

BOOK REVIEWS

(KİTAP TAHLİLLERİ)

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“DÉTRUIRE LES ARMÉNIENS”

(“ERMENİLERİ YOK ETMEK”)

Author: Mikaël Nichanian, *Détruire les Arméniens* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 2015), 273 pages.

D*étruire les Arméniens* (*Destroy Armenians*), a book written by Mikaël Nichanian, provides information regarding the rise of the Armenian Question under the rule of Abdülhamid II, the events of 1915, and the post-World War I period in Turkey. In this book, the Armenian Question and the historical debate related to it is scrutinized in five chapters. However, it appears that almost all of the information provided in this book is based on data that lacks solid evidence or reference.

Mikaël Nichanian’s main argument in the book focuses on the claim regarding the leading role that the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turks played during the –what the author refers to as the- destruction of the Armenian population living in the Ottoman Empire. By referring to the Young Turks and their supposedly aggressive attitudes towards minorities, Nichanian aims to emphasize the idea of “nationalism” imposed by this group. This idea is acknowledged as the main cause of the annihilation attempts towards other ethnic groups. The unionist and nationalist approaches of this period are reflected in the book in such a way that the reader might think of them as historic factors that favored a genocidal program.

While such information and interpretations are demonstrated in this book, it can be seen that the author makes these conclusions without providing solid facts or reference. It is important to emphasize that without giving any such reference regarding the historical arguments and claims, it is not possible for this book to serve an academic or scientific purpose.

It should be highlighted that this book is far from being able to provide an objective examination regarding the events of 1915. The author puts forward the views of only Armenian academics and academics who support the claim that the events of 1915 can be classified as an act of genocide. In the absence of solid facts or reference in the book, it can be construed that the author's approach to the events of 1915 has been influenced by his social upbringing. It is not hard to imagine that the author, who is of Armenian descent, most probably grew up as part of an Armenian community, constantly being told the Armenian side of a story that completely overlooks the Turkish side. This narrative is still very much an issue of debate in the academic sphere.

Indeed, it is a significant fact that while there are historians supporting claims of genocide, there are a significant number of well-known academics who refuse to label the events in question as genocide such as Bernard Lewis, Stanford Shaw, and Heath Lowry. Bernard Lewis of Princeton University, a very well-known scholar of the Middle East, is known to have refused these claims numerous times stating that "the issue is not whether the massacres happened or not, but rather if these massacres were as a result of a deliberate preconceived decision of the Turkish government," adding that "there is no evidence for such a decision."¹ In addition to that, Heath Lowry -who served as a Professor at Harvard, Georgetown, and Princeton- has concluded that the book *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, which is the primary source of the Armenian Genocide claims is full of "half-truths" and "falsehoods".² Lowry's conclusions have also been supported by Guenter Lewy, who has taught at Columbia University and the University of Massachusetts and is renowned for his work regarding the term genocide. Therefore, as it can be seen, there remains a serious debate surrounding this issue to this day, and any study that fails to provide a solid argument with strong references will be far from being able to qualify as scholarly work.

Furthermore, this book refrains from sharing sources while referring to and analyzing statistical data. Indeed, although some statistics are shared, these are not sufficient to make an argument towards a definitive conclusion on a topic which is argued on academic, social, and political platforms on an international level. An author covering an issue such as the Armenian Question has access to a great amount of research that put forth arguments for both sides of the dispute. It has certainly been a popular topic of research over the last few

1 Michael Getler, "Documenting and Debating a 'Genocide'" http://www.pbs.org/ombudsman/2006/04/documenting_and_debating_a_genocide.html

2 J.M Winter, *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 302.

decades. Considering the availability of such a wide range of resources, the author should have no excuse to have such a fairly poor bibliography.

