

REVIEW OF
ARMENIAN STUDIES

A Biannual Journal of History, Politics and International Relations

Facts and Comments

Ömer E. LÜTEM

Activities in Maraş and Its Surroundings of Organizations
and Committees Established by Armenians

Nejla GÜNAY

Geopolitical, Trade, and Economic Interests of
Turkey and Iran in the Southern Caucasus

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Maxime GAUIN

BOOK REVIEWS

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As always, “**Facts and Comments**” is the first article of this issue and covers the developments in Turkish-Armenian relations, Armenian Resettlement’s centennial commemorations, the recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations by several countries and international organizations, and Turkey’s reaction in this regard. It also analyzes the Perinçek case in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Lastly, it reveals that several political and legal developments in 2015 ran counter to the “independent Nagorno-Karabakh” claims. Armenians and the Diaspora were expecting that the “Armenian cause” would gain support worldwide in 2015. In reality, support for their cause was limited. Furthermore, the Perinçek case in ECtHR also harmed the claim that the “Armenian genocide” was an indisputable fact, and invalidated the expectation of punishing those who reject the Armenian genocide allegations. On the other hand, a verdict of ECtHR and several developments in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe proved that the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state was not possible. In brief, it is possible to state that 2015 was not a good year in terms of Armenians’ policies.

Necla Günay’s article titled “**Activities in Maraş and Its Surroundings of Organizations and Committees Established by Armenians**” explains that, after the enactment of the Edicts of Reorganization and Reform, Armenians took the Balkan peoples’ attainment of independence as an example for themselves, that they carried out insurrections to first attain autonomy and second attain independence, and that they sought to receive help from foreign powers for their objectives. In this context, the article also analyzes the organizational capacity building and activities carried out Armenians. Furthermore, this article presents the actions of Armenians in Maraş and its surroundings during and after World War I. This article is especially important in the sense that it is based on the use of original Ottoman documents.

This issue contains articles penned by Russian authors on various problems in the Caucasus. These articles look into a number of topics pertaining to South Caucasus studies and present us with examples of the Russian perspective on these topics. These articles are:

“**Geopolitical, Trade and Economic Interests of Turkey and Iran in the Southern Caucasus**”, by Amur Gadzhiev;

“Turkey’s Policies in the Southern Caucasus and Regional Security Mechanisms”, by Andrei Areshev;

“North-Western Caucasus in the Policies Pursued by Russia and the Ottoman Empire at the Final Stage of the Caucasian War”, by Andrei Boldyrev;

“A Glimpse of History: How the Treaty of Kars Was Signed (March Through October, 1921)”, Natalia Yu. Ulchenko, and;

“The Caucasus and Transcaucasia as Part of the Ottoman Empire (16th–17th Centuries)”, by Svetlana Oreshkova.

Armenians’, especially Diaspora Armenians’, assessment of Turks is generally negative and in most cases reflect their racist hatred toward Turks. Fearing that this would harm the “Armenian Cause” in the eyes of the public, the term “Righteous Turks” was coined in the recent times. What is meant with this term is Turks who helped Armenians during the resettlement in 1915-1916. It is aimed to balance this “racist hatred” by means of publications and statements praising these “righteous Turks”. The book titled “Report on the Turks Who Reached Out to the Armenians in 1915”, written by Taner Akçam and Burçin Gerçek, is one of the latest examples of such publications. AVİM’s scholar in residence Maxime Gauin, in his article titled **“On a Booklet Dealing with the ‘Righteous Turks’”**, reveals the mistakes, the nonscientific use and distortion of references, and several contradictions in this book.

Three book reviews can also be found in this issue. These books reviewed are: *Détruire les Arméniens* (Michael Nichanian), *Understanding the Turkish-Armenian Controversy* (Serdar Palabıyık) ve *Historical Archives and the Historians’ Commission to Investigate the Armenian Events of 1915* (Yücel Gülcü).

Good Reading!

FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

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Abstract: *This article examines the relations of Turkey with Armenia and the Diaspora for the whole year of 2015, especially with the commemoration of centennial of Armenian Resettlement of 1915, as well as the countries whose parliaments adopted resolutions on genocide allegations. Latest developments on the Karabakh issue and Perinçek case in European Court of Human Rights are also studied in this article.*

Keywords: *Turkey, Armenia, Commemorations of the Centennial of the Armenian Resettlements, recognition of Armenian genocide allegations, Karabakh question, Perinçek case at ECtHR, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Mevlut Çavuşoğlu, Serzh Sargsyan, Edward Nalbandian*

Öz: Bu yazı tüm 2015 boyunca Türkiye ile Ermenistan ve Diaspora arasındaki ilişkileri, Ermeni tehcirinin 100. yıldönümü anmalarını ve soykırım iddialarıyla ilgili parlamento kararı alan ülkeleri incelemektedir. Ayrıca, Karabağ sorunuyla ilgili son gelişmeler ve Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi'nde görülmüş olan Perinçek davası da irdelenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Türkiye, Ermenistan, Ermeni Tehcirinin 100. Yıldönümü anmaları, Ermeni soykırım iddialarının tanınması, Karabağ sorunu, AIHM'de Perinçek davası, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Mevlut Çavuşoğlu, Serj Sarkisyan, Edvard Nalbantyan*

ARTICLES

I - EVENTS IN ARMENIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENNIAL

The most important event in 2015 within the context of the Armenian issue and Turkey-Armenia relations is no doubt the centennial of the Armenian Resettlement.

Several resolutions were adopted and new organizations were formed in Armenia regarding the commemoration of the 1915 events and to make demands from Turkey regarding these events. We touch upon the most important ones below.

1) Pan-Armenian Declaration on the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide

In order to commemorate the centennial in the most spectacular manner (and hereby promote and support genocide allegations internationally and lay the foundation for demands to be made from Turkey), and to coordinate Armenians around the world, “The State Commission on Coordination of the Events Dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide”¹ was established on 23 March 2011. This Commission, which works with the broad participation from Armenia and the Diaspora, gathers once each year under the chairmanship of President Sargsyan.

On 29 January 2015, the Commission adopted the “Pan-Armenian Declaration on the Centennial of Armenian Genocide”. In his speech on this occasion,² stating that this document of national significance was for the first time adopted not through some state body or by separate segments of the Armenian nation, but with the participation of all the organizations representing Armenians all over the world and with the approval of Armenian churches, President Sargsyan indicated that the Declaration was embraced by all Armenians.

Furthermore, Sargsyan stated, “*We were frequently accused of not knowing what to demand from the world and from Turkey, regarding the Armenian Genocide. Do we expect various states to officially recognize it? What do we expect from Turkey? What do we want, and what is the foundation for our fight? Where are we going, and what is our precept for coming generations?*” and thus, implied that the Declaration includes the answers to these questions.

1 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, issue 28, 2013, p. 9.

2 “The Pan-Armenian Declaration On The 100th Anniversary Of The Armenian Genocide Was Promulgated At The Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex”, *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 29.01.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/01/29/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-visit-Tsitsernakaberd-Genocide/>

Sargsyan also indicated that the Declaration is both an ideological basis for the commemoration events of the 100th anniversary and a roadmap for future activities.

1.1) Content of the Declaration

Penned in the format of resolutions by international organizations, the Declaration consists of two parts. The most significant point in the first part are the references to principles, events, and documents. The second part, which can be called “procedure”, includes points that will be done or must be done.

A remarkable statement in the first part is that the crime of genocide cannot go unpunished and statutory limitations cannot be applied to this crime. This part also includes several accusations made against the Ottoman Empire and Turkey without producing any evidence. The issue brought up are nothing new and are for propaganda purposes, and are extreme enough to impede a settlement among Turks and Armenians.

The most important paragraph in the first part is paragraph 9, as it seems to be about territorial demands. The words “appreciating [...] the role and significance of the Sevres Peace Treaty of 10 August 1920 and US President Woodrow Wilson’s Arbitral Award of 22 November 1920 in overcoming the consequences of the Armenian Genocide” stands out. As it is known, the phrase “overcoming the consequences of the Armenian Genocide” amounts to Turkey paying indemnities and returning Armenian properties and territories determined under the Woodrow Wilson Arbitral Award to Armenia. By placing this sentence into the Declaration, Armenian demands are indirectly touched upon. However, this part of the Declaration does not amount to an official demand from Turkey.

The “procedure” part of the Declaration also includes more important matters.

The first paragraph is related to the commemoration of 1.5 million people who were allegedly killed during the alleged Armenian genocide.

In the second paragraph, the commitment of Armenia and the Armenian people to the prevention of genocides, the restoration of the rights of people subjected to genocide, and the establishment of historical justice is confirmed.

In the third and fourth paragraphs, the feelings of gratitude are expressed and it is stated that states and international or religious organizations that recognized and condemned the alleged Armenian genocide are appreciated.

The fifth paragraph, appeals are made to UN member states, international organizations, and all people of good will to unite their efforts aimed at restoring historical justice and paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the alleged Armenian genocide. It is uncertain how the “historical justice” will be restored.

The sixth paragraph is on the collection of legal files regarding the “Armenian genocide” and determination of the norms and principles of international law. This subject is being linked to the worldwide recognition of the “Armenian Genocide” and the elimination of the consequences of this alleged genocide (indemnities, properties and territorial claims) and it is stated that the preparation of a file of legal claims to this end would be the point of departure in the process of restoring individual, communal, and pan-Armenian rights and legitimate interests. Thus, it is understood that Armenia will make several “legal” demands from Turkey on a yet undetermined date.

The seventh paragraph condemns the alleged illegal blockade of Armenia by Turkey, Turkey’s anti-Armenian stance in international organizations, and its imposition of preconditions in the normalization of relations between the two countries. However, what is interesting is the fact that all of these are being linked to things such as the impunity of the “Armenian genocide” that has nothing to do with the issue.

The eighth paragraph calls upon Turkey to recognize and condemn the “Armenian genocide” committed by the Ottoman Empire and to face its own history and memory. Also, in the paragraph, support for members of the Turkish civil society who “dare” to speak out against the official position of the Turkey is also enunciated.

The ninth paragraph expresses the hope that the recognition and condemnation of the “Armenian genocide” by Turkey will serve as a starting point for the historical reconciliation of Armenian and Turkish people.

The points in the tenth paragraph could be considered as “self-praise”. Indeed, in this paragraph, it is stated that the Armenian people, through their unbending will and national self-consciousness, restored the Armenian state; preserved and developed their national values, achieved the renaissance of their national culture, science and education; established a powerful and effective network in the Armenian diaspora, thus contributing to the preservation of their Armenian identity in Armenian communities worldwide and the protection of the legitimate rights of the Armenian people.

The meaning of the phrase in this paragraph that the Armenian people “united and restored the national gene pool that was facing extermination” is not clear. On the other hand, when analyzed “word by word”, it evokes a rather racist approach.

The eleventh paragraph considers the “centennial” an important milestone in the ongoing struggle for historical justice and states that the slogan is “I remember and demand”. This means that the campaign against Turkey will continue in the coming years.

The twelfth and last paragraph contains a message to the coming generations of Armenians. Accordingly, the coming generations of Armenians must protect their sacred native heritage with patriotism and consciousness. Furthermore, they must struggle for a stronger homeland, a free and democratic Republic of Armenia, the progress and strengthening of independent Nagorno-Karabakh, the efficient unity of Armenians worldwide, and the realization of the centuries-old sacrosanct goals of all Armenians.

This is an idealist call and it is disconnected from reality. What is true regarding Armenia is a stagnant economy, a decreasing population, a regime far removed from democracy, a foreign policy controlled by Russia and focused on looking out for Russia’s interests, and a costly Nagorno-Karabakh regime which is kept standing by artificial means.

What is true regarding Armenia is a stagnant economy, a decreasing population, a regime far removed from democracy, a foreign policy controlled by Russia and focused on looking out for Russia’s interests, and a costly Nagorno-Karabakh regime which is kept standing by artificial means.

The truth about the Diaspora is a community who call themselves Armenians, but know nothing or little about the Armenian language, who are unaware of Armenian customs and traditions, and understands Armenianness through a fictitious and pessimistic approach such as “being a member of a community subjected to genocide”.

On the other hand, the truth about the Diaspora is a community who call themselves Armenians, but know nothing or little about the Armenian language, who are unaware of Armenian customs and traditions, and understands Armenianness through a fictitious and pessimistic approach such as “being a member of a community subjected to genocide”.

Sargsyan indicated that this Declaration is both an ideological basis for the commemoration events of the 100th anniversary and a roadmap for future activities. However, it is hard to say that the Declaration is a “roadmap” due

to the fact that it includes very obscure remarks and does not make concrete demands.

1.2) Reactions to the Declaration

The Declaration was generally well-received in both Armenia and the Diaspora. On the other hand, it was disfavored by the Dashnaks. Nevertheless, it was not dwelled on by the media and it was not criticized nor praised much, probably due to its unclear wording.

Turkey, on the other hand, even though it concerns Turkey and might be a future source of disagreement between both countries, did not officially react to the Declaration. The Turkish media, also, did not dwell much upon this document.

Soon afterwards, the Armenian media ceased to speak of the Declaration.

1.3) Ter Petrosyan's objections

Armenia's first President Levon Ter Petrosyan (1991-1998) contested the Declaration, stating the following:³

Although Armenia supports the international recognition of the "Armenian genocide", the issue of recognition of "genocide" should not be the cornerstone of its foreign policy and should not be put in front of Turkey to recognize the genocide claim, considering it to be an internal affair of the latter country. The genocide issue must be solely regarded as a human rights issue.⁴ Other states can call on Turkey to face its own history. However, Armenia must not do the same because that would damage Armenia-Turkey relations. Turkey would recognize the genocide only after such a normalization followed by an atmosphere of trust. Successive Armenian governments have avoided to make territorial claims to Turkey until now despite pressure from nationalist groups, as it will make the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations even more unlikely.⁵

3 "Levon Ter-Petrosyan calls to stop putting pressure on Turkey over 'genocide'", *VestnikKavkaza.net*, 27.03.2015, <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/68525.html>

4 "Levon Ter-Petrosyan: Diaspora Should Draft its own Genocide Agenda: Recognition Not A Cornerstone of Armenia Foreign Policy", *Hetq.am*, 24.03.2015.

5 "Ter-Petrosyan Critique Sarkissian et La Diaspora arménienne", *Armenews*, 12.02.2015.

The Declaration is a document fraught with dangers for Armenia and Karabakh and it cannot express the will of all Armenians unless it is adopted through a referendum.⁶

Ter Petrosyan's objections are in line with his policies towards Turkey during his presidency. He saw the genocide issue and territorial claims as elements impeding the establishment of relations with Turkey or ruining the already established relations. He possessed the opportunity to establish normal relations with Turkey and also tried to prevent Turkey from aiding Azerbaijan, which was an important matter at the time.

The last topic we will touch upon is whether this document is binding or not. The Declaration is not a law. It was not adopted through a referendum, but by the commission on the centennial commemoration at Sargsyan's request. Its bindingness is limited to the Commission's continued existence and President Sargsyan's tenure. In other words, the person succeeding President Sargsyan might not see himself bound to the Declaration and might change or even abolish it.

2) The Withdrawal of the Protocols from the Armenian Parliament

On February 16, 2015, Serzh Sargsyan sent a letter to the speaker of the National Assembly Galust Sahakyan, informing him that he recalled the Protocols signed by Turkey and Armenia in Zurich in 2009 from the National Assembly. He showed Turkey's alleged lack of a political will, its distortion of the letter and spirit of the protocols, its continuous introduction of pre-conditions, and the momentum in its "policy of denial" in the centennial of the "Armenian Genocide" as excuses for his decision.

Even though this behavior was well-received by the Armenian public, the fact that is overlooked is that the Protocols, although they were withdrawn from the Parliament, were not rejected. This provides the Armenian government the opportunity to send the Protocols to the National Assembly and request them to ratify the Protocols at any time later on.

As for Turkey's reaction to this incident, Tanju Bilgiç, spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey stated: "*We do not approve this attitude taken by Armenia. In our opinion, it is a wrong and unfortunate step. This move actually displays Armenia's incoherent and insincere stance it has maintained*

6 "Ter-Petrosyan No Longer Deems Meeting With Sarkisian 'Necessary'", *RFE/RL*, 20.02.2015.

*all along. It could also be regarded as Armenia's effort to create a new reason to accuse Turkey ahead of the 100th anniversary of the 1915 events.*⁷

The Protocols was enabling Armenia to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey and get its borders with Turkey opened. In return, Armenia was not required to abandon its genocide allegations, demands for compensation, or the return of properties. Ultimately, the Protocols are in favor of Armenia and therefore, Armenia cannot be expected to reject these documents completely.

3) Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide

One of the important events organized on the occasion of the centennial was the “International Social and Political Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide”. According to press reports, the Forum, held on April 22 and 23, was attended by over 600 people from 50 countries consisting of political and public figures, representatives of the clergy, journalists, editors, and national media.⁸

President Sargsyan, who made the opening speech,⁹ stating that the Forum was one of the central events to mark the “Armenian genocide” centennial, continued by saying that he hoped that comprehensive discussions would be made and mechanisms would be developed for the prevention of genocide.

Indicating that the recognition and condemnation of the past crimes of genocide play an invaluable role in the prevention of genocide, Sargsyan touched upon the resolution on the Prevention of Genocide (A/HRC/28/L.25) adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 23, 2015 upon Armenia's proposal and said that this resolution condemned the international public denial of the crime of genocide.

A “Yerevan Declaration” was read at the end of the Global Forum.¹⁰ The most remarkable parts of the Declaration in our opinion are as follows:

7 “Dışişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsü Tanju Bilgiç'in Basın Bilgilendirme Toplantısı”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, 17.02.2015, Ankara, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakanligi-soz-cusu-tanju-bilgic_in-basin-bilgilendirme-toplantisi_-17-subat-2015_-ankara.tr.mfa

8 “Two Day International Social and Political Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide”, *Panorama.am*, 22.04.2015.

9 “Address By H.E. Serzh Sargsyan, President Of The Republic Of Armenia, At The International Social And Political Global Forum Against The Crime Of Genocide”, *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 22.04.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/04/22/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-Genocide-global-forum-April-22/>

10 “Global Forum's Declaration read during Armenian Genocide Commemoration”, *News.am*, 24.04.2015, <http://news.am/eng/news/263734.html>

Paying tribute to the memory of the victims of past genocides. The cases regarding Armenians, Pontic Greeks and Assyrians, Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Darfur are listed as past genocides, but there is strangely no mention of the Srebrenitsa Genocide that took place in Bosnia. The cases regarding the Pontic Greeks and Assyrians and the events in Cambodia and Darfur cannot be characterized as genocide in terms of international law, since there are no court verdicts. On the other hand, there is a judgement by the International Court of Justice regarding Srebrenitsa.

The last sentence of the Declaration, which is in our opinion the most significant part of the Declaration, reads “The Forum calls upon the international community on the eve of the Centennial commemorations of the Armenian Genocide to support the continuous efforts aimed at its worldwide recognition” and thus reveals what is expected from the Declaration.

As regards to what sort of a function does the Global Forum’s have regarding the Armenian genocide allegations, it is possible to see it as the final phase of the efforts to carry the struggle of forcing Turkey to acknowledge the alleged Armenian genocide from a bilateral ground to the international arena. Within this context, the Global Forum is closely related to the resolution on the Prevention of Genocide (A/HRC/28/L.25) adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, which we mentioned above. This resolution, with the participation of several other countries, was proposed by Armenia and with its adoption, Armenia gained a primary position in the public opinion on the subject of the prevention of genocide.

4) Canonization of Armenians Who Died During the Armenian Resettlement

In some denominations of Christianity, especially among Catholicism, the church entitles people who strived to protect and develop Christianity and (occasionally) people who died for this cause as “Saint”.

Most saints are people who lived during early centuries of Christianity. The number of saints has declined after Christianity became established and became the official religion in many countries. On the other hand, in recent years, especially during Pope John Paul II’s papacy, there has been an increase in the people who have been canonized. His successors, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis also maintained the same policy.

The tradition of canonizing certain people or declaring them as saint also exists

in the Armenian Apostolic (Gregorian) Church. However, it is understood that this practice has not been implemented in the past four centuries. As in the Catholic Church, there conditions or criteria for canonization in the Armenia Church. These are: 1) Martyrdom for the faith 2) Leading a pious life, 3) Existence of miracles, and 4) Preaching the faith and spreading the belief.¹¹

Certainly, in a setting where the number of 1.5 million is incorrect, and the names of even the more realistic 500-600,000 victims and the conditions under which they lost their lives is unknown, it was not possible to examine each event to see if it fit the criteria for sainthood. In fact, such an endeavor was not even attempted.

It can be said that a record was set by the canonization of 1.5 million people in one day, whereas not a single person was canonized in the previous four centuries.

Presided by Catholicos Karekin II and Catholicos Aram I, the Bishops' Synod of the Armenian Church was gathered on 24 September 2013 in Etchmiadzin and a decision on "the collective canonization of the victims of the Armenian Genocide" was adopted in principle.¹² No information was given on the

specific number of victims and their names at the canonization ceremony on 23 April 2015.¹³ Thus, a new rank of sainthood that can be referred to as "anonymous saints" was created.

On the other hand, it can be said that a record was set by the canonization of 1.5 million in one day, whereas not a single person was canonized in the previous four centuries.

5) Speeches of Armenian Statesmen

It is seen that events regarding the commemoration of the centennial have two political functions. The first is the wide dissemination of the genocide allegations to the world public opinion. The second is putting pressure on Turkey in order to obtain concessions through continuous criticisms and by encouraging others to criticize.

11 "Canonization Ceremony Of Armenian Genocide Martyrs To Be Aired In Greece", *ArmenPress.am*, 12.03.2015, <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/797321/canonization-ceremony-of-armenian-genocide-martyrs-to-be-aired-in-greece.html>. For further information, please see; Michael Daniel Findikian, "From Victims to Victors, the Holly Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide", *Hye-Tert*, 19.04.2015.

12 "Bishops' Synod Considers Canonization of Genocide Victims", *Asbarez*, 30.09.2013, <http://asbarez.com/114512/bishops-synod-considers-canonization-of-genocide-victims/>

13 "Armenian killings were genocide - German president", *BBC*, 23.04.2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32437633>

To this end, President Sargsyan began to utter the genocide theme on every occasion since the beginning of the year 2015, while Foreign Minister Nalbandian was rather active in the international arena. We summarize below their speeches in this regard.

5.1) Speeches of President Sargsyan

Turkey had sent invitations to the heads of state of various countries as well as Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to take part in the commemoration ceremonies to marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli.

Sargsyan responded to the invitation on 16 January 2015 and at the same time, the response was provided to the press.¹⁴ In his response, Sargsyan touched upon Turkey's policy of "denialism", stating that peace and friendship first and foremost shall be based on the courage to confront the past, on historical justice, as well as on recognition of full-fledged universal memory but never on selective approach. He asserted that the purpose of organizing the ceremonies on 24 April, despite the fact that the Gallipoli land battles took place on 25 April was to distract the attention of the international community from the events dedicated to the centennial of the "Armenian genocide". Claiming that Turkey has much more important obligation towards its own people and the entire humanity such as the recognition and condemnation of the "Armenian genocide", he advised President Erdogan to commemorate 1.5 million innocent victims and give the world the message to not forget the "Armenian genocide".

As it is seen, Sargsyan began to attack Turkey in the early days of 2015.

President Sargsyan, who made a long speech at the 5th session of the State Commission on Coordination of the events for the Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide,¹⁵ mentioned the importance of broad participation from abroad and asserted that Turkey took a short-sighted and cynical decision to mark the anniversary of the Gallipoli Battle on the same day of the 100th anniversary of the "Armenian genocide". He stated that although all means were permissible in politics, Ankara had done itself a disservice by taking this decision. He said that when he received that

14 "Armenia President Responds to Erdoğan Invitation", *News.am*, 16.01.2015.

15 "State Commission On Coordination Of Events For Commemoration Of 100th Anniversary Of Armenian Genocide Holds Its Fifth Session", *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 29.01.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/01/29/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-participation-100th-anniversary-of-the-Armenian-Genocide-session/>

“immodest” invitation, he had deemed it necessary to instantly and publicly respond to President Erdoğan in order to prevent it to be misunderstood an misinterpreted by international community and media outlets, and he thought that his response and its repercussions in Turkey had proved the emptiness of the invitation.

Sargsyan indicated that denialism was a manifestation of political weakness and an inferiority complex and it linked present-day Turkish authorities to their predecessors (Ottoman Empire) and rendered them accessory to that gravest crime against humanity.

On 31 January 2015, Turkey’s Presidential Spokesman İbrahim Kalın, speaking to the Anadolu Agency,¹⁶ stated that the Armenian government was trying to

Turkey’s Presidential Spokesman İbrahim Kalın, stated that the Armenian government was trying to turn the year 2015 into an international campaign against Turkey and Turks, and to this end was making statements that contained insults and hate speech that violated diplomatic practices, and were thus unacceptable.

turn the year 2015 into an international campaign against Turkey and Turks, and to this end was making statements that contained insults and hate speech that violated diplomatic practices, and were thus unacceptable. Indicating that Sargsyan’s remarks - unbecoming of a statesman- were returned to him, Kalın stated that Turkey will continue to stand against all attempts to manipulate a one-sided view of history through exploitative politicking.

Touching upon the steps taken by Turkey for the normalization of relations between the two countries (call for the establishment of a “Joint

Historians’ Commission” in 2005, signing of the 2009 Protocols, condolence message by President Erdoğan on April 23, 2015), Kalın said that Armenia, on every occasion, gave no response to these steps by Turkey. He further said that Armenia was welcoming towards neither having a discussion through a fair historical perspective without a political agenda for the events of 1915, nor ending the occupation in Nagorno-Karabakh to normalize its relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan and to establish peace and stability in the region. He stated that this attitude was particularly damaging to Armenia and Armenians and added that long-established Turkish-Armenian friendship will continue to survive despite the provocations of radical groups.

16 “Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sözcüsü Kalın’dan Sarkisyan’a Cevap: “Bir Devlet Adamının Ağzına Yakışmayacak Bu İfadeleri Aynen İade Ediyoruz””, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 31.01.2015, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/2755/cumhurbaskanligi-sozcusu-kalindan-sarkisyana-cevap-bir-devlet-adaminin-agzina-yakismayacak-bu-ifadeleri-aynen-iade-ediyoruz.html>

Stating that Çanakkale land and sea battles have been commemorated on 18 March and 24-25 April for years, Kalın stressed that this year the centennial ceremony would be conducted with the highest participation at the national and international level, and it would issue a message of peace and brotherhood to the world.

Issuing a press release on the same day, the Turkish Foreign Ministry¹⁷ also voiced similar issues and indicated that Sargsyan's tone, which was not fitting of a representative of the Armenian nation, was strongly condemned. The Foreign Ministry diagnosed that the aim was to transform 2015 into a year of hatred against Turkey, that all means of the state were being allocated to this end, and thus, it was sought to prevent the Armenian people and the world public opinion from focusing on the current issues of the country. Another diagnosis is that the attitude of radical Armenian circles to exploit past events was also observed in those who are governing the State. Describing this attitude as archaic, the press release indicated that Turkey did not see this approach as an obstacle for Turkey from embracing the Armenian people and the Armenian diaspora that it saw as the Anatolian diaspora, and indicated that Turkey will resolutely continue to take decent steps in this regard.

“At the Foot of Ararat” is a forum organized each year by the Union of Russian Journalists, the Ministry of Culture of Armenia, and an international organization called Media Congress. It aims to further develop relations between South Caucasus countries.¹⁸

Sargsyan, who attended this forum on 18 March 2015, devoted a majority of his speech to the Armenian genocide allegations.¹⁹ Sargsyan said that they wanted to commemorate the “centennial” with the Turkish people, and therefore, they invited President Erdoğan to honor the memory of the Armenian genocide victims, but they once more encountered “denial”. He indicated that Turkey decided to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli on April 24 in order to distract the attention of the international community from the centennial of the “Armenian genocide”.

17 “No: 45, 31 Ocak 2015, Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı'nın 29 Ocak 2015 Tarihli Beyanı Hk.”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_45_31-ocak-2015_-ermenistan-cumhurbaskani_nin-29-ocak-2015-tarihli-beyani-hk_.tr.mfa

18 “Annual media forum of Russian media “At the foot Of Ararat” takes place place in Armenia”, *MediaCongress.ru*, http://mediacongress.ru/en/proekty/2014_en/mediaforum_of_the_russian_mass_media_at_the_foot_of_mount_ararat/

19 “Address By President Serzh Sargsyan At The 5th Media Forum ‘At The Foot Of Mount Ararat’”, *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 18.03.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2015/03/18/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-speech-Media-forum-speech>

Sargsyan indicated that Turkey's policy of denial set a precedent for the recurrence of new genocides, and efforts to avoid responsibility or consign the "Armenian genocide" to oblivion can be characterized as continuation of the crime and encouragement of new genocides. He added that larger segments of the Turkish intelligentsia and progressive youth, nevertheless, were demonstrating courage to confront their historical past.

Stating that Turkey's policy of "zero problems with neighbors" turned into "zero neighbors and numerous problems", Sargsyan indicated that Turkey's real intention was to impose its own views in its relations with its neighbors, which Sargsyan deemed was a manifestation of Turkey's Neo-Ottoman policy.

In an interview with France 24 on 23 March 2015,²⁰ Sargsyan criticized Turkey's decision to hold events to mark the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Battles at the same time with commemoration ceremonies for the centennial of the "Armenian genocide", and claimed that Turkey was trying to sabotage the "Armenian genocide" centennial ceremonies on 24 April.

President Sargsyan, who gave an interview to Rossiya 24,²¹ said that Turkey did not fulfill its commitments regarding the protocols signed in Zurich in 2009 to establish relations between Turkey and Armenia.

Mentioning that awareness in the Turkish public opinion on the "Armenian genocide" in 1915 was increasing, Sargsyan said, "We see a positive move and we are grateful to those Turkish citizens, who have started the movement."

In an interview he gave to the Italian Corriera Della Sera on 12 April 2015, President Sargsyan said that the reality of the "Armenian genocide" was undisputed and even Ankara recognized the fact that Armenian civilians were killed. Indicating that some countries referred to it as genocide and others referred to it as massacres or tragedy, he claimed that countries who did not recognize acted as such due to their interests with Turkey.

In an interview with CNN Türk on 22 April,²² President Sargsyan claimed that Prime Minister Davutoğlu's statement on 20 April on the "Ottoman Armenians Who Lost Their Lives" aimed at the international public opinion and said, "I

20 "Sarkisyan: Soykırımı anmak Türkiye karşıtlığı değil", *DemokratHaber.net*, 22.03.2015, <http://www.demokrathaber.net/dunya/sarkisyan-soykirimi-anmak-turkiye-karsitligi-degil-h46569.html>

21 "Sarkisyan: Türkiye'ye önköşul belirtmedik", *DemokratHaber.net*, 07.04.2015, <http://www.demokrathaber.net/dunya/sarkisyan-turkiye-ekonomi-belirtmedik-h47309.html>

22 "Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Sarkisyan: Umarım Erdoğan 24 Nisan'da...", *Hürriyet*, 22.04.2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/28809858.asp>

hope President Erdoğan sends a stronger message on 24 April and relations can be normalized“, suggesting that they expected Erdoğan to make a statement apologizing and/or recognizing the genocide allegations.

In an interview with Euronews correspondent Olaf Bruns on 23 April,²³ President Sargsyan said that the recognition of the genocide by the Turks is the shortest path to reconciliation between the two nations and he asserted that if it is done as such, relations would be elevated to a high level in a short period of time.

Regarding Turkey’s proposal to form a commission of historians, Sargsyan stated that he was not aware of a case where historians settled a dispute and he further indicated that he did not know how such a commission would operate since allegedly Turkish historians would be under pressure from Turkish society and Turkish authorities, and Armenian historians would be under the pressure of Armenian society and Armenian authorities. He also said that this proposal was an insult as it questions the veracity of the Armenian genocide.

On 24 April 2015, the newspaper Hürriyet published Cansu Çambel’s lengthy interview with President Sargsyan.

Sargsyan explained the aim of the invitation to the President of Turkey to participate in the commemoration events on April 24 as “giving tribute to the innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide and proclaiming from the memorial to the whole world that we join our efforts in condemning the crimes of genocide of the past, thus preventing the possible recurrence of genocide.”

Regarding the Sub-Commission on the Historical Dimension included in the 2009 Protocols, which Turkey hopes to be an organ in which the genocide issue will be discussed, Sargsyan indicated that this proposal is *only* to delay the process of the “Armenian genocide” recognition, and divert the attention of international community from that crime. He also said that protocols contain no clause of establishing any “commission on historical studies”.

