1982), coinciding with two of three direct military coups (1960, 1971, and 1980). As of this writing, there are efforts to change it a third time. Yet Turkey celebrates its national day on October 29, the date in 1923 when the Republic was first declared. From that perspective, it has older institutions than the majority of European nations, which did not assume their current shape until the end of World War II or following the fall of the Soviet Empire.

Who was Atatürk and why is his picture everywhere?

It doesn't take long for the most casual visitor to conclude that Turkey ascribes to the "great man" view of history. Portraits of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) hang in schools, public offices, private businesses, and many homes. In a sense, Atatürk is a combination of George Washington Winston Churchill, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and he is celebrated as both soldier and statesman. At the end of World War I, when the Ottoman Empire was being carved into Allied spheres of influence and even Istanbul was under occupation, Atatürk led a movement of national resistance. The forces under his command reclaimed virtually all the territory that constitutes today's modern Republic.[4]

Atatürk was chosen president by the National Assembly, a post he held until his death in 1938. His second and in many ways more dramatic accomplishment was as a political leader who gave the new state a determinedly modern orientation. The Turkish Republic set out to impose its authority over the remnants of the old regime. The capital was moved from Istanbul to Ankara, located 220 miles (350 kilometers) to the west, away from the sway of imperial decadence and reactionary clerics, and out of the reach of European powers.

Atatürk lent his name to a series of reforms that he defined as nothing short of a series of revolutions. Making men wear a Western-style brimmed hat instead of the fez, or altering the calendar to make Saturday and Sunday the weekend, might not seem radical or subversive, but a cumulative weight of change led to genuine transformation in the most intimate moments of peoples' lives. Women were encouraged to enter more fully into public life—and in order to do so, they unveiled. In a benign sort of Orwellian exercise, even the words in people's heads began to change. The adoption of the Latin alphabet proved an even more powerful fulcrum for tilting the new Republic toward the West.

Common sense suggests Atatürk neither won wars single-handedly nor modernized the country on his own. Many of those who worked shoulder-to-shoulder with him saw their reputations overshadowed. There is little doubt that he ruled dictatorially. While there was no Stalinist-like reign of terror, there were purges and some opposition figures were hanged. In 1937 a rebellion in the Kurdish province of Dersim (now Tunceli) was brutally suppressed. Arguably, some of the Atatürkist "revolutions," even the emancipation of women, were codifications of transformations already in the air. World War I, in the Ottoman Empire no less than in the rest of Europe, tore at the old order and was an accelerator of social change. Arguably, too, Atatürk's fifteen years as autocratic head of state set an unwieldy precedent for the postwar period, when Turkey embarked on multiparty democracy. Modernization by fiat was bound to provoke a backlash after Atatürk's death. Such arguments are heard, but not often. One of his reforms was the adoption of Western-style surnames. His own means "Father of the Turks," and modern Turkey is happy to bask in that paternalism. Most

regard his person as inspirational. The nation still stands to silent attention on the morning of every November 10 to mark the moment of his death.

What is Atatürk's legacy?

Atatürk was essentially a pragmatist, and though his founding vision is enshrined as inviolable in the very first sentence of the constitution, it is not clear in every instance how his legacy applies today. That does not stop those in authority from speaking in his name.

The political party he founded, the Republican People's Party, was dedicated to six "arrows" or founding principles; some of these are self-explanatory or rhetorical (a commitment to a republican form of government, to Turkey as a nation-state, and to a belief that sovereignty derives from the people). Others have become less clear over time, such as whether Turkey is a secular state in the sense of relegating religion to the individual conscience or in the Jacobin sense of keeping it firmly under an official thumb. A fifth principle, enshrining the role of the state in the economy, made sense during the 1920s and 1930s when there was no investment to kick-start development and when memories were still fresh of the debt regime imposed by foreign bankers over Ottoman administration. "Etatism" is not, however, a philosophy that passes muster with the IMF, to whom Turkey appealed for help throughout the 1990s to control what had become a bloated state sector. Equally problematic is a belief in revolution. At the time of its formulation it meant endorsement of the unflinching character of Atatürk's reforms in the face of conservative opposition. Its antonym is "reactionary" or "backwardness" (*irtica* in Turkish), the mindset of those who

would undermine Republican virtues, usually in the name of religion. In time, however, loyalty to the Atatürk revolution became the marching song of an officer class and its bureaucratic allies, both of which were determined to protect the people from their own politicians.

Democracy was notably not one of the founding six arrows. Atatürk was a member of a revolutionary cadre. His "Address to Turkish youth" of 1927 warns against those who, although holding high office, may be "in error," even "traitors," or who were "in league with the country's invaders." This was clearly a reference to the post–World War I Allied occupation and the toppling of the monarchy. However, Atatürk's example as purveyor of permanent revolution was to legitimate military intervention in civilian rule.

Turks draw a distinction between respect for the historical person of Atatürk and *Kemalism,* a term often used pejoratively to describe those who would evoke his authority to support their own interests. Yet most schoolbooks closely identify Atatürk's life with that of the nation. He is often spoken of as being "immortal," living on eternally in his compatriots' hearts. His escape in 1919 from Allied-occupied Istanbul to the Black Sea town of Samsun to initiate a national resistance is celebrated with the Soviet-sounding "Youth and Sports Day." Though a Kemalist would blanch at the comparison, it has acquired the same sort of symbolic resonance as the Prophet Mohammed's flight to Medina.

If there is a cult of Atatürk, it is subject to fashion and its high priests are not always those one might expect. In 1950, twelve years after his death, the party Atatürk founded—the Republican People's Party—was voted out of office, and his political successor and military second-in-command, İsmet İnönü, was dispatched into opposition. The party that

replaced them, the Democrat Party, was itself ousted by the military, in effect for betraying the revolution. Yet while in power the Democrat Party was more Atatürkist than Atatürk himself in its attempt to seize İnönü's mantle of legitimacy. Law number 5816, which makes insulting Atatürk's memory an offense punishable by up to three years in jail, dates from 1951. The Justice and Development (AK) Party, which formed a government for the first time in 2002, has been accused by Turkish secularists of trampling on Atatürk's grave, yet it too has kept on the statute books laws under which access to YouTube was blocked for over two years, ostensibly because the site housed unflattering postings about the national hero.

It would be wrong to suggest there has been no revision of Mustafa Kemal's place in Turkish history. A recent biography of Latife, whom he married in 1923 and divorced two-and-a-half years later, was well received, as was a docudrama showing him to have a more human side. Even so, both works provoked nuisance prosecutions under Law 1518. The possibility of Atatürk suffering Lenin's fate and being knocked off the pedestal atop which Turkish officialdom has labored to place him seems remote. Different factions fight to appropriate his legacy; to discredit it would be the equivalent of saying Turkey should not exist.

Atatürk represents a common denominator about what modern Turkey is all about. First is the creation of a nation within secure boundaries, one that embraces modernity, that keeps religion largely confined to the private realm, and that takes its international responsibilities seriously. High in the pantheon of most-quoted sayings is "peace at home, peace abroad," which translates as "let's behave ourselves and not go around looking for trouble"; it is not a bad motto, if