In the below paragraphs, there are some examples of information given without reference;

“Between 1894 and 1896, Abdülhamid II pursued terror policy notably in Eastern Anatolia involving massacre organization, ethnical purifying, destructions and removals to reinforce his dominance. Furthermore, this led to more than 200,000 victims.”³

“The immigrations lasted over fifteen years towards Russia, Balkans and America, and 100,000 Armenians emigrated from eastern parts of Ottoman Empire.”⁴

Another serious shortcoming of this book is the fact that the author does not even mention the deaths of Turks at the hands of Armenians. In this respect, the author fails to mention the activities of the Dashnaks aiding the Russian armies which were advancing in eastern Turkey during WWI. The author fails to mention that there was even a point in time during WWI that armed Armenian forces established autonomy around the eastern Turkish city of Van. Nichanian reflects past events in question simply as innocent Armenians dying at the hands of Turks, with no mentioning of the crimes committed against Turks by Armenians.

The analysis of the book provided above shows that the author holds the assumption that the readers know everything regarding the issue at hand. Nichanian does not delve into the sources or make an effort to prove what is being put forth.

To conclude, as it can be seen, this book is far from having the characteristics of an academic study, because it lacks the very basic elements of research and analysis. As it has almost no statistical data provided by reliable and respected sources, it fails to achieve an analytic argument and a sound conclusion. Almost every line written in the book reflects the feelings of the author regarding the Armenian Question, rather than the facts related to what happened in the past. Such a study only deepens the prejudices between the Turks and Armenians. Furthermore, such a study complicates any opportunity towards the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia that are located in a part of the world where stability is desperately needed.

3 Mikaël Nichanian, *Détruire les Arméniens* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 2015), p. 40.

4 Nichanian, *Détruire les Arméniens*, p.40.

UNDERSTANDING THE TURKISH-ARMENIAN CONTROVERSY OVER 1915

(“1915’LE İLGİLİ TÜRK-ERMENİ ANLAŞMAZLIĞINI
ANLAMAK”)

Author: Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy over 1915* (İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 2015), 132 pp.¹

About the Author

Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık finished his undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees in the International Relations Department of the Middle East Technical University (METU). His works include the Armenian issue, the Ottoman Empire and the Armenians, history of Ottoman diplomacy, Turkish foreign policy, and also theories on geopolitics and international relations.

In *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy over 1915*, Palabıyık gives a brief description about some major points regarding the “Armenian Issue”. His work in question serves as an introductory book to this topic. Containing many important information for academics, students, and other groups who may not know much about or be experts on Ottoman history, this book as such manages to appeal to a wide audience.

With the help of this book, readers who may have heard the term “genocide” on many occasions -but who may not know its legal definition- will have the chance to find out about the meaning of this term in its international context, and will become knowledgeable about this topic. To

¹ There is also a Turkish version of the book: Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, *1915 Olaylarını Anlamak: Türkler ve Ermeniler* (İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 2015), 132 pp.

put it succinctly; this book delves foremost into and informs about what the 1915 events were, how these events are relayed and understood by Turks and Armenians, and also how these events are characterized in today's politics and how a historical event is turned into a political tool.

The shortness of the book may actually be an advantage for readers who want to be informed on this issue only in general terms. In fact, it can be said this book "*is an opportunity for readers to look afresh at the central issues in what perseveres as a volatile issue in international relations.*"²

The book opens with a foreword by historian Jeremy Salt, a Middle East studies veteran and someone who has himself worked substantially on the late history of the Ottoman Empire. In the pages that follow the foreword, the book presents to the readers -who want to be informed about events of 1915- a number of crucial points such as: the definition of genocide in its legal context, the general condition of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the problems that were experienced during and after of the Armenian relocation, a description of the Armenian diaspora, and also information about legal verdicts related to the Armenian relocation.

In the introduction of the book, by using the examples of both the Armenian and Ottoman-Turkish narratives on the 1915 events, Palabıyık indicates that he will set out to do an overall assessment of the situation regarding the controversy over 1915. Palabıyık informs the reader that this work was meant to serve as a handbook for those who want to be informed on this controversy in easily understandable manner.

In the first chapter of the book the author states that the term "genocide" is a legal concept. Due to this, he indicates that the genocide allegations should be evaluated within the framework of international law and with the guidance of the provisions of 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. This chapter ends with Palabıyık pointing out which elements need to be considered for defining an event as genocide by giving examples of the opinions of various authors on this subject.

