

BOOK REVIEWS

(KİTAP TAHLİLLERİ)

Ellen Kronheim REISMAN

ARMENIANS: PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS (ERMENİLER: FAİLLER VE KURBANLAR)

Author: Dr. Arnold Reisman, New Academia Publishing, LLC,
September 2006, 604 pages, ISBN: 978-0977790883

Since Dr. Arnold Reisman's book *Turkey's Modernization: Refugees from Nazism and Ataturk's Vision* (New Academia Publishing, 2006) was published, all his subsequent books were inspired by his initial research. In April and May of 2009 his next two books, *Arts in Turkey: How Ancient Became Contemporary* and *Post-Ottoman Turkey: Classical European Music and Opera*, were published by Booksurge, and provided a look back at Ottoman cultural history and the strides that were made by the modern Turkish Republic to infuse the past with the present and, with the help of the refugees invited by Ataturk, create a Turkish heritage in the arts that would be a springboard for future generations. In that same year three more books, *Refugees and Reforms: Turkey's Journey*, *The Transformation of Istanbul: Art Galleries Reviving Decaying Spaces*, and *Shoah: Turkey, the US and the UK*, appeared in the marketplace.

After reading Emir Kivircek's book about his grandfather, Behic Erkin, Dr. Reisman was enthralled with the story and pursued a line of research resulting in *An Ambassador and a Mensch: The story of a Turkish Diplomat in Vichy France*. Learning about Erkin and Gallipoli led to *My Enemy's Enemy*. A departure from the usual Turkish themes, *My Enemy's Enemy* is about the development of the Zion Mule Corps which eventually led to the creation of the Palestine Brigade. However, it was learning about Gallipoli that piqued his interest about the Zion Mule Corps.

Dr. Reisman's last book, completed just before his death and due to be

published in spring 2012, covers a subject which he avoided for years partly because of his lack of knowledge in the subject matter and partly because of its controversial nature. After reading Hovhannes Katchaznoui's *Manifesto: Dashnagtzoutiun Has Nothing to do Anymore*, Reisman began extensively researching to see if there was material by other Armenians in the same vein. Katchaznoui, had been a leader of the Dashnagtzoutiun, the Armenian Party, and was appointed the first Prime Minister of the Armenian state in 1918. He presented his *Manifesto* to his party when it convened in Bucharest in 1923. Essentially, it is a work of self examination and self criticism, the self to which he refers is his own party.

The result of Dr. Reisman's research is the forthcoming book *Armenians: Perpetrators and Victims*. Reisman uses archival documents and non-Turkish sources to show there is more to this controversy which people, including many historians and heads of state, either do not know or have chosen to ignore. He lays out facts providing the reader with an opportunity to have a more balanced understanding of this argument that polarizes people. Newspaper articles from the 19th and 20th centuries are reproduced giving a context for the subject. Quite cleverly, editorials are juxtaposed with actual on the ground reporting showing how uninformed and biased many people were. From the beginning of the book, which offers some of the history of Armenia, through the Appendices, the reader is almost overwhelmed with the amount of detailed information chronicling the Armenian/Turkish controversy through two centuries. Following the demise of the last Armenian kingdom in 1453, the greater part of Armenia was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire while the Eastern regions were controlled first by Persia, then Russia which annexed these territories during the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire's loss in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 resulted in the creation of a Bulgarian state and forced the Empire to recognize Romania and Montenegro as independent entities. Seizing upon this, the Russian Armenians, supported by their government, crossed into Turkey perpetrating crimes on many people including their own. Why would a people slaughter their "brothers"? The Russian Armenians had adopted the policy "the end justifies the means" and because their end was an independent Armenia, they believed that their behavior was the means to that end. Why would a government sponsor such horrific behavior? Russia wanted the Ottoman Empire dismantled and helping to stir up trouble was one way of accomplishing that goal. The British and French were interested in acquiring the rights to explore for oil so they, too, were eager to get into the area so they signed secret agreements with various sheiks and sent teams to the Persian Gulf to investigate the possibility of oil exploration in the region. Reisman documents instigation by missionaries and various consular personnel to stir up negative publicity against the Turks

in order to achieve their ultimate goal which happened in 1918 at the end of World War I.

As a child survivor of the Holocaust (*Welcome Tomorrow*, North Coast Publishing, 1982), Reisman is sensitive to the Armenian claims of genocide. Taking no sides, voicing no opinion, he documents the horrible atrocities perpetrated against the Armenians...sometimes as retaliation, sometimes not. It is left to the reader to make the decision if what was done to the Armenians was, indeed, genocide. With sensitivity intact, he shows that there is enough blame to go around and that both sides have an obligation to accept their responsibilities for the horrendous acts of the past so that they may move forward and establish a new relationship for present and future generations.

THE SANDCASTLE GIRLS (KUMDAN KALE KIZLARI)

Author: Chris Bohjalian, Doubleday, New York, 2012, 320 pages

A well-known and bestseller *Midwives'* author Chris Bohjalian has released his latest novel entitled *The Sandcastle Girls* on July 2012. The reader would be well advised to start reading the book from reverse in order to have an idea of what the novel is about. The suggestion is to start with the "author's note" and "acknowledgments" that follow the ending of the novel.