About the question of genocide, Sargsyan stated: “*the veracity of the Armenian Genocide has been studied by various scholars, social and political figures, international law experts, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, lawmakers, and also a number of Turkish historians for about a century now. The unanimous view of all of them was that what happened to the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire definitely constituted genocide.*”

23 ““They did not succeed in erasing us from the earth”: Armenian president interview”, *Euronews*, 22.04.2015, <http://www.euronews.com/2015/04/22/armenian-president-sargsyan-pledges-remembrance-on-massacre-centenary/>

To the question “Does the Republic of Armenia have any territorial claims on Turkey”, he responded: “*The Republic of Armenia has never declared any territorial claims either on Turkey, or any other country since our independence. There has never been such an issue on the foreign policy agenda of our country, and there is none today. That is a clear-cut position. We are a fully-fledged and responsible member of the international community.*”

On 24 April at the Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, in the presence of top state officials and foreign guests,²⁴ President Sargsyan gave a speech similar to ones he makes every year on the “Armenian genocide”. Although he did not use the word Turkey, he explained what happened to Armenian in the Ottoman Empire within the known clichés.

Towards the end of his speech, Sargsyan stated that they were grateful to those who gathered at Taksim Square in İstanbul that day and he asserted that these were people who are standing for the righteous cause for their fatherland (Armenia?).²⁵

It is possible to explain Sargsyan’s -contrary to expectations- lack of use of the words “Turkey” and “Turks” with François Hollande and Vladimir Putin’s attendance and their unwillingness to being a party to remarks that would cause tensions with Turkey.

In an interview he gave to Channel One Russia correspondent Vladimir Pozner on 28 April,²⁶ President Sargsyan said that the “Armenian genocide” was not present-day Turkey’s fault, however Turkey was being an accomplice by denying the alleged genocide. He indicated that they invited Turkey relieve itself of this burden by recognizing “the genocide”.

Touching upon the fact that the US and Israel do not describe the events of 1915 as genocide, Sargsyan stated that these two countries attached more importance to their interests than humanitarian values and they preferred to not offend Turkey due to their interests in Turkey.

24 Four Heads of State attended the ceremonies: Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President François Hollande, South Cyprus President Nikos Anastasiades, and Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic.

25 “President Serzh Sargsyan Pays Tribute To Memory Of Armenian Genocide Victims At Tsitsernakaberd”, *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 24.04.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/04/24/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-Genocide-April-24/>

26 “Erdogan’s visit would have been signal to both Armenians and Turks – Serzh Sargsyan”, *Tert.am*, 28.04.2015, <http://www.tert.am/en/news/2015/04/28/pozner-sargsyan-interview/1659665>; “Atatürk’ün mozolesine çelenk konması bize acı veriyordu”, *Milliyet*, 28.04.2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-ataturk-un-mozalesine-cicek/dunya/detay/2051010/default.htm>

According to Milliyet's report regarding this interview, Sargsyan expressed that they were hurt when the Soviet Foreign Minister laid a wreath at the mausoleum of Atatürk during his visit to Turkey. With such a statement, Sargsyan revealed his racial hatred against Turks.

Apart from this, he indicated that they will approve the protocols as long as Turkey does the same and he reiterated that they do not have any territorial demands from Turkey.

On the dates of 5-7 May 2015, President Sargsyan made a working visit to Washington. However, he was not able to hold bilateral meetings with President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, who are his direct interlocutors.²⁷

In his speech during a prayer performed at the Washington National Cathedral on 7 May,²⁸ Sargsyan reminded that this cathedral was the resting place of President Woodrow Wilson, who also wanted to give lands to Armenia from Anatolia through the Treaty of Sevres, and stated that they have constantly felt the support of the US in their century-long struggle for justice and truth. He praised the US by saying that progressive American public and political figures strongly condemned the anti-Armenian policy of the Sultan and reached out a helping hand to the Armenians.

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As we have tried to explain above, since the beginning of 2015 and especially in March and May, President Sargsyan on many times spoke about the topics of genocide allegations and relations with Turkey. Later, starting from the middle of May, discussions on these topics died out and were kept in the background due to several internal developments in Armenia. Similarly, both the general elections and terrorism in Syria and especially PKK's attacks left the Armenian question off the agenda in Turkey.

Following ISIS's attack to the town of Suruç which killed 28 people, President Sargsyan's letter²⁹ to President Erdoğan, in which he condemned terrorism in

27 "President Serzh Sargsyan Meets With U.S. Senators In Washington DC", *Armenpress*, 06.05.2015.

28 "In Washington President Serzh Sargsyan Takes Part In Ecumenical Prayer In Memory Of Armenian Genocide Victims", *President of the Republic of Armenia*, press release, 08.05.2015, <http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/05/08/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-at-Washington-Church-Armenian-Genocide/>

29 "Armenia Condemns Deadly Blast in Turkey", *RFE/RL*, 21 July 2015.

all its manifestations and conveyed his condolences, was well-received in Ankara.

5.2) Speeches of Foreign Minister Nalbandian

During this period, Foreign Minister Nalbandian touched upon the topic of genocide and relations with Turkey. He also complained about Turkey's support to Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and indicated that Turkey must stay away from this issue if she wants to positively contribute to it.³⁰

With respect to the Protocols, Nalbandian occasionally repeated that Turkey was not respecting the international law principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, in other words, Turkey was not keeping its promise to implement the Protocols.³¹ Since the Protocols were not ratified by both countries, it is not possible to put the blame solely on Turkey.

In a speech he made following European Parliament's resolution dated 15 April 2015 confirming that it recognized the Armenian genocide allegations,³² Nalbandian said: *"It has been clear for a long time that the policy of denial has no perspectives. By recalling ambassadors, by harshly criticizing those states, organizations, which pay tribute to the memory of 1.5 million innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide, and which are raising their voices against denial for prevention of new crimes against humanity, Turkish authorities find themselves more and more isolated on the sinking boat of denialism."*

Another opinion frequently voiced by Nalbandian is that the international recognition of the genocide is an irreversible process. Considering the fact that the genocide claim was for the first time recognized in 1965 by a foreign country (Uruguay) and only 26 countries recognized in 50 years, it is possible to say that at this rate, it will take around 350 years for all countries (approximately 200 countries) to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations.

Another point Nalbandian mentions on occasion is the fact that more and more Turks are starting to question their government's policy of denialism was

30 "E. Nalbandian Met en Gadre l'Europe Contre L'Attitude Négative de la Turquie Dans le Conflit du Karabagh", *NAK*, 20.03.2015.

31 "FM E. Nalbandian's Interview to Sloven Daily Newspaper 'Dnevnik'", Groong.usc.edu, 14.03.2015.

32 "Turkey's increasingly isolated on sinking boat of denialism, says Nalbandian", *ArmeniaNow.com*, 17.04.2015, http://armenianow.com/news/62443/armenia_foreign_minister_nalbandian_turkey_european_parliament_resolution

encouraging for the future. As we will see when we will talk about public opinion polls, the ratio of people in Turkey who recognize the genocide allegations is around 9%. What is more important than the low ratio is the fact that the majority of those who recognize the genocide allegations do as such not because of an humanitarian interest for Armenians who died during and after the resettlement, but in order to use it as a means to criticize or vilify the present order in Turkey.

II – TURKEY’S REACTION, SPEECHES OF TURKISH STATESMEN

1) Speeches of President Erdoğan

Since 2002, the first four month of 2015 is the period where President Erdoğan talked the most on the Armenian question, made detailed speeches and strongly defended Turkey’s policy on this issue. The increase in criticisms and even accusations against Turkey by Armenia and the Diaspora, resolutions passed by countries and institutions and the tendency to do as such by others on the occasion of the centennial seem to be the reason behind this. As the reconciliation efforts towards Armenia and the Diaspora, it is understood that President Erdoğan felt the need to personally join the struggle.

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Below, we summarize President Erdoğan’s most important speeches on the Armenian question.

In his speech at the Ambassadors Conference -held in the first day of January 2015- gathering Turkey’s heads of missions (ambassadors and permanent representatives) in order to review the past year and determine the positions to be taken against issues to be encountered in the coming year, touching upon the Armenian question, President Erdoğan stated that Armenia was imposing its own memory and point of view by reading historical event one-sidedly and politicizing the issue. He further stated: “I’m confident that the Foreign Ministry and other relevant authorities will work in a coordinated and active manner to overcome these claims.”³³

33 “Enerjimizi Güçlü Ekonomiye, Dış Politikaya ve Müreffeh Bir Toplum İnşasına Yoğunlaştırmalıyız”, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 06.01.2015, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/170/91874/enerjimizi-guclu-ekonomiye-dis-politikaya-ve-mureffeh-bir-toplum-insasina-yogunlastirmaliyiz.html>

The fact that President Erdoğan's remarks were reported in the Armenian press with the titles "Erdoğan will combat Armenian 'allegations'"³⁴, "Turkey Will Not Allow the Distortion of Historical Truths, According to the Turkish President"³⁵, "Turkey Vows to Actively Counter Armenian Genocide Allegations"³⁶ revealed that the possibility of Turkey, which continuously sought to reconcile with Armenian and the Diaspora, to oppose the campaign against Turkey in 2015 was concerning them.

In January 29, President Erdoğan answered questions from several Turkish columnists in an interview in TRT.³⁷ Erdoğan said that no positive response was received from Armenia to his condolence message on 23 April 2015, although other foreign leaders expressed their appreciation. He indicated that in his message, he also prayed for the souls of Muslim Turks since the tragedies were not one-sided and Muslims also suffered losses like Armenians. Stating that the Armenian Diaspora was trying to draw Turkey into some sort of a fight, Erdoğan said that Turkey did not have to accept the so-called Armenian genocide because someone told them to do.

President Erdoğan stated that Turkey opened its archives and wanted Armenian and third country historians to study these genocide allegations. Indicating a report would be presented following these studies, Erdoğan said: "*If Turkey is actually guilty, if it actually committed a crime, if there is a price we have to pay, then we will discuss this and take the necessary steps.*" However, he indicated that Armenia was not in such an effort and Armenia was content with saying "Turkey is guilty". He said: "*we should all respect the report of researchers who will be commissioned*".

Erdoğan also indicated that Davutoğlu started a process following the Protocols, in which Switzerland was also involved, however Armenians ran away from the table. He indicated that Armenians were getting resolutions issued in the parliaments of irrelevant countries which, he added, hardly found or will find place in the world.

During his visit to Colombia, in a speech he made in the Externado University of Colombia, President Erdoğan touched upon his condolence message he issued in 23 April and said: "*We have made an effort to fix relations with*

34 "Erdoğan Va Combattre les "Allégations" de Génocide Arménien", *Collectif VAN*, 08.01.2015.

35 "La Turquie ne Permettra Pas de Déformer les Faits Historiques Selon Le Président Turc", *Armenews*, 07.012015.

36 "Turkey Vows to Actively Counter Armenian Genocide Allegations", *Global Post*, 06.01.2015.

37 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Biz Arşivlerimizi Açtık", *Haberler.com*, 30.01.2015, <http://www.haberler.com/cumhurbaşkanı-erdogan-biz-arsivlerimizi-actik -bir-6917107-haber/>

Armenia and open a new page. Unfortunately, our hand of peace has always been rejected by the influence of the Armenian diaspora. On the 100th anniversary of the 1915 events, we repeat our sincere call to Armenia. Let's take this issue out of the area of politics and refer it to scholars and scientists."

Indicating that they invited Armenia to the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli, Erdoğan indicated that this invitation was rejected and thus, doors of dialogue and peace was once again closed. He further said: *"We will not give up on our efforts for peace and dialogue concerning 1915 events."*

Reminding that millions of Muslims lost their lives in conflicts and exiles in the Balkans just before World War I, President Erdoğan said: *"However, we do not accuse anybody of genocide because of that. Commemorating the lost lives is different than trying to yield political and diplomatic results by using them. We support showing respect for memories but we will never allow them to carry out a hostile campaign against our nation and country by using those memories."*³⁸

In a speech he delivered at the Ottoman Archives Congress Center on 19 March 2015, touching upon the Armenian issue,³⁹ President Erdoğan said that the Armenian diaspora was trying to instill hatred against Turkey everywhere in the world through campaigns on genocide allegations and that the purpose of these campaigns were to treat Turkey and Turks as an enemy instead of keeping Armenians' sorrow alive. He indicated that pains and tragedies could be experienced during the years of the Great War and Armenians were not the only people affected by them. He said that the greatest massacres targeting Muslims in the Balkans and in Caucasia happened in the same period and as many as Armenians were harmed, there were hundreds of thousands of people who were harmed by Armenians in Anatolia.

Lastly, Erdoğan indicated that Turkey had nothing that it could account for and said that if Turks' 100-150 years of sorrow were to be examined, far more [suffering] would be found than Armenians allegedly went through.

During an interview conducted by France24's Marc Perelman on 27 March,⁴⁰ in response to the question *"the president of Armenia is accusing you of*

38 "Erdoğan'dan flaş 'Ermeni soykırımı' açıklaması", *TimeTürk*, 12.02.2015, <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2015/02/11/erdogan-dan-flas-ermeni-soykirimi-aciklamasi.html>

39 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: 'Ey Ermeni diasporası, belgelerimiz burada'", *Hürriyet*, 19.03.2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/28494448.asp>

40 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan France24'e Konuştu", *Milliyet*, 28.03.2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-france24-e-konustu-ankara-yerelhaber-696238/>

sabotaging the commemoration of the events by hosting a commemoration in Turkey on the same day—on April 24. What’s your response?”, Erdoğan stated: “Until today, when it comes to the problems between Turkey and Armenia, we have always been the ones to take positive steps. Armenia has never taken any positive steps. We have always extended our hand in peace, but our hand was never met by theirs. Last year, on the 23rd of April, I published a letter. This letter received quite positive feedback, but I did not get the same positive feedback from Armenia. This year, we are commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli land battles. We are not obligated to obtain permission from Armenia to do so. It is a date in history. It is set in history. It is the 100th anniversary of the land battles of Gallipoli, and it has nothing to do with the ceremonies to be held by Armenia.”

In a speech he delivered in Kocaeli on 18 April 2015, President Erdoğan stated that Armenians, who were provoked by the Russians, French, British and others that were active in the region, engaged in provocations against hundreds of thousands of Muslims and thus opened the doors leading to the resettlement. Pointing out that the biggest proof that Turks had no problems with Armenians was the Armenian population of 80,000 in Turkey, many of them living illegally, President Erdoğan said: *“If we had a systematic animosity toward Armenians, we would not have let this happen in the first place.”* Indicating that Turkey fundamentally had no issues with the Armenians, he stated that Armenians in Turkey are able to freely get education, trade, participate in political party activities, become candidates to parliament, and work in the public sector, in other words, they enjoy equal rights possessed by other citizens.

President Erdoğan, who said *“those who have an issue with us and our brothers are the Armenian diaspora and the Armenian state”*, indicated that they, as Turkey, repeatedly extended their hand and expressed their good-will but did not get any result since Armenia was unable to free itself from the Diaspora’s and other countries’ control. Indicating that their doors are still open with regard to relations with Armenia, he said: *“We are for cooperation with Armenia in the event of positive steps regarding the so-called Armenian genocide allegations and the occupation of Karabakh. We are always ready to discuss with Armenian politicians and authorities who are willing to show the necessary will and courage. But first, the Karabakh issue must be resolved.”*

President Erdoğan underlined that Armenians have ended up becoming pawns to the anti-Turkish front and Turkey. He indicated that Turkey’s calls were actually proving the opportunity for Armenians to protect their own will. Stating that Turkey was a true-hearted country, he once more called on Armenians to use this opportunity.

Mentioning the archives issue, Erdoğan said that Turkey's archives were open and asked Armenian and other countries to open their archives. He further said: *“Bring your documents and let us establish a joint commission. Let the commission research and evaluate the issue in all its parts. Let them reach a just memory and let us proceed accordingly.”*

Delivering a speech at the Peace Summit attended by foreign guest and organized in 23 April on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Land Battles of Galipolli, President Erdoğan largely talked about the Armenian issue and emphasized the importance he attached to this issue.⁴¹

Talking about the reasons of the resettlement, Erdoğan said that all qualified men were fighting on the fronts during WWI and therefore, Armenian gangs, provoked by various powers, had launched attacks on civilian people in the somewhat vulnerable Anatolia. He said that the Ottoman Empire, which had experienced similar problems and suffered great losses in Balkans before, in the light of these experiences, felt the need to take measures, one of them being the resettlement of the Armenian population in Anatolia to southern lands. Voicing that Turkey is well aware of the difficulties faced during this process, President Erdoğan stated that it is all recorded in the archives and said: *“I would like to sincerely express that all Armenian allegations concerning the 1915 events, particularly the figures, are baseless, groundless.”*

Erdoğan stated: “It is not the politicians’ or parliaments’ job to investigate these allegations. It is the historians who should examine the period between 1870 and 1920. I invite those who support the Armenian allegations and claim to share their sufferings to share the sufferings of our 4 million brothers who lost their lives at the same period. I want them to remember the pain and sufferings of more than 40 Turkish diplomats, who lost their lives as a result of the attacks carried out by Armenian terrorists between 1970s and 1990s, and the pain of their families”.

Erdoğan stated that of all the 30 million people who died during World War I, only the deaths of Armenians were being highlighted and he added that its use as a means for campaigning against Turkey and the Turkish nation was unacceptable. He further stated: *“[...] Unfortunately, the hand I extended has always gone unreciprocated. [...] It is not the politicians’ or parliaments’ job to investigate these allegations. It is the historians who should examine the*

41 “Öne Sürülen Ermeni İddialarının Hepsı Dayanaksızdır, Mesnetsizdir”, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 23.04.2015, <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/31981/one-surulen-ermeni-iddialarinin-hepsi-dayanaksizdir-mesnetsizdir.html>

period between 1870 and 1920. I invite those who support the Armenian allegations and claim to share their sufferings to share the sufferings of our 4 million brothers who lost their lives at the same period. I want them to remember the pain and sufferings of more than 40 Turkish diplomats, who lost their lives as a result of the attacks carried out by Armenian terrorists between 1970s and 1990s, and the pain of their families. The Armenian terrorist organization ASALA is making threats again. [...] We should stand united in solidarity against international terrorism so that we can protect the rights of the wronged, so that justice and truth can reign over this world.”

President Erdoğan sent a message to the religious ceremony held in the Armenian Patriarchate of İstanbul on 24 April 2015.⁴² (Appendix I)

The purpose of this message is to commemorate all the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives during World War I and extend the President’s condolences to their children and grandchildren. In the message, not only Armenians but also all the Ottoman citizens, regardless of their ethnic and religious identity, are commemorated with compassion and respect.

The message states that the sorrowful events experienced in the past by the Armenian community is known and their pain are sincerely shared. Hereby, the state’s highest-ranking official indicated that Armenians experienced sorrowful events during World War I.

Another significant point of the message is the statement that the Republic of Turkey was established not by forgetting these sufferings but by learning to cope with them, which carries the meaning that what is important is not to keep sorrows alive but to carry on.

Also calling on the diaspora Armenians, the message reiterates Turkey’s good will by stating “please rest assured also that our hearts remain wide open.”

President Erdoğan’s message was read at the ceremony held in the Armenian Patriarchate of İstanbul on 24 April in Kumkapı. The ceremony was attended by EU Minister Volkan Bozkurt to represent the Turkish Government. It was the first time a Turkish minister attended such a ceremony.

In his speech at the General Assembly of Independent Industrialists’ and

42 “Sayın Cumhurbaşkanımızın 24 Nisan 2015 Günü İstanbul Ermeni Patrikhanesi’nde Yapılan Dini Törene Gönderdiği Mesaj”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-cumhurbaskanimizin-24-nisan-2015-gunu-istanbul-ermeni-patrikhanesi_nde-yapilan-dini-torene-gonderdigi-mesaj.tr.mfa

Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) on April 25, President Erdoğan also addressed several countries' approach regarding the Armenian issue.⁴³

Stating that countries, including Russia, France, Germany, Austria, were supporting an allegation based on Armenia's lies and that the US was, unfortunately, joining them, President Erdoğan invited these countries to clean up the bloody stains on their own history.

Addressing German President Joachim Gauck's several statements which we will also address below, Erdoğan indicated that there were nearly 1 million German citizens of Turkish origin and 3 million Turks were living in Germany, therefore Gauck's behavior did not make sense.

Also touching upon Russia, Erdoğan said that more than 10 million people lost their lives due to practices in this country since 1917. He further said that what has happened in the Caucasus and Ukraine was crystal clear. On the other hand, he also pointed out that France's bad record from Morocco to Rwanda was well-known throughout the world.

President Erdoğan said: *“those who criticize the resettlement application for self-defense under World War I conditions must first answer for the blood stains in their own history. While were struggling to defend our nation, they were committing crimes against humanity for their imperialistic purposes.”* He further said: *“Henceforth, the process will be far more different. We will never be on the defensive. We will be a country where information, science and research are put forth with evidence.”*

2) Speeches of Prime Minister Davutoğlu

In this period that we analyze, Prime Minister Davutoğlu have talked to the press several times on the Armenian issue and allegations which became one of the hot topic in the media on the occasion of the “centennial”. Furthermore, he took several steps regarding the minorities in Turkey, especially Turkish Armenians.

In a statement he issued on 19 January 2015 on the occasion of the death of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink (Appendix II), Prime Minister Davutoğlu indicated that the resettlement had inhumane consequences. He also stated that Turkey shared the sufferings of Armenians and, “with patience and resolve”, was endeavoring to re-establish empathy between the two peoples. Within this

43 “Amaçları İmam Hatiplere Kilit Vurmak”, *Hürriyet*, 26.04.2015.

context, he referred to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's message dated 23 April 2015.

One of the most important findings in the statement is the fact that although time froze in 1915 for Armenians, Turkey left behind the generalizations and stereotypical assertions of the past.

Another important point is that it is only Turks and Armenians who can effectively address their issues together and work jointly to find ways forward, as other countries' involvement to Turkish-Armenian relations have, both in the past and today, complicated the problems rather than contribute to their resolution.

The statement also refers to the re-acquaintance between Turks and Armenians, the development of mutual trust and cooperation and re-establishment of friendship between the two people.

In the first months of 2015, Prime Minister Davutoğlu came together with representatives of minorities twice.

At a lunch with Christian and Jewish religious leaders in İstanbul, Davutoğlu criticized the rising Islamophobia and racism in Europe and said: "*We have never attempted any discrimination against our citizens. On the grounds of the fundamental principle of citizenship, the lives, commodities, minds, and honor of our citizens are sacred to us, regardless of religious, sectarian, or ethnic differences.*"⁴⁴

Prime Minister Davutoğlu also said that the principle of equal citizenship will be the fundamental principle in the return of foundation properties. During this meeting, it was also decided to build a new church in Yeşilköy.⁴⁵ According to one source, this is a first in the Republic's history.⁴⁶

One and a half months later, on 11 February 2015, Prime Minister Davutoğlu came together in Ankara Palace with representatives of religious foundations, non-government organization and journals from minorities, which half of them, nearly 40, were Armenian.

44 "Gayrimüslim Ruhani Liderleri Ağırlayan Başbakan A. Davutoğlu, "Türkiye Toprakları ile Musevi İnancı Arasında da Bağ Kurdu", *KeHaber.org*, 03.01.2015, <http://keh Haber.org/2015/01/03/davuto-glu-turkiye-topraklari-ile-musevi-inanci-arasinda-bag-kurdu/>

45 "Davutoğlu İle Azınlık Temsilcilerinin Bir Araya Geldiği Görüşmede, Kilise Yapılması Kararlaştırıldı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 02.01.2015.

46 "MHP'li Vural' dan 'kilise' çıkışı", *GerçekGündem.com*, 04.01.2015, <http://www.gercekgundem.com/siyaset/95036/mhpli-vuraldan-kilise-cikisi->

According to press reports, Prime Minister Davutoğlu, in his speech, said: *“You are genuinely children of this land. You did not come from abroad, you will not be leaving to go abroad. These traditions have lived in this land and they will continue to live in this land. At a time when an ideology where everyone is isolated, where everyone takes refuge in their own neighborhoods, whereas with PEGIDA the Muslims are ostracized in Germany, where Europe is cleansed of Muslims is in existence, know that we will be the first line of defence against anyone who want to cleanse Turkey of any religious congregation.”*

On the Armenian issue, indicating his hope that Turkish Armenians will not be affected by Turkey-Armenia relations, Davutoğlu said: *“If Armenians had withdrawn from at least one district, the border could have been opened. However, there was resistance on this matter.”*⁴⁷

On 20 April 2015, Prime Minister Davutoğlu issued a statement on the “on the Ottoman Armenians Who Lost Their Lives during the Last Years of the Ottoman Empire”, which we provide the full text in Appendix III.

Prime Minister Davutoğlu, as President Erdoğan did one year ago, offered his condolences to the descendants of “innocent” Armenians who lost their lives in World War I.

Furthermore, he stated that it would have been much more meaningful if Turkey and Armenia had been able to commemorate Ottoman Armenians together, history must not be exploited for political purposes, and two nations must understand each other and contemplate a future together. He indicated that it is important to face the past with honesty and the blame should not be laid solely on the Turkish nation. Indicating that the scars left by the exile and massacres that Turkish and Muslim Ottomans were subjected to a century ago were still vivid in minds today, Davutoğlu said that there should be no discrimination between pains suffered. He indicated that memories should not be imposed upon one another and the memories and convictions of all Ottoman citizens must be heard and respect, and he added that every viewpoint must be freely expressed and openly debated. Indicating that century old wounds must be healed and human ties must be re-established once again, the Prime Minister stated that Turkey will do its utmost for friendship and peace. He underlined that, rather than aggravating old wounds, an approach based on just memory and a common peaceful future must be adopted.

47 “Siz bu toprakların asli çocuklarıdır”, *Agos*, 12.02.2015, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/10569/siz-bu-topraklarin-asli-cocuklarisiniz>

As it is seen, this statement is a search for reconciliation and is filled with expressions of goodwill. However, despite the well-known views of Armenians that they were the only ones who suffered, the statement gives utterance to the suffering of Turks and Muslims, and mentions the exile and massacres they were subjected to.

Reactions to Davutoğlu's statement in Armenia and the Diaspora were unfortunately negative. It seems that this reaction was due to the fact that Davutoğlu's conciliatory and peaceful statement was divergent from the aggressive, incriminating, demanding attitude prevailing in Armenia at a time when 24 April was drawing closer.

Speaking at an election rally in Kars on 5 May 2015, Davutoğlu called on the whole Caucasus, especially on Armenia with the following statement: *"From Kars, I would to extend our regards to the Caucasus. Let's solve our differences and discuss history. Let's build peace and a new Caucasus. However, Armenia must also immediately withdraw from occupied Azerbaijani territories and return those territories to their true owners."*⁴⁸

On the other hand, several speeches of Prime Minister Davutoğlu shed light to the contacts he made with Diaspora representatives when he was the Foreign Minister.

It is understood that these contacts were made in Los Angeles⁴⁹ and New York⁵⁰ for the most part. The Armenians who attended these meetings did not want their identities to be made public.⁵¹ Since they wanted to remain unidentified, it could be inferred that these Armenians have no ability to influence the Armenian community. Incidentally, it must be noted that the majority of Armenian Americans are under the influence of the Dashnak Party, but the supporters of the Armenian Assembly of America are out of this influence and lack the ability to reach out to large Armenian masses.

In the aforementioned meetings, Davutoğlu indicated that in World War I, not only Armenians but also Muslims (Turks) suffered pains and declared Turkey's position with the following statement: *"We should not adopt an approach which interprets suffering in a one-side manner and from one perspective. We*

48 "Başbakan Davutoğlu Kars mitinginde konuştu", *NTV*, 05.05.2015, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/basbakan-davutoglu-kars-mitinginde-konustu._Alz1hzbPEayS2dtuPY-bkg

49 "Başbakan'dan muhalefete 'Ermeni Açılımı' eleştirisi!", *SanalBasın.com*, 19.04.2015, <http://www.sanalbasin.com/basbakandan-muhalefete-ermeni-acilimi-elestirisi-9425583>

50 "Başbakan Davutoğlu: İstanbul'un en zengini Ermeni", *Hürriyet*, 22.04.2015.

51 "Ahmet Davutoğlu'dan Diaspora Açıklaması", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 21.04.2015.

must be able to share all sufferings. We exhibit an approach based on understanding each other through mutual sharing in our sufferings and on building a common future. Let us understand history correctly and reflect it to today's politics in a peaceful manner and let's build a future together. This is Turkey's official approach."⁵² However, it is understood that those who were at the meeting did not agree with this and said "let us talk about our sufferings, not yours".⁵³

Prime Minister Davutoğlu expressed that Armenians had been using a language of hate and anger for years and the Diaspora was continuing its existence through this. He indicated that the sufferings and the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans during World War I and the Khojaly Massacre was being made to be forgotten, and he reiterated the proposal to form a joint historical commission.⁵⁴ Stating that the whole goal of the Armenian diaspora is to take revenge,⁵⁵ Davutoğlu stated: "*If you speak with them, they say it is a trap, if you issue condolences, they say it is not sufficient, if you keep your distance from them, they say Turks are not open-minded. So what do they want us to do? We say 'let us share our pain, they say 'no, your pain should be forgotten, you should understand our pain and apologize for it.' We say let us speak amongst each other, they say 'you should first recognize the genocide, then we will talk'. We cannot move on with such a mind-set.*"⁵⁶

Stating that the whole goal of the Armenian diaspora is to take revenge, Davutoğlu stated: "If you speak with them, they say it is a trap, if you issue condolences, they say it is not sufficient, if you keep your distance from them, they say Turks are not open-minded. So what do they want us to do? We say 'let us share our pain, they say 'no, your pain should be forgotten, you should understand our pain and apologize for it.' We say let us speak amongst each other, they say 'you should first recognize the genocide, then we will talk'. We cannot move on with such a mind-set."

Regarding Turkey's stance, Davutoğlu indicated that Turkey will respond if Armenians accuse Turkey of a collective crime (genocide)⁵⁷ and said "*if they think that they could gain something by pressuring Turkey, they will neither gain anything nor will we give up.*"⁵⁸

52 "Başbakan'dan muhalefete 'Ermeni Açılımı' eleştirisi!".

53 "Başbakan'dan muhalefete 'Ermeni Açılımı' eleştirisi!".

54 "Başbakan Davutoğlu: İstanbul'un en zengini Ermeni".

55 "Başbakan Davutoğlu: İstanbul'un en zengini Ermeni".

56 "Ahmet Davutoğlu'dan Diaspora Açıklaması".

57 "Davutoğlu Ermeni Diasporası İntikam Almak İstiyor", *Haberler.com*, 22.04.2015.

58 "Başbakan'dan muhalefete 'Ermeni Açılımı' eleştirisi!".

Another important point Davutoğlu mentions is the fact that the issue would be solved easily if the issue remained between Turks and Armenians, but third parties continuously keep causing provocations regarding this issue.⁵⁹

3) Speeches of Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu also made several statements about the developments regarding the Armenian issue.

In an interview he delivered to Sabah, he pointed out that Yerevan must give back Karabakh territories to normalize ties with Ankara.⁶⁰

During his visit to Azerbaijan, which also coincided with the anniversary of the Khojaly Massacre, Çavuşoğlu said “*Armenia could not pass the sincerity test; we see that they are being malevolent against neighbors,*” and pointed out that Armenia should withdraw from occupied Azerbaijani territories for the protocols to take effect. He indicated that unless Armenia fulfills this condition, the implementation of the protocols was out of question and added that this condition was known to the world. He indicated that Armenia could be included in the regional cooperation mechanisms in the South Caucasus if Armenia corrects its mistakes, withdraws from the territories it occupies, and respects Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity.⁶¹

In a speech on 13 March, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu said: “*Although we [Turkey] repeatedly hold out the hand of friendship, they [Armenia] reject it unkindly. They are at the center of problems in the South Caucasus. Armenia, having problems in its relations with all neighboring countries, must reconsider its foreign policy.*”⁶²

In response to Çavuşoğlu’s remarks, Armenian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Tigran Balayan reiterated Armenia’s common and “classical” attitude.⁶³ This attitude could be summarized as:

- Normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations without preconditions.

59 “Başbakan Davutoğlu: İstanbul’un en zengini Ermeni”.

60 “Turkish Foreign Minister Reiterates Conditions for Opening Border”, *Asbarez*, 20.02.2015.

61 “Dışişleri Bakanı Çavuşoğlu: Ermenistan protokollerin içini boşalttı”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 25.02.2015.

62 “Çavuşoğlu Gündeme İlişkin Soruları Yanıtladı”, *Diyadinnet.com*, 13.03.2015.

