

Istanbul, 7/4/1964

**Radio Speech by İffet Halim Oruz
President of the Society for Assistance to Darülaceze**

Dear Listeners,

I will begin my speech by sharing the good news that a Retirement Home is being established in Istanbul — a place that will open its doors to those who are left alone or feel that they have become a burden to their families.

Many devoted children who are listening to me now may feel saddened. They will say that their beloved elders — especially the sacred presence of a mother — would never be considered a burden. And they are absolutely right. In our traditions, elders are both the happiest and most essential members of the family. However, just as the physical size of homes has changed in today's world, so too has everything else within them. Just as it is no longer possible for an elder to financially support an entire family, it has also become difficult to accommodate three generations under one roof.

Imagine a place with the comforts of a hotel but at a fraction of the cost. A place where the heavy expenses of maintaining a separate home are no longer an issue. A place where you can come and go freely, where you can spend time with your children whenever you wish, knowing that you always have a room waiting for you — furnished with items that reflect your own personal home. There are cinemas, radios, libraries, friends, and companions — everything you might need. This is the modern concept of a Retirement Home.

It is a haven of compassion and civility for those who find themselves alone at any stage of life or who wish to avoid loneliness.

Dear Citizens,

I would like to briefly share with you the history of the concept of the Retirement Home, which we are now working to develop in Turkey and which has already received wide public support.

The Moral and Social Commission of the Women's Solidarity Union took the initiative to engage in positive work and proposed the idea of establishing a Retirement Home. At that time, the newly formed Association was seeking a partner organization — and they found one.

The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, while striving to meet every need of Darülaceze, also embarked on the initiative to establish Retirement Homes, as stated among the objectives in its charter. It was around the year 1960. One day, one of our female artists (painter), Ressam Melek, visited the Governor of Istanbul at the time, Mr. Refik Tulga, and showed him a medallion model she had created in 1938. She had designed this medallion while working on sketches in Paris, deeply moved by the sorrow she felt upon hearing of Atatürk's passing. She had crafted this medallion to express Turkish women's gratitude to Atatürk.

Ressam Melek expressed her wish: if the medallion could be minted and sold by women, the proceeds would be used to erect a monument in Atatürk's honor. However, since she had been unable to realize this project since 1938, she sought the support of Mr. Tulga. He advised her to meet with us. As a result, we held discussions and shared our thoughts. We proposed: "Let's have the medallions minted. But instead of building a traditional monument, let's establish a Nursing Home with the proceeds. We can memorialize our gratitude to Atatürk by enlarging the medallion and mounting it prominently at the front of the Home." Those who have seen the medallion will know: inscribed on it are the words, *"Atatürk, the women you liberated offer you their loyalty,"* along with Atatürk's birth and death dates.

The artist found our proposal appropriate. We also met with the governor, who supported our ideas. Thus, with the interest and support shown by the Mint, thousands of medallions were produced. Since then, through the efforts of the Ziraat Bank and the women of Istanbul, Ankara, and other cities, the medallions—sold at fifty lira for the large ones and ten lira for the smaller ones—have helped us successfully pursue the establishment of a Retirement Home.

Establishing a Nursing Home was not an easy task. On one hand, we struggled to allocate a fully equipped clinic, suitable for this purpose; on the other hand, we exerted our utmost efforts to raise the remaining amount needed for payment. Today, with the distribution of the small-sized medallions to all the neighborhood heads (muhtars) of Istanbul, we are now able to bring the medallions into every home and secure the support of every Istanbulite for the Nursing Home project.

Our esteemed Governor, Mr. Niyazi Akı, has also provided great support in this endeavor. He graciously accepted the honorary presidency of the Society for Assistance to Darülaceze and has been compassionately supporting our efforts to build a Nursing Home.

Dear Citizens,

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to touch upon the tradition of charitable foundations (waqf), from which our ancestors left us thousands of examples. I wish to emphasize that the Retirement Home we are establishing will also be formally institutionalized.

The property designated for our Nursing Home is surrounded by vacant land, allowing for future expansion. After completing the initial phase, we will work toward establishing a full "Retirement Campus," incorporating an additional six acres to enable the construction of further pavilions.

Through the observations we made during our visits to the United States, Switzerland, England, and Germany, we saw how comfortably people live in such facilities. Our wish is to bring a similar Nursing Home to Istanbul.

Wishing you all good health and well-being, we hope to carry forward this cause with your solidarity and collective strength.