# ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS

CRYSTAL CITY, VIRGINIA

MAY 4 - 7, 1989

# What is ATAA?

The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) was founded in 1979 as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization with the goal of promoting a more positive image of Turks and Turkey in the United States through cultural and educational activities. Currently, ATAA unites the Turkish-American community and friends of Turks in 49 component associations across the United States and Canada to disseminate information on the history, culture, customs and traditions of the Turkish people.

The Assembly is governed by a Board of Directors and a Board of Trustees, who oversee the financial management of the organization. Ultimate authority rests with the Assembly of Delegates which convenes once a year at the annual convention.

Through community schools, children of Turkish-Americans are educated in the Turkish language, history and traditions. ATAA is actively promoting packets of information on Turkey to be included in school curricula. Through the local organizations teachers of social studies are receiving workshops on how to teach about Turkish culture. Textbook review committees are forming to remove passages in books which are inaccurate or distort history and include sections where little or nothing is written. The goal is to have our children develop a deep love and knowledge of their Turkish heritage, and have them attend schools where they learn about Turkey's accomplishments.

ATAA's major publication is a quarterly journal *ATA-USA* which brings members up-to-date on the activities of the Assembly, the associations, and presents items of historical, cultural and social interest to the community. At various times ATAA publishes special books, articles and reports on issues that are confronting Turkish-Americans in their daily activities. The newest publication of ATAA is the newspaper, "The Turkish Times," which is available not only to members but to the general public.

The National Media Watch Committee monitors the top 25 markets for accuracy in their coverage of Turkish and Turkish-American issues, and responds when necessary.

In 1989, ATAA has begun serving the business community both in Turkey and the United States by acting as a liaison and center for businessmen to develop contacts and obtain information.

Membership in ATAA is automatically conferred on an individual when he or she becomes a member of one of the component associations spread across the United States. The Assembly also accepts applications from individuals at-large.

The President-elect and Board of Directors are elected for two-year terms while members of the Board of Trustees are elected for four-year terms.

In its central office, ATAA has a full-time staff and employs other professionals on an "as-needed basis." It also utilizes the services of volunteer workers throughout the United States and Canada.

ATAA is ideally situated in Washington, D.C., where national leaders and media offices are located.

**ATAA**
2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 293-4670

# Component Associations of the Assembly

Turkish American Association of Phoenix, AZ
American Turkish Association of Southern California, CA
Hilal Turkish American Islamic Cultural Society, CA
Turkish American Association of California, CA
Turkish American Cultural Society, CO
American Turkish Association, Washington, D.C.
Florida Turkish American Association, FL
Florida Turkish American Association Women's Club, FL
Turkish American Cultural Association, GA
Turkish American Friendship Association, HI
Turkish American Cultural Alliance, IL
Turkish Mosque and Culture Center, IL
United Turkish Americans, IL
Turkish American Association, LA
Turkish American Cultural Society of New England, MA
Maryland American Turkish Association, MD
Turkish Children Foster Care, MD
Turkish American Cultural Association, MI
Turkish American Neuropsychiatric Association, Inc., MI
Minnesota Turkish American Association, MN
Turkish American Association, Greater Kansas City, MO
Turkish American Friendship Club, St. Louis, MO
Azerbaijan Society of America, NJ
Karaçay Turks Mosque and Culture, NJ
Türkocağı Association, NJ
American Association of Crimean Turks, NY
American Turkish Islamic and Cultural Center, NY
Anadolu Club, NY
Society of Turkish Architects, Engineers and Scientists, NY
Turkestanian American Association, NY
Turkish American Physicians Association, NY
Turkish Cultural Alliance, NY
Turkish Cypriot Aid Society, NY
Turkish Society of Rochester, NY
Turkish Women's League of America, NY
Turkish American Association of Central Ohio, OH
Pittsburgh Turkish American Association, PA
Turkish American Friendship Society of U.S., PA
American Turkish Association, Houston, TX
Turkish American Association of Dallas, TX
West Texas Turkish American Association, TX
Turkish American Cultural Association, Seattle, WA
Turkish American Association of Milwaukee, WI
Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada

# ATAA President's Message

May 5, 1989
Crystal Gateway Marriott
Crystal City, Virginia

Dear Friends,

Today, as we are gathered here in Crystal City, Virginia to launch the second decade for our Assembly, I would like to welcome all of our participants and thank you for coming to our special Tenth Anniversary celebration.

Our organization has now come of age, and with the passing of the ten-year milestone, has become a very professional, efficient vehicle uniting our Turkish-American community and friends of Turks in the pursuit of an America where Turks are known and respected for their achievements and their heritage.

An informed, united community is our greatest asset, and the very backbone of our organization. Recently, we inaugurated "The Turkish Times," to reach out into our community with the information about Turkish-Americans, friends of Turks, and Turkey that could not be found in any U.S. publication, nor was easily accessible from Turkey. With an informed community we can move ahead in educational, economic, and media sectors in all areas of this country with facts and figures that will dispel erroneous perceptions and acquaint more of the American public with the true history and heritage of Turks.

We have moved from an all volunteer organization to one that employs a professional staff. However, volunteerism will continue to be of critical importance to the success of our organization in the next decade. We are seeing a steady growth in membership and contributions, yet our programs are limited by our resources. Some of you have attended every convention at a personal sacrifice of time and money. Others are attending for the first time, yet there are Turkish-Americans who have not heard of ATAA let alone attend this convention. Herein lies the challenge that I would like to put before all of you.

