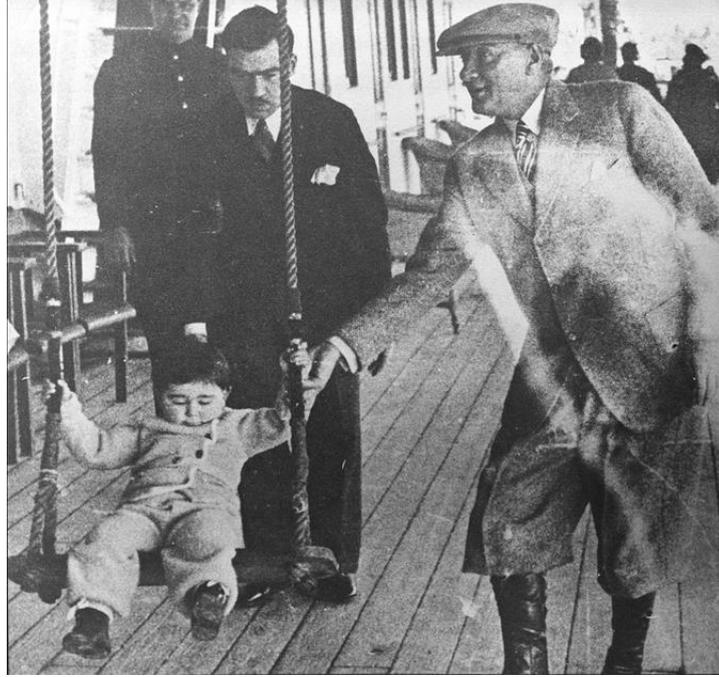


Ülkü Adatepe: Atatürk's Adopted Child and the Symbol of His Love for Children

by İdil Çakmut

Ülkü (Çukurluoğlu) Adatepe, was born on 27th November 1932 in Ankara, the fresh capital of the newly established Republic of Turkey. She was the daughter of Vasfiye Hanım, who was the adopted child of Zübeyde Hanım (Atatürk's mother) and had grown up near her, and Mehmet Tahsin Çukurluoğlu, a French tutor and a station master. The name "Ülkü" (meaning the ultimate goal, the aim wanted to be reached) was given to her under Atatürk's special request. After staying near her biological family for the first nine months of her life, she settled with Atatürk, becoming the youngest among his other adopted children: Sabiha, Ayşe Afet, Nebile, Rukiye, Abdürrahim, Mustafa, and Zehra. [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#)



Atatürk and Ülkü

She, unfortunately, was only able to stay near Atatürk until the age of 6, as Atatürk passed away in 1938. However, till then, she was the dream child of many Turks since she was the ultimate company of Atatürk during all of his trips. They traveled all around Turkey together and portrayed a beautiful picture for the other Turkish families. She was both a symbol of Atatürk's sincere and sympathetic side and a symbol of the young republic. After all of their trips, they left us a rich photo archive, which continues to create a smile on our faces each time we take a look at these precious photographs. [\(3\)](#)

Although Ülkü is considered to be a representative of Atatürk's never-ending love towards children, she was not the only child that felt the warmth of Atatürk's heart. Including her siblings, many children all across the country not only had the opportunity to meet Atatürk,

but also had a chance to talk to him, hug him and take pictures with him. As Atatürk never neglected to visit and spend time with other children when he paid a visit to a particular place, he left a great impact with many precious memories. In the end, he had come together with thousands of children, but he could not manage to meet, talk and hug every single child of Turkey. But with his foresight, he managed to give all of them a huge and unprecedented present: the April 23rd Children's Day.



April 23rd became the first national holiday of the Republic of Turkey, remarking the establishment of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1920. At first, the holiday was only "National Sovereignty Day". However, in 1927, with Atatürk's declaration, the day gained its more crucial role, becoming the "Children's Day". This day was not solely dedicated to Turkish children but also to all children of our world. That is why April 23rd is celebrated with great pride and joy all around Turkey, as well as all the guest nations, since the late 1920s.

On this special day, we once again commemorate Atatürk with endless love and respect, and want to remind everyone not to forget that the children of today are our future, thus pointing out how important it is for everyone to protect children at all costs and ensure a secure, peaceful, lovely environment to all of them. [\(4\)](#) [\(5\)](#)[\(6\)](#)

"The rising new generation, the future is yours! We founded the republic, you are the ones to rise and sustain it!"

- Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Happy April 23rd!