The second chapter of the book deals with the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire and whether there was a racist anti-Armenian sentiment in prevalent in the empire. The author states that in the mid-19th century of the Ottoman Empire, the empire came to see Armenians as the "Millet-i Sadıka" (The Loyal People) and Armenians were appointed to various positions in the

2 Jeremy Salt's words, as seen in: Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy over 1915* (İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 2015), p. xix.

political and bureaucratic structure of the empire. This point is further emphasized when the author gives a number of examples: Abdul Hamid II being confident enough in Armenians to entrust his own assets to them, Armenians serving as deputies in the “Meclis-i Mebusan” (Ottoman parliament) after the Union and Progress Party’s seizure of political power, and the fact that the events of 1915 did not occur due to racial and religious hatred. It is emphasized that the sequence of events that led to the relocation of Armenians can be directly traced back to when Armenians revolted against Ottoman rule during the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War.

The third chapter can be succinctly put forth with the following words by the author:

“... the Ottoman administration could not manage and allocate enough resources for the relocation process. Although, the administration tried to minimize casualties through governmental decrees, the losses of relocated Armenians were still high. However, this does not mean definitely that the Ottoman government acted with genocidal intent.”³

Furthermore, the author indicates that no statement that can be evaluated within the definition of genocide has ever been found in any Ottoman document. The fourth chapter builds upon this narrative, by giving information about the Courts-Martial (Divan-ı Harpler) that were established in 1916 to prosecute Ottoman officials and other individuals who were identified as having mistreated Armenians while the relocation was taking place.

The fifth chapter of the book deals entirely with question of whether or not the decision for relocating Armenians was taken as a form of military precaution. For this, in general terms, Palabıyık looks into the military considerations behind Armenians’ relocation, the activities of the Armenian revolutionary committees that were operating against the Ottoman Empire, and the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Armenians on the eve of World War I and the Armenian relocation. Within such a context, Palabıyık indicates that there really was a military motive behind the Armenian relocation. As a way of showing that the Armenian relocation was not unique in history, he gives some examples of other relocations that were carried out in different parts of the world due to military considerations.

The sixth chapter looks into the characteristics of the Armenian diaspora. The author provides a definition for the term “diaspora” and informs the reader

3 Palabıyık, *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy...*, p. 39.

about the power and influence of the Armenian diaspora that can be felt on an international level. The author indicates that the Diaspora has the capacity to intervene in both the domestic and foreign policy of Armenia. According to the author, any rapprochement that may take place between Turkey and Armenia will result in accusations of betrayal by the Armenia diaspora directed against Armenia.

In the seventh chapter, Palabıyık gives a narration of some important parliament decisions and court verdicts regarding the 1915 events. The author divides the chapter into three parts. In sequence, these parts deal with the 2003 verdict of the Court of First Instance of the European Communities, the 2012 verdict of France's Constitutional Council, and the 2013 verdict of the European Court of Human Rights.

In the first part, it is indicated that two French citizens of Armenian heritage – with the backing of the Armenian diaspora- applied to the Court of First Instance, arguing that the granting of candidacy status for European Union (EU) membership to Turkey by the EU was against the 1987 resolution of the European Parliament and that Turkey's "denial" of the "Armenian genocide" would prevent it from attaining full membership to the EU. In this respect, the applicants defended the idea that the European Parliament's resolution was legal in character and thus bore legal results. The Court of First Instance evaluated this application, and underlined in its 17 December 2003 verdict that the 1987 resolution of the European Parliament did not bear any legal results, and expressed the resolution was political in character.

In the second part, the author deals with the law adopted by the French parliament on 30 January 2001 that specifically states: "France publicly recognizes the Armenian Genocide of 1915". Arguing that the "Armenian genocide" was just like the Holocaust, the French Socialist Party sought to have a law enacted whereby the "denial" of the "Armenian genocide" would result in imprisonment and monetary fine. Despite the fact that France recognized the Armenian genocide claims, the Constitutional Council of France struck this law proposal down, stating that it was against the right of free speech and thus against France's constitution. The Constitutional Council went even further, and questioned the legal validity of the 2001 law.