63 “Tigran Balayan: Ermenistan, Soykırım gerçeğini asla şüphe altında bırakmaz”, *ArmenianGenocide100.org*, 29.03.2015, <http://armeniangenocide100.org/tr/official-armenian-will-never-question-fact-of-armenian-genocide-3>

- Armenia would never question the “fact” of the Armenian genocide. It would never cease the process of its international recognition.
- Turkey must keep away from the Karabakh issue.

Delivering a speech in April at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington on “Turkey’s Role in a Turbulent Middle East”, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu touched upon relations with Armenia. Indicating that it was easy to convince foreign parliaments to adopt resolutions, he said that these did not help to solve the problem and underlined that Turkey and Armenia should solve the issue together. Touching upon a sensitive issue for Americans, he said that minorities in Turkey were enjoying all rights and mentioned that properties of religious minorities were given back, and churches and synagogues were being renovated.

Stating that Turkey was for the normalization process and that it had spent much effort in this regard since 2009, Çavuşoğlu said: *Of course, this year, Armenia and the Armenian diaspora focus on influencing world public opinion on the events of 1915. So, we are not expecting any positive response from our Armenian friends. But we have to look forward and we need to overcome these issues.*⁶⁴ In his speech, Çavuşoğlu also stated that Turkey took bold steps in the normalization process (President Erdoğan’s message of condolence in 2014 and Prime Minister Davutoğlu’s messages regarding Hrant Dink and those Armenians who lost their lives), that Armenia too needed this normalization, that Turkey would not give up on the normalization and that it would continue to spend effort in this issue.

Reminding that Turkey proposed to Armenia to set up a joint committee of historians and scientist and to open the archives, he said that they proposed third countries to participate in the committee and open their archives.

In an interview with Daily Sabah, Çavuşoğlu indicated that Armenian lobbies’ constant push over the issue of the 1915 incidents onto the agenda every year had created fatigue in Washington, adding that it was no surprise that the number of U.S. representatives who signed proposals supporting Armenian genocide allegations was decreasing.⁶⁵

64 “Çavuşoğlu: Bu sene Ermeni dostlarımızdan olumlu bir karşılık beklemiyoruz”, *Agos*, 21.04.2015.

65 “Turkey, Armenia could mourn together, says FM Çavuşoğlu”, *Daily Sabah*, 22.04.2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2015/04/22/turkey-armenia-could-mourn-together-says-fm-cavusoglu>

III - ARMENIAN ISSUE IN PARTIES' ELECTION MANIFESTOS AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM

1) The Election of Three Armenian MPs

The ceremonies and other events held in Armenia and other countries on the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian Resettlement was pushed on the back burner, even forgotten by the Turkish public due to the general elections held on 7 June 2015 and on 1 November 2015 and the terrorist incidents in that period.

The fact that there are three MPs of Armenian origin in the Turkish parliament is an unprecedented event since half a century and even more. This is due to the small number of the Armenian community that is lacking the numbers to delegate MPs to the parliament. However, since several political parties attach importance to the election of one Armenian from their candidates list, the election of three MPs of Armenian origin was made possible. Incidentally, an interesting, even contradicting, development is the fact that although parties ensured the election of MPs of Armenian origin, they barely mentioned the Armenian issue in their election campaigns.

2) Armenian Issue in Parties' Election Manifestos

Below, we provide passages from the election manifestos of four parties who won seats in parliament at the general elections on the Armenian issue and relevant sections and analyze them.

2.1) Justice and Development Party (AKP)⁶⁶

In accordance with the peaceful settlement of conflicts in South Caucasus, our country will continue to strive for the cessation of the occupation in Azerbaijani territories and Upper Karabakh, and the ending of tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the upcoming period, we will continue steps aimed at normalizing relations with Armenia.

We expect from Armenia to turn towards an inclusionary understanding

66 Source: AKP Manifesto for the June 7, 2015 General Elections, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosyalar#!/2015-secim-beyannamesi-fasikulleri>

in search of a just memory which will pave the way to mutual benefits and cooperation, and to respond to our initiatives in a farsighted manner. We think that an environment of peace, stability and prosperity in the Caucasus can be possible only in this way.

It is seen that Azerbaijan's problems with Armenia are included in AKP's approach to the Armenian issue and Armenia, which is also in line with the Turkish government's policy currently pursued.

It is understood that Turkey's efforts for normalization, despite its initiatives for reconciliation having failed, will continue. However, success of these efforts depends on a change in Armenia's approach on both the genocide allegations and the Karabakh issue.

2.2) Republican People's Party (CHP) ⁶⁷

We will make attempts on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and through negotiations.

We will to aim at the establishment of good-neighbor relations and endeavor to resolve problems between Turkey and Armenia.

It is envisioned to make attempts for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict through negotiations within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, in other words, without giving territories to Armenia. It must be noted that the Azerbaijani government, since the relevant territories are forcibly occupied, asserts that it has the right to "self-defense" in accordance with article 51 of the UN Charter. However, CHP's manifesto gives the impression that it does not include this point.

As for Turkey's problems with Armenia, the manifesto is limited with the statements that it is aimed to establish good neighbor relations and efforts will be made for the resolution of issues with Armenia. On the other hand, CHP's approach is similar to AKP's stance to continue "*steps for the normalization of relations with Azerbaijan*".

⁶⁷ Source: CHP Election Manifesto 2015, <http://yasanacakbirturkiye.com/CHP-SECIM-BILDIRGESI-2015.pdf>

2.3) Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)⁶⁸

European Union

Continuation of accession negotiations and rejection of any approach outside of Turkey's full membership to the EU will form the basis of our policy, on the condition that EU's approach will not harm Turkey's interests on basic foreign policy issue areas such as national unity and integrity of Turkey, terrorism and separatism, Cyprus, Greece, and Armenia. (p. 246)

As it is seen, there is no mention of Armenia other than it being Turkey's "basic foreign policy issue", which is linked to the harm that might be caused by EU's approach during accession negotiations. In other words, it is indicated that Armenia must not gain any advantage during accession negotiations.

2.4) Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)⁶⁹

Facing the Past and Truths

HDP will take necessary steps to establish "Truth Commissions" with the aim of researching genocides, massacres, executions, disappearances, and similar practices that took place in the past and uncovering the truth about these incidents.

It will remove the economic embargo on Armenia, enhance economic, political and diplomatic relations, and build bridges of friendship with the Armenian people. It will unconditionally open the Turkey-Armenia border unilaterally closed by Turkey. It will support efforts the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

HDP's manifesto addresses two subjects.

The first one is the establishment of "Truth Commissions" for "genocides, massacres, executions, disappearances and similar practices that took place in the past", without mentioning the Armenian genocide allegations. It is understood that these commissions will research events, including the

68 Source: MHP 7 July 2015 Election Manifesto, http://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/mhpweb/MHP_Secim_Beyannamesi_2015_tam.pdf

69 Source: HDP 2015 Election Manifesto, <http://www.hdp.org.tr/images/UserFiles/Documents/Editor/HDP%20Se%C3%A7im%0Bildirgesi%20Tam%20Metin.pdf>

suppression of Kurdish insurrections and resettlement of Armenians, and the result they come up with will be “officially recognized” and approved.

However, since many HDP officials state whenever possible that they recognize the Armenian Resettlement as “genocide”, it is surprising that there is no clear statement that HDP recognized the alleged Armenian genocide in the election manifesto. It is inferred from the manifesto that in order to describe the events of 1915 as genocide, a “Truth Commission” must take a decision to that effect.

On the other hand, the idea of “Truth Commissions” is similar to the Turkey’s proposal to Armenia to set up a group of historians and other experts, which is shortly known as “Commission of Historians.” This group was to research the events of 1915 and declare its findings to the world public. As it is known, this proposal was rejected by Armenia.

The second subject addressed in HDP’s manifesto is about relations with Armenia and foresees the acceptance of certain demands by Armenia. These are: the removal of economic embargo on Armenia, and the unconditional opening of the Turkey-Armenia border. Furthermore, it is desired to enhance economic, political and diplomatic relations and build bridges of friendship with the Armenian people. However, it is not clear how relations will be enhanced and bridges of friendship will be built without the resolution of issues such as genocide allegations, rejection of current borders, and occupation of Azerbaijani territories including Nagorno-Karabakh. As to supporting the efforts to resolve the Karabakh issue, manifesto does not put forth any disagreement.

3) Relations with Armenia in the New Government’s Program

The section related to Armenia in the Turkish Government Program announced by Davutoğlu on 25 November 2015 at the Grand National Assembly is below:

“In accordance with the peaceful settlement of conflicts in South Caucasus, our country will continue to strive for the cessation of the occupation in Azerbaijani territories and Upper Karabakh, and the ending of tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the upcoming period, we will continue steps aimed at normalizing relations with Armenia.

We expect from Armenia to turn towards an inclusionary understanding

which research history in search of a just memory and which will pave the way to mutual benefits and cooperation, and to respond to our initiatives in a farsighted manner. We think that an environment of peace, stability and prosperity in the Caucasus can be possible only in this way.”

For the new government, the cessation of the occupation in Karabakh and other Azerbaijani territories is one of the issues that must be resolved. The program indicates that the government will strive accordingly.

As for Turkey-Armenia relations, it is seen that the new government will continue its steps for the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Armenia is expected to turn towards an “understanding that examines history in search of a just memory”. This statement reveals Turkey’s proposal to establish a Commission of Historians in 2005 and/or its desire to discuss genocide allegations within the framework of the “Sub-Commission on the Historical Dimension”.

On the other hand, Armenia is expected to turn towards an “understanding that examines history in search of a just memory”. This statement reveals Turkey’s proposal to establish a Commission of Historians in 2005 and/or its desire to discuss genocide allegations within the framework of the “Sub-Commission on the Historical Dimension”. Yet, as it is known, Armenia is against these as it will open the “fact” of genocide up for discussion.

Turkey, on the other hand, wants Armenia to respond to Turkey’s initiatives and proposals. Furthermore, it is stated that an environment

of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Caucasus can be possible only in this way. In other words, if Armenia continues to be silent over Turkey’s proposals or rejects them, there will be no environment of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Caucasus.

IV - PUBLIC OPINION POLLS

Public opinion polls are important in terms of identifying opinions and trends among the people, and providing governments insight regarding policies they will pursue.

Several researches done in Turkey and Armenia, which we summarize below, gives an idea about what the Turkish and Armenian public think about the Armenian issue and each other’s countries.

1) Research Of The Center For Economics And Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM)⁷⁰

A public opinion poll was conducted by The Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) with 1508 participants on “Turkey’s Potential Policies on the Armenian Issue” between November 7, 2014, and December 7, 2014. Below are the questions asked and the percentages of the answers given:

- *Turkey should apologize for the Armenians that lost their lives in 1915 and admit that what happened was a genocide: 9.1%*
- *Turkey should apologize for the Armenians that lost their lives in 1915 but should take no other steps: 9.1%*
- *Tukey should express its regret over the Armenians that lost their lives in 1915 but should not apologize: 12.0%*
- *Turkey should express that not everyone that lost their lives in 1915 were Armenians and express its regret for all the Ottoman citizens that perished in that period: 23.5%*
- *Turkey should take no steps: 21.3%*
- *No idea/No response: 25.0%*

We can list the conclusions as follows:

Firstly, it must be noted that the percentage of people who accept the Armenian genocide allegations is as low as 9.1%. The poll also shows the political parties supported by the participants. The percentage of people who accept the Armenian genocide allegations and vote for BDP (HDP), which is usually voted by citizens of Kurdish origin, is 24.4%. Excluding those of Kurdish origin, remaining Turkish citizens accept the genocide thesis at a percentage lower than 9.1%, which is very low and shows that a large majority of the Turkish people do not believe the “genocide” assumption, despite the efforts of certain liberal intellectuals supported by the EU and the US.

On the other hand, the percentage of those wanting some kind of a reconciliation with Armenians or a statement of sorrow is as high as 44.6% (9.1% + 12.0% + 23.5% = 44.6%), possibly meaning that there is a desire for a reconciliation with Armenians without recognizing the genocide claim.

70 “Türk kamuoyu Ermeni meselesine üzgün ama...”, *Hürriyet*, 25.12.2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/27841379.asp>.

2) Orc Research On The Armenian Issue⁷¹

The Objective Research Center (ORC) conducted a poll in 17-20 April and tried to identify what Turkish citizens and academics think about Western countries, the European Parliament, and international law (judiciary), and what their general opinion on Armenia is.

The questions asked in the poll and their answers are below:

In your opinion, what is the reason for the West's interest in the Armenian issue and them being a party to it?

Citizens

1. To Create Chaos and Disorder:	18.5%
2. To Discredit Turkey:	15.6%
3. For Religious Reasons-Their Christianity:	9.1%
4. To Take Revenge From Turks:	6.9%
5. Their Common Interests:	6.2%
6. Objection to a Strong Turkey:	6.1%
7. To force Turkey to Give Lands to Armenians:	5.7%
8. Other:	6.5%
9. No Opinion:	25.4%

Academics

To Put Turkey in a Tight Spot - Turcophobia:	52.8%
Religious Reason - Islamophobia:	28.4%
Common Interests:	11.5%
Diaspora:	7.3%

It is not easy to make a comparison since citizens and academics did not answer the same questions. In order to make a comparison between questions, we tried to find the equivalent of the “Turcophobia” question, which was asked to academicians, in the citizens section and when we summed up the percentages of the answers given to questions 1,2,4,6, and 7, we found the same percentage (52.8%) of the answers given to the “Turcophobia” question.

Ultimately, citizens and academics believe that the main reason for the West's

71 “ORC'nin Ermeni Meselesi Anketi”, *SonSeçimAnketi.com*, 28.04.2015, <http://www.sonsecimanketi.com/orcnin-ermeni-meselesi-anketi>

interest in the Armenian issue is “Turcophobia”. The second reason is the fact that Armenians are Christians.

In your opinion, what should be Turkey’s attitude about EU membership following the European Parliament’s statements on the Armenian resolution?

Citizens = C, Academics = A

<i>EU Negotiations Should Be Suspended:</i>	C (62.8%)	A (29.3%)
<i>EU Negotiations Should Be Completely Terminated:</i>	C (28.9%)	A (26.8%)
<i>EU Negotiations Should Continue:</i>	C (6.2%)	A (39.0%)
<i>No Opinion:</i>	C (2.1%)	A (4.9%)

Considering these answers, the opinions of “citizens” about Turkey’s membership to the EU are highly negative, since the total percentage of those who want EU negotiations to be suspended or terminated is 91.7%. It is beyond doubt that the European Parliament’s resolution dated 15 April 2015 had an effect on this. A majority of academics (56.1%) share the same opinion. However, a good part, as high as 39%, want EU negotiations to continue. As is known, the Turkish government is also in favor of the continuation of negotiations.

General Opinion about Armenia

Citizens = C, Academics = A

<i>Friendly Country:</i>	C (-)	A (2.1%)
<i>Enemy Country:</i>	C (32.0%)	A (39.8%)
<i>Neighbor Country:</i>	C (67.8%)	A (56.4%)
<i>No Opinion:</i>	C (0.4%)	A (0.4%)

What is interesting regarding this answers is the fact that the percentage of people who perceive Armenia as an enemy is rather low. The high percentage of people who see Armenia as a neighbor points to a tendency to reconcile with Armenia.

Do you believe that verdicts adopted and to be adopted by the international judicial organs are unbiased?

Citizens = C, Academics = A

<i>Yes:</i>	C (1.3%)	A (1.6%)
<i>No:</i>	C (95.2%)	A (85.4%)
<i>No Opinion:</i>	C (3.5%)	A (13.0%)

These answers confirms the present negative opinions in Turkey against international judiciary.

3) Research of the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC)

A public opinion poll was conducted in Armenia on relations with Turkey at approximately the same period.⁷² However, since questions are very different, in principle, both polls are incomparable.

Below are the answers given to the questions asked in this survey, which was conducted by the organization called The Caucasus Research Resource Centers as part of an EU project to promote direct contacts between the Turkish and Armenian civil societies:

<i>Those who want the opening of the Armenia-Turkey border:</i>	51%
<i>Those who oppose it:</i>	33%
<i>Undecided:</i>	16%
<i>Those who think that the opening of the border would benefit the Armenian economy:</i>	57%
<i>Those who think that the opening of the border would damage Armenia's national security:</i>	50%
<i>Those who think Turkey is untrustworthy:</i>	82%

These answers show that Armenian public opinion is divided over the opening of border with Turkey. While 51% support it and 57% think that it would be beneficial for the Armenian economy, a nearly same percentage of people (50%) think that it would damage their country's national security. The amount of those who look at opening of borders in economic terms and those who look at it from an anti-Turkish point of view are nearly the same. On the other hand, the high percentage of those who think that Turkey is untrustworthy suggests a paranoia in Armenia against Turkey. In short, as a result of the continuous propaganda against Turkey, it is seen that these negative feelings and thoughts prevalent in the Armenian public are at such a level that it could prevent reconciliation, let alone peace, between both countries.

72 "Armenians Divided Over Turkish Border Opening", *RFE/RL*, 21.04.2015.

IV - THE ATTITUDE OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANITIONS AT THE “CENTENNIAL”

In this section, we will examine countries and international organizations who took an attitude in favor of the views of Armenia and the Diaspora and/or recognized the Armenian genocide allegations.

1) The Vatican

The Italian Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who was elected as Pope on 13 March 2013 and took the name Fransiscus (Francis), appeared to have recognized the Armenian genocide allegations and uttered these allegations on various occasions.⁷³

Due to the extremely pro-Armenian climate in Argentina, it was normal in a sense for Cardinal Bergoglio to feel such sentiments. However, his responsibilities had changed as he had become the Pope and should have also considered Turkey’s stance against Armenian genocide allegations. The new Pope, who had no experience outside Argentina and therefore, could not look at certain things globally, came across Turkey’s negative reaction to his remarks regarding the genocide allegations. In

Due to the extremely pro-Armenian climate in Argentina, it was normal in a sense for Cardinal Bergoglio to feel such sentiments. However, his responsibilities had changed as he had become the Pope and should have also considered Turkey’s stance against Armenian genocide allegations.

a statement on 8 June 2013, the Turkish Foreign Ministry indicated that the Pope expressed views reflecting the one-sided opinions of Armenians regarding 1915 events. The Ministry said that reliable factual information was required in order to understand this period and to this end, Turkey had proposed the establishment of a joint commission composed. Indicating that there was no competent international court decision regarding the events of 1915, the Ministry also underlined that there were differing opinions among the scholars on the events. Stating that history should not be exploited for political reasons by passing one-sided judgments, the Ministry indicated that the Office of the Pope had to contribute to world peace instead of bring out enmity from historical events.⁷⁴

73 Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, pp.107-108.

74 “No: 163, 8 Haziran 2013, Papa’nın 1915 Olaylarına İlişkin İfadeleri Hk.”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-163_-8-haziran-2013_-papa_nin-1915-olaylarina-iliskin-ifadeleri-hk.tr.mfa

For Armenians, the support of the Vatican was essential at the centennial of the Armenian Resettlement. Although Pope Jean-Paul had recognized the Armenian genocide by using the word “Metz Yegern” (“Great Calamity”) at a prayer during his visit to Armenian on 2001,⁷⁵ his successor Pope Benedict XVI had kept away from this subject.

In his speech during his official visit to the Vatican on May 2015,⁷⁶ Catholicos Karekin II invited the Pope to visit Etchmiadzin in 2015 on the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian genocide. The pope did not mention this invitation in his reply speech. On the other hand, he referred to the events of 1915 as “tragic events” and mentioned that many Armenians died.⁷⁷

In March, President Sargsyan visited the Vatican and met with the Pope.⁷⁸ A statement from the Vatican only indicated that political issues were discussed. However, some websites reported that Sargsyan had invited the Pope to Armenia for the centennial commemoration ceremonies, which was probably true.

Pope Francis met with President Erdoğan during his official visit to Ankara on 29 November 2015. The next day he went to İstanbul and visited the Patriarchate of Phanar and met with Patriarch Bartholomew. He signed a Joint Declaration with Patriarch Bartholomew that addressed religious/moral subjects more so than other subjects. He also attended the Liturgy for the Feast of St. Andrew and left İstanbul on the third day.

In the plane that had left İstanbul, journalists asked him why he did not bring up the Armenian issue during his visit. Referring to Erdoğan’s condolence message on April 23, the Pope said: *“some judged it to be too weak, but it was, in my judgment, an extending of the hand. And this is always positive. Something that I had very much at heart was the Turkish-Armenian border: if that border could be opened, it would be something good.”*⁷⁹ It seems that the Pope continued to be interested in Turkey-Armenia relations.

With 24 April drawing near, what the Pope was going to do on that date was an object of curiosity. In the end, it appeared that he was going to lead a special

75 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 3, 2001, pp.14-15.

76 “Pope Francis Hosts Armenian Catholicos at Vatican”, *Asbarez*, 08.05.2015.

77 “Papa, Sözde Ermeni Soykırımı Ayini Yapacak İddiası”, *TurkishNY.com*, 13.11.2014, <http://www.turkishny.com/headline-news/2-headline-news/166040-papa-sozde-ermeni-soykirimi-ayini-yapacak-iddiasi#.VdODK7Ltmko>

78 “Sarkisyan’dan Vatikan’a Ziyaret”, *Haberler.com*, 19.09.2014, <http://www.haberler.com/sarkisyan-dan-vatikan-a-ziyaret-6502525-haberi/>

79 “Türk-Ermeni Sınırı Keşke Açılrsa”, *Hürriyet*, 01.12.2014.

mass for the Armenians in St. Peter's Basilica on 12 April. The mass, according to the Vatican, was celebrated for the centenary of the "Armenian Martyrdom" and to proclaim Saint Gregory of Narek, who was an Armenian priest scholar who lived between 950-1005, as "Doctor of the Church".

During the mass, there was no mention of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire, or Turks. The word genocide was used once during a plea to God to accept victims of war and genocide to his presence without referring to Armenians. In general, what will be said during Catholic liturgies is known beforehand and with the exception of prayers, no additions can be made to these. This mass did not have a satisfactory feature apart from its name. In order to make up for this, the Pope (or the Vatican's relevant departments) resorted to the following: before the mass, the Pope issued a message on the occasion of the "the 100th anniversary of Metz Yeghern and Proclamation of St Gregory of Narek (Surp Krikor Naregatsi in Armenian) as a Doctor of the Church".⁸⁰ Before the mass, he also made a speech addressing to those present there.⁸¹ In both the message and the speech, he clearly touched on the subject of genocide. The words "Metz Yeghern" was used twice in the message, in the title and in the first paragraph. In Armenian, this word means "Great Calamity". At the same time, it also comes to mean genocide for Armenians. During his visit to Armenia in 2001, Pope Jean-Paul II, bearing in mind Turkey's sensitivity, had used this word instead of genocide.⁸² Afterwards, President Obama, using the same tactic, had said Metz Yeghern instead of "genocide" in his 24 April messages. However, Pope Francis, in addition to Metz Yeghern, also used the word genocide in his message.

In his speech, the Pope said that the humanity has lived through three massive and unprecedented tragedies. After stating that the first one struck the Armenians (as well as Syriacs, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Pontic Greeks), he indicated the Nazi era as the second and the Stalin era as the third. He also mentioned the more recent massacres and killings in Cambodia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Bosnia. Thus, it is seen that the Pope wanted to categorize events in a biased manner quite contrary to international law.

The only thing in the Pope's message that could be considered as positive are

80 "Message Of His Holiness Pope Francis On The 100th Anniversary Of "Metz Yeghern" And Proclamation Of St Gregory Of Narek As A Doctor Of The Church", *Vatican.va*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150412_messaggio-armeni.html

81 "Pope Francis: Opening address to Armenian Christians during Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday", *IndependentCatholicNews.com*, 12.04.2015, <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27182>

82 Lüttem, "Olaylar ve Yorumlar" (2001), pp. 13-15.

his words about Armenia and Turkey taking up again the path of reconciliation and peace coming to Nagorno-Karabakh. The Pope said that despite conflicts and tensions, Armenians and Turks have lived long periods of peaceful coexistence in the past and, even in the midst of violence, they have experienced times of solidarity and mutual help. He added that this could open a path for the new generations.

Turkey reacted to the Pope's message and speech on the same day. The Turkish government's views on the Pope's statements, outlined in the Foreign Ministry's press release and of which we provide the full text in Appendix IV, was conveyed to the Ambassador of the Holy See in Ankara, who has been summoned back to Turkish Foreign Ministry.

The main points of the Turkish Foreign Ministry's press release can be summarized as follows:

- The statements of the Pope contradict historical and legal facts
- Pope Francis made a discrimination between the sufferings by solely emphasizing the sufferings of the Christians and foremost the Armenians.
- His statements include contradiction to international law.
- Pope's Statements deviate from the remarks he has made during his visit to Turkey at the end of November.
- His statements were made under the influence of the Armenian narrative which persists to derive enmity from history.
- The Pope is expected to support joint approaches and peace.
- The Pope's statements are declared null and void by the Turkey and the Turkish nation, and are rejected.
- Turkish Ambassador at the Holy See, has been called back to Turkey for consultations.

Turkish politicians reacted strongly to the Pope's message and statements. We briefly touch on them below.

President Erdoğan, stating that he greatly regretted that the Pope's description of events experienced by everyone as genocide, said that they will not let historical events be brought out of their own course and turned into a campaign against Turkey and the Turkish nation. Reminding his statement (condolence message) last year on 23 April, he indicated that Turkey was not in an effort to

gain political benefits from sufferings. Erdoğan said that facts needed to be revealed in order to discuss the issue and indicated that it was historians' duty to do this. Indicating that Turkey opened its archives, Erdoğan stated that Armenia and third countries must also open their archives. Stating that no one was willing to do this, he said that there was only an effort to get results from lobbies and parliaments against Turkey. Erdoğan said that whenever politicians, religious functionaries assume the duties of historians, then delirium comes out instead of fact, and he reiterated Turkey's proposal to establish a joint commission of historians. He then condemned the Pope and warned him to not repeat such mistakes.⁸³

In a statement he made the same day with the Pope's speech,⁸⁴ Prime Minister Davutoğlu expressed: *"If there had been no external factors, the painful events of 1915 would probably not have been experienced. It was unbecoming of Pope and his office to read the events of 1915 one-sidedly and hide the tragedies of others by owning the suffering of only a part of humanity."* Stating that he would like to make an appeal to the Pope, Davutoğlu said that the elements which would be ashamed the most would be the ones in Europe if we were to reopen historical cases, and he reminded that the Turkey had been the refuge for Muslims and Jews who had escaped from Spain due to the Inquisition.

Stating that an environment of peace emerges only when sufferings are mutually understood and sufferings are owned with a just memory, Davutoğlu said that the Pope's statements were not only an incorrect and inadequate reading of history, but were also unilaterally owning the sufferings of one group while glossing over the sufferings of the other group. He also underlined that the Pope's statements were giving credence to the increasing racism in Europe and were accusing Muslims and Turks with a collective crime. Davutoğlu emphasized that these statements were unfortunate, incorrect, and inconsistent.

Calling for the establishment of a new era between Turks and Armenians and between Turkey and Armenia, Davutoğlu asked to consider the events of 1915 as a beginning of a new era of friendship where common pains are shared with the understanding of just memory. He indicated that in a period in which all Muslims and Turks in particular are blamed with a collective crime and racism and anti-Islamism are spreading, the Pope's statements were leading a very faulty movement.

83 "Tarihçilerin İşini Din Adamları Aldığı Zaman Oradan Hakikat Değil Hezeyan Çıkar", *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 14.04.2015, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/170/92945/tarihçilerin-isini-din-adamlari-aldigi-zaman-oradan-hakikat-degil-hezeyan-cikar.html> - 14.04.2015

84 "Acıların tek taraflı okumak Papa'ya yakışmamıştır", *Memurlar.net*, 12.04.2015, <http://www.memurlar.net/haber/509733/>

EU Minister Volkan Bozkır said that Pope Francis' statements will go down in history as an historical enmity. He indicated that such unacceptable statements were null and void for Turkey and condemned this statement.

As it is seen, Turkish state officials directed heavy criticisms to the Pope. It is possible to say that the Pope, after his election, was criticized the most on this occasion. Considering the fact that Popes are rarely criticized in the Christian world, the attitudes of Turkish statesmen probably surprised the Vatican and its associates. However, due to the principle of "papal infallibility", Vatican is not expected to make a major policy change.

The reaction by the Turkish press was parallel to the views of government officials. Let's list some examples of newspaper titles: *Hurriyet*: "1915 Crisis with the Pope"; *Habertürk*: "Credence to Racism"; *Milliyet*: "Strong Response to the Pope Who Said 'Genocide'"; *Akşam*: "The Pope Contradicted with Himself"; *Birgün*: "Genocide Crisis with Pope Francis"; *Cumhuriyet*: "The Pope Said 'Genocide', Ankara Govt Angered"; *Milli Gazete*: "He Slandered Turkey as Genocider in Front of the World"; *Sabah*: "Turkey's Anger to the Pope"; *Star*: "Pope! Mind your own business"; *Zaman*: "Ankara's Strong Reaction to the Pope's Statements".⁸⁵

With regard to how reactions from Turkey were received in the Vatican, according to a press report, the Pope responded to criticisms from Turkey by saying "people should say things with frankness, we cannot keep silent about what we have seen and heard."⁸⁶

Answering journalists' questions, Vatican spokesman Rev. Federico Lombardi said: "The Pope always speaks clearly. He referred to the joint declaration made by John Paul II and Karekin II in 2001, that is, he used the term genocide as a quote." Describing the Pope's speech as clear and rich, he indicated that the Pope, at the end of the mass, wished for a reconciliation and dialogue between the Turkish and Armenian people, and said that this was positive.

"We take note of Turkey's reaction, but we have no intention of turning this into a polemic", said Lombardi and added: "Erdoğan's offer to establish a mixed historical commission and the historical archives is interesting. The Pope's intention was open up historical and present debates. He also wants dialogue to be further considered."⁸⁷

85 "Gazeteler Papa'nın Soykırım Açıklamasını Nasıl Gördü?", *Agos*, 13.04.2015.

86 "Papa'dan yeni açıklama: Olayları adıyla telaffuz etmek gerekir", *Agos*, 14.04.2015, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/11266/papa-dan-yeni-aciklama-olaylari-adiyla-telaffuz-etmek-gerekir>

87 "Vatikan'dan Papa'nın 'Soykırım' İfadesine İlişkin İlk Resmi Açıklama", *Doğan Haber Ajansı*, 15.04.2015.

As it is seen, the Vatican spokesman, stating that the Pope did not say anything new and was quoting to the joint declaration in 2001 by John Paul II and Karekin II, tried to tone down Pope's remarks and drop the subject by indicating that he did not want to create a polemic.

As for reactions from Armenia, talking to an Armenian news agency, President Sargsyan said: "I am sure that the Pope's statements will be perceived as stinging by the Turkish government and Turkish leaders. I distinguish the Turkish nation from the Turkish government. I am sure that the Pope's statements will touch the heart and minds of many Turks and will make them once again think of the genocide committed against Armenians and conduce them to relieve themselves from this historical burden."⁸⁸

What were the results of the Pope's 12 April message and speech?

First of all, it is seen that, several parliamentary resolutions on Armenian genocide allegations were adopted more easily in dates close to 12 April following the Pope's statements. Among these are: 15 April resolution by the European Parliament, 14 April resolution by the Chilean Parliament, 14 April resolution by the Foreign Relations Commission of the Czech Parliament, and the 22 April resolution by the Austrian Parliament. German President's speech on 23 April might have been also influenced by the Pope's approach. However, it is not possible to say that each Christian or Catholic country were under such an influence. For instance, this was the case for Italy, in which the Vatican is based, Spain, which is one of the biggest Catholic countries, and the US, which is of particular importance regarding the genocide allegations.

As for Turkey, the reaction against the Pope reinforced the opinion that the 1915 events was not a genocide, which is adopted by nearly %90 percent of the public. On the other hand, the reaction led those who oppose this opinion not to silence but to use a restrained language, even if for a short period of time.

What will be the course of Turkey-Vatican relations from now on?

Before answering this question, we have to examine the nature of the relations. Although the Vatican has a state status, it is not a state in the true sense of the word, but an international religious organization. Therefore, except the fields of religion and occasionally culture, it is not possible to establish relations with

88 "Sarkisyan: Papa'nın sözleri Türk halkının kalbine dokunacaktır", *ErmeniHaber.com*, 13.04.2015, <http://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2015/04/13/Sarkisyan-Papa-n%C4%B1n-s%C3%B6zleri-T%C3%BCrk-halk%C4%B1n%C4%B1n-kalbine-dokunacaktır/55459>

the Vatican on fields such as trade, finance, military, communications, or technology. The fact that 99% of Turkey's population is Muslim restricts relations with the Vatican on the religious field. When viewed from this aspect, Turkey's relations with the Vatican are not so important. Its influence over the Christian world, especially Catholics, provides the Vatican a relative importance. For this reason, Turkey, for many years, did not establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The first embassy was established at the end of 1950s upon the insistence of Roncalli, who served in Turkey for the papacy in the 1930s, after he became the Pope taking the name Jean XXIII.