As you go back to your local organizations, go into your community and bring other Turkish-Americans and friends of Turks into your association, not just as guests at a social function but as active volunteers. Look into ways you can strengthen your organization and thereby strengthen the Assembly. Increase our numbers, and we will inform and nurture them. I would like to see each and every one of you bring another person with you to the convention next year.

Let us carry the pride and happiness we have here in our Tenth Anniversary celebration back with us and let it direct our efforts in the next decade.

Sincerely,

Tunca Iskır
President

Kenan Evren
Cumhurbaşkanı

Ankara, 14th February 1989

Assembly of Turkish American Associations
Washington D.C.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the members of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations, as you gather to celebrate this milestone occasion, the tenth anniversary of ATAA.

Turkish-American relations are increasingly characterized, in recent years, by a high level of maturity, diversity and stability reflecting the strength of our shared goals of freedom, democracy and peace. As the world prepares to enter a new century, I believe that our cooperation will continue to develop in conformity with our common interests.

You serve as a most valuable human bond, bringing together Turkish and American nations and you have contributed to the growth of mutual understanding between the two countries. I am confident that you will continue to play an ever-increasing role in the further flourishing of Turkish-American friendship and your past achievements are only a prologue to what you can accomplish in the future.

I take this opportunity to convey to you my best wishes for continued success and happiness.

*Prime Minister*

*Ankara,* February 16,1989

Assembly of Turkish
American Associations
Washington D.C.

It is a great pleasure for me to address my fellow citizens and Turkish-Americans on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations. It is with special pride that I salute you on this happy occasion which is a landmark in the organization of the Turkish - American community.

Turkey and the United States have a large array of common interests, see eye to eye on the majority of world issues and mutually desire further improvement of their multi-faceted partnership. Their interest not only lie in strategic partnership, but also stem from mutual dedication to democracy, freedom, human rights and free enterprise. Through your efforts, there has been a growing appreciation of these shared values and interests at the grass roots level in the United States.

I am confident that you will continue to broaden your activities and thus contribute to the maintenance of a continued auspicious atmosphere in which Turkish-American friendship and cooperation will further flourish.

Turgut ÖZAL

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINISTER

13.2.1989

Assembly of Turkish
American Associations
Washington D.C.
U.S.A.

It is indeed a privilege for me to extend my greetings and best wishes to all Turkish-Americans on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations.

As you celebrate this auspicious event, I am delighted to commend the unceasing efforts of the Assembly in countering activities which seek to tarnish the Turkish heritage and harm Turkish-American relations. Your activities have contributed to the foundation of a more stable and diversified relationship between Turkey and the United States. You have also functioned as a much needed human and cultural link, strengthening the fabric of mutual trust and understanding.

I would like to extend to each one of you my profound thanks and appreciation for your efforts and call on you to continue and expand them in the future.

Mesut Yılmaz

A.Mesut YILMAZ

TURKISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dear Turkish Americans and Members of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations,

On this auspicious occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations, it is indeed an honor and privilege for me to recognize your outstanding success in generating a wide spectrum of activities in a mere decade.

As you commemorate this landmark event, it is with great pride that I applaud each and every one of you for your noteworthy contributions to American society, placing Turkish Americans in the vanguard of responsible civic activity.

Since its creation ten years ago, ATAA has provided an effective and much needed function in American society, acting as a catalyst in countering the intrusive elements which seek to erode the Turkish American alliance. You have vanquished over the persistent tendency to identify Turks with the decrepit myths of the past and brightened the Turkish image in the United States.

Through the mobilization of the ever expanding reservoir of Turkish American potential, ATAA has overcome formidable challenges. Today, ATAA is secure in its role as the guardian of strong Turkish American ties.

As ATAA concludes its first decade of activity in a spirit of vitality and harmony, it is an appropriate time to evaluate its past accomplishments as well as to identify and articulate its plans for the future. What is the most efficacious role for ATAA as you chart your course for the next decade? How will ATAA adapt itself to the requirements of the 21st century? What issues will be of greatest relevance to ensuring the strength and resilience of the Turkish American alliance?

I salute you and your outstanding record of achievement over the last ten years. My profound gratitude goes out to all of you, from the East Coast to the West Coast, and I wish you every success for your annual meeting and for the future.

Sincerely,

Şükrü Elekdağ

Dr. Şükrü Elekdağ
Ambassador of the
Turkish Republic

## Board of Directors of ATAA

*Executive Committee*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tunca Iskır | President |
| Bonnie Joy Kaslan | First Vice President |
| Leylâ Kazaz | Secretary General |
| Tolga Çubukçu | Treasurer |
| Dr. Kemal Göknar | Past President |

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| Dr. Ahmet Bayar | V.P. Midcentral Region |
| Birtan Aka Collier | V.P. Northcentral Region |
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| Dr. Engin Holmstrom | V.P. Capital Region |
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| Tarık Pekin | V.P. Northeast Region |

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Dr. Ülkü Ülgür, Chairman

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| Dr. Tamer Açıkalın | Media Watch and Response Committee |
| Şadi Dinlenç and Yalçin Oral | Immigration Committee |
| Oğuz Babürğlu and Koray Arikan | Business Network Council |

# Endowment Fund Contributors of Distinction

To insure the economic well-being of the Assembly in the years ahead an endowment fund was established for the Assembly in 1986. Ambassador Club members have contributed over $5,000.00 to the fund. For a contribution of between $2,500.00 and $4,999.00, a person becomes a member of the President's Club. Those in the Benefactor's Club have contributed from $1,000.00 to $2,499.00.