In the third part, the author comments on the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the following manner:

"... [the ECHR] implies that the Armenian genocide allegations cannot be substantiated as clearly as the Holocaust and therefore accepting the

“Armenian genocide” as a fact and doing so in a way which hampers sound discussion on this controversial issue would be contrary to the right to free speech. Moreover, the accusation of “denialism, made by persons who accept the Armenian genocide allegations against those people [who] reject the validity of the allegations, is dismissed by this decision. For denialism, there must be a real genocide, one proved and established in law but, in the Armenian case, this fundamental aspect is lacking.”⁴

In conclusion, in this book, the 1915 relocation events have been evaluated via Turkish and Armenian narratives through a systematic way. The Turkish narrative draws attention to the sufferings of both peoples, yet the Armenian narrative is confined to mentioning the sufferings of just the Armenians during the First World War. This problem, ongoing for a hundred years, profoundly affects both communities, and today has led to a standstill in political relations. Palabıyık’s book, titled *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy over 1915*, appeals to those who are curious about the relocation of 1915 and the resulting dispute, and who wish to find out more about this issue. The overall language employed in the book is simple and lucid, which will be to the advantage of those who are just getting acquainted to the 1915 events. As such, this book will serve as an important starting source for those who wish to conduct research on this disputed issue.

4 Palabıyık, *Understanding the Turkish Armenian Controversy...*, p.

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"HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND THE HISTORIANS' COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE ARMENIAN EVENTS OF 1915"

(*"1915 ERMENİ OLAYLARININ ARAŞTIRILMASIYLA İLGİLİ
OLARAK TARİHİ ARŞİVLER VE TARİHÇİLER KOMİSYONU"*)

Author: Yücel Güçlü, *Historical Archives and the Historians'
Commission to Investigate The Armenian Events of 1915*
(London: University Press of America, 2015), 360 pp.

Yücel Güçlü's book, titled *Historical Archives and the Historians' Commission to Investigate the Armenian Events Of 1915*, has been composed with the use of archives and databases in Turkey, United Kingdom, Russia, and Armenia. When we look at the general context of the book, Güçlü provides to the reader detailed information about the progress in the indexing and the current situation of the historical documents in the archives of the abovementioned countries. This information allows the reader to make a comparison about the level of openness of the archives and see the comments of the scholars who benefited or tried to benefit from them. In general, Güçlü points out to the importance of carrying joint historical research in order to uncover the facts that will be instrumental in moving forward Turkish-Armenian relations, which is a process that started within the framework of Zurich Protocols in 2009.

In the first nine chapters of the book, Güçlü expresses how meticulous the research on the archives have been conducted, starting from the times of the Ottoman Empire up until today. This research has been conducted by using various documents located in a wide array of sources such as tax registers, Yıldız Palace Archive, Military Archives, Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive (BOA), Muslim Court Records etc., as well by using the

works of many Turkish and non-Turkish scholars who focus on Ottoman studies. In this respect, Güçlü gives very detailed information about the history of archive management in Turkey.

What is striking in these chapters are the budget dedicated to documenting all these works, the number of people who accessed and benefited from the archives, and the systematic registration of everything in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. This is an important initiative welcomed by many people, as it is a step towards taking historical discussions to a more sophisticated different level. For instance, in his speech he made on 20 February 1990,¹ US Senator Robert Byrd stated that “*in the last year, the Government of the Republic of Turkey has opened the Ottoman Archives spanning the World War 1 era*” and added; “*So there is a new information freely available which could help historians make a determination about this (Armenian) matter.*”

In addition, while expressing his views on the subject on the next day, US Senator Timothy Wirth stated;

“The relevant documents in the Ottoman archives are being made accessible to researchers. That commitment has been made by the Turkish Government. The Turkish Government has responded to calls for these documents and has invested significant resources into cataloging four centuries of archives relating to Armenians. All documents through 1895 have so far been catalogued. This process is ongoing. I think the Turkish Government has certainly been forthcoming on this front.”²

While providing a guideline on which documents to look for and how to use the relevant search engines, Güçlü also underlines an important concern; some scholars wonder whether there are full sets of documents without any missing parts/information included in the catalogues. On this issue, Güçlü states;

“As noted above, most of the relevant documents are contained in bound, consecutively paginated registers. For example, each decision taken by the Council of Ministers was recorded daily in such registers. Were even a single document to be missing, a simple perusal of the page numbers would reveal that fact. In short, allegation was nothing but a “smoke screen” advanced by the resolution’s proponents.”³

1 Yücel Güçlü, *Historical Archives and the Historians' Commission to Investigate The Armenian Events of 1915* (London: University Press of America, 2015), p. 33.