On the other hand, Turkey is an important country for the Vatican. As Pope Jean-Paul II told me during my Ambassadorship, this importance stems from the following facts: Christianity spread from the territories of present-day Turkey; Christian artefacts from that period, although not as many, still exist; Greek Orthodox Patriarch of İstanbul, who is the spiritual representative of Orthodoxy, resides in İstanbul.

After his accession, the Pope's only request from Turkey was to meet the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (Patriarch Bartholemew who is the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians). His request was granted. From now on, the Pope, in principle, will have no further requests from Turkey. As his predecessors, he will not come to Turkey again. For this reason, it is understood that the Pope feels at liberty against Turkey.

Indeed, despite reactions against his message and speech at the mass on 12 April, the Pope continues to support the Armenian genocide allegations. In his speech at a mass which he co-led with Krikor Bedros XX Gabroyan on 7 September 2015, the Pope said that Armenians suffered for being Christians, and then indicated that in 1915, during the "Armenian genocide", 1.5 million Armenians, Assyrians and Greek Christians were killed and millions more were displaced. Furthermore, he said that Armenians, who he describes as the first nation to convert to Christianity, were persecuted, driven away from their homes and sent into the desert just for being Christians.⁸⁹

It seems that the Pope will continue to do so in the coming period. Within this context, Mar Flavianus Michael Malke, a Syriac Catholic Bishop who was allegedly killed in 1915, was canonized in August.

Furthermore, the publication of documents in the Vatican archives on the Armenian issue from the Abdulhamid Period till the first years of the Republic

89 "Pope Francis Urges Armenian Catholics to Remember Their Martyrs", *Catholic News Agency*, 01.09.2015.

in November 2015, and as expected, its presentation in the Armenian media as the revelation of Armenian genocide documents⁹⁰ are acts that, although indirectly, support the genocide allegations.

In the face of these developments, the Turkish Ambassador to Vatican did not resume his duty.

Lastly, let's point out that an unexpected opposition against the Pope, who recognized the Armenian genocide allegations and began to utter this openly, came from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric stated that the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon considered the killings of Armenians by Turks 100 years ago "atrocities" and was not supporting Pope Francis' description of the killings as "the first genocide of the 20th century".⁹¹

The UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric stated that the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon considered the killings of Armenians by Turks 100 years ago "atrocities" and was not supporting Pope Francis' description of the killings as "the first genocide of the 20th century".

2) European Parliament

The European Parliament's interest in the Armenian issue and genocide allegations is quite old and waxes and wanes in direct proportion to developments in Turkey's candidacy to the European Union. In other words, the European Parliament will continue to be interested in the Armenian allegations to the extent that Turkey's EU candidacy has a future.

2.1) European Parliament's 1987 resolution

Turkey applied to the European Union for full-membership for the first time in 1987. While the European Commission was reviewing this application, the European Parliament adopted a resolution titled "a Political Solution to the Armenian Question".⁹² The merits of the resolution is briefly as follows: the European Parliament recognizes the Armenian Resettlement as genocide within the meaning of the 1948 UN Charter and calls on Turkey to recognize this

90 "Armenian Genocide Documents From Vatican Archives Published In 7-Volume Set", *ArmRadio*, 24.11.2015.

91 "UN Chief won't call 1915 Slaughter of Armenians 'genocide'", *TimesofIsrael.com*, 14.04.2015.

92 For information about under which circumstances this resolution was adopted, see: Pulat Tacar, "Avrupa Parlamentosunun 1987 Yılında Aldığı 'Ermeni Sorununa Siyasal Çözüm' Başlıklı Kararın Öyküsü", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 18, Summer 2005, p. 60.

“genocide”. It is further stated that Turkey refusal to recognize will be an obstacle in Turkey’s full membership route. However it is stated that present Turkey cannot be held responsible for the events and neither political nor legal or material claims (such as indemnities and lands) will be derived from the recognition of this genocide. The Armenian terrorism is also condemned. In this way, the 1987 resolution regarded the recognition of genocide allegations as a “moral” obligation which does not result in material consequences.

The European Union rejected Turkey’s membership application on the grounds that it was not yet ready and the 1987 resolution, which was based on the assumption of Turkey’s membership at that time, ceased to have any relevance.

2.2) Developments Following the Approval of Turkey’s Candidacy

Nearly 10 years later, the 1987 resolution came to the fore again when Turkey reapplied to the European Union for membership and appeared in European Parliament resolutions regarding annual progress reports on Turkey, either as a reference or as a separate item. Beginning from 2008, the Armenian genocide issue disappeared from European Parliament resolutions, probably due to the preparation and signing process of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols.⁹³ The failure of the Protocols did not change this.

Probably due to the European Parliament resolutions of 1987 and 2000, it is seen that there is a belief in the Armenian media that Turkey has to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations in order to become a full member to the EU. However, this is not true since there is nothing about the “Armenian genocide” among the Copenhagen criteria that define the requirements to become a member to the Union. In the event that a Treaty of Accession can be signed in the future, it is unlikely that the European Parliament will oppose this.

2.3) European People’s Party’s Resolution

It was important for Armenia to have a resolution passed in the European Parliament on the occasion of the centennial. In order to achieve this, it is seen that Armenia, instead of attempting to persuade the members of the European Parliament and wait for its impact on the European Parliament, is implementing the strategy of having the European People’s Party adopt a resolution.

93 For information on how the Armenian genocide issue is addressed within the European Union, please see: Deniz Altınbaş, “Avrupa Birliği Kurumlarında ‘Ermeni Meselesi’”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 39, 2011, p. 67.

No political party from Turkey joined the EPP, although Turkey signed an Association Agreement with the EU. On the other hand, along with the ruling Republican Party of Armenia, the Heritage Party, and the Rule of Law Party in the opposition are observer members of the European People's Party. President Sargsyan, as the leader of the Republican Party of Armenia, is attentive to participate and speak in the meetings of the EPP.

Apart from the fact that Turkey is not being represented in the Party, the interest shown to the European People's Party by Armenia has led to a sympathy within the party towards Armenia's stance on issues such as genocide allegations and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The European People's Party, on 3 March 2015, adopted a resolution titled "The Armenian Genocide, Turkish Responsibility, and European Values".⁹⁴

In brief, the resolution condemns "genocidal acts" against the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire and various regimes of Turkey in 1894-1923, the "dispossession" of the homeland of the Armenians, and the "destruction" of the Armenian heritage, and claims that not only Armenian people but also the Pontic Greeks and Assyrians were subjected to such acts.

The resolution invites Turkey to face its history, to recognize, and condemn the "Armenian genocide", to resolve issues relating to the freedom of expression worthy of a European country, to allow references to be made for the "genocide" in state, society, and educational institutions, to repair religious and cultural sites and allow their return to the Armenian and other relevant communities, and to ensure the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations.

Apart from these, the resolution also invites the European Union, its Commission, Council, and Parliament, and the international community as a whole, to recognize 24 April as a day to remember and condemn the "Armenian genocide".

As it is seen, the resolution largely adopts Armenian views. Due to its one-sidedness, it is impossible for this resolution to contribute to the settlement of Armenia-Turkey conflict and the reconciliation between Turks and Armenians in general.

94 "EPP's Resolution is a Serious Blow to Turkish Denialist Policy", ARKA, 03.03.2015; "Avrupa Halk Partisi Soykırımın 100. Yılına İlişkin Bir Tasarı Kabul Etti", *News.am*, 04.03.2015, <http://news.am/tur/news/255195.html>

2.4) European Parliament's Human Rights Report

The European Parliament, on 12 March 2015, adopted the “Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013”.

Article 77 of the report reads as follows: “Calls, ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, on all the Member States to acknowledge it, and encourages the Member States and the EU institutions to contribute further to its recognition.” In short, according to this article, not only will EU members recognize the Armenian genocide assumption, but the European Parliament will also work with other EU institutions for the recognition of the genocide by other countries.

In a statement on 14 March 2015, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that the report included assertions which are devoid of historical reality and legal basis, and therefore was condemned. He indicated that the report interpreted a tragic period of the Ottoman Empire one-sidedly and put forward illogical and unlawful demands.

2.5) European Parliament Resolution on the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide

On April 15, 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution numbered 2015/2590(RSP) regarding the Armenian genocide allegations.

Below, we summarize important points of the resolution:

- tragic events that took place in 1915-1917 represent a genocide as defined in the 1948 Convention,
- the timely prevention and condemnation of genocides should be among the main priorities of the international community and the European Union,
- statements by the President Erdoğan, and the Prime Davutoğlu are welcomed and are a step in the right direction. Turkey should use the commemoration of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide as an important opportunity to continue its efforts, including the opening of the archives, to come to terms with its past and to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and thus to pave the way for a reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples,

- Turkey should realize its obligations for the protection of cultural heritage, and conduct an inventory of the Armenian cultural heritage,
- Turkey and Armenia, taking the examples of reconciliation between European nations into consideration, should give priority to the cooperation between peoples, and support civil society initiatives between the two countries. Both countries should proceed to a normalization of relations by ratifying and implementing, without preconditions, the Protocols and by opening the borders. Both countries should improve relations through cross-border cooperation and economic integration.

This text, in all aspects, pays regard to Armenian demands and does not reflect Turkey's approach in any way, except for the references to President Erdoğan's and Prime Minister Davutoğlu's messages.

The resolution met with strong reaction from Turkey. The reason for this is the fact that European Parliament, which remained silent against Armenian genocide allegations for the past seven years, by taking advantage of the "centennial", took an approach which adopted the Armenian theses.

The relevant reactions could be found below.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in its statement on 15 April escribed the resolution as preposterous which repeated the anti-Turkish clichés of the Armenian propaganda and indicated that they do not take seriously those who adopted this resolution by mutilating history and law. The Ministry said that the participation of the EU citizens with a rate of 42% in 2014 elections already implied the place that this Parliament occupies in the political culture of the EU, and added that this text of unprecedented incoherence was returned to the European Parliament. It was further stated that this selective and one-sided approach of the European Parliament with regards to the 1915 events had the potential to harm the relations between Turkey and EU and fell far behind from bringing a solution to the issue between Turkey and Armenia. It was indicated that the reason behind this was religious and cultural fanaticism and indifference towards others regarded as different.

As for the 1915 events, the Ministry said that Turkey had assiduously fulfilled its duty with regards to memory, and indicated that it hoped that Armenians also achieve such a level of maturity as soon as possible. The Ministry stated that members of the European Parliament would better face up to their own past and remember especially their roles and responsibilities in the most

abhorrent calamities of humanity such as World War I and World War II, well before dealing with the 1915 issue.

Turkish statesmen also reacted to this resolution.

President Erdoğan said that Turkey would ignore any decision by the European parliament qualifying the 1915 events as genocide, because it was not possible for Turkey to accept such a sin or crime.⁹⁵ Later, Erdoğan, calling on Armenians, proposed to leave history to historians and build a new future in the light of common interests and common past.⁹⁶

Prime Minister Davutoğlu also made a statements⁹⁷ and stated the European Parliament could adopt resolutions only when there was a low level of participation and that many of its resolutions lacked seriousness. He added that all manner of racist, anti-Islamic, and anti-Turkish elements had found the opportunity to enter the European Parliament. Davutoğlu said that he told European Parliament President Martin Schulz: *“If we are to open the history of Europe, we would have to discuss what was done in Asia, Africa, Australia, and what happened to the aboriginal tribes that seem have disappeared.”* He said that if Europe wanted to maintain the multicultural, multi-religious status of Europe, the European Parliament had to refrain from making decisions that would provoke hatred against a certain religion or nation based on history. He indicated that this was a move that could provoke the rising trends of anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish sentiments. He indicated that the situation was beyond the Turkey-Armenia and Turkish-Armenian issue and it was another reflection of racism in Europe.

Davutoğlu said that Turkey was ready to develop good neighbor relations with Armenia, provided that Armenia also take steps to develop good neighbor relations with Azerbaijan.

Prime Minister’s statements feature the resentment against the European Parliament resolution, Turkey’s objections against the rising discriminatory trends in Europe against Turks and Muslims, and also the fundamentals of Turkey’s policy towards Armenia, as well as its support to Azerbaijan.

95 “Turkey Cannot Accept Armenian Genocide Label, Says Erdogan”, *The Guardian*, 15.04.2015.

96 “Erdogan Says European Parliament’s 1915 Vote Shows Enmity Against Turkey”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 16.04.2015.

97 “Yeni Yargı Reformu Stratejisi Başbakan Davutoğlu tarafından açıklandı”, *Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/pg_Article.aspx?Id=2d68b3f5-5bb3-42db-a4a1-ceba48d62323

EU Minister Volkan Bozkır, in his statement that touched on the same points,⁹⁸ stated that the European Parliament resolution contradicted historical and legal facts and added that such resolutions were considered null and void by Turkey and Turks. Bozkır further said that the resolution would be returned to the European Parliament by Turkey's Permanent Representation to the EU without even opening its envelope.

As for the opposition parties, Republican People's Party Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stated that European Parliament resolution calling on EU countries to recognize the alleged Armenian genocide were unacceptable, as they constituted political moves that did not serve for the reconciliation of the two people.⁹⁹

Nationalist Movement Party Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, making a statement on the issue,¹⁰⁰ expressed that European Parliament's hostile and one-sided hostile attitude, reeking of ignorance and perversion, was illegitimate and could not be considered as just and felicitous. Stating that no trace of a genocide could be found in the glorious history of the Turkish nation, Bahçeli said that Europe should look at its own history if it was searching for a genocider. He further requested for the withdrawal of President Erdoğan's condolence message on 23 April 2014 regarding the 1915 events, and the immediate suspension of Prime Minister Davutoğlu's message on 20 January 2015.

Upon the initiative of the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Cemil Çiçek, the National Assembly adopted a joint declaration expressing Turkey's reaction to European Parliament's resolution. In the joint declaration, it is stated that the European Parliament resolution was exceptionally unfortunate in all aspects and was condemned regretfully, and that it - emphasized only the pain of Armenians- proved the European Parliament's biased and selective approach. It is further stated that this inappropriate resolution was unacceptable and was considered null and void. Furthermore, it is stated that the European Parliament, by assuming the role of historians and international courts and by rewriting history and arriving at its own verdict on a very serious crime such as genocide, was going against human rights, justice, history, and law.

98 "AB Bakanı Bozkır: Karar yok hükmünde", *T24*, 15.04.2015, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/ab-bakani-bozkir-karar-yok-hukmunde,293673>

99 "TBMM'den Ermeni tasarısını kabul eden Avrupa Parlamentosu'na yanıt", *Milliyet*, 16.04.2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/tbmm-den-ermeni-tasarisini-kabul/siyaset/detay/2045255/default.htm>

100 "Bahçeli: Avrupa Parlamentosu'nun kararı insanlık vicdanına aykırı, paçavra", *Cihan*, 16.04.2015, <http://www.cihan.com.tr/tr/bahceli-avrupa-parlamentosunun-karari-insanlik-vicdanina-aykiri-pacavra-1750021.htm>

In a statement issued by the National Security Council convened on 29 April 2015 under the chairmanship of President Erdoğan, it was indicated that “*the remarks and decisions of some organizations and countries over the 1915 events were evaluated and it was expressed that these remarks and decisions were devoid of historical facts, had political characters and therefore, they were null and void.*”¹⁰¹

As it is seen, European Parliament’s resolution led to resentment and strong reaction in Turkey from nearly all segments. On the other hand, the majority of the few supporters of the Armenian genocide thesis, in the face of these reactions, chose to remain silent for a while.

In our opinion, the main reason for the European Parliament’s recognition of these allegations on the occasion of the “centennial”, which for years did not touch on the Armenian genocide allegations, is the rising Islamophobia in Europe, partly owing to several terrorist acts.

In our opinion, the main reason for the European Parliament’s recognition of these allegations on the occasion of the “centennial”, which for years did not touch on the Armenian genocide allegations, is the rising Islamophobia in Europe, partly owing to several terrorist acts. In such an environment, we believe that, with the rising Islamophobia,

a consensus was reached in the European Parliament to keep Turkey, which is already hard to “absorb” for Europe due to its size and population, from becoming an EU member, and the Armenian genocide allegations were used in this regard.

2.6) The European Parliament’s Resolution regarding the 2014 Progress Report on Turkey

Each year, the European Commission prepares a report called “progress report” that addresses the developments in Turkey regarding its accession to the EU and sends it to the European Parliament for its opinion. As we mentioned above, there was no mention of the Armenian genocide allegations in these reports since 2007.

Within this framework, the 2014 Progress Report on Turkey was discussed in the European Parliament and a resolution about it was adopted on 10 June 2015. The opening section of the resolution included the phrase “*having regard*

101 “Milli Güvenlik Kurulu’ndan açıklama”, *NTV*, 29.04.2015, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/milli-guvenlik-kurulundan-aciklama.GrsL3MBOwE-wzBS_3nbSCg

to its resolution of 15 April 2015 on the centenary of the Armenian Genocide.” Apparently, there was a return to the tradition of referring to Armenian genocide allegations in European Parliament resolutions regarding Progress Reports. This, of course, indicated a decline in Turkey-EU relations.

In a statement on 10 June 2015, the Foreign Ministry indicated that this resolution, with its reference to the Armenian issue, was a one-sided text far from being objective and would not contribute to Turkey’s cooperation with the European Parliament. It was stated that the resolution was not accepted and would be returned, as it contained unfounded allegations against Turkey in many fields.

As we have mentioned above, the European Parliament’s relevant resolutions aim to prevent Turkey’s EU membership. However, such resolutions of the Parliament are advisory. The European Commission and the European Council are the authorized bodies for Turkey’s accession to the European Union. Although there are doubts within these institutions regarding Turkey’s full membership, when conditions change, they adjust to these new conditions accordingly. As a matter of fact, when the need to cooperate closely with Turkey emerged due to the large number of refugees from the Middle East, contrary to the European Parliament’s tendency, a decision to revive Turkey’s accession process to the EU was taken at the EU-Turkey summit on 29 November 2015.¹⁰²

3) Parliamentary Assembly of the Council Of Europe

Comprising of 47 member states, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has 318 members, of which 18 are Turkish. The Armenian genocide allegations or the “centennial” issue was not brought into the agenda of the Assembly. However, 171 members signed a declaration uttering Armenian genocide allegations,¹⁰³ and the Secretariat printed and distributed the declaration, stating that “*it committed only those who have signed it.*”

This declaration is not a Parliamentary Assembly resolution as it was not put on the agenda, discussed and voted, and it only reflects the views of the signees on a specific subject. Notwithstanding its lack of legal status, since the number of signees is more than half of the number of members of the Parliamentary

102 “AB- Türkiye Zirvesi Sona Erdi: Ortak Bildiri Hazırlandı”, *Imctv.com*, 29.11.2015.

103 “Commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian genocide”, *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, written declaration, no. 591, doc. 13770, 16.07.2015, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=22003&lang=en>

Assembly, the declaration, though not legally, has nevertheless a moral significance. However, although Armenian members of the Assembly had employed this method in the past, the signatures they collected was well below the absolute majority of the Assembly.

4) France

France has a special place regarding the recognition of Armenian genocide allegations. President François Mitterand had personally recognized these allegations, and a law regarding the recognition of the events of 1915 as genocide by France was introduced during the presidency of Jacques Chirac. During the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, a law punishing denial of the Armenian genocide was passed but was cancelled by the Constitutional Council of France. His successor François Hollande tried to put this law into force one way or another, but was unsuccessful.

François Hollande's close ties with Armenians has been long known. Hollande, forgetting his presidential duty or tradition to treat ethnic groups in a balanced manner, maintains a partial attitude. What is interesting is the fact that François Hollande has no political reason to support Armenian views to such a degree. Indeed, French Armenians are not a minority group large enough to have a president elected or not elected. Whether Hollande has a personal reason to support Armenians to such an extent is not known.

Prime Minister Valls is a supporter of Armenian views as well, and his support is enough to draw Turkey's objections.

Each year, on 24 April, events are organized to commemorate the "genocide" in various places in Paris. The most important among these is the ceremony held before the statue of composer-priest Komitas, who is presented as a genocide victim, despite the fact that he did not die in 1915 but in 1935 in Paris. This year, while President Hollande was in Yerevan, Prime Minister Manuel Valls attended this ceremony.

"Even today, to ask for peace between Turks and Armenians, to say that the Armenian genocide must be recognized in Turkey can cost your life. This is insupportable and we should say this in front of the world," said Valls during his speech.¹⁰⁴ Emphasizing that denialism was a crime and the government

104 "Manuel Valls: Türkiye'de soykırımın tanınmasını savunmak hayatınıza mal olabilir", *Cihan*, 25.04.2015, <http://www.cihan.com.tr/tr/manuel-vallsturkiyede-soykirim-taninmasini-savunmak-hayatınıza-mal-olabilir-1765102.htm?language=tr>

would fight denialism, he indicated that this should be condemned and should also have a legal consequences (in other words, should be punished). Valls' statements are direct contradiction with ECHR's Perinçek case verdict.

Attending the ceremony in Yerevan on 24 April 2015, François delivered a speech as long as Sargsyan's speech.¹⁰⁵ After explaining the "genocide" process in his own way, he talked about what France has done for the recognition of the "genocide". Since he claims that he does not make a distinction between tragedies, he should have talked about the atrocities committed (especially by Armenians) against the Muslim people of Anatolia during and after the World War I. However, he did not in any way mention this subject during speech.

François Hollande, like many heads of state, was invited to the commemoration ceremonies for the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Battles. France suffered a total of 27,169 casualties, of which 9,798 were killed and 17,371 were wounded, and was the third country with the most losses after Britain and Australia.¹⁰⁶ French battleships sunk in the first days of the war should be included into this. Under normal circumstances, François Hollande should have come to Çanakkale and paid his respects to French soldiers buried there. However, he chose instead to go to Yerevan.

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In a statement on 24 April 2015, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said that François Hollande once again reiterated his support to the Armenian narrative by participating at the ceremony held in Yerevan, which turned out to be an occasion to slander Turkish identity, history, and society. The statement also said that Prime Minister Valls distorted historical facts and violated legal principles during his speech at the event he participated in Paris, and that it was not held with the understanding of cultivating no peace and friendship from history but was rather held to cultivate hostility.¹⁰⁷

105 "Génocide arménien: Discours de François Hollande en Arménie", *Collectif Van*, 25.04.2015.

106 "Gallipoli Campaign", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_Campaign#Casualties

107 "No: 132, 24 Nisan 2015, Fransa Cumhurbaşkanı Hollande'ın Erivan'daki Etkinlikte Yaptığı Konuşma ile Başbakan Valls'ın Paris'teki Açıklamaları Hk.", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_132_24-nisan-2015_fransa-cumhurbaskani-hollande_in-erivan_daki-etkinlikte-yaptigi-konusma-ile-basbakan-valls_in-paris_teki.tr.mfa

Furthermore, it was stated that Hollande, during these ceremonies, once again chose to continue his discriminatory approach by not mentioning that all Ottoman citizens endured tragic sufferings during the process of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

5) Russia

Until now, the conflict between Turkey and Armenian had never affected Turkey-Russia relations. Despite its close relations with Armenia, Russia not giving the impression that it supported Armenia against Turkey had played a major part in this. However, despite Turkey's opposition, President Putin went to Yerevan to attend the 24 April ceremony. In his speech he made at the ceremony, Putin said that Russia had sincere sympathy for the Armenian people, and that Armenians went through one of the greatest tragedies in human history. He stated that 1.5 million Armenians were killed or injured, 600,000 were driven from their homes,¹⁰⁸ and numerous valuable monuments and objects were destroyed.

Putin, indicating that Russia remained resolute in its judgement that there cannot be any justification for mass murder, said that the international community must do everything possible to ensure that these tragic events never happen again.¹⁰⁹

The Russian Duma, in a resolution adopted on the same day, expressed its deep sympathy to fraternal Armenia in connection with the centenary of the "Armenian Genocide" and to other peoples who suffered during the tragic events of the World War I, and emphasized that complex historical issues needed to be resolved by peaceful means.¹¹⁰ Hereby, it must be noted that the Russian Duma adopted a resolution on the Armenian issue for the first time in 1995 and then again in 2005. With the latest resolution, the Duma has adopted a resolution regarding the Armenian genocide allegations in every 10 years.

Turkey reacted strongly to Putin's speech in Yerevan. In its statement on 24 April 2015,¹¹¹ the Foreign Ministry indicated that Putin's labelling of the 1915 events as "genocide", despite all warnings and calls, was rejected and

108 According to Armenian Patriarchate figures, there were 1,914,622 Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in 1914. When 300,000 Armenians who were subjected to relocation are added to the figures given by Putin, the number of Armenians increase to 2.4 million.

109 "Armenia, Armenia Forum", *Topix.com*, <http://www.topix.com/forum/am/armenia>

110 "Russian State Duma Adopts Statement on Armenian Genocide Centenary", *ArmRadio*, 24.04.2015.

111 "No: 129, 24 Nisan 2015, Rusya Federasyonu'nun 1915 Olaylarına Yaklaşımı Hk.", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-129_-24-nisan-2015_-rusya-federasyonu_nun-1915-olaylarina-yaklasimi-hk_.tr.mfa

condemned, and that such political statements, which are flagrant violation of law, were null and void for Turkey. Mass atrocities and exiles in Caucasus, in the Central Asia and Eastern Europe committed by Russia for a century; collective punishment methods such as Holodomor as well as inhumane practices especially against Turkish and Muslim people in Russia's own history were also mentioned, and the resolution adopted by Duma was condemned.

It was also stated that the only thing that Russia could do in this issue was to leave its biased attitude aside and encourage Armenia and Armenians to respond positively to the calls of Turkey for peace and friendship.

President Erdoğan's reaction was also strong. He stated;

*"It is not the first time Russia has used the word genocide on this issue. France has also used a similar word. I am disappointed that Putin took such a step, and I relayed this disappointment to him. Russia should look at its own history if it is to take such a step regarding genocides. What is happening in Crimea is evident. They should first explain these. Turkey never committed genocide."*¹¹²

Russia's response to Turkey's reaction was appeasing. Kremlin spokesman Peskov said that Erdoğan's criticism had been conveyed to the Russian president, and they hoped that relations between Russia and Turkey would develop despite these criticisms.¹¹³

The downing of a Russian plane when it entered the Turkish border from Syria caused a crisis between both countries and a bill on the criminalization of Armenian genocide denial was immediately introduced in Duma by several extremist groups.

6) The United States

Commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Resettlement and events held on this occasion in the US can be discussed in three different levels.

The first one is the centennial commemoration and other events held by American Armenian organizations or individuals. Such events were widely organized all over the US, especially in the states of California and Massachusetts with large Armenian population, in an unprecedented fashion.

112 "Erdoğan'dan Putin'e Sert Cevap", *Yeni Şafak*, 27.04. 2015.

113 "Soykırım' gerilimi, Rusya ile ilişkileri zora sokabilir", *Zaman*, 30.04.2015, http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_soykirim-gerilimi-rusya-ile-iliskileri-zora-sokabilir_2291769.html

The second one is adoption of resolutions recognizing the Armenian genocide in state parliaments or city councils. Such resolutions adopted in connection with the centennial were rather limited, as they were already done before.

The third one is the adoption of resolutions recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations and the characterization of the 1915 events as genocide by both houses of the Congress, the House of Representatives and/or the Senate. In this

There are at least two factual errors in the message. The first one is that “Meds Yeghern” was the “first atrocity” of the century, which is wrong as the first mass killing graver than atrocity was committed against the Herero and Nama peoples by Germans in South-West Africa (modern-day Namibia). The second error is about the allegedly 1.5 million Armenians died during the Armenian Resettlement. There is no evidence supporting this allegation and this number is not a result of a proper calculation.

context, the “centennial” did not influence the Congress or the President, and the current situation did not change. In other words, the Congress did not adopt a new resolution on the occasion of the “centennial” and the President did not use the word “genocide” in his 24 April message.

On the occasion of the “centennial”, Armenian organizations in the US, in order to attract the attention of the public, organized several events. Climbing to Mount Everest, bicycle tours, walking tours, hanging large banners about the “genocide” along highways, concerts by rock star Serj Tankian, programs by reality TV star Kim Kardashian, attendance by famous actor George Clooney to several

events could be counted among these. Furthermore, many documentaries were screened, but no big feature film was filmed about the “genocide” topic. Armenian organizations, due to their disagreements, could not open a genocide museum in Washington despite the building being ready. This deficiency was tried to be removed by including 1915 events to the Holocaust museums owned by Jews.

The “24 April” message issued this year by President Obama was not so different than the messages in previous years. Instead of the word genocide, the word “Meds Yeghern”, which is apparently the equivalent of genocide in Armenian, was used. There are at least two factual errors in the message. The first one is that “Meds Yeghern” was the “first atrocity” of the century, which is wrong as the first mass killing graver than atrocity was committed against the Herero and Nama peoples by Germans in South-West Africa (modern-day Namibia). The second error is about the allegedly 1.5 million Armenians died during the Armenian Resettlement. There is no evidence supporting this

allegation and this number is not a result of a proper calculation. Furthermore, referring to Ambassador Morgenthau, the majority of whose statements have been established to be false,¹¹⁴ is not a proper way to act.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in its statement regarding this message, said that it noted with disappointment that this message was highly far from assessing, based on a just memory, the painful period of the shared history between Turks and Armenians. Indicating that what happened during World War I was as sensitive for the Turkish people as it was for the Armenians, the Ministry said that the message was problematic as it reflected a unilateral point of view, therefore this selective and biased understanding of justice was rejected.

It was further stated that the message of condolences issued by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on 23 April 2014 during his tenure as the Prime Minister, and the subsequent statements made by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu on 20 January 2015 and 20 April 2015, were sincere calls to share, without denying, the sufferings of the past with accurate definitions and attitudes, to collectively and respectfully commemorate all our losses including those of the Ottoman Armenians, and above all to rebuild our common future.

7) Germany

Germany's approach to Armenian genocide allegations have never been uniform and there have always been marked by disagreements.

After World War I, the German public never sided with its ally, the Ottomans, but with instead sided with Armenians due to their Christian identity. As a matter of fact, the jury who tried the Talat Pasha's murderer Tehlirian created a scandalous injustice when it exonerated the aforementioned person despite him having confessed that he killed Talat Pasha knowingly and willfully.

In the years following the war, just like almost everywhere else, the Armenian issue was forgotten in Germany.¹¹⁵ The battalion created by Dashnaks under the German Army in order to fight Russians, despite constituting the proof of Nazi-Dashnak collaboration, still does not get quite noticed today.

Although the Armenian issue and the Resettlement was not remembered after World War II, this issue started to show itself in the 1970's, probably as a

114 For the review of Morgenthau's book see, please see; Heath Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 1990).

115 The accuracy of the remark attributed to Hitler - "Who now remembers the Armenians?", which is still being used by several Armenian authors, is questionable, for it has not been mentioned during the Nuremberg Trials.

byproduct of the reaction against the large number of Turkish workers who moved to Germany and with the support of the Protestant Church. In order to slightly ease the moral burden of perpetrating the genocide of Jews, the idea that the Armenian genocide, not the genocide of Jews, was the first genocide of the 20th century was put forth.¹¹⁶ It is also seen that, in general, during the same period, leftist political movements recognized and supported the Armenian genocide allegations, and certain Turks, such as Taner Akçam, begin to be trained for this issue.

German politicians became closely interested in Armenian genocide allegations with Turkey's candidacy for EU membership and later, the initiation of membership negotiations. Upon the proposal of certain MPs who endeavored to prevent Turkey's EU membership, a long resolution was adopted in the Bundestag (German Federal Parliament) that contained many contradictions and several factual errors. In our opinion, this text, although not including the word genocide, literally acknowledged Armenian genocide allegations.

In the following ten years, the Armenian "genocide" subject, while always being handled academically in line with Armenian allegations, was put on the back burner. In connection with the centennial of the Armenian Resettlement, the issue came to the fore again, but there was no consensus about using it. Christian Democrat Norbert Lammert, who is also the President of the Bundestag, is an example of this. Norbert Lammert, during a meeting to commemorate the "centennial" on 24 April 2015, did not refrain from saying "What happened in the midst of the World War I in the Ottoman Empire, before the eyes of the world, was a genocide."¹¹⁷

On the other hand, Federal Government's approach was different. Answering a parliamentary question on Armenian allegations, the German Foreign Ministry indicated the following:¹¹⁸

- Making an assessment regarding the 1915-1916 events is, first of all, the concern of Turkey and Armenia.