## Ambassador's Club

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Remzi Ağan | '86 | Victor Kent, M.D. | '86 |
| Tamer Açıkalın | '87 | Asım Kocabıyık | '88 |
| Yıldırım Aktürk | '88 | Ali Koçman | '88 |
| Sedat Aloğlu | '88 | Fuat Miras | '88 |
| Cem Boyner | '88 | Albert Nahum, M.D. | '86 |
| Ali Coşkun | '88 | İbrahim Günyüzü | '86 |
| Tarhan Danışman | '86 | Mustafa Önal, M.D. | '86 |
| Lenny Epperson | '86 | Gültekin Ovacik, M.D. | '86 |
| Selim Edez | '88 | Yusuf Özer | '88 |
| Ender Erenoğlu | '86 | Nuri Sabuncu | '86 |
| Ahmet Ertegün | '86 | Osman Soyer | '86 |
| Tunca Iskır | '86 | Halis Toprak | '88 |
| Robert Gray | '86 | Nevzat Türkmen, M.D. | '86 |
| Naşide Gwin | '88 | Erol Üçer, M.D. | '86 |
| Ahmed Kafadar | '86 | Aytekin Ülgen, M.D. | '86 |
| Jak Kamhi | '88 | Ülkü Ülgür, M.D. | '86 |
| Alp Karahasan, M.D., Ph.D. | '86 | | |

## President's Club

| | |
|---|---|
| Süleyman Sarpel, M.D. | '88 |

## Benefactor's Club

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| M.S. Akaydın, M.D. | '86 | Ali Ismailoğlu, M.D. | '86 |
| Sümer Aygen, M.D. | '86 | Altan Kodanaz, M.D. | '86 |
| Vedii Ayyıldız, M.D. | '87 | Zülfiye Köymen | '86 |
| Ömer Başer | '87 | Ali Manizade | '86 |
| Yılmaz Durudoğan, M.D. | '86 | Mike Saraç | '86 |
| Ender Erenoğlu, M.D. | '87 | Suphi Sürmeli, M.D. | '86 |
| Namık Ersöz, M.D. | '86 | Yusuf Süveyke | '86 |
| Yılmaz Eryasa, M.D. | '86 | Orhan Tanrıkulu | '87 |
| Mücel Fuad (Team Machine) | '87 | Mahir Tekin, M.D. | '86 |
| Selçuk Gencer | '86 | Şerafettin Tombuloğlu, M.D. | '86 |
| M.F. Göklen, M.D. | '86 | Cevdet Turan, M.D. | '86 |
| Naşide Gwin | '87 | Orhan Yirmibesh | '86 |

## Turkish-American of the Year Award Recipients

This exclusive award is presented each year to a person of Turkish descent who has come to this country or was born here and has achieved an outstanding degree of success in his field to the point that it has brought honor to our Turkish-American community. Also, this person has to have made an outstanding contribution toward the pursuit of our Assembly goals. They are a role model for all of us to follow.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AHMED KAFADAR | 1984 | EROL ONARAN | 1987 |
| AYHAN HAKİMOĞLU | 1985 | NURİ SABUNCU | 1988 |

## Assembly's Gold Medal of Honor Award

Each year the Assembly has honored those individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to ATAA and to the Turkish American community. However a special award was created to honor an individual whose accomplishments had a nationwide impact on all Americans.

DR. ESIN ATIL 1987

## The Turk of the Year Award

ATAA gives this special award to a person of Turkish descent who has gained worldwide recognition and esteem for his or her achievements.

NAIM ŞÜLEYMANOĞLU 1989

## Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Each year the Assembly bestows its Distinguished Service Award on the person or persons who have given extraordinary service to the Turkish-American community.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| RALPH ROPP | 1984 | BONNIE JOY KASLAN & BEKIR ONURSAL | 1987 |
| TARHAN DANIŞMAN | 1985 | ALP KARAHASAN, M.D., PH.D. | 1988 |
| LEON PICON | 1986 | | |

# TENTH ANNIVERSARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

## Assembly's Gold Medal of Honor Award

The Assembly's award for those individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to ATAA and to the Turkish-American community which have had a nationwide impact.

H. E. SÜKRÜ ELEKDAĞ
AYLA ELEKDAĞ

DR. ÜLKÜ ÜLGÜR

## Assembly's Silver Medal of Honor Award

The Assembly's award for those individuals have made extraordinary contributions to ATAA and the Turkish-American community.

