolishment of **carsaf** and **veil**, allowing women to have the freedom to wear modern clothing;

O Abolishment of the Sharia Law and replacement of it with the Swiss Civil Code which gave **equality to men and women**, and **equal rights to women** (1926);

Legal equality between the genders was instituted between 1926-1934 with changes in a multitude of rules and regulations.

Turkish women differed from their sisters in other countries: Rather than fighting directly for their human rights and equality, they received these rights “in a Silver Tray” from Ataturk!

The reforms in the Turkish civil code, especially those affecting women’s suffrage, were breakthroughs not only within the Islamic world, but also in the Western world.

During a meeting in the early days of the new republic, Ataturk proclaimed to women: “**Win for us the battle of education and you will do yet more for your country than we have been able to do. It is to you (Turkish women) that I appeal !”.**

The emphasis on women’s education and the introduction of a modern civil code, constituted the most important two steps in enhancing the social and economic development of Turkish women. The equal rights provided by the Swiss Code covered the areas of civil (as against religious) marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance. The polygamy (four wives allowed under the *Sharia Law*) was also abolished.

Voting rights were given in 1934. Eighteen female Members of the Parliament joined the Turkish National Assembly with the 1935 General Elections, at a time when women in a significant number of European countries had no voting rights.

Women’s rights reforms, provided by Ataturk, led the Turkish Republic giving to the **world** its “first female Supreme Court Judge” (*Tulay Tugcu*) and its “first female fighter pilot” (*Sabiha Gokcen*). In 1993, the first female Prime Minister of Turkey took office. As of 2001, more than 30 percent of the academicians in Turkish universities were women. Also, in 2001 the Presidents of both the Turkish Constitutional Court (*Anayasa Mahkemesi*) and the highest administrative court, Council of State (*Danistay*) were female.

II. VI. Rise and “Relative” Decline In the Status of Turkish Women

After the Ataturk’s reforms, there was in 1920s and 30s a vibrant and visible public enthusiasm for change and progress. *Halkevleri* (public education centers) opened and served millions of people with libraries, performing arts, concerts, publications, sport activities, etc. throughout the country. As a result, literacy in Turkey today reached 80 % and its economic potential is rated among the first twenty in the world. In the past 90 years Turkey produced internationally acclaimed female musicians, operatic performers, physicians, engineers, lawyers, business executives, and Olympic champions. The contribution of Turkish women to the contemporary civilization has been remarkable.

There was no debate in Turkey over religious issues such as converting all modern contemporary schools to *Imam* schools, favoring *Sharia Law* over the civil code or covering women’s hair with *head scarves*, until the race for votes in the multi-party system in Turkey became frantic, and a “moderately Islamic” government took office in 2002.

Since coming to power in 2002, the “moderately Islamist” Government has gradually but increasingly moved away from the Ataturk’s reforms and the Republic’s national identity. Numerous foreign observers as well as many Turks are convinced that the current government is trying to transform Turkey into an Iranian-style Islamic state. Despite its occasional official denials, the Government’s actions and media statements demonstrate its clear intentions. Under the current Government, religiosity in Turkey has increased markedly. The Administration began to hire top bureaucrats from an exclusive pool of religious candidates. The number of women covering themselves has increased significantly, female “work force” dropped from 36 % to 25 %, and the percentage of women in executive positions in government, declined sharply .

Also, since 2002 with the rise of conservatism under the current Government, “religious marriages” (*Imam nikahlari*) instead of legal marriages; violence against women and “honor killings” (*tore cinayetleri*), especially in the rural areas, have increased notably. With the religious marriages, men can violate the principle of *monogamy* and can have more than one wife. Another problem is the issue of “child brides”, rampant in the rural areas: Young girls are forced to marry before they are even 15 years old. According to the Population Research Institute at Hacettepe University, in Ankara, there are significant number of child brides in Turkey today, especially in the East and Southeast regions.

There are indications that the current Government is planning to change the Turkish Constitution unilaterally. The current Government’s **Islamist roots** and its **disrespect for secularism** are major threats to modernity and progress achieved to date. However, there is a strong belief in the Turkish society that the struggle to preserve Ataturk’s philosophy, ideals and reforms will continue, and the Republic’s national identity will remain intact.