116 It is a known fact that the first mass destruction of the 20th century was perpetrated in the German colony of South-West Africa (modern-day Namibia) between 1904 and 1907, during which around 80.000-100.000 natives from the Herero and Nama tribes were killed by German colonial forces. In 2005, on the centenary of the said event, Germany apologized, but refused to pay reparations. Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, said that the crimes committed by Germans in Namibia must be recognized as genocide.

117 *German Bundestag*, http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/documents/kw17_armenier/371446

118 Hakkı Keskin, "Bundesregierung will keine eigene Gedenkveranstaltung zum Genozid an den Armeniern durchführen", *AGA Newsletter*, Berlin, 23.01.2015.

- We see the establishment of a commission of historians in order to research this issue as a correct approach.
- United Nations Genocide Convention entered into force in 1951. It cannot be retroactively applied.
- The German government does not plan a commemoration event on the occasion of the centennial of 1915/1916 events.

As it is seen, these opinions, in essence, coincide with the Turkish views.

These being the German government's stance, German President Joachim Gauck, who was elected as president in 2012 and who has been intervening in current politics in an unprecedented manner, began to support the Armenians regarding the genocide allegations.

Germany holds a significant place in the Gallipoli Battles due to being the primary ally of the Ottoman Empire. Gauck, although being invited, refused to attend ceremonies on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of these battles.

Joachim Gauck, however, on the same day (24 April 2015), attended a mass commemoration of "the genocide of Armenians, Assyrians and Pontic Greeks" held at the Berlin Cathedral and delivering a long speech, he openly accused the Ottoman government for committing genocide against Armenians and other minorities. Although indicating that the grandchildren (today's Turks) of the perpetrators of the crime cannot be blamed for the crime, Gauck said that they should recognize this crime.

Gauck's speech shows that he does not have clear knowledge on the 1915 events. It also shows that he is unfamiliar with certain rules of international law. According to article 6 of the convention, only a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed or an international penal tribunal can decide whether an act amounts to genocide. Gauck, who said that the 1915 events was a genocide, acted as if he was the court.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in a statement issued on 24 April 2015, regarding Gauck's speech, stated that Gauck, contrary to law and historical facts, did not have the right to attribute on the Turkish people a crime which they have not committed, and it was astonishing that Gauck has also disregarded the opinions of hundreds of thousands of Turkish-German citizens whom he also represents. It is indicated in the statement that Turkish history and identity is an integral part of Turkish-German society, and members of this community would not remain silent against initiatives aimed at defaming their

identity. It is stated that the Turkish nation would not forget and forgive President Gauck's statements.

It is further stated that it was hoped that the Bundestag, which was planning to discuss a resolution on the events of 1915 in the forthcoming days, would take a neutral and constructive stance and would not present an approach which would have long term negative repercussions on Turkish-German relations.

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By taking sides on an issue that does not directly concern his country, Gauck created a new problem between Germany and Turkey. His attitude consolidated the anti-German sentiment of the Turkish public and the majority of Turks in Germany that has become more apparent in recent years arising from Germany's prevention of Turkey's membership to the EU and the discrimination against Turks in Germany on various areas. In brief, Gauck's behavior damaged the relations between Turkey and Germany.

A session to mark the centennial of the 1915 events was held in the Bundestag. A motion prepared by the coalition government stating, "the destiny of Armenians during the First World War constitutes an example for the history of mass destructions, ethnic cleansings, forced deportations and genocides in the 20th century," was submitted in the parliament. However, due to it being found inadequate by the opposition and due to disagreements over a common wording, the motion was not agreed on¹¹⁹ and was returned to the parliament's foreign affairs committee.¹²⁰

8) Belgium

Although the Belgian Senate approved a resolution regarding genocide allegations in 1998, the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, despite all efforts, did not approve such a decision.

119 "German parliament's 'genocide' motion remains undecided", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 24.04.2015, <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/499069—german-parliament-s-genocide-motion-remains-undecided>

120 "Germany ambassador: Armenian Genocide resolution not yet over in Bundestag", *News.am*, 01.06.2015, <http://news.am/eng/news/269588.html>

However, an incident that occurred in 2015 revived the Armenian genocide allegations.

Mahinur Özdemir, a member of the Brussels Regional Parliament, was expelled from her party CDH¹²¹ on 29 May 2015, for refusing to acknowledge the Armenian genocide allegations as “genocide.” Özdemir, who was elected from the CDU in 2009, was the first headscarf-wearing member of the parliament.

It is believed that the CDH, under the influence of the rising Islamophobia, did not want to see a headscarf-wearing person in their party and expelled Özdemir on the under the pretense that she did not recognize the “Armenian genocide”. Thus, they planned to end her political career, or at least to damage it, and in this way receive more votes from “Christian Belgians”.

The commotion created regarding Mahinur Özdemir is actually about Belgian Turks preserving their Turkish characteristics. A columnist wrote that Belgian Turks were under the influence of Turkey, and complained that this prevented Turks from integrating into the Belgian society.¹²² Actually the integration that is referred to in the columnists writing amounts to assimilation. In other words, what is meant here is Turks forgetting their roots and customs and the weakening of their religious beliefs. This fact is not limited to Belgium, and the integration (assimilation) is an issue which exists in Christian countries to which Turks migrated, especially in Germany.

On the other hand, it is possible that the incident regarding Mahinur Özdemir was actually aimed at Emir Kır, who is a very significant political personality in the Brussels region. Emir Kır, who was a minister in the Brussels Regional Government, is currently the Mayor of Saint-Jose, a municipality in the same region. Kır was much criticized for not recognizing the Armenian genocide allegation, however, he was able to successfully maintain his political career.

The two reasons why the Chamber of Representatives did not adopt a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide allegation, whereas the Belgian Senate did, could be summarized as follows: to maintain good relations with Turkey and to avoid a situation that leads to the disturbing of 150,000 Turks in Belgium. However, there have been some major changes lately. It is understood that the Pope’s remarks at the mass on 12 April that echoed in the Catholic world, the European Parliament’s resolution on 15 April, François Hollande’s speech in Yerevan, the fact that all of Belgium’s neighbors recognized the

121 CDH = Centre Démocrate Humaniste (Humanist Democratic Centre)

122 Eric Burgraff, “Analyse ‘Un Nationalisme Turc Pregnant’”, *Le Soir*, 01.06.2015.

genocide allegations,¹²³ and also the rising Islamophobia in Europe which in many cases turned into Turcophobia, prompted the Belgian Prime Minister to do something about this issue.

In a speech he delivered on 18 June 2015, in the Chamber of Representatives,¹²⁴ Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel stated that he believed that the tragic events 1915-1917 should be described as genocide. He also emphasized the importance of a prospective dialogue between Turkey and Armenia.

In a statement regarding Charles Michel's remarks, the Turkish Foreign Ministry stated that his remarks were inconsistent with historical facts and incompatible with international law. The Ministry's statement also said that it was neither acceptable nor justifiable in any way for the Belgian Prime Minister to presume impertinently to pass a judgment on an issue over which there has never been a judicial decision. It is also stated that several political circles in Belgium had practices to obtain political gains through "bashing Turks", comprising of racist, xenophobic and anti-Islamist dimensions. The Ministry indicated that this state of affairs would offend the Turkish community in Belgium and would not make any positive contributions to their further integration, and it was inevitable that this attitude would give rise to unfavorable results in relations between Belgium and Turkey.

Following the Belgian Prime Minister's statement, while political parties forming the government coalition proposed a rather moderate text, the remaining parties endeavored to pass a resolution which extended the definition of the term genocide and asserted that Assyrians, Yazidis, Chaldeans and Pontic Greeks too were subjected to genocide. Ultimately, through Turkey's diplomatic efforts, a lighter text emerged and was approved by a vote of 124 and 8 abstentions.¹²⁵ This very long text included Prime Minister Charles Michel's speech in the Chamber of Representatives on 18 June 2015 and stated that his speech taken into note.

The resolution also states that modern-day Turkey cannot be held responsible for the tragedies suffered by Armenians in the Ottoman era and President Erdoğan's and Prime Minister Davutoğlu's messages, which recognized that Armenians were ill-treated and showed empathy towards them, were positive

123 Genocide allegations were recognized by France in 2001, Germany and Hollande in 2005 and Luxembourg 2015.

124 "Le Premier ministre Charles Michel, au nom du gouvernement belge, reconnaît le génocide arménien", *Sudinfo.be*, 18.06.2015, <http://www.sudinfo.be/1313573/article/2015-06-18/le-premier-ministre-charles-michel-au-nom-du-gouvernement-belge-reconnait-le-gen>

125 "'Soykırım' yasasında Türk imzası", *Gazete Vatan*, 24.07.2015, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/-soy-kirim-yasasinda-turk-imzasi-836021-dunya/>

developments. Furthermore, encouraging Turkey to recognize the “Armenian genocide” in order to pave the way toward a genuine reconciliation between Turkish and Armenian peoples, establishment of diplomatic relations to normalize relations, the approval and implementation of the Protocols without preconditions, opening of borders, and development of relations through cooperation and economic integration in the border zones are the several points included in the resolution.

What is striking in the text of the resolution is the fact that, although Prime Minister Michel openly recognized Armenian genocide allegations, the text only made due by “noting” the Prime Minister’s speech. While mentioning the Armenian genocide several times, the resolution does not state that the Belgian Chamber of Representatives recognized the Armenian genocide. On the other hand, it called upon Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide “in order to pave the way toward a genuine reconciliation.”

The Turkish Foreign, in a statement on 24 July regarding this resolution, indicated that Turkey was unfairly being accused, historical facts were being distorted, and law was being disregarded. The Ministry indicated that the grave picture that emerged with the resolution was being also regretted by the Turkish Belgian community and had reached a stage profoundly affecting bilateral relations. It stated that this resolution and other similar ones did not serve to the interests of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation in any way, and this resolution, ignoring historical facts and the memory of Turkish people, was condemned.

9) Austria

In recent years, Austria have witnessed the conflict between proponents of democracy and human rights on one side, and extreme right-wing and xenophobic groups on the other side. About 80% of Austria’s population is Catholic. Due to the both extreme forms of Catholic and right-wing trends, there is ongoing discrimination against foreigners, especially Turks and Muslims in the country. Ambassador Ecvet Tezcan’s utterance of these issues in 2011, despite being the truth, was not well-received and caused Austrian President Fischer to postpone his visit to Turkey.¹²⁶

Although Austria did not recognize the Armenian genocide allegations, a tendency to do so became apparent when President Heinz Fischer visited the Genocide Memorial and observed a minute of silence during his visit to

126 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 45, 2013, p. 30.

Yerevan on July 2012.¹²⁷ This subject came to the fore once again with the “centennial”. Pope Francis’s speech on 12 April, the aforementioned statements of German President Gauck who has a great influence in Austria, and the belief that the Bundestag will shortly adopt a resolution recognizing genocide allegations removed the reservations of the Austrian Parliament.

On 22 April 2015, a moment of silence was observed to commemorate the victims of the “Armenian genocide”, and on the same day, a joint declaration prepared by six parties indicating “Austria’s duty to recognize and condemn the terrible events as genocide” was issued in the Parliament. The declaration also asked Turkey to confront a dark and painful chapter of its history and recognize the crimes of the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians as genocide.¹²⁸ Since the declaration was not put to a vote, no formal parliamentary resolution was adopted.

On the same day, The Turkish Government expressed its reaction through the Foreign Ministry’s statement. The Ministry indicated that the declaration caused great resentment and that the Austrian Parliament had neither the right nor the competence to accuse the Turkish nation of a crime in a manner contrary to law and historical truth, and Turkey and the Turkish nation would not forget this slander uttered against their history. The statement further indicated that the fact that the declaration did not even care to mention the Muslims who lost their lives during that same period, all the while sharing the suffering of all Christian groups, was a sad and clear indication of religious discrimination.

The statement also indicated that viewing the events of World War I from a one-sided perspective, a selective and discriminative understanding, and describing these events as genocide, was a massacre of law and this behavior was rejected by Turkey. It is stated that it would not be possible to get such a crime, which was not even committed, acknowledged by Turkey.

On the other hand, the statement indicated that the declaration issued by the Austrian Parliament would leave permanent stains on Turkish-Austrian friendship and relations, and the Turkish Ambassador in Vienna would be recalled to Turkey for consultations.

As we will see later on, in the face of Turkey’s reaction, the Austrian Government made statements toning down the declaration.

127 Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar” (2013), p. 30.

128 “Austrian parliamentarians acknowledge Armenian genocide”, *Deutsche Welle*, 22.04.2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/austrian-parliamentarians-acknowledge-armenian-genocide/a-18398976>

10) Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is under pressure to recognize Armenian genocide allegations due to being an EU member. It being influenced by the Pope's partial attitude regarding the Armenian issue could be considered normal, since the large majority of the country is Catholic. On the other hand, it enjoys good relations with Turkey, especially in the economic field, and wants to preserve these relations. Under these contradictory circumstances, the Czech Republic, while tacitly accepting the existence of a genocide, tries to avoid recognizing it legally. For instance, Czech statesmen visiting Yerevan, without declaring that they recognize the genocide, observed a minute of silence at the Genocide Memorial.

During his visit to Armenia on January 2014, Czech President Milos Zeman, going a step further, stated that the coming year was the centennial of the Armenian genocide and 1.5 million Armenians were killed in 1915.¹²⁹

The Czech Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, going a step even further, in its resolution adopted by unanimous vote on 14 April 2015, referring to the resolutions of the states and international organizations that have already recognized the Armenian genocide, condemned genocide denial. In the resolution, the committee also expressed condolences to the Armenian people, and indicated that it was in solidarity with Armenians, Pontic Greeks, Syrians, Assyrians and Yazidis who were allegedly subjected to genocide in the same period were also commemorated in the resolution.¹³⁰

From a legal perspective, it is apparent that statements of foreign ministers and even heads of state are not enough for the official recognition of the Armenian genocide. In this context, the Foreign Affairs Committee's resolution which was adopted by unanimous vote has no meaning or effect as long as it is not adopted by the General Assembly of the Czech Parliament.

11) Bulgaria

Bulgaria's interest in the Armenian issue is based on two reasons. The first one is the presence of an Armenian community which increased in number following the Armenian Resettlement and is estimated to be around 30.000. They are traditionally against Turkey and Turks.

129 "Czech President Recognizes Genocide", *Asbarez*, 31.01.2014.

130 "Çek Cumhuriyeti de Ermeni Soykırımını Tanıdı", *T24*, 15.04.2015.

The second reason is the long-standing nationalist political movement and parties which grew even stronger after the collapse of communism. They are also against Turkey and Turks (especially Bulgarian Turks) and support Armenian genocide allegations in this context. Among these parties, ATAKA stands out today.

These parties made many attempts to have the Armenian genocide allegations recognized by the Bulgarian Parliament. However, they were unsuccessful due to the opposition of governments which attached importance to having good relations with Turkey.¹³¹ The parties then went to a change of tactics and without giving up the efforts to have the Parliament adopt a resolution, tried to have such resolutions be passed in city councils and became partially successful in this. Such resolutions were passed in about ten city councils. However, when Turkish cities that had “sister city” status with these cities suspended this status, some of these Bulgarian cities abandoned their resolutions.

The ATAKA party brought the issue of “Armenian genocide” recognition to Bulgarian Parliament’s agenda in April 2015. However, Prime Minister Borisov stepped in, asking the word “genocide” in the draft resolution to be changed, and claimed that “mass extermination” would be the correct term.¹³² Ultimately, the parliament passed a resolution recognizing the mass extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the 1915-1922 period. In the resolution, it was stated that Bulgaria drew a distinction between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, and supported a dialogue between Turkey and Armenia regarding historical truth. Also, 24 April was declared as “Victims Remembrance Day”.¹³³

In the voting, all parties voted in favor of the resolution with the exception of the Movement for Rights and Freedom, which is predominated by Bulgarian Turks.

In a statement on 25 April 2015, the Turkish Foreign Ministry indicated that this resolution demonstrated an antagonistic attitude towards Turkey, and stated that Turkey rejected this slander against its history. Furthermore, the statement

131 On this subject, please see; Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar” (2013), pp. 31-33. Also see; the “Olaylar ve Yorumlar” sections in the following issues of *Ermeni Araştırmaları*: #20-21 (Winter 2005-Spring 2006), pp 20, 46-47; #25 (2007), pp. 24-25; #27-28 (2007), pp. 35,36; #29 (2007), pp.15-17; #32 (2009), pp. 53-54.

132 “Parliament Passes Resolution on Armenian Mass Extermination in Ottoman Empire in 1915–1922 Period”, *Bulgarian News Agency*, 24.04.2015. In this article, it is stated that Prime Minister Borisov saw the term “mass extermination” and the word “genocide” as being equivalents of each other.

133 “Bulgaristan 1915 İçin ‘Katliam’ Kararı Aldı”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 24.04.2015.

indicates that the Bulgarian Parliament has been taken hostage by the extremist elements within itself, is ignoring the humanitarian and concrete initiatives that Turkey had taken in this historical issue, and that the resolution would negatively affect Turkey-Bulgaria relations.

12) Luxembourg

This small but very rich country of Europe, under the influence of its neighbors' recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations, European Parliament's resolution regarding the "Armenian genocide" and the Pope's 12 April speech, in order to not be isolated, turned onto recognizing the "Armenian genocide".

In a resolution unanimously adopted by the Luxembourg Parliament on 5 May 2015, it is stated that the tragic acts perpetrated against Armenians in the Ottoman Empires was a genocide, and the recognition of the genocide perpetrated against Armenian would be honorable gesture by Turkey. It is also stated that the Luxembourg Parliament agrees with European Parliament's proposal to establish an international remembrance day for genocides. Furthermore, the resolution praised Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's messages. The resolution also indicated that it encouraged Turkey to face its past, and both Armenia and Turkey to work on the normalization of relations.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in its statement issued on 7 May 2015, regarding this resolution, indicated that it condemned and strongly rejected the unfair resolution the Luxembourg Parliament adopted by distorting the historical facts and the law. It indicated that Parliaments would abuse history and law if they put themselves in the place of international courts and try to render judgements on such a serious crime such as genocide. The statement also announced that the Ambassador of Turkey to Luxembourg had been recalled to Ankara for consultations.

As we will see later on, in the face of Turkey's reaction, the Austrian Government made an attempt to tone down the this resolution.

13) The Netherlands

The Dutch Parliament recognized the Armenian genocide allegations on 21 December 2004, and asked the Dutch government to raise this issue within the framework of its dialogue with Turkey.

The very active Armenian community in the Netherlands occasionally tries to have the “genocide” issue discussed in the Dutch Parliament. This was also the case in the “centennial” and a group of pro-Armenian MPs submitted several motions, including one proposing King of the Netherlands and the Prime Minister’s visit to Yerevan on the occasion of 24 April.¹³⁴ However, these motions were overruled, with the exception of the motion calling both Turkish and Armenian to come to an agreement regarding their pasts.¹³⁵

14) Brazil

After genocide allegations became a current issue on the occasion of the “centennial”, Pope’s recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations,

Furthermore, the Ministry explained the political system in Brazil and the Senate’s duties, and told him that the traditional position of the Brazilian government remained unchanged.

although it was with reference to Pope Jean-Paul II, was effective on political circles and as a result, the Brazilian Senate, in a resolution unanimously adopted on 1 June 2015, recognized the Armenian genocide allegations and paid tribute to its victims. It also expressed its appreciation to Brazilians of Armenian descent for their economic, social, and cultural contributions.¹³⁶

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in its statement on 8 June 2015, condemned the resolution of the Brazilian Senate on the events of 1915, which distorted the historical truths and ignored the law, and considered it as an example of irresponsibility. Also, the Turkish Ambassador in Brazil was recalled to Ankara for consultations.

The Brazilian Senate’s resolution apparently put the Federal Government in a difficult position. The Brazilian Foreign Ministry invited the Turkish Ambassador, who had not yet returned to Turkey, and indicated that it regretted Turkey’s decision to recall its ambassador. Furthermore, the Ministry explained the political system in Brazil and the Senate’s duties, and told him that the traditional position of the Brazilian government remained unchanged.

15) Chile

In 2007, the Chilean Senate had adopted a resolution recognizing the Armenian

134 “Hollanda meclisi’nde ‘1915 olayları’ önergeleri”, *Kanal B*, 10.04.2015, <http://www.kanalb.com.tr/haber.php?HaberNo=64857#.VebBQfbtmko>

135 “Ermeni soykırımı için kral gitsine ret”, *Dünya*, 10.04.2015, <http://www.dunya.com/dunya/ulkeler/ermeni-soykirimi-icin-kral-gitsine-ret-258814h.htm>

136 “Brazilian Senate Recognizes Armenian Genocide”, *RFE/RL*, 03.06.2015.

genocide allegations. About 8 years later, this time, the Chilean Chamber of Deputies adopted a new resolution on this subject on 15 April 2015. Expressing solidarity with the Armenian nation, the resolution, in brief, indicated that 24 April 1915 marked the beginning of the systematic extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, and 1.5 million Armenians were killed between 1915 and 1923, which was the first ethnic cleansing of the 20th century.

16) Bolivia

On 26 November 2014, the Bolivian Parliament unanimously approved a resolution condemning all denialist policy regarding the “genocide and crimes against humanity suffered by the Armenian nation”. The resolution also expressed solidarity with the Armenian people for the fight of their claims, the preservation of human rights, and the establishment of justice. President of the Bolivian Senate Zonia Guardia Melgar said that this resolution was approved by the Bolivian Foreign Ministry, and Bolivia offered support to the Armenian and Kurdish people.¹³⁷

The Bolivian senate, in its declaration unanimously approved on 3 June 2015, similarly to the above resolution of the Bolivian Parliament, expressed solidarity with the Armenian people for the fight of their claims, the preservation of human rights, and the establishment of justice, and condemned denialism of genocide and crimes against humanity.¹³⁸

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, as in the case with Chile, criticized Bolivia’s resolution.

17) Argentina

The country which adopted the highest number of resolutions on the Armenian genocide allegations is Argentina. This has affected bilateral relations and an attempt to solve this problem was made with President Cristina Kirchner’s recent visit to Turkey. In Argentina, which was ruled by military dictatorship for years, human rights is regarded as the most important issue and the Armenian issue remains on the country’s agenda as it is presented as a violation of human rights.

137 “Bolivia Legislature Unanimously Recognizes Armenian Genocide”, *Asbarez*, 01.12.2014.

138 “Declaracion Camaral N°.122/2014-2015”, posted on *Armenian-Genocide.org*, http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.456/current_category.7/affirmation_detail.html

President Cristina Kirchner, meeting with representatives of the Armenian community on 14 April 2015, expressed her solidarity with the Armenian people in hundredth anniversary of the “Armenian genocide”.¹³⁹

The city council of Buenos Aires, in its resolution adopted in March 2015, indicated that 1.5 million Armenian were killed in the Ottoman Empire and announced that posters featuring forget-me-not flower logos –the symbol of the “centennial”- would be placed in billboards in the city.¹⁴⁰

Buenos Aires Mayor Mauricio Macri won presidential elections held in Argentina on 22 November 2015. In 2010, Macri, who is long known to support Armenian views, hours before Prime Minister Erdoğan’s visit to Argentina, had canceled the inauguration ceremony of a monument dedicated to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Buenos Aires, causing Erdoğan to call off his visit to the country. Macri continues to make statements regarding Armenian genocide allegations. In 2014, he authorized the allocation of some an area for the construction of an Armenian genocide memorial in Buenos Aires.¹⁴¹

18) Paraguay

Since Paraguay, unlike its neighbor Uruguay, was a country which remained silent about Armenian genocide allegations, Paraguayan Senate’s adoption of a resolution recognizing these allegations on 29 October 2015, came as a surprise.

The text of the resolutions is very short: “The Senate of the Republic of Paraguay recognizes the genocide that Armenians suffered between 1915 and 1923 at the hands of Turkish-Ottoman Empire and commemorates this crime against humanity on its 100th anniversary.”¹⁴²

The fact that Turkey and Paraguay have minimal relations and have not disagreements makes it difficult to understand the adoption of this resolution by unanimous vote. Since the resolution would not benefit Paraguay in any shape or form and only induce Turkey’s resentment, under normal conditions,

139 “Argentina President Expresses Solidarity on Armenian Genocide Centennial”, *Asbarez*, 15.04.2015.

140 “‘Arjantin’den Ermeni Soykırımı Kararı”, *Demokrat Haber*, 15.03.2015.

141 “Argentina’s newly-elected President and Armenian Genocide: review”, *PanArmenian.net*, 23.11.2015, http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/201084/Argentinas_newlyelected_President_and_Armenian_Genocide_review

142 “Mario Nalpanian: Paraguay Realizes that Armenian Nation Should Exercise Its Rights”, *News.am*, 30.10.2015, <http://news.am/eng/news/293561.html>

it is possible to think that the Paraguayan government is not happy with this resolution and sees it as the Senate's interference to the government's powers in the foreign relations.

19) Parlatino

PARLATINO (the Latin American Parliament) is a consultative organ consisting of representatives of parliaments of Latin American countries and several Caribbean states (23 countries). It was established in 1987 and its headquarters is situated in Panama.

In its session on 31 July 2015, PARLATINO, approved with one abstention a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations.¹⁴³

The resolutions of both organizations have no legal value.

Another organization called MERCOSUR (Mercado Comùn del Sur, Güney Ortak Pazarı), which aims to regulate economic cooperation between several Latin American countries, also had recognized the Armenian genocide allegations in 2007.¹⁴⁴

The resolutions of both organizations have no legal value.

20) Syria

Despite the Armenian minority of more than 100,000 in Syria and the fact that a portion of this community looks for every opportunity to act against Turkey, the Syrian government, taking into consideration its relations with Turkey, mostly had not allowed such acts go through in the past. However, after the deterioration of bilateral relations, a change of attitude in this regard was seen in Syria and Hafez al-Assad personally began to mention that 1.5 million Armenians and half a million Assyrians were killed in Turkish lands.¹⁴⁵

President Bashar al-Assad, in his speech on Martyr's Day on 6 May 2015, stated that the Ottoman Empire had carried out executions of Syrian patriots. He also indicated that millions of Armenians, Syrians and members of other groups were killed, giving Cemal Pasha's name, who he described as "butcher".¹⁴⁶

143 "Latin American Parliament Recognizes Armenian Genocide", *PrensaArmenia.com.ar*, 01.08.2015, <http://www.prensaarmenia.com.ar/2015/08/latin-american-parliament-recognizes.html>

144 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Olaylar ve Yorumlar", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 27-28, 2007, pp. 37.

145 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Olaylar ve Yorumlar", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 49, 2014, pp. 42-43.

146 "Bashar al-Assad Mentions Armenian genocide in his Martyrs Day Address", *ArmenPress*, 07.05.2015.

Although it was reported in media outlets that Syria would recognize the Armenian genocide allegations,¹⁴⁷ such a thing did not happen.

21) Israel

Israel is country that has hesitations on recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations. Bilateral relations that can be considered as “bad” due to both the Palestine issue and the “Mavi Marmara” incident led certain circles in Israel to advocate the recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations. However, Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli Foreign Ministry, believing that such an act would worsen the problems with Turkey, do not lean towards doing this. Ultimately, the recognition of the Armenian “genocide” is occasionally brought up in the Israeli Parliament to threaten Turkey. However, related proposals come and go between commissions without any decisions taken, and no one in Turkey is being affect from this situation.

Although President Reuven Rivlin believes that the Armenian genocide happened and said this prior to becoming president, he acts as if he does not want to use the word genocide in his new post.

22) Armenia

“Centennial” commemoration ceremonies and events kept the Armenian public occupied from the beginning of March till the end of May of 2015. However, despite discourses that these would continue for a long time, the events began to drop to the back burner, and virtually disappeared by autumn.

It is seen that the main purpose of these ceremonies and events was not to mourn, but to disseminate the narrative that there was an Armenian genocide which was perpetrated by the Ottomans (Turks), and the removal of the consequences of genocide in order to administer justice which would be possible through support for Turkey’s fulfillment of certain political demands: the recognition of the Armenian genocide; an apology; the opening of borders; indemnities; if possible, Armenia’s annexation of some territories in Eastern Anatolia or the provision of certain privileges to Armenians in that region.

Ceremonies and other events held in 2015 on the occasion of 24 April were basically not so different from previous years, there was only an increase in their number. In order to attract the attention of the public, several foreign

147 “Beşar Esad Yakında Ermeni soykırımını tanıyacağını bildirdi”, *ErmeniHaber.am*, 01.06.2015.

statesmen and celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, who is famous especially in the US, were invited to these events.

Apart from the Presidents of France and Russia, no well-known statesmen attended the ceremonies. The attendance of the Greek Cypriot Administration leader and Serbian President did not draw any attention and was even ignored. There was also no high-level participation from Armenia's neighbors. The lack of participation from Turkey and Azerbaijan due to known reasons was considered normal. However, the fact that there was no high level participation was observed to create displeasure. On the other hand, the non-attendance of the Russian Orthodox Patriarch to the canonization ceremony of 1.5 million Armenians who were allegedly killed during the Resettlement also drew attention, and although no statement was made about this, gave rise to the thought that this was due to the fact that this canonization did not suit religious rules. Furthermore, the fact that the Deputy Patriarch of the Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate of the Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate did not come to the ceremonies from Turkey, in which the Armenian Resettlement occurred and about 60,000 Armenians live, also drew attention.

On the other hand, with 17 heads of state, 3 parliament speakers, 5 prime ministers and 28 ministers, the attendance to the ceremonies held in Çanakkale was incomparably high.

On the other hand, with 17 heads of state, 3 parliament speakers, 5 prime ministers and 28 ministers, the attendance to the ceremonies held in Çanakkale was incomparably high.¹⁴⁸

It is seen that every opportunity was used in order to propagate the Armenian genocide allegations. For instance, Armenia tried to participate in the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest with the song "Don't Deny", but, upon Turkey's objection, the name of the song was changed. Another method used to draw the attention of the public was bringing celebrities popular in the US such as Kim Kardashian, Serj Tankian, and Conan O'Brien. The opinion that such people, especially Kim Kardashian, have an influence over large masses is actually accurate. However, people who follow Kim Kardashian closely are rather young and have no interest in politics. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that they learning about the genocide allegations will bear political results.

Ultimately, although Hollande and Putin were present in the ceremonies, 24

148 "Dünyanın Gözü Türkiye'de! Çanakkale'de 100. Yıl Törenleri Başladı", *Haberler.com*, 24.04.2015, <http://www.haberler.com/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-canakkale-ye-geldi-7232754-haberi>

April ceremonies seemed to be made of mostly Armenian attendance, rather than being international event.

23) Turkey

23.1) “Centennial” Events by those Espousing the Armenian Narrative in Turkey

Pro-Armenian narratives and events in Turkey began approximately ten years ago and has gradually increased each year. The main reason for this is because

Armenian organizations from foreign countries which attended these events were nationalist, even ultranationalist, while the ideologies of Turkish organizations who joined them are far-left, mixed with liberalism. The element bringing these totally different political tendencies together is most probably anti-Turkism and anti-Turkey views.

claiming that genocide was perpetrated against Armenians in 1915 is now not seen by Turkish prosecutors as an act insulting the Turkish nation and state. Since 2015 is the centennial of the events of 1915, as in most countries, commemoration ceremonies and events were expected and encouraged to be held in Turkey. Armenians from abroad were also expected and encouraged to attend these events.

Indeed, the number of people who came from abroad for these commemoration ceremonies was higher in 2015 compared to previous years. However, it is difficult to give a specific number. According to one source,

3000 people, including Turks and foreigners, attended a rally in front of the French Consulate situated at the entrance of the İstiklal Avenue.¹⁴⁹ There are other sources giving higher numbers.¹⁵⁰ Although the number of attendees were higher in 2015, compared to previous years, there were not many changes in “centennial” commemoration ceremonies.

Armenian organizations from foreign countries which attended these events were nationalist, even ultranationalist, while the ideologies of Turkish organizations who joined them are far-left, mixed with liberalism. The element bringing these totally different political tendencies together is most probably anti-Turkism and anti-Turkey views.

149 “Taksim’de 1915 Anması”, *Doğan Haber Ajansı*, 24.04.2015.

150 “Centenaire du Génocide arménien: Des Manifestants ‘Du Monde Entier’ à İstanbul”, *Libération.fr*, 25.04.2015.

