



# Madam Atatürk: The First Lady of Modern Turkey

*Ipek Calislar*

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Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is hailed as one of the most charismatic political leaders of the twentieth century, but little is known today about his one and only wife, Latife Hanım. A multilingual intellectual educated at the Sorbonne, Latife's marriage to Atatürk in 1923 set her apart from her contemporaries, raising her to the pinnacle of political power. She played a central role in the creation of a modern and secular Turkey and campaigned tirelessly for women's right to vote. Throughout her marriage, Latife stood beside her husband and acted as his interpreter, promoter and diplomatic aide. She even twice risked her own life to save his. However, after only two years of marriage, Atatürk divorced Latife and she soon disappeared from public life. She was shunned, blamed for the failure of the marriage and portrayed as a sharp-tongued, quarrelsome woman who had strained Atatürk's nerves. Latife spent the rest of her life in seclusion. In the first biography to be written on Latife Hanım, Ipek Çalıslar recounts the life of an exceptional and courageous woman, well ahead of her time, who lived through a remarkable period in Turkish history. 'Rich, surprising and profound' Orhan Pamuk 'A daring biography' Independent 'A unique account of the life and times of an exceptional woman' Moris Farhi, author of Young Turk



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