II. VII. Ataturk’s Reforms and Other Islamic Countries

Ataturk’s *secular* modernization model, in a predominantly Islamic Turkey, was first copied by a non-Arab ruler, Reza Shah Pahlavi of **Iran**, who embarked on an ambitious reform program along Turkish lines. This program was later slowed down because of

mounting resistance from the conservative Shiite clergy and finally collapsed after his removal from power in 1941.

Also, **Egyptian** based "Nasserism" and **Syrian** and **Iraqi** "Baathism" initially mirrored early Turkish secular modernization and nationalism with its emphasis on national independence, national unity and foreign policy neutrality. With its *secular* model, Ataturk had replaced the *jihadi* approach of the Ottoman Empire, with peaceful neutrality in foreign policy with his famous quote "**Peace at home and peace in the world!**" These movements in Egypt, Syria and Iraq coincided with the early phases of the Cold War, prompting these Islamic Arab leaders to abandon these policies and embrace cooperation with the Soviet bloc.

On **women's rights, Iran** went backwards after the 1979 Islamic Revolution: Iranian women have been compelled to wear black chador or long robe and head scarves, since 1979. There are still serious women's rights restrictions in all Arab countries such as **Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates** and **Kuwait**. Several Islamic countries in recent years witnessed two simultaneous developments: One, the State making anti-women laws in the name of *Sharia Law*; two, powerful women's movements in these respective countries fighting against such laws.

A large number of women from Islamic countries including Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal and Sudan gathered in Nigeria in 2000, and took note of the dangerous consequences of such laws introduced in the name of *Sharia*. Other countries with sizeable Muslim populations like India, Kenya and South Africa also participated in the protest. They declared that such **religious laws** were violating human rights of women in Islamic countries.

In **Saudi Arabia**, women were not allowed to travel alone and drive cars until recently (2012). In the **United Arab Emirates**, women are prohibited from politics and becoming Cabinet Ministers. In **Kuwait**, women are still not permitted to vote and hold political offices. Although there was some softening of this rule in 2003, the battle for women's rights in Kuwait continues. All Arab women are expected to cover themselves and travel, only if accompanied by a man: Their husbands, sons or fathers.

The situation is even worse in other Islamic countries such as **Afghanistan, Pakistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Afghanistan**, women and girls have limited access to education, jobs and other means of gaining economic independence and freedom of movement. In **Pakistan**, a progressive law, the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO), was issued in 1961 to promote and protect human rights for women. This law has been under sustained attack by religious groups, and was seriously challenged in 2000 in the Federal Sharia Court. The Court upheld some sections of the MFLO, but came down heavily on certain important beneficial provisions for women like divorce, inheritance and custody.

Bangladesh is not governed by Sharia law. However, there has been a long standing practice of *Mullahs* issuing *Fatwas* (religious interpretations) on adultery, divorce and

custody etc. with the verdict invariably going against women. Women activists in Bangladesh are currently creating awareness among women especially in the rural areas about this violation of women's rights, and demanding that this practice be forbidden.

What is lacking in all these Islamic countries are the **main pillars** of Ataturk's reforms: **Secularism** and **democracy**.

VIII. Conclusion: Ataturk's Ideals and Reforms Empowered Turkish Women and These Will Continue to Set Example for the Developing World, in the 2000s and Beyond

A great leader, reformer and a brilliant statesman, Kemal Ataturk converted a theocratic, backward and illiterate Islamic society into a modern, secular, and progressive new nation: the Turkish Republic. Ataturk's primary goal of "elevating people to the level of contemporary civilization" was a dynamic, non-ending objective and process. He believed that civilization was universal in which all nations participated, and it was dynamic. Modern education and science, and intellect and rational thinking were the elements of contemporary civilization. These would set aside religious disagreements and conflicts, and bring peace and continuous progress to the world. Secularism, therefore, was essential to eliminate the influence of religion and dogma, on education and state affairs. Similarly, democracy, the rule of people, would assure individual freedoms and liberty, and people's own participation in the nation's governance.

In many ways, the Turkish Republic still is one of the few shining lights in the Middle East. One can only judge the success of a country's regime by looking at the progress it has made over the years and by comparing it to the other countries that are similarly situated. 90 years after Ataturk's reforms, Turkey stands out, among the fifty plus (50+) majority-Muslim countries, as a "success story" with its record in **development and progress**, and in **gender equality and women's rights**. Before Ataturk's reforms, the Turkish women, who now stand on an equal legal footing with men in the Turkish society, were kept away from schools, forced to wear veils, be servants to their husbands, and remain in the background of all social life under the Islamic tradition and Sharia law.