2 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 33.

3 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 39.

Considering how carefully the documentation and registration has been done, as it has been explained in this book, Güçlü's answer is persuasive. Additionally, according to Güçlü, between the years 1984-1989, the Turkish Government allocated over 20 million dollars to a massive program to declassify and catalog all documents covering the period from 1691 to 1894, and these documents are all available to interested scholars.⁴ Comments of the academics who accessed these archives⁵ support Güçlü's statements and gives the reader an idea about the open position of Turkey on historical facts.

In the following chapters (until Chapter 10), Güçlü touches upon present-day documents and cases that inform on the discussions concerning Turkish-Armenian relations, such as the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights on the *Perinçek v. Switzerland* case.⁶ What we understand from these chapters is that, during the Ottoman times, information about both Muslim and Non-Muslim people had been registered very precisely and meticulously, and the Republic of Turkey dedicated an important amount of time and money to open them for academic use. Güçlü presents this fact in a easily understandable manner.

Chapter 10, titled "Armenian Depositories", gives information about the resources and databases related to Turkish-Armenian relations, which located mainly in Armenia, but also in the Armenian libraries in different countries such as the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. The situation in these places is rather different than Turkey. Armenia's various archives and libraries are not as welcoming as the ones in Turkey. For example, Taner Akçam stated;

*"The archive [archives of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem] is unfortunately not open to all researchers. For this reason, it is difficult to state with any authority the extent of its holdings. There is no need to emphasize the wrongness of such an indefensible policy as the denial of access to such a potentially valuable sources."*⁷

As even Akçam reveals, who is an ardent supporter of the genocide narrative regarding the the events of 1915, most of the Armenian documents are either not available or are difficult to access. Güçlü gives a very striking example of this in his book titled *The Türkyılmaz Case, A Turkish Scholar Harassed in Yerevan*. This Turkish scholar obtained permission to access archives in

4 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 32.

5 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, pp. 47-50.

6 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, pp. 42-50.

7 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 121.

Armenia in 2005, but after his work was done in the archives, he was nevertheless detained at the Zvartnots Airport by Armenia's National Security Service. The National Security Service claimed that he was not allowed to take the copies of the documents he collected during his research outside of Armenia. This event created reactions in academic circles.⁸ Such a reaction is to be expected, as organizations such as the International Crisis Group encourage scholars to do more academic works on Turkish-Armenian relations.⁹ Güçlü states that even though some documents in the archives in Armenia are available for access, further guidelines are needed to use them efficiently. The International Crisis Group also touches upon the archives in US, Russia, and the UK within the framework of the recommendations they gave on Turkish-Armenian relations,¹⁰ which leads the reader to the following two chapters.

Chapter 11 and 12 are dedicated to the archives, documents, and depositories in the UK and Russia. For the UK, Güçlü gives detailed information about which documents to find in what location. Additionally, he expresses the importance of the closed-EMSIB¹¹ archives. He concludes Chapter 11 with the Malta Deportations as a historical case and the decisions on the "absence of evidence" with some statements made by the British officials serving in İstanbul in 1920s.¹² In Chapter 12, Güçlü gives information on the opening of the Soviet Union's archives. In 1989, for the first time, foreign scholars were admitted to the normal reading rooms of the state archives and, again in 1989, some scholars (very limited in number) were able to access the central party archives.¹³ However, they gave mixed reports about the documents present in the archives and the situation of the archives. Some important examples of the works produced with the help of the Russian documents include the ones of Mehmet Perinçek,¹⁴ who was able to conduct research in the Russian archives on Turkish-Armenian history. The work of the European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS) is also substantial in this regard. TEAS published a three-volume

8 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 123.

9 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 127.

10 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 127.