MURAT SUNGAR

## Tenth Anniversary Celebration Plaques

**FOUNDING ASSOCIATION PLAQUE**

American Turkish Association of Washington, D.C.
Maryland American Turkish Association

**CHARTER ASSOCIATION PLAQUE**

American Association of Crimean Turks, Inc.
American Turkish Islamic and Cultural Center, Inc.
Anadolu Club
Azerbaijan Society of America
Karacay Turks Mosque and Cultural Association
Minnesota Turkish American Association
New England Turkish-American Cultural Society, Inc.
Turkish American Association of Greater Kansas City
Turkish American Cultural Alliance
Turkish American Cultural Association of Michigan
Turkish American Friendship Society of the United States
Turkish American Neuropsychiatric Association
Turkish Cultural Alliance
Turkish Cypriot Aid Society
Turkish Women's League of America
United Turkish Americans

**MEMBER ASSOCIATION PLAQUE**

American Turkish Association of Houston
American Turkish Association of Southern California
Florida Turkish American Association
Florida Turkish American Association Women's Club
Hilal Turkish American Islamic Cultural Society
Pittsburg Turkish American Association
Society of Turkish Architects, Engineers and Scientists in America
Turkestanian American Association
Turkish American Association of California
Turkish American Association of Central Ohio
Turkish American Association of Dallas
Turkish American Association of Louisiana
Turkish American Association of Milwaukee, Inc.
Turkish American Association of Phoenix
Turkish American Cultural Association of Georgia
Turkish American Cultural Association of Seattle
Turkish American Cultural Society of Colorado
Turkish American Friendship Association of Hawaii
Turkish American Friendship Club of St. Louis
Turkish American Physicians Association, Inc.
Turkish Children's Foster Care
Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada
Turkish Mosque and Culture Center
Turkish Society of Rochester
Turkocagi Association
West Texas Turkish American Association

**NEW ASSOCIATIONS**

American Turkish Association of North Carolina
Balkan Turks of America
Turkish American Cultural Association of Alabama
Turkish American Cultural Association of Florida, Inc.
Turkish American Cultural Society of Northeastern Ohio

## Tenth Anniversary Plaque to Organizations

The Assembly wishes to recognize organizations whose exemplary work has greatly improved U.S.-Turkish relations in the past ten years.

American Friends of Turkey
The Federation of Turkish American Societies, Inc.
The Institute of Turkish Studies

## Meritorious Service Certificate

This certificate is given to those individuals who have given meritorious service to ATAA in the past ten years.

REMZİ AĞAN
DR. HASAN AKDEMİR
DİNÇER AKYALI
HASAN ALİ
ADİL ARABOĞLU
TAŞKIN ATIL
AYŞEN BAŞARAN
SUAT BAŞARAN
DR. BÜLENT BAŞOL
TURHAN BEYGO
EKREM BULGUR
GÜNDOĞAN ÇAĞAL
YURDAKUL GÖKER
DR. KEMAL GÖKNAR
DR. ENGİN İNEL HOLMSTROM
LAUREL HOUSE
DR. ALP KARAHASAN
ATTILA KASLAN
BONNIE JOY KASLAN
HARUN KAZAZ
LEYLA KAZAZ
DR. ALTAN KODANAZ
DR. AYTEKİN KODANAZ
SEBAT KÜÇÜKÇETIN
DR. TUNCER KUZAY
BARBARA LARSON
DR. ALBERT NAHUM
SENGUN NURİ
DR. MUSTAFA ÖNAL
VERA ORAL
YALCIN ORAL
DR. GÜLTEKİN OVACIK
ANSELINE ÖZBERKMEN
DIAN PEKİN
DR. LEON PICON
ARMAĞAN SANVER
ALİ FERDA SEVİN
YAVUZ SOMEN
ÖZCAN TUNCEL
DR. EROL ÜÇER
JOAN WEEKS
HIFSIYE ZİNCİR

## Assembly's Bronze Medal of Honor Award

The Tenth Anniversary Award given by the Assembly to the scholars who have contributed substantial research to Turkish history and the Turkish American cultural heritage.

DR. ESİN ATIL
DR. AVIGDOR LEVY
DR. BERNARD LEWIS
DR. HEATH LOWRY
DR. JUSTIN McCARTHY
DR. PIERRE OBERLING
DR. STADFORD SHAW

## Tenth Anniversary Plaque to Businessmen

The Assembly wishes to recognize the magnanimous contributions by business leaders during the past decade.

LENNY EPPERSON
AHMET ERTEGÜN
AYHAN HAKİMOĞLU
GERALDINE HAKİMOĞLU
TUNCA ISKIR
AHMED KAFADAR
EROL ONARAN
NURİ SABUNCU
JEFFERY STEINER

# History of ATAA

On August 19, 1977, the President of the Maryland American Turkish Association (MATA), Dr. Ülkü Ülgür, in his letter to the membership states, ". . . It is no news that Turkey and Turkish-Americans in this country are beset by many problems and recently have been subjected to unfair treatment and discrimination by some other ethnic groups and their political representatives. Your new Board of Directors believe that we clearly need to intensify our efforts for better and more effective representation of our views, especially in the light of growing criticism and hostility from many quarters." Another part of the same letter states that, ". . . we have reached a tentative agreement with the new president of ATA D.C., Mr Yavuz Somen, to collaborate and work together in these crucial and vital areas."

Similar letters and notes in the American Turkish Association of Washington, D.C. (ATA D.C.) files reflect the concern of this community to the problems faced by Turkish-Americans in this country.

On June 29, 1978, MATA President, Dr. Ülgür, in his letter to ATA D.C. President Yavuz Somen states, "In our recent Board of Directors' meeting we have discussed the possibility of bringing our associations together by affiliating them in some official form. We, as members of the Board of Directors of the Maryland American Turkish Association, believe that such an affiliation will be a giant step forward for better representation of the Turkish community in the Mid-Eastern United States. Therefore, we have unanimously elected three of our distinguished members to form an ad-hoc committee and have instructed them to work jointly with a similar committee so that a solution can be found to realize the goal of uniting these two respected organizations."