There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that in the "author's note", the author admits candidly that he has no affinity with the theme of the book. Furthermore, so as to write this novel, he expressed that he read the available stories based on the Armenian allegations. However, the most crucial point is the indication of the nearing centennial of the 1915 events. It is understood that the author was encouraged to write this novel with a view to serving Armenian propaganda.

The second noteworthy reason is the "acknowledgments" part where he lists the extent of his sources of reference, all notorious anti-Turkish publications of Armenian claims and allegations. Despite his Armenian heritage, he does not forgo his American fairness by revealing his biased references. The author should be appreciated for his honesty.

Bohjalian does not try to hide why he wrote this book. As the books of his reference are considered, it is to be seen why Bohjalian is a successful author. In the light of these consulted books, he wrote a comparatively moderate novel. With this input, one cannot expect or hope another outcome. Even though he tried to balance the book by giving room to the Turkish characters within the novel, the author's avoidance of indicating the difficulties that the Turkish people were subjected to in 1915 and the absence of the Turkish sources are serious deficiencies making the novel biased and propagandistic. The author subtly indicates that this novel is undertaken for a certain date.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS


Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's Visit to Lebanon and Turkey's Relations with Lebanon



When we look at Turkey's relations with Lebanon from the past to the present, we see that these relations have developed on the basis of cooperation and, at times, conflict. However, since 2005, we have seen Turkey's relations with Lebanon develop rapidly in the fields of economy, politics and security.

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Northern Iraq Notes II: Sulaymaniyah Observations



All the PUK authorities we interviewed said that the elections were a big gain for democracy. Probably, the reason for these statements isn't only the development of democracy. We got the impression that the Change List, formed by the PUK's veteran leaders, may reunite with the PUK.

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Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations: How to Switch from Brotherhood Slogans to Strategic Partnership?



It is time to develop a closer relationship. By adding block into place each year, a common future that is based not only on bureaucrats and politicians but also on the entire nation and with the aim of improving friendship, peace and prosperity between Turkey and the Azerbaijan will be built.


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The Importance of the Turkey-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) High Level Strategic Dialogue Meeting



According to the GCC members, Turkey is the

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EVENTS

ORSAM-TRT Cooperation for the Documentary of Turkish Straits




The topics of the documentary film include the the issue of Turkish Straits.

ORSAM Middle Eastern Studies Summer School Completed




ORSAM held a summer school program from July 1-15, 2009.

Tal Afar Conference in Istanbul




A conference was held on "Tal Afar: From the Invasion to the Present." on June 13, 2009 in Istanbul.

Obama's Middle East Policies Discussed



New American Policies and the future of Turkish-American relations were a topic at the meeting.

The Priorities of Turkey's Iraq Policy Evaluated



A brainstorm was arranged at ORSAM seeking to answer the question: "What should the

- ORSAM GUEST**
- Prof. Raymond Hinnebusch** evaluated Syrian foreign policy and Turkey-Syria relations. According to Hinnebusch Syria values relations with Turkey for several reasons.
- Rıza Çolak**, Representative of the Iraqi Turkmen Front in Talafar: "There is no such thing as Sunni-Shite conflict in Talafar. We are all brothers and sisters."
- Christer Asp**, The Kingdom of Sweden's Ambassador to Ankara, assessed Turkey-EU relations and Turkey's changing role within the international system.
- Mohammed bin Nasser Hamad Al-Wohabi**, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, stated that Turkey is a stabilizing and balancing element in the Middle East.
- Baodad Amreyev**, Kazakh

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Aslan Yavuz ŞİR

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- AB MEDYASI: "BASIKLAR TÜRKİYE'NİN İMAJINI BOZUYOR"

Dünyadan Seçme Haberler


ABD: "İSRİL'E BİLGİ YOK"



"NATO'nun radar sistemindeki bilgiler İsrail'e paylaşılmayacak." Amerikan yönetimi bu bilgiyi bir kez daha teyit etti.

Devamı için ...


"KOMŞU'DA GREVLER DALGA DALGA YAYILIYOR"



Yunanistan'da, mali krizle mücadele temelinde uygulamaya konulan reformlar çerçevesinde alınması kararlaştırılan yeni sert önlemlere toplumun her kesiminden gelen tepkiler her geçen gün artıyor.

Devamı için ...


SLOVAKYA PARLAMENTOSU'NDAN RET



Slovakya parlamentosu Avro Bölgesi'ndeki borç krizi için hayati önemde görülen Avrupa Mali İstikrar Fonu'nun genişletilmesi planlarını reddetti.

Devamı için ...

TİMOŞENKOYA 7 YIL HAPİS



Ukrayna'nın eski başbakanı, yolsuzluk yaptığı gerekçesiyle suçlu bulundu. Mahkeme Timoşenko'yu 7 yıl hapis cezasına çarptırdı.

Devamı için ...

MAKEDONYA'DA NUFUS SAYIMI