

BOOK REVIEWS

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TURKISH ACCUMULATION VIS-À-VIS ARMENIAN ALLEGATIONS

(ERMENİ İDDIALARI KARŞISINDA TÜRKİYE'NİN BİRİKİMİ)

Author: Prof. Dr. Hikmet Özdemir

Ankara, TBMM Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2008, 163 Pages.

The book entitled “Turkish Accumulation Vis-à-vis Armenian Allegations” written by Prof. Dr. Hikmet Özdemir gives detailed information on the issue of publications in Turkey on the Armenian issue which have been published until today.

Prof. Dr. Hikmet Özdemir, who interprets the increase in numbers and the quality of the recent publications in Turkey as a positive trend, wishes for a change in academic circles to be effective especially in civil society organizations.

In the first part of the book, it is seen that Prof. Özdemir, who examines the literature of the Turkish thesis against the Armenian claims regarding the events of 1915 under two different headings separates these in two periods: before Lausanne and from Lausanne to the end of 2007. Regarding the period before Lausanne, the author emphasizes the “territory claims” of the Ottoman Armenians in Eastern Anatolia which were rejected by the Turkish Grand National Assembly administration. This solution was officially acknowledged within the Lausanne Peace Treaty, and the Armenian claims were accounted invalid. For this reason, Prof. Özdemir, who interprets the Lausanne Peace Treaty as a historical turning point, provides for details and tables concerning rare publications.

Publications before Lausanne are examined under three separate headings: publications in Europe, the memoirs of Talat Pasha and Cemal Pasha. In the subsequent part, the publications after Lausanne are evaluated in two phases. The period in question is examined in two separate categories; publications pre-1970 and post-1970.

The third part of the book is kept longer since there are more publications in this period. Prof. Özdemir, who interprets the period after 1923 from Lausanne up to 1980 as a “rebellion with Pen”, mentions the formation of two separate attitudes after Lausanne in the context of lethargy experienced in Turkey during this period.

The book includes some examples regarding the extreme “sensitivity” in various echelons. The reactions to Prof. Leon Kawan in 1931 and Armenian diaspora in the periods of Atatürk and İnönü has also been touched upon. He also interprets two notes of statement added to the original text of Prof. Kawan which was presented in the Population Congress held in Rome in 1931 while it was being prepared for publication in Turkey in 1935 as a response to the writer because of the distortions applied in the text.

The book, which includes the policies regarding Armenia during the İnönü period, also mentions the visit of the Prime Minister of the İsmet İnönü period to Armenia in 1935. Prof. Özdemir, who notes that some studies were carried on in the General Staff on the issue of the Armenian question in the coming years, underlines that there is important information about the activities of the Armenian diaspora, especially in the report titled “Report of State of the General Staff” in 1949. In this work, Armenian demands during the years in question were pointed out. Chronological information about the Turkish-Armenian dispute is also included.

In this part, there is also information about the classic work of Esat Uras, titled *Armenian and the Armenian Question in History*. Uras’s book comes first among the essential reference books about the Armenian question. Prof. Özdemir evaluates this work as the single undisputable book which is prepared by using Armenian resources in original language in the field of Armenian studies in Turkey, and he also mentions broadly the contents of the book.

Prof. Özdemir, who indicates that the first “rebellion by pen” about the Armenian issue in Turkey emerged in 1965 as a result of activities against Turkey, points out that the first article about this issue was published in the *Journal of Turkish History in Documents* under the leadership of a lawyer, Ertuğrul Zekai Ökte in 1967. Prof. Özdemir mentions the academic meetings again with regard to the Armenian issue, and the works of the Turkish Historical Society (THS) about the issue. He also gives some examples from the works published by the THS on the Armenian issue.

In this book, in which there also are publications by the Institute for Armenian Research, information about the journals of the institute and the congress papers published between the years 2004 and 2007 is included. In addition, the book contains information about the ATASE archive of the General Staff concerning the Armenian issue and the works published by the State Archives. In the table at the end of this part it is clearly seen that there is a progressive increase in publications especially after 2000. In the book which also includes publications in foreign languages, it is seen that there was rapid progress in Turkey in the field of foreign publications between the years 1975-2007.

In conclusion, the work titled “Turkish Accumulation vis-à-vis Armenian Allegations” is fundamental since it gives a brief history of Turkish studies in the field of Armenian studies and guides researchers interested in this subject. In addition, studies made in each period are enriched with tables. This work, which can be considered as a chronological book examining the Turkish thesis regarding the events of 1915, is fairly important in terms of demonstrating Turkey’s place regarding the Armenian issue.