The ad hoc committees of ATA D.C. and MATA met on November 5, 1978. ATA D.C. was represented by President Yavuz Somen, Suat Basaran, and Loren Myers while MATA was represented by President Ülkü Ülgür, Cenap Kiratli, and the late Alp Karahasan.

By 1979, there was a crying need to address the attacks, the distortions of history, and the discrimination the Turkish-American community was facing every day in their jobs, at schools their children attended, and in their daily lives. Isolated local, Turkish American organizations were unable to cope with the massive work that needed to be done nationwide.

Upon his arrival in Washington to take up the post of Ambassador from Turkey, Dr. Şükrü Elekdağ was met by members of both ATA D.C. and MATA at a special reception held at the Navy Officers Club in Bethesda, Md. on September 23, 1979. He inspired both communities with his dynamic approach to U.S.-Turkish relations. Now the two communities were no longer talking merely about regional cooperation. Visions of a national umbrella organization were forming.

In the aftermath of threats of yet another arms embargo passing through Congress with virtually no Turkish-American voice raised in opposition, a series of meetings were held in the Washington, D.C. area. A steering committee was formed in November 1979, headed by ATA D.C. President Yavuz Somen with the late Yurdakul Göker and Taskin Atil and by MATA President, the late Dr. Alp Karahasan, with Dr. Ülkü Ülgü, Cenap Kiratli and Sengun Nuri. The advisor associates were Erol Gurun, Aydin Caginalp, Hasan Akdemir, Tuncer Kuzay, and Ozcan Tuncel. Out of their meetings came an agreement to establish the nationwide **Assembly of Turkish American Associations.**

Washington, D.C. was chosen to be the headquarters of the new organization to utilize the vast opportunities for promoting U.S. Turkish relations among policy makers. A Secretariat for the Assembly was established to coordinate the activities, publish a nationwide bulletin and generally be the central source of information on Turks and Turkey. For this purpose office space was provided by Adil Araboğlu, a Washington business leader, and the Assembly was in business.

Clearly the tasks that lay ahead were enormous and the resources limited. The first ball was a fundraising activity sponsored by ATA D.C. and MATA, and held on December 29, 1979 at the Turkish Embassy. One hundred and forty-six people managed to raise $17,470 for the Assembly. The first *ATA-USA* was published in February, 1980 and news about Turks and Turkey premiered nationwide.

With coordinating committee members Yavuz Somen, Ekrem Bulgur, and Yurdakl Göker from ATA, and the late Alp Karahasan, Ülkü Ülgür, and Cenap Kirath from MATA, plans for convening the general assembly on May 17-18, 1980 in the nation's capital pressed forward with great speed. More than 120 people representing 24 organizations and 5 student associations gathered at the Embassy Row Hotel during this two-day conference and brought plans on the drawing board into reality. The delegates elected the Coordinating Committee members to a special Steering Committee. Their task was to draw up a constitution and bylaws for the Assembly to be presented to the delegates at the next annual convention.

Founded to deal with issues confronting the community, the Assembly was not to be given time to grow and mature slowly, but rather would have to come on as an adult and face Armenians crying "genocide," and trying to include their grievances in a national museum dedicated to the memory of six million Jews murdered by the Nazis duirng World War II. The "Midnight Express" image of Turks and Turkey was constantly being shown with even President Carter giving it free advertising. Now there was an organization that was writing letters with the weight of the whole Turkish-American community behind it. Publications were giving the members information about the issues to enable them to set the record straight when they encountered distortions and attacks on their Turkish heritage.

The second general meeting of the Assembly was held on November 15th and 16th, 1980 at which time the bylaws were adopted, officers were elected and Articles of Incorporation were filed. During this time 18 Turkish American Associations ratified the bylaws and became official members of the Assembly. Dr. Ülkü Ülgür became the first President assisted by Yavuz Somen, Vice President; Ali Ferda Sevin, Secretary; and Sengun Nuri, Treasurer.

A gala New Year's Eve Fundraising Ball held at the Turkish Embassy got the Assembly off to a very good start in 1981, raising over $24;000. Now the Turkish voice was being heard in new areas of the United States with letters protesting unjust or one-sided views of Turkey, letters congratulating elected officials and information in response to inquiries about Turkey sent out regularly.

To permit wider participation in the general meeting, it was decided to hold the third convention April 11-12, 1981 in New York. At the opening session, held at the Sheraton Centre

Hotel, Armenians demonstrated and marched outside on 7th Avenue. However, delegates and members attentively listened to presentations by Representative Stephen Solarz (D-NY) and Representative Fred Richmond (D-NY) as well as prominent Turkish diplomats. Ambassador Elekdağ emphasized the fraternity of Turkish-Americans in his speech.

May 19, 1981, marked the launching of year-long celebrations for the centennial of Atatürk's birth. Several American cities, including New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Pittsburgh issued proclamations honoring Atatürk, thus raising public awareness of the immense contributions of our great leader.

This year also saw more Turks taking part in T.V. debates, sending letters to their congressmen and initiating letter campaigns on issues that concern them. One of the main issues was the Armenian attempts to have their exhibit included in the Holocaust Museum, which was intended to commemorate the Nazi destruction of over six million Jews. Dr. Leon Picon, a long-time friend and hard working volunteer for ATAA was at the forefront of a campaign to present the highly positive picture of Turkish-Jewish relations and explain the very erroneous and detrimental nature of the Armenian attempts to include their materials in the museum.