It is seen through speeches delivered in ceremonies held in İstanbul that the aforementioned Turkish organizations have fully embraced Armenian views. For instance, Eren Keskin, president of the İstanbul branch of the Human Rights Association, in a press conference she held ahead of the ceremonies, stated that as long as the Turkish State and the majority of the Turkish society fed by the official ideology refused to recognize the genocide and the irreversible losses are not compensated, they would continue their search for justice.¹⁵¹ Making a press release on behalf the Platform for Commemorating the Armenian Genocide, Nurcan Kaya said that 24 April marked the beginning of a systematic genocide attempt of the State and Armenians were purged as a result. Later, she said: "... We expect an apology, not condolences, from those who talk about mutual suffering. They should (she refers to President Erdoğan's condolence message dated April 23, 2014) apologize. The centennial is a good opportunity to face the facts."¹⁵² In the statement made on the steps of the Haydarpaşa Terminal, it was indicated that concrete demands were for genocide recognition, apology, compensation, and restitution, and the state of the Republic of Turkey was called on to fulfill these demands.¹⁵³ According to one press report, the aforementioned Turkish organizations, issuing a statement, asked world leaders to reject Erdoğan's invitation to the Gallipoli ceremonies on 24 April, and go to Yerevan instead of Çanakkale.¹⁵⁴

Despite press reports stating that the centennial was to be commemorated in 28 provinces of Turkey,¹⁵⁵ there was no significant events other than in İstanbul and Diyarbakır, and highly circulated newspapers reported that there were small-scale events held in Ankara, İzmir, Gaziantep, Van, Kars and Muğla/Bodrum. Although it was not possible to follow regional and local press, the claims that events were held in 28 provinces seems unrealistic.

It is understood that events in Diyarbakır were held under the auspices of and in cooperation with this city's municipality.

In conclusion, although the number of participants to the "centennial" commemorations were higher than previous years' 24 April commemorations, their reflection in the public opinion were limited. The reasons are thought to be as follows:

151 "Génocide de 1915: Programme des Commémorations en Turquie", *Collectif Van*, 14.04.2015.

152 "Taksim'de 1915 Anması"

153 "Soykırım Yürüyüşünden Görüntüler", *Hye-Tert*, 24.04.2015.

154 "Appel des ONG turques aux leadeurs mondiaux: Boycottez Gallipoli Allez à Erevan", *Collectif VAN*, 05.03.2015.

155 "Le génocide des Arméniens commémoré dans 28 villes en Turquie en *Armenews*, 03.01.2015.

First of all, ceremonies and events held were the same as previous years. Also, speeches and statements made were the same too. These factors reduced interest to such events.

Furthermore, grand ceremonies commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Battles overshadowed the “centennial” events held the same day.

Since 24 April commemorations and events were organized by circles that could be defined as leftist/liberal and these political ideologies have few supporters in Turkey, interest and support to these ceremonies and events was low and is not expected to increase in the future.

Even though the number of supporters of Armenian allegations increased with the adoption of these allegations by pro-HDP and pro-PKK Kurds, the fact that those in line with HDP/PKK’s views constitute a maximum of 10% and the insurmountable political differences between them and the rest of Turkey is a factor preventing Armenian genocide allegations and demands to reach large masses.

23.2) Reactions in Turkey to “Centennial” Events

The opposition of several Turkish civil society movements, their declarations and rallies against 24 April commemorations and other events organized by Armenians and their supporters was the highlight of 2015.

Foremost among these was the Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi) headed by Doğu Perinçek. The Patriotic Party and several organizations supporting this party organized a march on 24 April in İstanbul under the slogan “The Genocide Lie is an Imperialist Plan.” In his speech, Perinçek stated that the sufferings of 1915 were the sufferings of the whole nation. Addressing Obama, he said; “your narrative regarding 1915 events today, as was in the past, is a war propaganda.” Perinçek also placed a wreath before the Republic Monument in Taksim.¹⁵⁶ The Nationalist Turkey Party (Milliyetçi Türkiye Partisi) and the Turan Hearths (Turan Ocakları) placed a black wreath in front of the new building of AGOS on 24 April in the morning.¹⁵⁷

On the other hand, it was also seen that several grassroots movements took a stance against 24 April commemorations and events.

156 “Perinçek Taksim’e Çıktı”, *Aydınlık*, 25.04.2015.

157 “Agos’un önünde siyah çelenk”, *Agos*, 24.4.2015, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/11383/agos-un-onunde-siyah-celenk>

About 60 well-known authors, scholars and politicians, issuing a declaration,¹⁵⁸ stated that the sole truth was that the country was facing a plot similar to those conspired a hundred years ago. The declaration stated that according to the UN Genocide Convention, competent national courts or international criminal courts can decide whether an incident amounts to genocide, that there were no court verdicts characterizing the events of 1915 as genocide, and that the resolutions adopted by certain countries were political statements. Furthermore, it was emphasized that all judicial processes regarding the events of 1915 and the Armenian state were finalized with the Treaty of Moscow dated 16 March 1921, Treaty of Kars dated 13 October 1921, and Treaty of Lausanne dated 24 July 1923.

In another declaration signed by about 400 well-known people,¹⁵⁹ it was stated that the disregard shown by some foreign people under the influence of the propaganda of imperialist countries in World War I for the atrocities committed against the Turks was being condemned, and those who try to accuse Turkey for committing genocide were violating the international law. It was further stated that the Genocide Convention authorized only certain competent courts to decide whether an incident amounted to genocide, and parliaments, international organizations, and politicians who ignored these stipulations of the UN Convention were putting themselves in the place of authorized legal institutions.

Furthermore, it was indicated that those influenced by anti-Turkish propagandas distracted people into forgetting the Khojaly Massacre where 613 Azeris were killed at the hands of Armenians. It was also stated that the forced exile of about one million Azeris from Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia's occupation of 20% of the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan were also overlooked.

The declaration also stated that it was not appropriate to distort history for the political purposes of today, and history should be left to historians, but Armenia, who had not accepted the proposal of the Turkish Parliament in this regard, had blocked this path leading to a solution. The declaration also condemned the irresponsible policies of Armenia, invited Turkish politicians to pursue a more resolute position in this regard, and called on foreign statesmen

158 "Aydınlardan Ermeni soykırımı iddialarına karşı bildiri", *Oda TV*, 29.04.2015, <http://odatv.com/aydinlardan-soykirima-karsi-bildiri-2904151200.html>

159 "Biz Aşağıda İmzası Olanlar; 'Sözde Ermeni Soykırımı' İddialarını Reddediyoruz", *İlk-Kursun.com*, 07.05.2015, <http://www.ilk-kursun.com/haber/226829/biz-asagida-imzasi-olanlar-sozde-ermeni-soykirimi-iddialarini-reddediyoruz-turk-siyaset-adamlarini-bu-konuda-daha-kararli-bir-tutum-izlemeye-davet-ediyor-yabanci-devlet-adamlarini-ve-pa/>

and parliaments to refrain from unrealistic accusations that hurt the pride of the Turkish people.

On the other hand, retired ambassadors, retired officials of the foreign ministry and family members of victims of Armenian terrorist organizations organized a protest march on 25 April 2015.¹⁶⁰

As it is known, between 1973 and 1986, several Armenian terrorist organizations, in order to disseminate their genocide claims, committed assassinations against Turkish diplomats and other government officials and killed 31 people, including 5 ambassadors. These terrorist organizations caused the death of 70 people in total, both Turkish and foreign, while injuring 524 people.¹⁶¹

24) Efforts to Tone down Several Parliamentary Resolutions

The Armenian Government and the Diaspora expected that the number of resolutions adopting genocide allegations would increase on the occasion of the centennial of the Resettlement, and believed that these would put pressure on Turkey. A lot of effort was put by Armenians to reach this goal. However, ultimately, only five countries recognized the Armenian genocide allegations for the first time: Austria, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Brazil, and Paraguay. Furthermore, these countries do not have the capacity to put pressure on Turkey, as four of them are small countries with limited influence. Brazil, on the other hand, despite being a large country, has no such intention and besides, has no such means. Bulgaria is a country which endeavors to maintain good relations with its big neighbor Turkey. In fact, Bulgarian Parliament's resolution, while actually recognizing the genocide, does not include the word "genocide".¹⁶²

Austria and Luxembourg, due to several economic interests and especially the considerable amount of Turkish citizens or people of Turkish origins living in them, wish to have good relations with Turkey. Turkey's strong reaction led the governments of Austria and Luxembourg to find formulas to tone down the resolutions of their parliaments. Since it was not possible for parliaments to take back their resolutions overnight, Foreign Ministers of these countries,

160 "Şehit Edilen Türk Diplomatları, Aile Mensupları Ve Devlet Görevlileri Anıldı", *AVİM*, 27.04.2015, <http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/tr/SEHIT-EDILEN-TURK-DIPLOMATLARI—AILE-MENSUPLARI-VE-DEVLET-GOREVLILERI-ANILDI/4019>

161 Ömer Engin Lütem, *Armenian Terror* (Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, 2007).

162 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Olaylar ve Yorumlar", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, issue 51, 2015, pp. 164-165.

through explanatory statements, attempted to alter the meaning of these resolutions. In this context, talks were held with Luxembourgian and Austrian Foreign Ministers.

In a press conference held with Turkish Foreign Minister Feridun Sinirlioğlu during his visit to Luxembourg on 4-5 April 2015, Luxembourgian Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn stated that all parties in the Luxembourgian Parliament confirmed the importance of maintaining good relations with Turkey. He also stated that the term “genocide” had a legal definition in international law and such crimes could only be established by a competent court. Thus, the Luxembourgian Foreign Minister tried to express that the parliament and the government did not share the same opinion regarding genocide allegations.

In his response to certain questions posed to him in the Austrian parliament on 11 September and also during a press conference on 19 September with Foreign Minister Feridun Sinirlioğlu, which took place during his Ankara visit, the Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz said: “The decision here was not a parliamentary decision. It was the opinion, declaration of an opinion of six political parties represented in the Austrian parliament. These political parties and politicians have a right to express their ideas, however, it did not have the quality of a court decision.” He also stated that the position of Austrian government had not changed and the 1948 United Nations Convention cannot be retroactively applied.¹⁶³ He, thus, pointed out that government’s opinions differed from opinions in the resolution by the six parties in the parliament.

Therefore, two types of parliamentary resolutions on genocide emerged: Firstly, resolutions that could be label as “full”, which openly recognize the Armenian genocide allegations, include the word “genocide” and are supported by the government, and secondly, resolutions that could be described with the term “defective”, which are opposed by governments or do not include the word “genocide”.

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163 Turgut Kerem Tuncel, “1915 Olaylarının Soykırım Olarak Tanımlanmasına İlişkin Avusturya Ve Lüksemburg’un Geri Adımı”, *AVİM*, 23.10. 2015, <http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/tr/1915-OLAYLARININ-SOYKIRIM-OLARAK-TANIMLANMASINA-ILISKIN-AVUSTURYA-VE-LUKSEMBURG%E2%80%99UN-GERI-ADIMI---Turgut-Kerem-TUNCEL/4232>

“defective”, which are opposed by governments or do not include the word “genocide”.

Apart from the aforementioned resolution of the Bulgarian Parliament, the Belgian Parliament’s resolution dated 24 April 2015 can be given as an example to resolutions which recognize the Armenian genocide allegations without using the term genocide.¹⁶⁴ Also, the German Parliament’s resolution on 2005 also does not include the term genocide. Aside from those of Austria and Luxembourg, resolutions of Switzerland (2004) and Sweden (2010) could be given as examples of resolutions upon which the parliaments and governments do not agree upon. Ultimately, the number of “defective” resolutions is seven and constitutes one fourth of all these resolutions.

V - THE PERİNÇEK CASE AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The “Perinçek Incident” which began in 2005 when Doğu Perinçek publicly called the Armenian genocide allegations an “international lie”, was submitted to the Swiss courts when he was sued by the Switzerland-Armenian Association. At the end of the trial, he was sentenced to 90 days imprisonment and fined 3000 Swiss Francs. Perinçek was also sentenced to pay 1000 Swiss Francs in compensation to the Switzerland-Armenia Association for non-pecuniary damage and 10,000 Swiss Francs for court expenses.

When the verdict of the first instance court was upheld at the end of the appeal process in Switzerland, Perinçek carried his appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Reaching a judgment on 17 December 2013, the ECtHR ruled that the Swiss court’s judgment had violated Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention of Human Rights - in other words, Perinçek won the case.

The Swiss Government took the case to the “Grand Chamber”, the highest chamber of the Court. The case was heard on 28 January 2015, and Perinçek’s exoneration became absolute when the Grand Chamber’s judgement on 15 October 2015 upheld the lower chamber’s verdict.

The Perinçek Case was of great importance for Turkey. Even though there is no court verdict on whether the events of 1915 amounted to genocide, Perinçek losing the case would have carried the meaning that the ECtHR confirmed that

164 Lütem, “Olaylar ve Yorumlar” (2015), pp. 152-159.

the events of 1915 was a genocide, or at least, Armenia and the Diaspora would have presented as such. This would have rendered Turkey's half a century old thesis that there was "no genocide" untenable.

Our journal closely followed the "Perinçek incident" and related lawsuits since 2005, and informed its readers on the related developments. Furthermore, issue 29 of the *Review of Armenian Studies* titled "Special Issue on ECHR – Perinçek v. Switzerland Case" was devoted to the Perinçek case.

In this article, we will mention several subjects regarding "Grand Chamber" trial and briefly speak of our opinions about the possible outcomes of Perinçek winning the case.

Switzerland is the party who legally lost the case. Following ECtHR Second Chamber's judgement absolving Perinçek on 17 December 2015, no one doubted that the Grand Chamber would pass the same judgement, since a judgement by the Grand Chamber convicting an acquitted person, although legally possible, would have been inappropriate. Therefore, Switzerland was not expected to take the case to the Grand Chamber, and Switzerland and Turkey reportedly had come to an agreement in this regard. However, in the last minute, Switzerland decided to take the case to the Grand Chamber. It is very likely that several external factors, especially demands by France, played a role in this.

Switzerland losing the case will have certain consequences. Foremost among these is a changing of the legislation which led to the conviction of Perinçek, which is understood to be an issue Switzerland refuses to discuss in its Parliament due to internal politics. This might be because the EHtCR judgement does not ask Switzerland to change its legislation. However, this will leave Swiss courts the possibility to pass judgements similar to the Perinçek case, which will lead Switzerland to be tried and convicted again by ECtHR.

France intervened in the Perinçek case as a third party. The reasons behind this are François Hollande's promise to his Armenian friends about the introduction of a legislation punishing "denial, his failure to keep this promise due to the French Constitutional Council's clear stance, and to give Armenians the impression that he was helping Armenians by intervening in the Perinçek case. However, Perinçek's victory made France one of the losing parties.

As for Armenia, it did not have to intervene in the Perinçek case, as the related incident did not occur in its territories. However, Armenia, probably due to

pressures from the Diaspora, intervened in the case as a third party but eventually lost the case along with Switzerland and France.

Nevertheless, Armenia declared that it was pleased with the Grand Chamber's verdict. It is possible to explain this situation, which could be considered as being bizarre, as follows:

It is understood that Armenia is not content with several statements in the Second Chamber's verdict on 17 December 2013 that cast doubts on the Armenian genocide allegations, and court's distinction between Armenian genocide allegations and the Holocaust. It is for these reasons that at the Grand Chamber hearing on 28 January 2015, Armenia's counsels Geoffrey Robertson and Amal Alamuddin (Clooney), in their defense, tried to ensure that these statements that cast doubts on genocide allegations were removed from the Grand Chamber's verdict. They did this by making excessive statements that claimed that the 1915 events was genocide, despite this no being the subject of the case. Hence, the opinion in the Second Chamber's verdict that there was no general consensus on whether the 1915 events amounted to genocide was not found in the Grand Chamber's verdict. Furthermore, the statements that made a distinction between the 1915 events and the Holocaust were not clearly made as the Second Chamber's verdict. Therefore, Armenia believes that its demands were realized and is thus pleased with this outcome. On the other hand, it is seen that ECtHR's final judgement is criticized by the Diaspora.

However, the truth is actually different. First of all, it is not the court's duty to decide on genocide allegations, which was clearly stated in the Grand Chamber's ruling. Therefore, the fact that certain explanatory statements in the Second Chamber's verdict are not repeated in the Grand Chamber's verdict is just a detail that does not require to be greatly pleased with.

Another point that must be noted is that Grand Chamber ruling is final; it replaces and invalidates the Second Chamber's verdict. Therefore, the Second Chamber's explanations for its verdict would be invalid. However, what is special about the Perinçek case is the fact that verdict of the Grand Chamber is the same as the verdict of the Second Chamber. Thus, there is no reason for the explanations of the Second Chamber's verdict to become invalid. Furthermore, there is no statement in the Grand Chamber's explanations criticizing or rejecting the Second Chamber's explanations. In brief, both verdicts complement each other.

In our opinion, ECtHR's final judgment is important from two aspects.

Firstly, the judgement puts an end to efforts to silence people who reject the Armenian genocide allegations by propounding that denialism (indicating that there was no Armenian genocide) must be prevented and punished. From now on, expressing, defending, and writing that there was no Armenian genocide, as long as they do not aim for hatred or contempt against Armenians, will no longer be a crime in countries who signed the European Convention on Human Rights.

Secondly, although there is no ruling on the character of the events of 1915 (whether it was a genocide or not) in the Grand Chamber's verdict, the fact that Doğu Perinçek, who said that the Armenian genocide was an international lie, won the lawsuit has consolidated the opinion adopted by the majority of people in Turkey that the Armenian genocide allegations are not true. Thus, the verdict produced a result completely opposite of what the Armenians wanted.

VI - DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING NAGORNO-KARABAKH

2015 was a year in which Armenia suffered great failures regarding Nagorno-Karabakh and understood that this issue would not be resolved the way it wanted.

1) Failure Of The Minsk Group

During the 21 years since the ceasefire in 1994, the Minsk Group and its co-chairs, despite their proposals and plans for the resolution of the conflict, failed to make any progress. Although Armenia is to blame primarily, the Minsk Group co-chairs, namely the US, Russia, and France, are also responsible for this situation, as they do not use their authority and influence as required, do not exert serious effort for the resolution of the conflict and therefore, although indirectly, take a pro-Armenian stance by maintaining the status quo.

The insistence of Azerbaijan, which became the most powerful country of the South Caucasus by making good use of its energy sources, on a swift resolution of the conflict, Turkey's support in this regard, and several Muslim countries taking Azerbaijan's side, showed that the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding Azerbaijani territories can no longer continue. As a matter of fact, the increasing skirmishes along the ceasefire line prove that Armenia's occupation must come to an end.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, in a speech he made in early 2015,¹⁶⁵ indicated that Armenia was resorting to (armed) provocations and Azerbaijani army was giving a fitting response to these provocations. He further said, “Azerbaijani army can at any time restore its territorial integrity. It is just better that issue is resolved through negotiations.” He also emphasized that Azerbaijan would further strengthen its army, and stated that huge funds were allocated for this purpose and these funds exceeded Armenia’s total budget twofold.

Despite Aliyev’s implicit criticism of the Minsk-Group (and its co-chairs), it is seen that the countries composing this Group still seek a resolution in line with their opinions. Russian President Putin brought Aliyev and Sargsyan together in August 2014. US Foreign Minister Kerry also brought about a meeting between both presidents in September the same year. Aliyev and Sargsyan also met once again in Paris in October upon the initiatives of President Hollande. However, Armenia’s military exercises in the occupied Agdam district of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the involvement of about 40,000 military troops, the opened fire on Azerbaijan’s position, and later the downing of Armenian helicopter by Azerbaijan, conflicted with the mediation efforts mentioned above. On the other hand, this incident served as a military warning against Armenia.

2) European Court Of Human Rights’ (ECtHR) Judgement Regarding Nagorno-Karabakh

While Azerbaijani and Armenian authorities continued to criticize each other in every occasion, the case brought to ECtHR by six Azerbaijani nationals for being forced to abandon their homes in Lachin due to Armenian occupation was concluded on 16 June 2015.¹⁶⁶

Armenia, in its defense in the court, as if Nagorno-Karabakh was independent, had claimed that Armenia did not have effective control and jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories. In its judgment, ECtHR overruled Armenia’s claims and stated that the “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” (NKR) was not recognized by any State or international organization. The court indicated that Armenia and the “NKR” were highly integrated, the “NKR” survived by virtue of the military, political, financial, and other support given to it by Armenia, and Armenia exercised effective control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories.

165 “President Aliyev: Some World Forces Not Interested in Karabagh Conflict Being Solved”, *Trends News Agency*, 11.01.2015.

166 “Azerbaijan Refugees, Rights Violated by the Lack of Access to their Property Located in the District Controlled by Armenia”, *ECtHR*, 206 (2015), 16.06.2015.

ECtHR's judgement,¹⁶⁷ contrary to Armenia's claim, determined that "NKR" is not an independent state or a separate entity from Armenia. Since ECtHR judgements are final, it is now impossible to legally recognize the idea of an "independent" NKR. In brief, the argument of an "independent Nagorno-Karabakh", which is not much supported in the international arena, has collapsed. This is a big blow to Armenia's policies.

3) Parliamentary and Local Elections in Nagorno-Karabakh

In 2015, parliamentary and local elections were held in Nagorno-Karabakh on 3 May and 13 September respectively.

Many countries and international organizations declared that they did not recognize these elections and/or called them illegal. Among them are the European Union, the US, the UK, Germany, Ukraine, China, Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Islamic Cooperation Organization.¹⁶⁸ Even OSCE, which is tasked with resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, announced that they did not accept these elections as affecting the legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁶⁹

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The Turkish Foreign Ministry, in its statement on 11 September 2015, declared that it would not recognize these elections and its results.

4) Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Established following the World War I in 1949 to facilitate cooperation between European countries, the Council of Europe and especially its Parliamentary

167 For more details on ECtHR's decision, please see: Turgut Kerem Tuncel, "Hukuki Açıdan Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu, Chiragov ve Diğerleri v. Ermenistan Davası", *AVİM*, 26.06.2015, <http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/tr/HUKUKI-ACIDAN-DAGLIK-KARABAG-SO-RUNU:-CHIRAGOV-VE-DIGERLERI-V—ERMENISTAN-DAVASI-/4132>

168 Ali Murat Taşkent, "Dağlık Karabağ'da 'Seçimler'", *AVİM*, 05.10.2015, <http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/tr/DAGLIK-KARABAG%E2%80%99DAKI-%E2%80%98SECIMLER%E2%80%99—Ali-Murat-TASKENT/4213>

169 "International Community Condemns Illegal Elections in Nagorno-Karabakh", *Eurasia Review*, 16.09.2015.

Assembly is an international forum in which the people of Europe freely express their views and opinions.

The Parliamentary Assembly has been interested in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is a major issue in Europe, and discussed it many times. In these discussions, Armenia, making a wrong interpretation of the principle of self-determination, argued that a majority could determine a region's political future without taking minorities' rights into consideration.

4.1) Resolution 1416 (2005) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe¹⁷⁰

This resolution is important in the sense that it shows that nations' right to self-determination is valid under certain conditions.

According to the resolution, independence and secession of a regional territory from a state may only be achieved through a lawful and peaceful process based on the democratic support of the inhabitants of such territory and not in the wake of an armed conflict leading to ethnic expulsion and the de facto annexation of such territory to another state.

Resolution 1416 (2005) of the Parliamentary Assembly proves that Nagorno-Karabakh cannot gain its independence through the nations' right to self-determination. This is also confirmed by the top judicial organ of Europe, the ECtHR in the abovementioned resolution dated 16 June 2015.

4.2) Draft Resolution dated 4 November 2015 of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

In the wake of increasing armed skirmishes in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly discussed the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and after several investigations, approved a draft resolution titled "Escalation of Violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Other Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan" on 4 November 2015.¹⁷¹

170 "The Conflict Over the Nagorno-Karabakh Region Dealt with the OSCE Minsk Conference", *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, Resolution 1416 (2005).

171 "Escalation of Violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and Other Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan", *Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, draft resolution.

This draft resolution will take its final shape after being discussed and voted in the Assembly's January 2016 session.

The draft resolution states that considerable parts of the territory of Azerbaijan are still occupied by Armenian forces and regrets that separatist forces are still in control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Referring to abovementioned ECtHR resolution dated 16 June 2015, the resolution mentions that Armenia exercises effective control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories, and thus indicates that Nagorno-Karabakh is not independent.

The draft resolution embraces the abovementioned Resolution 1416 (2005) and the related Recommendation 1650 (2005) by repeating their fundamental points. Incidentally, the draft resolution indicates, as in Resolution 1416, that ethnic expulsion of Azeris and the creation of mono-ethnic areas (areas populated by Armenians) resemble the terrible concept of ethnic cleansing.

One of the most important feature of the draft resolution is its call on the OSCE Minsk Group to consider reviewing its approach to the resolution of the conflict in light of the lack of progress over the last twenty years, which undermines the credibility of international institutions. This proves that the Minsk Group is considered to be unsuccessful.

The draft resolution indirectly blames Russia for selling weapons to both sides and calls for Russia to recognize the arms embargo on both parties.

The draft resolution makes the below proposals for the resolution of the conflict:

- Cessation of military activity in the vicinity of the region,
- Demilitarization of the line of contact on both sides,
- Withdrawal of Armenian armed forces and other irregular armed forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and the other occupied territories of Azerbaijan,
- Establishment of full sovereignty of Azerbaijan in these territories,
- Establishment of an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh,
- Establishment by OSCE of an international peacekeeping force to maintain security within Nagorno-Karabakh and the other occupied territories;
- Safe return and resettlement of displaced persons.

These measures aim to change the situation created in the early 1990s by Armenia, partially with the help of Russia. Furthermore, in the event that they are implemented, there is no doubt that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be resolved.

VII - AN ASSESSMENT OF TURKISH-ARMENIAN RELATIONS IN 2015

The flashy ceremonies and events for the commemoration of the Armenian Resettlement's centennial held in Armenia and the Diaspora undoubtedly left its marked on Armenia-Turkish relations in 2015.

As for the recognition of these allegations, the situation is different and out of about 200 parliaments, only 26 have resolutions recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide, which are declarations of opinion rather than anything else.

It appears that these ceremonies and events, apart from commemorating Armenians who died during World War I, were expected to serve two purposes: promote the recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations in the international area, and the assertion of Armenian demands from Turkey.

It is possible to say that European as well as the South and North American public became aware of the Armenian genocide allegations with the efforts of the Diaspora in the last 50 years and Armenia in the last 25 years. These allegations appear to be unknown and/or disregarded in the remaining regions, except for a small minority.

As for the recognition of these allegations, the situation is different and out of about 200 parliaments, only 26 have resolutions recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide, which are declarations of opinion rather than anything else. Among international organizations of political significance, only the European Parliament has such resolutions.

However, what the Armenian public expected was the recognition of the genocide allegations by a large number of countries and international organizations. Yet, the number of countries which recognized these allegations for the first time was five. These are Austria, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Brazil, and Paraguay. These countries have no power or position to have an influence over Turkey. On the contrary, several countries were obliged to tone down their resolutions due to Turkey's reactions such as recalling ambassadors and

insinuating that relations would be reviewed. For instance, Austria and Luxembourg toned down their parliaments' resolutions through the statements of their foreign ministers. Bulgarian Parliament, by not using the word genocide, tried to prevent any conflicts with Turkey from the very beginning. On the other hand, the Brazilian Government declared that it would not change its position. As for Paraguay, it is possible to think that the Paraguayan Foreign Ministry circles were unhappy with the Senate's decision since it would not serve any purpose other than creating a controversy with Turkey.

As for countries that could influence Turkey, it is seen the US Government did not attach a special importance to 2015 and President Obama's 24 April message was not different from the messages of previous years. The draft resolution prepared for the German Bundestag was sent back to the Foreign Affairs Committee due to disagreements between political parties and was never submitted again to the Parliament. In France, despite Hollande's promises, no legal measures regarding the punishment of genocide denialism was taken. Even President Putin, in his speech in Yerevan on 24 April, tried to use a cautious language against Turkey.

As for international organizations, the only resolution regarding genocide allegations that must be noted is the European Parliament's resolution dated 15 April 2015. The European Parliament has adopted many resolutions linked with Turkey's full membership to the EU since 1987. Therefore, its position regarding genocide allegations is not new. On the other hand, the aforementioned resolution did not affect Turkey, since there was no statement indicating that Turkey cannot become a member of the EU as long as it refuses to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations. It must be noted that there was such a statement in the European Parliament's resolution in 1987, and this statement was reiterated by means of references to the 1987 resolution. On the other hand, despite the European Parliament's highly critical approach towards Turkey, the decision by the Union's executive organs in late December to revive negotiations with Turkey indicates that the European Parliament's resolution was not taken into consideration.

Ultimately, it is possible to say that the efforts for the international recognition of the genocide allegations were limited. The only exception is the Vatican and Pope Francis continues to support Armenian genocide allegations.

The reason why Armenians attach great importance to the international recognition of these allegations is the thought that if more countries and international organizations, including influential countries such as the US, were to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations, Turkey would be forced to

recognize these allegations and this would ensure or at least facilitate the acceptance by Turkey of Armenian demands such as indemnities. President Erdoğan's condolence message on 24 April 2014 during his tenure as the prime minister, his message to the religious ceremony held in the Armenian Patriarchate of İstanbul on 24 April 2015 as the president, Prime Minister Davutoğlu's message on the anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink and his statement 20 April 2015 on the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, are statements of sentimental, rather than political value made with the intention to share the sufferings of Armenians with a view to facilitating Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. However, these were found insufficient and it was insinuated that a lot more was expected. The abovementioned statements by President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu during the 24 April period of 2015 and the Foreign Ministry's response to Parliaments recognizing the genocide claims obviously do not meet the hopes for Turkey's recognition of genocide allegations. When considered from this point of view, it is possible to say that the year 2015 was a failure for Armenians.

Another expectation from 2015 was the demands from Turkey. These demands can be summarized as indemnities to the grandchildren of those who were resettled, restitution of seized properties to inheritors, and cession of some territory to Armenia. While an official commission was formed two years ago to determine the legal bases of these demands, there is no information on the results of the commission's studies. In short, despite the special significance of the year for Armenians, no demands were made from Turkey in 2015.

Despite the failures regarding the international recognition of Armenian genocide allegations, many events to commemorate the genocide allegations were held especially in the Diaspora. Armenians attended these events nearly in all countries and it is possible to say that they reinforced their Armenianness through such attendance. However, these did not lead to any changes in Turkish-Armenian relations.

There are two more failures for Armenia in 2015: losing of the Perinçek case and the elimination of the possibility of the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state.

Armenia, although it did not directly concern it, intervened in the Perinçek case as a third party and lost the case together with Switzerland and France with ECtHR's exoneration of Doğu Perinçek. It is now possible to openly say, without belittling Armenians, that there was no Armenian genocide in countries that are signatories to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). ECtHR's verdict is a major defeat for Armenia and the Diaspora, which claim that the Armenian genocide is an indisputable fact. On the other hand, it is

likely that ECtHR's verdict will affect Armenia's demands from Turkey.

2015 was also a year of negative developments for Armenia regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. Foremost among these was ECtHR's verdict on 16 June 2015 which ruled out the assumption that Nagorno-Karabakh was an independent state. This judgement, in principle, prevents the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state by signatories to the ECHR. Although there are no countries intending to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh or defending its independence, it is seen that there are still hopes of an independent Nagorno-Karabakh.

Furthermore, the draft resolution approved by Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 4 November 2015, indicated that Nagorno-Karabakh was not an independent state and the principle of self-determination cannot be applied. Also, it likens the forceful removal of Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories to ethnic cleansing. The adoption of this draft resolution by the Assembly would make the argument of "independent Nagorno-Karabakh" untenable.

It is for the benefit of a "land-locked" country such as Armenia, which suffered economic difficulties and lost a significant portion of its population due to migration to other countries, to work on having no troubles with its neighbors within the bounds of possibility.

Another fact that must not be ignored is that Armenia was the losing side in the increasing number of skirmishes in 2015 in border areas with Azerbaijan or at least was the party which could not respond to Azerbaijan. Armenia brought this issue before the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is, in principal, responsible for ensuring the security of its members. However, when it saw that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan - Muslim members of the CSTO- were unwilling to support Armenia against Azerbaijan, Armenia began to openly bemoan about it.

It is for the benefit of a "land-locked" country such as Armenia, which suffered economic difficulties and lost a significant portion of its population due to migration to other countries, to work on having no troubles with its neighbors within the bounds of possibility. However, it is possible to say that Armenia, which cannot free itself from the influence of historical events and its century old territorial demands, does the opposite by maintaining its problems with Turkey and Azerbaijan, thus preventing the establishment of security and cooperation in South Caucasus. It is possible to say that Armenia itself suffers the most from this policy.

