

### Mustafa Kemal

The Ottoman Empire was destroyed after WWI. In Turkey this brought a call for independence. The person in control of Turkey was the sultan; a harsh, corrupt ruler who did not care about the people of his country.

Mustafa Kemal wanted to free Turkey from oppressive rule. He said, "This nation has never lived without independence. We cannot and shall not live without it. Either independence or death." Mustafa Kemal emerged as the national liberator of the Turks when was in its last days. Already a legendary hero of many battles, he became in 1919 the leader of the Turkish emancipation. With a small and ill-equipped army, he repelled the invading enemy forces. He even had to contend with the Sultan's troops and local bands of rebels before he could gain complete control of the Turkish homeland. By September 1922, he had received one of history's most difficult triumphs.

Within a few weeks, the Turkish mainland was completely liberated, the armistice signed, and the rule of the Ottoman dynasty abolished. In 1923, the Republic was proclaimed and Mustafa Kemal was unanimously elected President of the Republic.

As the national struggle ended, the heroic leader proclaimed: " *Following the military triumph we accomplished by bayonets, weapons and blood, we shall strive to win victories in such fields as culture, scholarship, science, and economics,*" adding that " *the enduring benefits of victories depend only on the existence of an army of education.*"

The New Turkey's ideology was, and remains, "*Kemalism*", later known as "*Atatürkism*". Its basic principles stress the republican form of government, secular administration, and nationalism, a mixed economy, and most importantly modernization. Atatürkism introduced to Turkey the process of democracy. This was the first Muslim nation to become a Republic; Turkey has served since the early 1920s as a model for Muslim and non-Muslim nations in the emerging world.

Atatürk as Kemal became known means "Father of the Turks." He was given that name because of his love for his country and for liberating its people. When he finally gained control he began to reform Turkey. The most important goal was to Westernize, which means begin to make Turkey a modern industrial nation. He encouraged people to wear western clothes, this would help them westernize more rapidly. He also encouraged incorporating western ideas into government, the economy and civil rights.

He also made many cultural reforms. With faith in the importance of women in society, Atatürk launched reforms to give Turkish women equal rights and opportunities. The new Civil Code, adopted in 1927, abolished polygamy and recognized the equal rights of women in divorce, custody, and inheritance. The entire educational system from the grade school to the university became coeducational. He gave women the same opportunities as men, including full political rights. In the mid-1930s, 18 women, among them a villager, were elected to the national parliament. Later, Turkey had the world's first female Supreme Court justice. He died in 1938, but it still hailed as the Father of modern Turkey.

1. Who is Mustafa Kemal?
2. What does Atatürk mean?
3. What were some of his reforms?