

Happy 100th Anniversary of Our Republic

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Advanced education is one of the most essential parameters required to elevate the Republic of Turkey to a contemporary and civilized level. Indeed, societies that have drifted away from logic, inquiry, and analytical thinking have not given enough importance to science and art. The best expression that reflects this situation is undoubtedly: “For everything in the world, for materiality, spirituality, and success, the most genuine guide is knowledge, it is science. Seeking a guide other than knowledge and science is negligence, ignorance, and delusion.” The author of these words is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who is defined by UNESCO as the father of modern Turkey on the occasion of his 100th birth anniversary. Turkey’s relentless struggle in the first half of the 20th-century for both social and political development constitutes a particularly remarkable page in modern world history.

While previous modernization efforts were wasted due to wars and uprisings, the Republic established by the great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk offered the country a new opportunity, transforming it into a modern, secular republic. One of the key building blocks of achieving contemporary levels of science and technology is modern medical education (1). The “Kabakçı Rebellion”, which resulted in the dethroning of Sultan Selim III, disrupted clinical and surgical education, which had been limited by the “Tersane Tıbbiyesi Nizamnamesi” as part of the “Nizam-ı Cedid” movement, and it completely disappeared after the “Kasımpaşa Fire” in 1822. However, due to social and military needs, higher education institutions were established during Mahmud II’s reign, and the first modern medical school, known as “Tıphane-i Âmire” was founded in 1827. Despite the appearance of providing modern medical education in

subsequent years, note that the number of Turkish doctors who could practice medicine had decreased significantly because of the French language of instruction (2). With the help of Grand Vizier Fuat Pasha, the Society of Scientific Medicine Translation was founded with the aim of translating medical works in foreign languages into Turkish. The first civilian and completely Turkish-medium medical school was “Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Mülkiye”, opened in 1867. This school, which merged with the military medical school in Haydarpaşa in 1909, became the Faculty of Medicine under the name “İstanbul Dar’ül Fünunu Tıp Fakültesi” and maintained this structure until the University Reform of 1933. “Dar’ül Fünun”, meaning “House of Sciences” or “Gateway to Sciences,” was granted scientific, administrative, and financial autonomy by law after the proclamation of the republic. However, due to its persistence as a traditional madrasah and its failure to adapt to the new republican reforms and innovations, there was a need for reform. After the proclamation of the Republic, with the foresight gained from the great leader’s historical knowledge and genius, preparations were made for the “university reform” by sending talented students abroad between 1927 and 1930 (3). This reform, aimed at creating a university that would defend the principles of the Turkish revolution and enjoy the support of political power, was based on the examinations and report of Prof. Albert Malche, who worked in the field of pedagogy at the University of Gelf in Switzerland. The noteworthy points in this report are that the education at İstanbul Darülfünun was medieval in nature, lacked room for research, discussion, and critical thinking, and there was no scientific collaboration between faculties.



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Cite this article as: Demirkale İ. Happy 100th Anniversary of Our Republic. Eur Arch Med Res 2023;39(4):219-220

Received: 08.12.2023

Accepted: 13.12.2023



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Modern medical education is undoubtedly one of the most important building blocks on the road to modern Turkey. Thanks to this education, led by Atatürk, quality and modern healthcare services became easily accessible to every individual. As we proudly celebrate the 100th anniversary of our Republic, a real revolution has been achieved in terms of people's sovereignty, as well as in the fields of economy, culture, technology, and science. In these days when we celebrate the 100th year of our Republic, we should strive even harder for progress in science, education, and the arts. As scientists, we remember with respect

and gratitude the great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his comrades-in-arms, who paved the way for us on this path.

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