APPENDIX I

MESSAGE SENT BY H.E. MR. RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, TO THE RELIGIOUS
CEREMONY HELD IN THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF
İSTANBUL ON 24 APRIL 2015

Reverend Patriarch Aram Ateşyan

Acting Patriarch of the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey

On this day that carries a special significance for our Armenian citizens, I once again respectfully commemorate all the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives amid the conditions of the World War I and extend my condolences to their children and grandchildren.

I fondly recall all the memories - engraved all across these lands - of the Armenian community, whose economic, social, cultural and political contributions both to the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey will always be remembered with appreciation.

Taking this opportunity, I also extend my best wishes for the recovery of Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan, who is undergoing treatment for his illness.

My distinguished Armenian citizens,

In World War I, which ranks among humanity's major catastrophes, millions from all nations also perished within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire.

I commemorate with compassion and respect all the Ottoman citizens, regardless of their ethnic and religious identity, who lost their lives under similar conditions during this War.

We succeeded in establishing the Republic of Turkey not by forgetting these sufferings, but by learning to cope with them.

Today, we are working and striving together with all our citizens and friends, regardless of their ethnic or religious identities, to attain a better future on the basis of peace, harmony and fraternity.

It is due to these values that we are able to enthusiastically host today in Çanakkale, the grandchildren of those who had arrived from all over the world a century ago to invade our shared homeland, so as to condemn war and promote peace and friendship,

Let me reiterate that we are cognizant of the sorrowful events experienced in the past by the Armenian community and that I sincerely share your pain.

Please rest assured also that our hearts remain wide open to the grandchildren of the Ottoman Armenians all around the world.

With heartfelt salutations, I extend my best regards and wishes.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AHMET DAVUTOĞLU ON THE COMMEMORATION OF HRANT DINK

It has now been eight years since Hrant Dink was taken from us. Throughout his life, he strived, mind, heart and soul, to shed light on one of the major issues that the Ottoman Empire passed down to the Republic of Turkey. We wish patience to Dink's bereaved family and all those who held him dear.

Hrant Dink was an invaluable Anatolian intellectual who, without compromising either his Armenian heritage or his loyalty to Turkey, sought to help find the ways and means through which Turks and Armenians may build a common future. As someone who personified Turkish-Armenian friendship, he worked selflessly and gave his all, so that the bonds of a historic coexistence could be remembered, and the deep-rooted suffering overcome. As we commemorate the anniversary of his demise, and guided by the seeds of friendship he sowed, we wish to open new paths into hearts and minds.

With this understanding, we call on all Armenians, and invite all those who believe in Turkish-Armenian friendship to contribute to a new beginning:

Having already underscored the inhumane consequences of the relocation policies essentially enforced under wartime circumstances, including that of 1915, Turkey shares the suffering of Armenians and, with patience and resolve, is endeavouring to re-establish empathy between the two peoples. Our 23 April 2014 message of condolence, which included elements of how, primarily through dialogue, we may together bring an end to the enmity that has kept our relations captive, was a testament to this determination. Only by breaking taboos can we hope to begin addressing the great trauma that froze time in 1915. For its part, Turkey has transcended this critical threshold and relinquished the generalizations and stereotypical assertions of the past.

There is every reason to believe that these two ancient nations can demonstrate the wisdom to understand each other and contemplate a future together. Having shared the same geography and a long history, it is only Turks and Armenians who can effectively address their issues together and work jointly to find ways forward. Fostering a sense of mutual trust and cooperation; getting reacquainted against the backdrop of an 800 years-old common history and promoting human interaction will be essential. Accordingly, we invite our

Armenian friends to visit Turkey more often and do away with respective prejudices.

Furthermore, we will press ahead with resolve to give due recognition to the Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey and to those Armenian personalities who made inestimable contributions to Ottoman/Turkish culture. Our desire to share in the pain, to heal the wounds and to re-establish friendships is sincere. Our course is set towards a horizon of friendship and peace.

Ahmet Davutođlu

APPENDIX III

STATEMENT BY H. E. MR. AHMET DAVUTOĞLU, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY ON THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE LAST YEARS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

During the last years of the Ottoman Empire, a very large number of Ottoman citizens from different ethnic and religious backgrounds endured great suffering, leaving deep scars in their memories. They had all lived together for centuries in peace and harmony.

As descendants of nations with different ethnic and religious origins who endured these sufferings amid the conditions of the First World War, we understand what the Armenians feel. We remember with respect the innocent Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives and offer our deep condolences to their descendants.

It is both a historical and humane duty for Turkey to uphold the memory of Ottoman Armenians and the Armenian cultural heritage.

With this in mind, a religious ceremony will be held by the Armenian Patriarchate on 24 April this year and Ottoman Armenians will be remembered in Turkey, just as they will be across the world.

On this day, it would have been much more meaningful if Turkey and Armenia had been able to commemorate Ottoman Armenians together with a ceremony that befits both nations. This is what our President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, stated in his message on 23rd of April 2014, when he was the Prime Minister.

We believe that when history is no longer exploited for political purposes, such a mature and morally sound outcome can be attained.

Ancient Anatolian civilization teaches us to stand up for our history, to remember both our joys and pains, to heal our wounds collectively and to look to the future together.

As I declared in my message on 20 January 2015, on the anniversary of the passing away of Hrant Dink, “two ancient nations can demonstrate the wisdom to understand each other and to contemplate a future together”.

As a consequence of our historical responsibilities and humane mission, and without making any distinction among those who suffered, we respectfully remember today all those who lost their lives in those events that transpired a century ago.

We also believe that, in order to ease the ongoing suffering, it is just as important to face the past with honesty, as it is to remember the deceased.

It is possible to establish the causes of what happened in World War One and those who were responsible for it.

However, laying all blame - through generalizations - on the Turkish nation by reducing everything to one word and to compound this with hate speech is both morally and legally problematic.

The scars left by the exile and massacres that Turkish and Muslim Ottomans were subjected to a century ago are still vivid in our minds today.

To ignore this fact and discriminate between pains suffered is as questionable historically as it is mistaken morally.

Indeed, recent years have shown that nothing can be achieved by trying to impose conflicting narratives upon one another.

In this context, the memories and convictions of all Ottoman citizens must be heard and respected.

To reach the truth, it is sufficient to attain a just memory, empathy, respectful language and a reasonable and objective way of looking at things.

In Turkey, every viewpoint is freely expressed and openly debated. Documents and knowledge of every kind can be investigated. By providing these means, Turkey is taking significant and positive steps towards the building of a common future.

As descendants of two ancient peoples who a hundred years ago shared the same destiny whether in joy or in sorrow, our common responsibility and calling today is to heal century old wounds and re-establish our human ties once again.

Turkey will not remain indifferent to this responsibility and will continue to do its utmost for friendship and peace.

As such, we are calling on all third parties to adopt an approach based on just memory and a common peaceful future, rather than aggravating age old wounds.

It is with these feelings and thoughts that we once more commemorate with deep respect the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives during the relocation in 1915 and we share in the grief of their children and grandchildren.

Ahmet Davutoğlu

APPENDIX IV

NO: 110, 12 APRIL 2015, PRESS RELEASE REGARDING THE STATEMENTS DELIVERED DURING THE LITURGY IN VATICAN ON APRIL 12, 2015

The statements of Pope Francis and the Armenian representatives delivered during the liturgy held at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican on 12 April 2015 regarding the 1915 events contradict historical and legal facts.

Having underlined his willingness to promote the establishment of peace and friendship among different groups in the world since the day he was elected to the Pontificate, Pope Francis has made today a discrimination between the sufferings by solely emphasizing the sufferings of the Christians and foremost the Armenians. With a selective point of view, he ignored the tragedies that befell on the Turkish and Muslim people who had lost their lives in World War I.

During this Holy Mass, history was instrumentalized for political aims. While overlooking the great sufferings and dark pages in remote geographies far away from Anatolia, and disregarding completely the cruelty of colonialism, only referring to our Christian brothers with whom we lived side by side in Anatolia for centuries, and who have nothing to do with the events of 1915, is unacceptable.

Genocide is a legal concept. Claims not fulfilling the requirements of law, even if they are attempted to be explained on the basis of widespread conviction, are bound to remain as slanders. Pope Francis, in his statement, refers to the tragic events that took place in Bosnia and in Rwanda as "mass killings", whereas these are recognized as genocides by competent international courts. He, however calls the events of 1915 a "genocide", despite the absence of any such competent court judgment. This is meaningful. It is not possible to explain this contradiction with the concepts of justice and conscience.

It is regrettable to see that, the statement delivered by Pope Francis in today's liturgy presents a great deviation from the remarks he has made during and on his return from his visit to Turkey on November 2830, 2014. In those remarks, the Pope had pointed out that "both sides are in good will" and that "third parties should encourage and pray for the reconciliation of the peoples".

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ACTIVITIES IN MARAŞ AND ITS SURROUNDINGS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED BY ARMENIANS*

(ERMENİLERİN KURDUKLARI CEMİYETLER VE
KOMİTELERİN MARAŞ VE ÇEVRESİNDEKİ FAALİYETLERİ)

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Abstract: *In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire enacted several changes in its legal and political system due to its desire to overcome its internal problems and due to the expansion of its relations with the West. The first change was the declaration of the “Edict of Reorganization” (“Tanzimat Fermanı”). Following this edict, which regulated the relationship between the state and the public, the “Edict of Reform” (“Islahat Fermanı”) and the “Constitutional Era” (“Meşrutiyet”) were proclaimed. Armenians, who lived under the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia, took the case of the Balkan peoples as an example to be emulated, whom had gained their independence by revolting against the empire. Under the effect of this example, Armenians tried to get support from the foreign states in order to first gain autonomy, and then to establish an independent Armenian state. In the meantime, they organized several internal insurrections. For these insurrections to work, Armenians needed to make psychological and organizational preparation and acquire weapons. In this study, the way in which Armenians organized themselves for independence and the activities of the organizations they founded will be investigated. This study also aims to reveal the activities that Armenians had engaged in Maraş and its surroundings during and after the World War I. In this study, the documents of the Ottoman archives will be used as the main sources.*

Key Words: *Armenian, Terrorism, Maraş (Marash), Zeyton (Zeitun), Kilis*

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Öz: *Osmanlı Devleti, XIX. yüzyılda kendi iç problemlerini çözmek istemesi ve Batı ile ilişkilerinin artması sonucunda bazı düzenlemeler yaptı. Bu düzenlemelerden ilki “Tanzimat Fermanı”nın ilan edilmesiydi. Devletin halkla ilişkilerini düzenleyen bu fermanın ardından Islahat Fermanı ve Meşrutiyet’in ilan edilmesi geldi. Osmanlı Devleti’nin Anadolu’daki unsurlarından biri olan Ermeniler; Balkanlarda yaşayan halkların çeşitli isyanlar çıkararak bağımsızlıklarını elde etmelerini örnek aldılar. Bunun da etkisiyle önce özerk, sonra da bağımsız bir Ermeni devleti kurma amacıyla çalışmalar yaparak yabancı devletlerden destek almaya çalıştılar. Bir taraftan da içeride isyanlar organize ettiler. İsyanların çıkarılması için psikolojik hazırlık, örgütlenme ve silahlanma gerekiyordu. Bu çalışmada, Ermenilerin bağımsızlık için çeşitli şekillerde örgütlenmeleri ve bu örgütlerin faaliyetleri ele alınacaktır. Çalışmada ayrıca Ermenilerin Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında ve sonrasında Maraş ve çevresinde yaptıkları faaliyetlerin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışmada Osmanlı arşiv belgeleri ana kaynak olarak kullanılacaktır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermeni, Terör, Maraş, Zeytun, Kilis.*

INTRODUCTION

Charity Foundations and Unions Established by Armenians in Ottoman Territories

Following the proclamations of the Edicts of Reorganization and Reform (*Tanzimat ve Islahat Fermanları*), various charity unions were established throughout the Ottoman Empire. The purpose of these Armenian unions was to ensure the cultural, physical, and social development and cooperation of the Armenian community by opening schools, dormitories, orphanages, hospitals, and sports facilities.¹ Armenians' first union was "Ser" ("Love"), established by Mıgırdıç Kırımian, who had been sent from İstanbul to Kilikya (Cilicia). The purpose of this union was the establishment of an independent Armenian state in Kilikya. Once this purpose received support from Patrik Varyebatyan as well, the union opened branch offices in Zeytun (Zeitun), Haçin, and Göksun, and in time, it started to work for not only the independence of Armenians in Zeytun and Kilikya, but also for the independence of all Ottoman Armenians.²

The other union was the "Hayırseverler Cemiyeti" ("Benevolent Union"), which began its activities in 1860 in İstanbul. Headed by Mikail Nalbandian, who had come from Russia, the purpose of this union was to economically and socially uplift Kilikya Armenians and to finance Armenian schools that had opened in Kilikya. Even though the union did not directly take part in revolt organizations, it is known that two of its members, Hasip Şişmanyan and Mıgırdıç Beşiktaşyan, had a role in the revolt that took place Zeytun in 1862.³

Between 1870 and 1880, the unions of "Ararat" in Van, "Okul Sevenler" ("School Lovers"), "Şarklı" ("Easterner") and "Ermenistan'a Doğru" ("Towards Armenia") in Muş (Mush), and "Kilikya" in Adana were established. Seemingly devoid of revolutionary intentions, these unions merged together in 1880 and took the name "Miyasiyal Enikorotyon Hoyotis" ("United Armenian Union").⁴

1 Azmi Süslü, Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, Refet Yinanç, ve Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler* (Ankara, 2001), p. 167.

2 Louis Ziazan Nalbandian, "The Armenian Revolutionary Movement of the Nineteenth Century: The Origins and Development of Armenian Political Parties", PhD thesis (Michigan: Stanford University, 1958), pp.119-120.

3 Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası* (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1985), p. 128; Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary...*, p. 114.

4 Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Genişletilmiş 2. Baskı (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 1987), p. 421.

In addition to these unions, there were unions established with overtly revolutionary intentions: the unions of “İttihad ve Halas” (“Union and Liberation”) and “Kara Haç” (“Black Cross”) were established in 1872 and 1878 respectively in Van with Russia’s support. Established in Erzurum in 1881, the union called “Şurây-ı Âli” (“Council of Ali”) later on changed its name to “Müdafi Vatandaşlar” (“Defence Citizens”). Again in Erzurum, unions of “Anavatan Müdafileri” (“Homeland Defenders”), “Silahlılar” (“Those Who Have Weapons”), and “Milliyetperver Kadınlar” (“Nationalist Women”) were established in 1882. Among these, the “Anavatan Müdafileri” -although expressing that it was established to protect Armenians from attacks- was closed down in 1882 after some of its members were arrested, once it was realized that it was engaging in destructive activities and arming Armenians.⁵ Armenians, apart from the unions they established in eastern cities, were also organizing themselves in the inner parts of Anatolia by establishing organizations with revolutionary intentions. The stamps, which belonged to the “Kilikya Vatanseverler Topluluğu” (“Cilicia Patriots Society”) and which were seized and sent to the central government by the Maraş (Marash) Commissariat (*Komiserliği*), are a good example of this.⁶ As soon as it was established, the Kilikya Vatanseverler Topluluğu opened the “Getronegan Yüksek Ermeni Okulu” (“Getronegan Armenian College”). Again, in the year 1880, an association named “Kilikya Hamisi” (“Guardian of Cilicia”) was established by Simbat Pürat in Maraş.⁷

“Yıldırım” (“Lightning”) and “Kurban” (“Sacrifice”) unions were established in 1890 in İstanbul. The Kurban union was established by Dr. Pakrat Naavasartyan, who was a Caucasian Armenian. This union was being managed from Tbilisi.⁸ Established in Maraş in the year 1901, the “Ermeni Öğretmenler Eğitim Kulübü” (“Armenian Teachers Education Club”) started to hold conferences on cultural and social issues.⁹

ARMENIAN COMMITTEES

New York Yurtsever Ermeniler Komitesi (New York Patriotic Armenians Committee)

“New York Yurtsever Ermeniler Komitesi” (“New York Patriotic Armenians

5 Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, p. 129.

6 Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, 1-38, 3. Cilt, Belge Numarası 43, p. 186.

7 Pars Tuğlacı, *Tarih Boyunca Batı Ermenileri*, II. Cilt (İstanbul: Pars Yay., 2004), p. 563.

8 Süslü ve diğerleri, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler*, p. 169.

9 Pars Tuğlacı, *Tarih Boyunca Batı Ermenileri*, III. Cilt (İstanbul: Pars Yay., 2004), p. 239.

Committee”) was established in 4 April 1891 to attain Armenian objectives by ensuring the organization of Armenians, managing of Armenians, and the establishing of the European Central Committee. In a letter dated 20 April 1891, the Patriotic Committee in İstanbul announced that it supported the establishment of a central committee. Following the committee’s program being voted on and ratified, it was sent to its centers in various European cities.¹⁰

Armenekan Komitesi (Armenekan Committee)

Constituting a first, the Armenian committee called “Armenekan” was established in 1885 in Van.¹¹ The objective of establishing the Armenekan Committee was to give Armenians a political organization with which they could govern themselves through the way of a revolution. In order to achieve this, it was necessary was to gather all Armenians under the roof of this organization and to teach them how to use guns with military discipline, to acquire guns and money, to form guerrilla forces, and to gear up the people for a mass movement.¹²

Hınçak Komitesi (Hunchak Committee)

“Hınçak” (“Hunchak”) means bell, ting, or rattle in the Armenian language. The committee was established in 1887 by seven Armenians of Russia who were the children of wealthy families and who were educated in Europe.¹³ Social democrat in character, the committee was established with the aim of prioritizing Karl Marx’s principles. Its political program was Socialist-Marxist and centralist.¹⁴

The political purpose of this committee was establishing an independent

10 BOA, HR. SYS. 60/46 (26 May 1891).

11 Nejat Göyünç, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, yay. Haz. Kemal Çiçek (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yay., 2005), p. 98.

12 Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, p. 129.

13 Süslü ve diğerleri, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler*, p.171; Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, p. 130.

14 Erdal İltir, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermenilerin Silahlanma Faaliyetleri ve Milli Mücadele’de Ermeniler (1890-1923)* (Ankara, Kök yay., 2005), p. 13. For information about the Hunchak Committee’s program, please see: Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, pp. 130-131; Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, pp. 432,437-438. Also, to see the full text and parts regarding terror, please see: Hüseyin Nazım Paşa, *Ermeni Olayları Tarihi*, 1. Cilt (Ankara: Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Yay., 1998), pp. 9-12, 178-183. To make a comparison, please see: Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *1895 Trabzon Olayları ve Ermenilerin Yargılanması* (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2005), pp. 29-34.

Armenian state in eastern Anatolia and combining it with Armenian states in Russian and Iranian territories.¹⁵

The road map to reach these objectives was: spreading propaganda, creating tensions, engaging in terrorism, setting up organizational structures and engaging in labor unrest.¹⁶ One of the main attention-grabbing characteristics of the committee was that its target was not only the government, but also Turks and Armenians working for the government.¹⁷

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Hunchak Committee, which gave the appearance of being both communist and nationalist, started to publish in London a newspaper titled “Hınçak” in Armenian in order to spread out its ideas and to increase its number of supporters.¹⁸ In Ottoman territories, this committee organized itself first İstanbul, and then in Anatolia: in the cities of Amasya, Arapkir, Bafra, Eğin, Merzifon, Tokat, and Yozgat.¹⁹ Actually, these were not the only locations in Anatolia in which the Hunchak Committee organized itself. It had organized itself in cities in the south such as Antep, Maraş, and Adana, and

succeeded in finding support especially amongst the youngsters. For instance, in 1895, at the head of committees’ branch in Maraş was a person named Ter Kovanet.²⁰ After the committee completed building up its organizational capacity, it started carry out various activities in İstanbul and Anatolia, such as the Kumkapı Demonstration, Sason Insurrection, and Zeytun Insurrection.

15 Süslü ve diğerleri, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler*, p. 171.

16 Mim Kemal Öke, *Ermeni Sorunu (1914-1923)* (İstanbul: İz Yay., 1996), p. 115; İltar, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermenilerin...*, p. 13.

17 Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, p. 131.

18 Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, p. 441.

19 Göyünç, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p. 99.

20 BOA, Y.PRK. ASK. 132/45 (1315 R 20 /17 September 1897). For detailed information regarding Ter Kovanet’s activities in Marash, please see: Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *Bir Ermeni’nin İtirafı 1895 - Maraş Ermeni Olayları* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yay., 2007).

Dashnaktsutyun Committee

In 1890 in Tbilisi, non-socialist, nationalist Armenians who the Hunchaks could not satisfy established a union called “Droshak” (“Flag”) and published a newspaper with the same name.²¹ Afterwards, Droshak took the name “Dashnaktsutyun” (“Armenian Revolutionary Federation”) by merging with Russian and Georgian unions which had been established against Tsarist Russia.²² The objectives of this committee was to; 1) assemble the committees “Genç Ermenistan” (“Young Armenia”) in Tbilisi, and “Armenekan” and “Hinçak “ in Van, 2) insert Armenian gangs into Ottoman territories, 3) arm Armenians in these territories, 4) teach villagers how to use guns, 5) establish gangs, 6) train gang leaders, 7) establish a defense organization, and 8) carry out a revolution by gathering supporters and secure the independence of Armenia. The committee’s slogan was; “No matter their circumstance, kill Turks and Kurds wherever you see them. Kill reactionaries, promise breakers, and Armenian inspectors [*hafiyeler*, who worked for the Ottoman government] and traitors. Take revenge!”²³

The Dashnaks, who referred themselves as social-democrat, socialist-revolutionary, nationalist, and humanist, actually emerged as a terrorist organization.²⁴ The committee’s program was centered on spurring revolts by establishing revolutionary groups, imitating the example set forth by Russian nihilists.²⁵ The committee’s symbol was also correspondingly designed to reflect these objectives. The symbol contained a shovel, a pen, and a dagger. The shovel symbolized the workers, the pen symbolized the intellectuals, and the dagger symbolized the fighters and *fedaîs* (someone who is ready to face any type danger for the sake of a higher cause).²⁶

Just like the Hunchaks, the Dashnaks, determined to try all methods for reaching their objectives, planned to stir revolts by attacking not only Turks but also Armenians who were not members of their group. This would thus guarantee external powers intervening in these events, and Armenian

21 İlder, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermenilerin...*, p. 14.

22 Göyünç, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, p. 100; Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, p. 132.

23 Süslü ve diğerleri, *Türk Tarihinde Ermeniler*, p. 172.

24 İlder, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermenilerin...*, p. 15.

25 Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, s.133. For the full text of the program published by Dashnaktsutyun Committee with the title “Armenian Revolutionary Union Program”, please see: Halaçoğlu, *1895 Trabzon Olayları...*, pp. 37–40. To compare some of the small differences that is thought to be a result of translation from Armenian, please see: Paşa, *Ermeni Olayları Tarihi*, pp. 183–187.

26 İlder, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist Ermenilerin...*, p. 15, footnote 14.

nationalist would hereby establish an independent state.²⁷ Anyone who did not follow the orders of the Dashnaks were declared traitors and were punished by them. For instance, a wealthy Armenian named I. Jamharian was stabbed to death for not paying 30,000 rubles. Dashnaktsutyun members were merciless even towards the members of their own ethnic group. The priest of the Ahtamar Church (Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Aghtamar) A. Vartabet and his helper Mihran, and also notable persons of Armenian society like D. Davit, G. Manoug, B. Capamajian, B. Atamian, S. Keyfijan, M. Aghazarian, and H. Arakelian were all killed by the Dashnaks for opposing their arbitrary actions. For the same reason, Baliozian from İzmir and Gerektzian from Erzurum were also killed by Armenian militants.²⁸

There were two reasons why Armenian nationalists choose terror as a method for achieving their objectives. The first reason was to achieve a demographic majority in the regions where they sought to establish an independent state, by slaughtering the regions' majority constituted by Muslim Turks or forcing them to migrate. The second reason was to portray the events thus occurring as a "massacre of Armenians" to the Western world in order to attain their military and political intervention.²⁹

ARMENIAN COMMITTEES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES AFTER PROCLAMATION OF THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL ERA

Before the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era (*II. Meşrutiyet*), Armenian committees such as the Hunchak Committee, Dashnaktsutyun, and "Ramgavar" were accepted as terrorist organizations by the Ottoman Empire. The reason for this was that these committees had secessionist ideas and that they chose propaganda and terror as ways for reaching their goals. Armenian historians claim that these committees were unable to unite due to differences of opinion on many issues between them. Even though this claim is partially true, the main objective of the committees was the creation of Armenian secessionist movements. From the point of view of the Ottoman Empire, what was important was not their internal conflicts, but the fact that they possessed secessionist objectives. Therefore, what has been scrutinized the most by Turkish historiography is the fact that decisions for independence or autonomy were taken by Armenians, rather than by which Armenian committees they

27 Stanford J. Shaw ve Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye*, çev. Mehmet Harmancı, 2. Baskı, II. Cilt (İstanbul: e Yay., 1983), p. 253.

28 Türkkaya Ataöv, "İki Olağanüstü Ermeni Kaynağı-Papazian ve Katchaznoui", *Tarih Boyunca Türklerin Ermeni Toplumu İle İlişkileri Sempozyumu* (Ankara, 1985), p. 294.

29 Yusuf Sarıncay, "Ermeni Tehciri ve Yargılamalar", *Türk-Ermeni İlişkilerinin Gelişimi ve 1915 Olayları Uluslararası Sempozyumu Bildirileri* içinde, haz. Hale Şıvgın (Ankara, 2006), p 258.

were taken by, and there has not been much of an interest in the internal structures of these committees. In this respect, the lack of knowledge about the details of activities of Armenian communities are a shortfall of Turkish historiography, and this shortfall must be remedied.

Following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era, Armenian political parties/committees and leading Armenian public figures were in an effort to have good relations with the Ottoman government. However, at the same time, they secretly established armed gangs in villages. Detailed information regarding the establishment and features of these gangs can be obtained particularly from the circulars of Dashnaksutyun concerning villages.³⁰ Ottoman officials were aware of the fact that Armenians in the southern regions were attempting, with various activities, to revive the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia even after the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era. However, this must not be understood as having been a new objective. In fact, in 1891, a short time after their establishment in 1887, the Hunchak Committee had organized itself in Adana and its surroundings, and procured the mediation of the Great Powers by instigating an insurrection in Zeytun and managed to have the Ottoman government accept some of its requests.³¹

In 1908, during which the Constitutional Era was proclaimed, a large number of Armenians -foremost being Karekin Pastırmacıyan (Armen Garo)- who were identified by the Ottoman government as being committee members and thus who fled abroad, started returning back to the country.³² This was because, after proclamation of the Constitutional Era, the Hunchak and Dasnaksutyun committees, which were previously accepted as terrorist organizations, now became political parties.³³ These political parties opened clubs in many regions

30 H. Erdoğan Cengiz (haz.), *Ermeni Komitelerinin Â'mâl ve Hareketi İhtilâliyesi* (Ankara, 1983), pp. 176-180.

31 Regarding the members, operations and establishment of the Hunchak Committee in Adana and its surroundings, please see: Nejlâ Günay, *Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyanları* (İstanbul: IQ Yay., 2007), pp. 263-279. For the insurrections carried out by committee in this region, please see: *Ibid.*, pp. 287-321.

32 Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Atase ve Denetleme Başkanlığı Yayınları, *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918*, Cilt IV (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 2006), pp. 3, 5, 7. Recep Karacakaya ve diğerleri, "İstanbul Ermeni Patriği Mateos İzmirlıyan ve Siyasi Faaliyetleri", *Ermeni Araştırmaları* 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri, 1. Cilt (Ankara: ASAM, 2003), p. 390; Yalçın Özalp, *Millet-i Sadıka Patırtısı ve Maraş*, yay. Yılmaz Akçakale (İstanbul: t.y.) p. 226.

33 The committees asked if they could open branches in various regions in Anatolia, and the in turn, the local authorities asked to the central government for instructions on whether these committees -who were accepted as a terrorist organization until that day- could open such branches. It was declared to local authorities that there was no harm in the Dashnak and Hunchak committees opening new branches in rural areas on the grounds that these communities were allowed to open branches in İstanbul. For a copious amount of correspondence (45 leafs) with respect to this issue, please see: BOA. Dahiliye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım Evrakı (DH. SYS.), 65/2.

of Anatolia and gathered the Armenian society in these clubs, which increased the suspicion and uneasiness of the Muslim population.³⁴ During that period, the government lifted all arms trade and import restrictions, just like it lifted restrictions on everything else.³⁵ This formed the basis for the quick armament of Armenians. Benefiting from the far-reaching level of freedom given to them by the government of the Constitutional Era, Armenians could easily bring guns and ammunition to the country with the purposes of first “*protecting themselves*” and later on “*pursuing the attainment of their claims in an aggressive way*”.³⁶ The Great Powers had provoked Armenians into attempting to establish an Armenian state in Çukurova, which had strategic importance due to the Mediterranean and Baghdad railways. On the other hand, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Cretan movements and internal insurrections were accepted as an opportunity by the Armenian committees. According to plans made by them, Armenians were to revolt and resist against the government. Upon this, European states would send their armored vehicles to Mersin and give Kilikya to Armenians.³⁷ Even more, the establishment of “*Great Armenia*” would be approved by the European states.³⁸

The committees made Armenians migrate from eastern cities to Adana to attain their goals, without having these people registered. Armenians coming from abroad to Adana were dispatched to and settled in villages.³⁹ Armenians, who were brought from Maraş, Harput and Diyarbakır and made to look like

34 Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde 1909 Adana Olayları*, Cilt II (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2010), p. 13.

35 Metin Martı (haz.), *Cemal Paşa, Hatırat*, 5. Baskı (İstanbul: Arma Yay., 1996), p.359. There are some differences between the different publications of “Hatırat” of Cemal Paşa. For other parts in which Armenian events in Adana are narrated, please see: Behçet Kemal (tamamlayan), *Cemal Paşa, Hatıralar* (Selek Yay., M. Sıralar Matbaası, 1959), pp. 348-355; Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (haz.), *Cemal Paşa, Hatırat (1913-1922)*, Hatıralarla Yakın Tarih Dizisi (İstanbul: Nehir Yay., 2006), pp. 348-357. Regarding how easy and ordinary it was to acquire guns, please see: Vahakn N. Dadrian, *İttifak Devletleri Kaynaklarında Ermeni Soykırımı*, çev. Ali Çakıroğlu (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 2007), p. 215.

36 Salâhi R. Sonyel, “İngiliz Gizli Belgelerine Göre Adana’da Vuku Bulan Türk-Ermeni Olayları (Temmuz 1908- Aralık 1909)”, *Bellekten*, C.LI, S.201 (Ankara: TTK Yay., Aralık 1987), p. 1267.

37 Ahmet Rüstem Bey, *La Guerre Mondiale et La Question Turco-Arménienne*, çev. Cengiz Aydın (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2001), p. 41; Alpay Kabacalı (haz.), *Talât Paşa’nın Anıları* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yay., 2003), p. 24; Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, p. 551; İzgöer, *Cemal Paşa, Hatırat*, p. 353; Süleyman Kâni İrtem, *Ermeni Meselesinin İçyüzü*, haz. Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu (İstanbul: Temel Yay., 2004), p. 150. Regarding arrival of warships of Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Russia, Germany, and United States to the Mersin Harbor, please see: Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Ermeni Soykırım Tarihi – Balkanlar’dan Anadolu ve Kafkasya’ya Etnik Çatışma*, çev. Ali Çakıroğlu (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 2008), p. 271.

38 Arsen Avagyan ve Gaidz F. Minassian, *Ermeniler ve İttihat Terakki İşbirliğinden Çatışmaya*, çev. Mutlucan Şahan (İstanbul: Aras Yay., 2005), pp. 16-17.

39 Regarding testimonies of a 20-person Armenian group, who escaped after their existence was reported to security units, in which they confessed that they came from United States and they were from Harput, please see: BOA. Yıldız Pera-kende Zaptiye Nezareti Evrakı, 38/36, (1326 Ra 19).

seasonal workers, were being placed in empty plots seized by Armenians or in the houses of Armenians living in towns.⁴⁰ In the meantime, Armenians accelerated the propagation of their propagandas. In the various newspapers they were publishing, they released news that mentioned poor Armenians who were the victims of famine, for instance Zeytun Armenians, and the government's use of force and violence upon them in order to collect taxes. Realizing the forthcoming danger, the Ottoman government worked to convince people that these news were not true, and also had refutation texts published.⁴¹

The degree of freedom afforded by the Constitutional Era government, the weakness of the administration, and the geographical location were factors that made it easier to import guns to Anatolia. As a consequence of these, armories were built in Anatolia by Armenian committees to easily procure guns to their supporters. Adana and Maraş were important gun distribution centers as well.⁴²

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One other reason for the tension between Turks and Armenians in the region was the dissatisfaction of Armenians upon the settling of Muslims coming from Balkans to this region, and the efforts of Armenians, who dwelled in Haçin (known today as the township [*kaza*] of Saimbeyli, located within the borders of Adana) to come to Çukurova.⁴³

Having completed their preparations, Armenians were simply becoming anxious to start an insurrection and were thus purposefully provoking the

40 Mehmed Asaf, *1909 Adana Ermeni Olayları ve Anıları*, çev. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1982), p. 24.