By the end of 1981, 27 regional and national Turkish-American associations and 6 student organizations had joined the Assembly. The collaboration and increased communication among the component associations of the Assembly had markedly improved the representation of the Turkish-American community in the U.S.

1982 started off on a very sad note when Armenian terrorism took a deadly turn on January 28th with the assassination of the Turkish Consul General of Los Angeles, Kemal Arikan. Our community knew now that the survival of our ideals, our liberties and even our lives were in jeopardy. ATAA published an ad in the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times to publicize the vicious and vindictive nature of Armenian terrorists to a largely unaware American public.

Dr. Ülgür made a trip to Turkey to meet with government officials and members of the business community, especially those associated with TÜSIAD. He was received by the Prime Minister and other officials concerned with U.S. Turkish relations and was encouraged by their pleasure at ATAA efforts to promote better relations between the two countries.

All aboard the Turkish Express joined their compatriots in Chicago for the fourth annual meeting, April 17-18, 1982. Originating in Washington, D.C. and joined by contingents from New York and other cities along the way, the Turkish Express train brought conventioneers to a two-day, highly profitable annual meeting. Speakers featured were Senator Charles Mathias, Jr. from Maryland and Congressman Paul Findley from Illinois.

A return trip to Turkey, August 20-30, 1982, was in the offing for a seven-person delegation at the request of the Turkish Head of State, Kenan Evren. Armenian terrorism and the image of Turks in America formed the primary focus of the discussions.

As 1982 came to an end the Assembly now numbered 34 member associations. Public education and public affairs, civil rights and legal representation of Turkish-Americans were the most important activities undertaken in the past year.

The process of building a national Turkish-American unity was carried to a new plane with the construction of a national agenda for the Assembly at the Fifth Annual Convention held in Atlanta, Georgia from April 15-17, 1983, at the world famous Westin Peachtree Plaza. Congressman Larry McDonald of Georgia gave a very well documented presentation on international terrorism. Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island spoke on the status of the proposed security assistance for Turkey in Congress. Four new associations joined the Assembly for a total of 38 member organizations. On April 16th as part of the Assembly's Fifth Annual Meeting, a charter for the Council on Education was accepted and this important division of ATAA was inaugurated under the chairmanship of Armağan Sanver. Its agenda was far reaching in scope, performing services for the community on a national level. It would synthesize the major issues confronting the community and coordinate the efforts to resolve the problems brought to it by the associations.

Although the Assembly was still a young organization its voice was being heard. On May 27, 1983 T.V. Channel 26 (WETA, Virginia) aired a movie titled, "The Forgotten Genocide." The Assembly asked for and received equal time. On June 24, 1983, the First Vice President, Taşkin Atil, and Dr. Justin McCarthy debated two members of the Armenian community and successfully presented the Turkish point of view.

To protest the inclusion of Armenian materials in the Holocaust Museum the Assembly submitted articles to major Jewish newspapers, effectively communicating the facts behind this effort to more than a million Jewish-Americans.

1983 also marked the inception of a major fundraising drive to build a Turkish-American Cultural Center in the Nation's Capital. In the initial phase over $20,000 was collected for this project. Additionally to raise funds, Mrs. Ayla Elekdağ opened the doors of the Embassy and held a very successful Turkish bazaar in November with all profits going to the Assembly, as she has done every year since the beginning of ATAA. In December, Ambassador and Mrs. Elekdağ hosted a Turkish Republic Sixtieth Anniversary Fund Raising Ball with all profits going to the Assembly's educational and cultrual programs. ATAA spearheaded a fundraising drive for the victims of a devastating earthquake in Eastern Turkey that claimed over 1,100 lives as 1983 came to an end and a check for $41,000 was presented to Mrs. Elekdağ at this ball to be forwarded to the survivors in Turkey. Through the years she has been a tireless and highly successful fundraiser for the Assembly.

Cyprus came to the forefront of the issues confronting the Assembly as 1984 began. In Congress, a bill was introduced to ban aid to Turkey until it withdrew its recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

On May 17-20, 1984 the Assembly held its Sixth Convention at the Washington Hilton in the Nation's Capital. Dr. Kemal Göknar became ATAA's second President. A White House conference was a highlight of the convention, organized in response to a President Reagan meeting with Greek and Armenian community members. A fashion show by Zuhal Yorgancioğlu gave attendees a great deal of pride in their Turkish cultural heritage.

On September 10, 1984, the House passed Resolution 247 designating April 24th as an Armenian National Day of Remembrance and not a single representative raised a voice against it. The time had come to have the Turkish-American voice effectively heard in Congress. Under its first chairman Taşkin Atil the Political Action Committee of the Assembly was formed. Now the members of the community could make contributions to the congressional campaigns and put the weight of all Turkish-Americans behind them. Today, PAC-ATAA is a separate organization headed by its President, Asil Gezen.

To bring the Assembly closer to the membership, a series of regional meetings were held in 1984. In New York the focus was on the lack of Turkish history in the American school system. On October 6-7, 1984 members gathered in Chicago for the Midwest Regional meeting and discussed "Youth and Grass Roots Activities of Turkish-American Associations."