Ataturk's Political Philosophy, his Ideals and Reforms emphasizing:

1. Secularism;
2. Democracy, the rule of people, with Ataturk's own words: "Sovereignty belongs to people. It cannot be shared with any other authority, including religious authority";
3. Primary goal of "elevating people to the level of contemporary civilization" - which is dynamic, continuously moving upwards;
4. Providing modern, contemporary education and co-education for men and women;

5. 5. Gender equality in all aspects of modern life, by providing equal opportunities and equal rights for women;
6. 6. Maintaining "Peace at Home and Peace in the World" to preserve the world peace, cultural heritage and contribute to the enhancement of civilization...

... Are all consistent with the **UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – for 2015.**

These Atatürk ideals, principles and reforms, set up for Turkey starting in the 1920s, will continue to serve as **Guiding Principles** for Turkey as well as for other developing countries, especially for those with Islamic roots, during the 2000s and beyond.....thus **facilitating the achievement of the UN's 2015 MDGs and post-2015 Development Agenda.***

.....

Authors are **ASA Board Members:**

Aynur Uluatam Sumer. Principal Economist and Financial Specialist at the World Bank (IBRD). Former Head of the Policy Team for the World Bank's Global Partnerships. AFS and Fulbright Scholar.

Ilknur Boray. Former Adjunct professor of Fine Arts at Montgomery College. Producer of 'Turkish Hour TV' weekly.

Sources:

1. 1. Atatürk, The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey, Dr. Andrew Mango, The Overlook Press, 1999
1. 2. Atatürk'çülüğün Kökeni, Etkisi ve Güncelliği, Menter Şahinler, 1996
2. 3. Atatürk Bugün Olsaydı, Cemal Kutay, 2000
3. 4. Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkilap Tarihi, Prof. Dr. Refik Turan ve Komisyon üyeleri, Gazi Kitabevi, Ankara, 2003
1. 5. Kemal Atatürk, Encyclopedia of the Middle East, Middle East Web. Org
2. 6. Atatürk's Reforms, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013
3. 7. Is Secularism Possible in a Majority-Muslim Country? Adrien Katherine and Ozan O. Varol, 2006
1. 8. "The Forgotten Secular Turkish Model", H. Akın Ünver, Middle East Quarterly Winter 2013
1. 9. The Development of Secularism in Turkey, Niyazi Berkes, 1964
2. 10. Turkish Woman (A phenomenal metamorphosis), Ayse Cebesoy Sarıalp, 1997
3. 11. "Women's Movement in Islamic Countries", R.M. Pal, International Women's Rights PUCL Bulletin, December 2000

*Copyrights belong to the Ataturk Society of America (ASA).

CHECK LIST OF ATATURK'S REFORMS

1. Political Reforms

- Abolishment of the Sultanate (November 1, 1922) - Declaration of the Republic (October 29, 1923)
- Abolishment of Caliphate (March 3, 1924)

2. Social Reforms

- Women were given equal rights with men (1926-1934)
- Change of Headgear and Outfit (November 25, 1925)
- Closure of dervish lodges and shrines (November 30, 1925)
- Law on Family Names (Surnames) (June 21, 1934)
- Abolition of by-names, pious and royal titles (November 26, 1934)
- Adoption of the International calendar, time and measurements (1925-1931)

3. Educational and Cultural Reforms

- The unification of education (March 3, 1924)
- Adoption of the new Turkish alphabet (November 1, 1928)
- Establishment of the Turkish Language and Historical Societies (1931-1932)
- Regulation of university education (May 31, 1933).

4. Legal Reforms

- Introduction of the new penal law modeled after the Italian penal code (March 1, 1926)
- Introduction of the new civil code modeled after the Swiss civil code (October 4, 1926)
- Full political rights to women, to vote and be elected (December 5, 1934)

5. Economic Reforms

- Abolition of the capitulations with the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923)
- The Weekend Act. The changing of Workweek (1924)
- Establishment of model farms: Ataturk Orman Ciftligi (1925)
- The Obligation Law (1926)
- The Commercial Law (1926)
- Establishment of the Turkish State railways (March 31, 1927)
- The system of International Measures (1933)
- First Five Year development Plan (Planned Economy)(December 1, 1933)

In accordance with the new surname law, Turkish Grand National Assembly granted Mustafa Kemal with the surname Atatürk on November 24, 1934.