11 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, pp. 133-135. Also see; "KV 1. Imperial Overseas Intelligence 1915-1919: Eastern Mediterranean Special Intelligence Bureau", NationalArchives.gov.uk, 1921, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C3973360>

12 High-ranking Ottoman officials, accused of mistreating Armenians, were taken to Malta and were to be tried by the British. However, despite intense efforts by the British to find incriminating evidence, the Ottoman officials were let go once it was realized that there was no evidence that could substantiate the accusations of mistreatment leveled against them. Please see; Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 137.

13 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 142.

14 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 155.

archive study titled *The Armenian Question in the Caucasus: Russian Archive Documents and Publications*. Güçlü concludes his remarks and the information given in this chapter by underlining the importance of the Russian archives, considering the influence and interest of Russia in the region. Chapter 12, like the other chapters, provides guidelines for doing further research on the Russian archives.

Until Chapter 19 (starting from Chapter 12), Güçlü mostly talks about the developments in the last decade and next steps to be taken on Turkish-Armenian relations. Chapter 19 is dedicated to the “collapse” of the Zurich Protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia. Güçlü indicates that it was a “stillborn” initiative with nevertheless good intentions. Armenian officials of the time were rather skeptical about the whole idea of rapprochement, as even contemplating about posing the question of whether what happened in 1915 was a “genocide” or not was not –and is still not- acceptable for Armenians. In the last three chapters, Güçlü gives suggestions about the future of the Turkish-Armenian relations based on the idea of creating a “sub-commission” working on the historical documents. He also summarizes the general idea prevalent in the international community on this topic, including many officials’ statements and declarations. One of the important ones, which gives a concrete idea about the position, which should be adopted by the international community as well, is US Whitehouse Spokesperson Mike Hamer’s statement that he made on 27 February 2010;

*“Our interest remains the achievement of a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts. We continue to believe that the best way to advance that goal is for the Armenian and Turkish people to address the facts of the past as a part of their ongoing efforts to normalize the relations.”*¹⁵

As Güçlü explains, even though Turkey is a rather young country in the international context, its history is still subject to questioning, and particularly when the Armenian question comes up to the agenda, Ottoman heritage is brought up as a binding link to the history of the Republic of Turkey. According to this approach, Turkey’s Ottoman heritage should not be taken into account separately from modern Turkey’s history. Nevertheless, even if one was to assume that this approach is valid, one should not try to manipulate historical facts with political motivations. In this respect, the following sentence by Güçlü grabs attention; *“Writing scholarly history should not be about one’s own experiences and eyewitness accounts, [scholarly history is about] the systematic*

15 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 247.

examination of surviving written sources of the past.”¹⁶ This can be taken as the exact summary of Güçlü’s book and the reason why he wrote it.

Güçlü does not only delve into the issue of the progress in indexing historical documents, he also compiles the recent developments, statements of the academics and the high level officials on the Turkish-Armenian issue, related declarations, events, and other relevant documents in one book, which in total provide a wide perspective to the reader on this issue. By doing this, Güçlü also gives a rich list of resources that will enrich the academic literature and discussions on this issue. Therefore, this book should be one of the main sources for people who are curious about the 1915 events and its reflections on the current and future relations between Armenians and Turks. Güçlü not only includes Turkish and Armenian archives to his study, he also includes Russian and British, and also many others.

In order to understand history, it is more appropriate to make a wider research and examine the databases of the actors, besides the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey, which were somehow involved in the regional developments at that time. Both the UK and Russia, were actors with a special interest for the region in which the Ottoman Empire was located. Hence, both of these countries have a rich database concerning the issue at hand. Unfortunately, not all archives are open, but still, there is considerable amount of resources to be found regarding the historical facts related with the Armenian issue. Güçlü directs and guides the reader on how to find the relevant sources, as well as helps the reader to understand within which context to evaluate them. Moreover, he helps the reader to understand the past and the present of the Turkish-Armenian relations with the help of the related documents and the progress that has been made -or that is attempted to be made- by Turkey, Armenia, and the international community. By doing so, coming back to his core motivation, Güçlü explains the reason why working on historical documents is important for building a better future amongst people who have diverging interpretations on history.

16 Güçlü, *Historical Archives*, p. 262.

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