Again, Armenian terrorists struck with deadly aim—this

time at the Turkish Embassy in Canada where a guard was killed and the Ambassador injured. Immediately following this attack on April 1, 1985 Ali Ferda Sevin, ATAA's First Vice President at the time, appeared on the MacNeil Lehrer News Hour to debate and analyze the attack with an Armenian spokesman. Sevin, with clear, precise, very factual statements, was able to expose viewers to the treacherous and far reaching consequences of Armenian terrorism.

Prime Minister Özal visited the United States in April and ATAA hosted an elegant dinner in his honor at the Washington Hilton. Also in attendance were over 60 members of the Grand National Assembly and many prominent Turkish businessmen.

New Orleans, famed for its hospitality, left no one disappointed at the Seventh Convention, held May 2-5, 1985 at the Sheraton. The issues discussed focused on the American academic response to Armenian claims and on youth concerns. Creole cuisine, jazz and Turkish folk dancing made the annual banquet a huge success.

The issue of greatest concern in 1985 was the Armenian resolution before Congress. One of the most beneficial and crucial documents that was presented to congressmen was the declaration by 69 eminent American Scholars of Ottoman and Turkish history that refuted the basic tenants of the resolution. The Assembly published this declaration in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* to draw public attention to this insidious resolution. 1985 ended on an upbeat note with the defeat of this resolution on December 12th.

In February, 1986 a very special Strategic Planning Group comprising members of the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors and Committee Charipersons assembled and issued a communique detailing areas where the Assembly needed to grow and where the organizational strucutre needed fine tuning.

In the Spring of 1986, ATAA issued a Special Report on the suffering of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Members were informed on actions to take with human rights organizations to focus world public opinion on the Bulgarian Government gun-point assimilation campaign. At the Eight Convention, held in Washington, D.C., a resolution was passed by the delegates condemning the human rights abuses of the Bulgarian Government and which set in motion a protest campaign.

Another major issue presented at the Convention was the current status of U.S. Turkish relations. Ajda Pekkan was the superstar entertainment attraction at the annual banquet, much to the delight of everyone. During the delegates meeting the reins of leadership passed to Tarhan Danişman who became the third President of the Assembly, and the Assembly gained three new associations for a total of 41 under the umbrella.

In September an international bazaar for trade and business was held at New Hampshire College. College educators and local business leaders were amazed at the stumbling blocks Turkey's foes put into U.S. Turkish relations. In Newark, NJ, members of the ATAA Board of Directors met with the leadership of the New York Federation to issue a unity communique.

A major trip to Turkey by the Assembly leadership provided high visibility of ATAA's activities in the United States to the Turkish public. Both President Evren and Prime Minister Ozal received the delegation, as well as ministers and parliamentarians.

During November a North Central Regional Conference was held in Michigan bringing the Assembly in touch with Turkish-American psychiatrists from around the country. Also in November, a community forum was held in New York to point out how vital community involvement is in solving the problems faced by Turkish-Americans.

ATAA visited Florida in January and in March participated in a Southern Regional Conference in New Orleans. A highly successful First Youth Convention held in Princeton, N.J. followed in April. The young Turkish-Americans left with a deep pride in their Turkish heritage and a resolve to carry on the Asembly's work in their communities.

With the magnificence of Süleyman in Washington, D.C. the venue for the Ninth Convention had to be the Nation's Capital. With this backdrop the convention took on a special elegance. Four congressmen really drove home the point that Turkish-American input was welcome and desperately needed when issues concerning Turkey came up in Congress. Delegates admitted three new associations and the Assembly now numbered 44 component associations.

In June 1987 President Danişman stepped down having a different set of goals and objectives for the Assembly than those agreed upon by the Board of Directors. The treasurer, Tunca Iskır, was nominated by the Board and became the fourth ATAA President.

Waiting until many were on vacation and the Congress was just about to adjourn, the Armenians made their major thrust to run their resolution through Congress. With a night and day major letter writing, telephoning, and visiting campaign by all of Turkey's admirers, this legislation was defeated on August 7, 1987.

The Armenians lost this one but were more active than ever in California trying to put their version of history into the social studies curriculum. New York has a similar curriculum under study. A second printing of *Armenian Allegations: Myth and Reality* has just been published and will give us a valuable tool as we confront this unceasing attack on our very essence.

At the 10th Convention in California, Tunca Iskır was elected President with Bonnie Joy Kaslan as First Vice President.

On October 8, 1988, at the very historic ATAA Southern Regional Conference leaders of the Sephardic Jewish community as well as other Jewish-American representatives assembled with Turkish-Americans to set the groundwork for 1992, 500th Anniversary Commemorations of the welcoming of Jews in Turkey. The formation of the Shared Jewish Turkish History Committee was announced during that conference.

In the past year ATAA has moved ahead to appoint an Executive Director to handle the daily operation of the Central Office and Harun Kazaz has filled this position. With this professional staff in place and with professional volunteers ATAA began publication of the first Turkish-American newspaper in the United States. "The Turkish Times" currently comes out on a monthly basis. However, it is projected to be published bimonthly very shortly and eventually on a weekly basis.

A national Media Watch and Response Committee, under its chairman Dr. Tamer Acikalin has begun keeping tabs on the way Turkey and Turkish-Americans are handled by the media. When defaming programs or articles appear, ATAA responds with letters or personal contacts to set the record straight.

A Business Committee, headed by Oguz Babüroğlu and Koray Arikan, has begun to develop programs assisting businessmen both in Turkey and the United States by providing a liaison service and information.

ATAA is celebrating its 10th Anniversary with a gala convention in Crystal City, Virginia, and is looking ahead to serving increasing numbers of Turkish-Americans and friends of Turks in the next decade.

# Program of Activities

**ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS TENTH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION**
Crystal City, Virginia
May 4-7, 1989

**THURSDAY, MAY 4, 1989**
6:00-9:00 p.m. REGISTRATION and HOSPITALITY SUITE

**FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1989**
8:00-5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION and HOSPITALITY SUITE

9:00-11:30 a.m. SYMPOSIUM
Topic: "CATCHING THE WASHINGTON FEVER"

Moderator: Bonnie Joy Kaslan, ATAA Virst Vice President
HOW TO VISIT YOUR CONGRESSMAN IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND IN HIS DISTRICT
The Honorable Michael G. Oxley (R)
Representative from Ohio
HOW SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS CATCH THE FEVER
Joan Weeks, Editor — *ATA USA*
GETTING THE MEDIA ON YOUR SIDE
Jackson Bain, Vice President — Hill and Knowlton
DO'S AND DON'TS IN COMMUNITY ADVOCACY
Amy Judy, Political Organizer — Common Cause

12:00-2:00 p.m. KEYNOTE LUNCHEON*
Guest Speaker: U.S.-Turkish Relationship in the 101st Congress
The Honorable Marvin Leath (D), Representative from Texas
TUTAV, TURKEY — Special Award Presentation to Professor Avigdor Levy by The Honorable Mehmet Yazar, Minister of State of the Repblic of Turkey

2:30-2:45 p.m. SPECIAL REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE MEHMET YAZAR, MINISTER OF STATE OF TURKEY, ON TURKEY AND THE EEC

2:45-5:00 p.m. PANEL DISCUSSION
Topic: TURKEY, U.S. AND THE EEC — TRANSITION INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Moderator: Birtan Aka Collier, ATAA V.P. North Central Region
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES AFFECTING U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS
Professor Bruce Kuniholm, Institute of Policy Science and Public Affairs, Duke University
NATO AFTER GLASNOST — THE U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP INTO THE NEXT DECADE
George W. Bader, Principal Director for European and NATO Policy — Office of the Ass't. Secretary of Defense

*— BRIEF BREAK —*

TURKISH PERSPECTIVE — BUSINESS WITH THE U.S. IN THE 1990's
A representative from Turkey
U.S. PERSPECTIVE — BUSINESS WITH TURKEY IN THE 1990's
Clarence Brown, Consultant, Former Deputy Secretary of Commerce
HOW THE EEC WILL AFFECT THE U.S. ECONOMY IN THE 1990'S
Giancarlo Chevallard, Director of the Press and Public Affairs — European Communities' Commission
TURKEY IN THE FUTURE — SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS
Professor Aydin Yalcin, Publisher — *Yeni Forum Magazine* (Ankara, Turkey)

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**YUSUF ÖZER**

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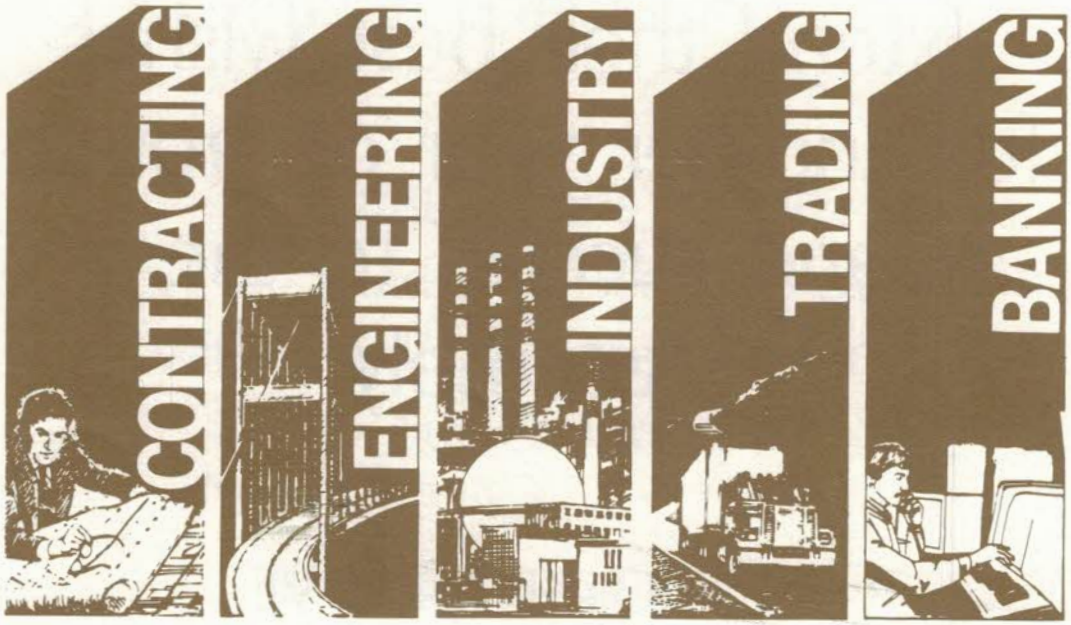


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(from the speech commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic, October 29, 1933)

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