41 Takvim-i Vekayi, I.se., ad.151, Pazartesi, 2 Mart 1325 (15 Mart 1909)'dan Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, "Takvim-i Vekayi'de Ermenilerle İlgili Haberler", *Bellekten*, C.LV, S.212-214 (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1991), p. 835.

42 Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Siverek, Trabzon, Samsun, Antep, Bursa, İzmit, Adapazarı, and İstanbul were being used as the other gun distribution centers. Please see: İlater, *Türkiye'de Sosyalist Ermenilerin...*, pp. 39–40. Regarding the armament of the Muslim population in Maraş and the increase in Armenian communities' operations, which will help the reader in understanding that armament was taking place throughout the region, please see: Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Armenien Faksimilesammlung diplomatischer Akten-stücke 1877–1936* (Wien, 1995), no. 662; İnanç Atılğan ve Kerstin Tomenendal (haz.), *HA PA XII 198 no. 15/E Cilt IV, p. 3340'dan Avusturya-Macaristan ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Cilt. IV (Viyana, 2004).

43 Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens* (Paris : Odile Jacob, 2006), pp. 107–108.

Muslims.⁴⁴ The Muslim population was becoming concerned because of Armenians issuing cigarette packages that had the symbol of Armenia engraved on them and cigarette paper that had Armenian written on it.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the opening of a “Milli Lokal” (“National Club”) in Adana by the Hunchaks after the Dashnaktsutyun –who were known to have secessionist intentions- had already opened one, in which conferences were held about the longing for an independent Armenia, was increasing the hostility of Armenians towards Muslims.⁴⁶ The fact that some Armenians, who were members of committees, such as Gökdereliyan Garabet, were putting target practice signs in their houses and having young Armenians do practice shooting increased inter-group tensions to the peak.⁴⁷

These preparations made by Armenians was not escaping the attention of Muslims, and this was fueling hate and grudge between the two sides. An armament race started between Armenians and Muslims due to the day-by-day increase in negative emotions between the two sides and the insufficient efforts of the local administration in finding a solution to this problem. Armenian newspapers were fecklessly writing about the necessity of armament, claiming that it was crucial in protecting and defending the constitutional order, and their physical well-being, honor, and properties. Interpreting Armenian armament as a sign for an impending attack against Muslims, Muslims were warning their coreligionists to be prepared. Moreover, both two sides were not refraining from trying out the guns they were buying in empty yards, in the vicinity of the city, and even in the city center.⁴⁸

The proclamation of the Constitutional Era not only did not remove Armenian committees with secessionist ideas, but facilitated these secret organizations coming out into the public and thus caused them to gain legitimacy. A French diplomatic letter sent from Maraş to Kilikya on 4 January 1909, spoke of pressure being put on prominent Christians by the Committee of Union and

44 German and British documents’ clear demonstration of Armenians’ provocative demeanor prevents Armenian authors from dismissing this fact. Referring to Armenians, Doughty Wyllie, the British Vice Consul in Adana stated: “A vicious and provocative language, used very widely and directed at the Turks. The commotion created by and the incurable babbling of the armed Armenian has provoked the Turk...” Britanya Hariciye Arşivi, FO, 24/220, Genel Rapor s.70, ek no.48’den; Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Ermeni Soykırımında Kurumsal Roller - Toplu Makaleler*, Kitap 1, çev. Atilla Tuygan (İstanbul: Belge Yay., 2004), p. 6.

45 Bayram Kodaman ve Mehmet Ali Ünal (haz.), *Son Vak’anivis Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi Tarihi II. Meşrutiyet Olayları (1908–1909)* (Ankara: TTK Yay., 1996), p. 71.

46 Cemal Anadol, *Tarih Boyunca Türk-Ermeni Meselesi - Ermeni Dosyası* (İstanbul: Bilge Karınca, 2007), p. 284.

47 Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde 1909...*, p. 16.

48 İrtem, *Ermeni Meselesinin İcyüzü*, pp.158–160; Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde 1909...*, p. 75.

Progress (CUP) members (who the letter claimed were in an effort to solidify the position of their new regime) along with their neighborhood leaders, and of the danger of war.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Armenians were the most ardent supporters of the Constitutional Era, and the long lasting celebrations they held for the proclamation of the Constitutional Era significantly escalated the tension in Adana.⁵⁰ The local unit of CUP became aware of this situation and felt the need to take precautions. In order to ease the anxiety of prominent Christians, who were fearful of the pressure from the partisans of the old regime and influential tribal leaders in Çukurova, the local unit of CUP had the military governor (*askerî vali*) of the region and Governor (*Vali*) of Adana Bahri Bey removed from duty. However, these precautions could not prevent the outbreak of the events. The events that broke out between Muslims and Armenians, which started on 14 April 1909 and lasted until the middle of May, spilled over to nearby cities. There were casualties, injuries, and people forced to leave their homes from both sides.

The proclamation of the Constitutional Era not only did not remove Armenian committees with secessionist ideas, but facilitated these secret organizations coming out into the public and thus caused them to gain legitimacy.

Dasnaktsutyun and Hunchak committees, which did not learn from the sufferings in the Adana events, swung into action again to arm Armenians. The importance of all Armenians being armed was stressed in letters of instructions sent to all units of the committees.⁵¹ This is an indication that Armenians adopted armed insurgency as a method of establishing an independent state. This armed organization capacity building caused Dasnaktsutyun, which was also operating in the political sphere, to emerge as a threat to the Ottoman Empire that was going through difficult times in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars. Facilitating the intervention of the Great Powers by bringing the issue of reform to the agenda, Armenians were able to attain what they wanted through this Great Power support. The Ottoman government took various precautions regarding such activities by Armenians due to several reasons. One reason was that, with the start of the World War I, these Armenian groups cooperated with the Russian army, and opened new fronts against the Ottoman Empire within its borders in Bitlis and Muş. Another reason was that they ambushed Ottoman

49 Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 101.

50 Dadrian, *Ermeni Soykırım Tarihi...*, p. 270.

51 Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Armenien Faksimilesammlung...*, no.715; Atılğan, *HA PA XII 201 no.133/G, cilt V, p. 3573–3576'dan Avusturya-Macaristan ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Cilt IV; Seyit Sertçelik, *Rus ve Ermeni Kaynaklarının Işığında Ermeni Sorununun Ortaya Çıkış Süreci* (Ankara: TBMM Yay., 2009), p. 215.

soldiers. A third reason was that they attacked defenseless villages, which lacked most of their men as they had gone off to fight in the war, and killed many people. The most important precautions were the arresting of committee leaders and the relocation of Armenians away from warfronts.

ARMENIAN TERRORISM IN MARAŞ AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Armenians organized into small groups upon Ottoman government's policy to disband Armenian committees and decision to relocate Armenians. Alongside perpetrating robberies and murders, these Armenians armed their cognates located in Halep (Aleppo), and registered them to their armed committee. The committee was established in Halep with the purpose of merging with enemy armies and attacking Ottoman borderlines.

9 bandits of a 25 member group affiliated with this committee were arrested in Maraş. Based on the testimony given by those who were arrested, it was identified that the Armenian Deputy of Halep (*Halep Ermeni Murahhasası*) Nerses Vartabet, pharmacist Nerses Efendi who dwelt in the Kazgancı Bazaar, Diyarbekrî İsa, Nişan, Muşeg Dikran, merchant Dikran Müfdikyan who dwelt in the Kıl Inn, Agop from Diyarbakır, village headman Ohannes from Sason, and baker Haço from the Şeyh Neighborhood were the high-ranking administrators of the committee, and were the ones who acquired guns and ammunition for the organization. It was also found out that the head of the committee was İsa from Silvan, and that Deputy Nerses Efendi was also head of the revolutionary coterie. According to the testimony, Nerses Efendi would from time to time have a force go up the Kurd Mountains (Halep Mountain) and have them deployed there, and was planning later on to go to the mountain to burn down any neighborhood that the group would encounter.⁵² Moreover, it was revealed that the main targets of the committee were Kilis and Antep, and that if they found the chance, they would attack these cities.⁵³

Notifying that bombs and dynamites were found in some houses during house searches in Maraş⁵⁴ and that Armenians who were relocated to Halep started organizing gangs, Minister of Internal Affairs Talat Paşa ordered governorates (*valilik*) in Halep and Adana, and sub-governorates (*mutasarrıflık*) in Urfa,

52 Regarding the report sent by the Police Sergeant of Maraş to the *Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti* (the Directorate of Public Safety), please see: BOA. DH. EUM. 2.Şb., 21/7. Ayrıca bkz. BOA. DH.ŞFR., 63/194 (21 Nisan 1332), BOA. DH. ŞFR., 576/68 (1334 Ks 24).

53 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 668/60 /1334 Ke 05).

54 Nejla Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş (Ermeniler, Türkler, Müslümanlar)* (Kahramanmaraş: Ukte, 2012), p. 80.

Maraş, and Zor to be watchful on the grounds of it being heard that a 24-member gang –formed in Kilis- had started to move towards the environs of Diyarbakır.⁵⁵ In addition, the government tasked Esat Bey, the Deputy Director of the Public Security Directorate (*Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdür Muavini*), with investigating and inspecting Armenian gangs' activities in Maraş.⁵⁶ Esat Bey's knowledge of Armenian language and having previously looked into Armenian-related happenings was the cause of his assignment.⁵⁷ In a report that he sent to his Minister of Foreign Affairs Burian, Consul of Halep of the Australia-Hungary Empire stated that Armenians had established a gang, and were aiming to conduct raids to the embassies of Austria-Hungary and Germany by wearing Ottoman military uniforms in order to disrupt public order and security in the Ottoman Empire, and that the government –which got news of this- arrested 70 members of committee member Armenians in Halep.⁵⁸

The report prepared by the Maraş Sub-Governorate in 29 November 1915, and sent to the relevant authorities in the capital, contained the number of people that Armenians injured and killed in different villages, and the scale of the damage they inflicted on these people's properties. According to the report, 12 Muslims were killed and two Muslims were wounded in the center of Maraş. The houses of 4 Muslims were burnt down. A total of 27 Muslims were killed: 1 in Fatmalı Village, 3 in Hartlap Village, 4 in Öksekk Village, 3 in Afşarlı Village, 1 in Kumperli Village, 1 in Musalar Nomad Tent (*oba*), and 2 in Hacı Köselers Farm, while 16 people were wounded. 51 houses were burnt down and 33 people's belongings were extorted.⁵⁹

During the start of the year 1916, while the relocation of Armenian people was underway, it was identified that another Armenian gang was operating in Zeytun.⁶⁰ In fact, İsmail, Ahmet who was the son of Mehmet Mustafa, and another friend of İsmail -who had all deserted the 12th Division (*12. Fırka*)- were on 14 August 1916 attacked by a 10-member bandit group as they were walking in a forestland two hours away from the Süleymanlı Township. After extorting the aforementioned soldiers' money and belongings, the bandits tied them together from their necks to suffocate them, and then escaped from the area. However, the aforementioned soldiers did not die, and after regaining

55 BOA. DH.ŞFR., 63/175 (20 Nisan 1332).

56 BOA. DH. ŞFR. 63/263 (27 Nisan 1332).

57 BOA. DH. ŞFR. 63/282 (28 Nisan 1332).

58 Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Armenien Faksimilesammlung...*, no.1186; Atılğan, *HA PA XXXVIII 369. no.5/P, cilt VII, p. 5153'den Avusturya Macaristan ve Ermeni*, Cilt VII.

59 BOA. DH.EUM.2.Şb., 14/48.

60 BOA. DH.ŞFR., 62/57 (6 Mart 1332).

consciousness, they reported what happened to them to the Süleymanlı District Governorate (*Kaymakamlık*). Sub-Governor of Maraş Kemal Bey assigned Gendarmerie Commander of Süleymanlı (*Süleymanlı Jandarma Komutanı*) to track down the bandits. 7 bandits were caught in the operations. Based on the testimony of the captured bandits, it was understood that many Armenians - who had deserted their military duties from various places- were grouping themselves in the Süleymanlı Mountains. Kemal Bey thereupon notified the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the importance of not a giving a chance to the Armenian deserters to harm the neighborhood's public order, by relocating the people of Zeytun region far away from their neighborhoods or preventing bandits from escaping.⁶¹ On 10 February 1916, another Armenian gang was captured with criminal evidence in a cave in the Efkere borough (*nahiyesi*) of Kayseri.⁶²

There were many Armenians in the Amanos Mountains range who had escaped from the relocation or who had deserted their military duty. These people were attacking soldiers who were being sent to their hometowns for a rest, seizing their documents authorizing them to take a rest (*tebdil-i heva*), and harassing people passing through that region.⁶³ Operations were conducted on 4 October 1916 by Adana Regional Command (*Adana Mintika Kumandanlığı*) upon the increase in harassments, which resulted in the arrests of 35 military deserters and 2 Armenians. 1 Armenian and 2 military deserters stated that they could show the location of where the remaining bandits were hiding. All of the arrested ones were dispatched to the Martial Court (*Divan-ı Harb*).⁶⁴

Upon Armenian gangs -operating in the environs of Niğde- going over to Adana in order to damage railway lines, respective administrative units were warned to prevent such attempts and were requested to take necessary precautions.⁶⁵ Upon this, a 45-member force was dispatched to the area and the Kızıldağ Kayışlı Borough was surrounded in case the bandits pulled back. A 28-member force was also dispatched to Pozantı. It was identified that Topal Agop, who had been dismissed from Beyoğlu Police Department (*Beyoğlu Komiserliği*), was the head of the bandit group.⁶⁶ The government, which was waging a serious struggle against the bandits in Maraş, requested from the Niğde Sub-Governorate to investigate whether this 28-member bandit group

61 BOA. DH. EUM. 2. Şb., 26/40.

62 Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, p.355.

63 ATASE, BDH, K1.4214, Dos.195-57, Fh.1. Krş; Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş...*, p. 82.

64 ATASE, BDH, K1.4214, Dos. 195-57, Fh.1-8.

65 ATASE, BDH, K1.4218, Dos. 193-67, Fh.1-6.

66 ATASE, BDH, K1.4218, Dos. 193-67, Fh.1-2.

came from eastern provinces or Maraş, and to not lose a track of them.⁶⁷ The government also recommended that Niğde Sub-Governorate should cooperate with nearby provinces (*iller*) if necessary.⁶⁸

The fact that some Muslims too were engaging in banditry in southern regions -on top of Armenian bandits- brought about a demand for a serious number of forces to secure public order. According to a report prepared by Halep Chief Civil Inspector (*Halep Mülkiye Müfettişi*) Şekip Bey on 15 September 1915 regarding Maraş Shire's (*Liva*) order and discipline, there were three different 25-30-member bandit groups -one of them Kurdish and two of them Armenian-operating in Maraş alone. There was a Kurdish gang, established in Elbistan, the number of members of which was increasing day by day, and this gang was acquiring provisions and new members from Kurdish villages. The Çolakyan Gang, which had 25 members, was operating around Zeytun. The gang's most attention-grabbing activity was its choking to death of two immigrants on the Zeytun-Elbistan route. The gang known as Topal Gâvur or Topal Agop had 30 members, and was roaming between İslahiye and Pazarcık. Attacking the Ördekler Village in Pazarcık in June 1917, the Topal Agop gang killed the village's imam and extorted 3000 liras from villagers. After this event, the majority of forces that had been allocated to track down bandits were sent after the Topal Agop gang. Since this would cause a security gap in Maraş, the Maraş Sub-Governorate requested for reinforcement from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁶⁹ The Minister of Internal Affairs Talat Bey stated that forces were requested from Syria and Western Arabia Public Command (*Suriye ve Garbi Arabistan Umum Kumandanlığı*) and 7th Army Command Authority (*7. Ordu Kumandanlığı Vekâleti*), and ordered developments be monitored and reported.⁷⁰ Topal Agop and his cousin Mardiros, who had killed many gendarme and regular army soldiers and who were operating in the environs of Maraş and İslahiye for 10 months, were killed in a clash in the vicinity of Hasan Bey as a result of the persistent tracking of the government. During the clash, Sergeant Süleyman and five soldiers accompanying him were wounded and 1 person of the local folk died. The government decided to pay a total of 150 liras to ones wounded during clash and to appropriate 5000 kuruş in funds for the family of the person who lost his life.⁷¹

The Commander of 4th Army (*Dördüncü Ordu Komutanı*) Ahmet Celal Paşa

67 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 81-112, (12 Teşrinisani 1333).

68 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 81-188, (21 Teşrinisani 1333).

69 BOA. DH. EUM. 6.şb., 27/25, (8 Kanunuevvel 1333).

70 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 81/81 (8 Teşrinisani 1333).

71 BOA. DH. EUM. 6.şb., 28/9 (1336 Ra 8).

gave orders to the Commander of the 44th Division (*44. Fırka Komutanı*) and the commanders of the officers (*zabit kumandanları*) near the Armenian gangs in İslahiye to track these gangs. They were to establish two units of 40 persons each, track the Armenian gangs, and with the help of gendarme forces, immediately apprehend them.⁷² On the other hand, according to the report prepared by Lieutenant (*Mülazım-ı Evvel*) Kemal Efendi, who had been sent to İslahiye as the commander of the two units; although they was not an armed bandit gang, there were Armenian construction workers who were taking out the guns they were hiding during day-time to engage in banditry during night-time. In fact, according to the report, the local community was aware of this activity, and that all of these individuals had documents signed by Construction Inspector (*İnşaat Müfettişi*) Fuat Ziya Bey showing that they were construction workers. It was as such not possible to arrest these individuals, but the report notified that putting them under heavy surveillance would prevent them from engaging in banditry.⁷³

In a telegram sent on 10 February 1917 by the Regiment Commander of Adana (*Adana Jan-darma Alay Komutanı*) personally working towards capturing the gang in İslahiye, it was reported that the captured gang members were previously relocated Armenians, and that the Cebel-i Bereket Sub-Governorate would continue its tracking in order to apprehend those procuring weapons for the returning relocated Armenians and the rest of the gang.⁷⁴ Concerning the rest of the gang, the telegram stated that the authorities engaged in a clash with a 32-member gang in the environs of İslahiye's Şihli Village on 1 February 1917, that there were four deaths and one injured among the soldiers, and that the Armenian bandits benefited from the steepness of the terrain to escape. On 5 February 1917, another clash took place, in which two bandits were killed and one was captured alive in an injured state, but that three soldiers died and that the remaining bandits escaped towards Antep. The telegram stated that in order to disallow conspirators to desert their duties and in order to form a new operation against bandits, it was needed to send a force under the command of the battalion (*tabur*) present in İslahiye.⁷⁵ Someone by the name Manok from Sivas, who infiltrated from Halep on 8 March 1917 and headed towards the mountains that were the borders of İslahiye and Bahçe townships to Maraş, gathered together 60 bandits wearing gendarme outfits and attacked the nearby villages, killing some of the villagers and injuring some others.⁷⁶ Moreover,

72 ATASE, BDH, Kl.4214, Dos. 195-57, Fh.2.

73 ATASE, BDH, Kl.4214, Dos. 195-57, Fh.2-5.

74 ATASE, BDH, Kl. 4223, Dos.81-84, Fh.1.

75 Hikmet Özdemir (ed.), *Türk- Ermeni İhtilafı - Makaleler* (Ankara: TBMM Yay., 2007), p. 194.

76 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 74/72 (15 Mart 1333).

the Manok Gang attacked the gendarmes who were going to their units in the environs of Ekbez Lake, killing and injuring some of them.⁷⁷

The Ottoman government wanted to take new precautions in region upon an increase in gang activities that was concentrating on Kilis. The precautionary measures were increased around the 15 Muslim villages in the Kürtdağı region which were attacked the most.⁷⁸ No matter how closely they were tracked, the actions of Armenian gangs in the Anatolia-Syria border could not be stopped. According to what the Governor of Adana reported to the 12th Corps Command (*12. Kolordu Komutanlığı*) on 3 November 1917: 1) a 20-member Armenian gang had crossed into Adana to attack railways, tunnels, and other places, 2) Two or three days ago a 32 armed people had raided İşçi Bekir Town in Kamışlı, 3) One day ago 15 armed people were seen roaming the forestland of Pozantı, 4) Efforts to such activities were not successful because gendarme force necessary to apprehend these bandits could not be acquired.⁷⁹ Ten days later, the same gang raided the Kamışlı Borough and burned down some houses.⁸⁰

Armenian gangs were fulfilling their provision needs by raiding Muslim villages. Following its establishment in Maraş, an Armenian gang operating in Maraş and its environs attacked the Yanık Village in İslâhiye in June 1918 with a 70-member group, extorting provisions and animals. They then succeeded to escape and units were established with gendarme and soldiers to track down the bandits.⁸¹ On 22 June 1918, an Armenian gang of 40 members ambushed and killed 7 gendarmes in nearby the villages of Hacılar and ..?.., which were 9 hours away from İslâhiye. The next day, they killed six people, 4 being of the locals and 2 gendarmes, in the area of Sabunsuyu.⁸² In the beginning of July, a corporal and two privates, who were ordered to track down a military deserter from the 44th Division's district (*44. Tümen mıntıkası*), were killed by Armenian gangs in a marshy place between Zincirli and Süleymanağa Villages in the region called İntelli near İslâhiye. The fact that this incident took place in a mountainous region close to a railroad and the sudden disappearance of the bandits brought to mind the possibility that it was the railroad workers and servants who had formed the gang. It was therefore decided that a platoon (*müfrezin*) to be formed by the 12th Army Corps (*12. Kolordu*), working

77 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 74/141 (8 Mart 1333).

78 BOA. DH. ŞFR., 573/112 (1333 Ke 15).

79 ATASE, BDH, K1.4218, Dos. 193–67, Fh.1.

80 ATASE, BDH, K1.4218, Dos. 193–67, Fh.1–14.

81 BOA. DH. EUM. 2.Şb., 55/24 (25 Haziran 1334).

82 ATASE, BDH, K1.2688, Dos.130–247, Fh.2, 2–1.

together with the Adana gendarme platoon, would fully scan the Cebel-i Bereket Sub-Governorate region that was near the İslâhiye-Osmaniye railroad, and apprehend and punish the criminals.⁸³

Reinforcements were sent to the region to apprehend the bandits on 6 August 1918.⁸⁴ When they could not be captured, two battalions (*tabur*) from the 10th Depot Regiment Command (*10. Depo Alay Komutanlığı*) were ordered on 12 August 1918 to apprehend the Armenian gangs.⁸⁵

Armenian Terror Activities after the Armistice of Mudros

After Ottoman Empire's losing of the First World War and its signing of the Armistice of Mudros, Armenian gangs operating in the south tended to move towards carrying out bolder operations. Gang members coming down from the mountains rallied in Halep and branched into three arms, and decided to march to Adana by passing through Maraş, Antep, and Kilis. The Ottoman government took measures to prevent this from happening.⁸⁶

Upon the coordinated actions of Armenian gangs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a set of instructions on 7 October 1918. According to this; platoons were established by exempting some members of the shire gendarme (*liva jandarma*) from other duties in order use them for as policemen (*inzibat*). Furthermore, Sub-Governor of Maraş Ata Bey notified the following orders to the Second Army Command (*İkinci Ordu Kumandanlığı*): 1) the strengthening of the soldier platoon due to their insufficiency in tracking down the gangs, 2) the need to do what was necessary to have soldiers and gendarme to act jointly.⁸⁷ The preparations for establishing gendarme forces to keep track of Armenian gangs started in response to Sub-Governor of Maraş's request.⁸⁸ Alongside the gendarme forces, two regular army platoons (*nizamiye müfrezesi*) of 30 people each were assigned to track down the Armenian gang in İslâhiye.⁸⁹

83 Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Atase ve Denetleme Başkanlığı Yayınları, *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri 1914-1918*, Cilt II (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 2005), p. 268.

84 ATASE, BDH, K1.2688, Dos.130-247, Fh.14.

85 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos.130A-303, Fh.001.

86 BOA, BEO, 4546/340934, 1339 Ra 10.

87 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos. 130A-303, Fh.009,01.

88 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos. 130A-303, Fh.009,02.

89 ATASE, BDH, K1.4214, Dos. 195-57, Fh.2-2.

The Ways Through Which Terror Groups Procured Their Needs

Armenians, who were previously exiled, were escaping from where they were and coming to Halep. They were there joining the organization that was formed with aim of establishing an independent state in the vicinity of Amanos Mountains, İslâhiye, Pazarcık, Kilis, Maraş, and Zeytun. They were intent on pursuing their activities until they achieved their goals and were thus attempting to inflict all manner of damages in the vicinity of Amanos Mountains, İslâhiye, Pazarcık, Kilis, Maraş, and Zeytun. It was ordered to the Halep Governorate to secretly and very carefully investigate the Halep Railroad Central Manager (*Halep Şimendifer Merkez Müdürü*) Mihnas, Basmacıyan dwelling in İstanbul, Paspasyan who again dwelt in İstanbul and was a cashier in a management company, Karamanyan from Maraş who was a telegraph operator in Halep Station, the other telegraph operator Balabanyan, and the merchant Tuma brothers, all of whom were being suspected of procuring all manner of materials to Armenian bandits who dwelt in the mountains.⁹⁰ Guns, ammunition, and provisions being procured in various ways by different people were being delivered to the abovementioned people, and were thus being delivered to İslâhiye and distributed by Alis Efendi in a completely unsupervised way. Furthermore, this delivery was taking place within the knowledge of the Railroad Head Manager (*Şimendifer Başmüdürü*) Şoven Donrer who was German Switzerland national.⁹¹ This was not the only way of procurement of weapons for Armenians. Gangs were stealing some of the guns and ammunition in Bahçe and Meydan-ı Ekber stations being sent to soldiers and sending them to İslâhiye via trains. This was easily being done with the help of machinist Hayik, machinist Vahan from Sivas, and stoker Arakil. The ammunition and guns sent underneath bread sacks were sometimes hid by Küpeli Anastas when they were taken to İslâhiye.

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90 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos.130A-303, Fh..3-4; relayed from: Günay, XX. *Yüzyılda Maraş...*, p. 86.

91 The support given by Armenians -who were working in the railroads and even in the Labor Battalions- to gangs had been determined many times. For an example of this in Geyve, please see: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, p. 385.

Another way of transporting the guns and ammunition was to deliver them to the Manager of Bahçe Station and the incarcerated former Manager of İslâhiye Station. İbik? (a stoker who worked in the İspalya roadway between Tahta Bridge and Aran, and who was the son of Tarakçioğlu from Hasanbey) and Balanyan from Kartal (who would determine the routes of the Balast and Şukka trains running between Ayranağa and İslâhiye) would send the weapons and ammunition they acquired to the abovementioned managers. Ceridyan, a telegraph operator in Yarbaş Station, was aware of these actions. Although they were first bandits, Foça (who first roamed around Meydan-ı Ekbez Station and then around Tahta Bridge, and who was the son of Marko from Hasanbey), and Agop (who was a blacksmith in Meydan-ı Ekbez Station and who was the son of Artin from Hasanbey) left their bandit group, got into jobs at the company, were assigned by their group to procure guns and ammunitions.

The authorities were also informed that Commander of İslâhiye (*İslâhiye Kumandanı*) was aware that guns acquired by bandits around Halep and Bahçe were being transported in various ways to İslâhiye. According to the intelligence gathered, the guns and ammunition were being hid in the store of İsmail Çavuş, who operated the store on behalf of the Station Commander (*İstasyon Kumandanı*). The guns and ammunition that was usually left at the İslâhiye Station were secretly taken away and sold for 5 golden liras to villages. The profit was shared between the sellers Sabit Alis (the old station manager), Rupen (a dispatch clerk at the station), Şükrü Osman (switchman), and Mehmet Ali Çavuş (who always accompanied Şükrü Osman).

It was understood that some of the Armenians who had previously been exiled due to the damages they caused in Amanos Mountains, İslâhiye, Pazarcık, Kilis, Maraş, and Zeytun had managed to escape. The aim of tracking down these gangs was to apprehend these runaway Armenians and thus disperse the gangs. Wanting to attain this goal, the Supreme Military Command (*Başkumandanlık*) ordered the apprehension of these aforementioned individuals and the carrying of necessary procedures.⁹² On the other hand, 44th Division Command (*44. Fırka Kumandanlığı*) ascertained that the ammunition that was dispatched to the bandits was acquired from the Germans by Papasyan, Basmacıyan and the Merkez Head Manager Şondermaher. It was decided to arrest these abovementioned persons along with some of those who helped them.⁹³ These persons were sent to Martial Court⁹⁴ and Captain Cemal Efendi was assigned to monitoring these trials.⁹⁵

92 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos. 130A–303, Fh.3–4, 5, 6, 7, 8; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş*, p. 87'den naklen.

93 ATASE, BDH, K1.2722, Dos. 133–51, Fh.003–37; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş*..., p. 87.

94 ATASE, BDH, K1.2688, Dos. 39–243, Fh.003–03; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş*..., p. 87.

95 ATASE, BDH, K1.2722, Dos. 133–51, Fh.003–40; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş*..., p. 87.

Beginning to experience provision shortages due to their facilitators being arrested, the bandits in the İslâhiye Çamlık forest moved onto other regions. It was determined that a bandit group of 40 people was attempting to gather provisions around Kilis and that another group whose member count could not be determined was roaming around the Hodi mountain. Upon this, it was ordered that measures be increased in Gâvur Mountain, Pazarcık, and Antep to prevent bandits from fleeing and getting into these regions.⁹⁶

In the struggle against Armenian gangs, the ones who were determined to be facilitating the bandits were either arrested or exiled out of the region. For example, the 44th Division Command (*44. Fırka Kumandanlığı*), tasked with following the bandits, saw it fit to exile 5 Armenians (who worked at the German school as teachers) and Molkan (who worked as a blacksmith at Haruniye) out of the region for helping the bandits.⁹⁷

CONCLUSION

Armenians under Ottoman Empire first organized themselves after the proclamations of the Edicts of Reorganization and Reform. It is seen that these precursor organizations, which took the appearance of charity foundations, were actually engaged in cultural activities aimed at awakening a national consciousness among Armenians.

Armenians established organizations with a political character after the 1880s. Although these committees being established with different names gave the appearance of being disorganized, they all had in common the objective of breaking loose from the Ottoman Empire. The fact that these committees chose terrorism and armed struggle to attain their goals brought them to a conflict with the state, which felt obliged to protect the well-being of its citizens. The interventions of foreign states made this domestic problem of the Ottoman state difficult to solve.

After the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Era, the Ottoman Empire became faced with problems much more serious than before. The Ottoman administrators were forced on the one hand to deal with wars that broke out in Tripoli and the Balkans, and on the other hand to deal with demands of Armenian committees that would have taken the Ottoman Empire towards

96 ATASE, BDH, K1.2688, Dos. 39–243, Fh.003–13; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş...*, p. 87. Also see: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, p. 395.

97 ATASE, BDH, K1.2702, Dos. 130A–303, Fh. 011, 02; relayed from: Günay, *XX. Yüzyılda Maraş...*, p. 87.

disintegration. The outbreak of the First World War made the situation even worse. This was so because the states which the Ottoman Empire was fighting against were Britain and Russia, which were the states propping up Armenians' demands the most. In the end, when a certain section of Armenians helped Russia in the warfronts and the insurrections these Armenians carried out began to hurt the civilian population, the Ottoman state took action; Armenian committees were dispersed and Armenian people were relocated to regions behind warfronts.

Some Armenians did not give up on armed struggle and organized themselves in Halep. Infiltrating Anatolia, they carried out activities in Amanos. Although being at war made it more difficult, the Ottoman state did not back away from this struggle. The ones hurting the civilian population were persistently tracked down and dispersed.

Armenian terror groups' activities kept the Ottoman army occupied. On the other hand, the civilian population living in region became anxious. The acts of the terrorist organizations from time to time resulted in loss of lives and property, it was attempted to use this to give the impression that the state was in a state of weakness. However, this attempt met with failure when the state insisted on tracking down these terrorist organizations.

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GEOPOLITICAL, TRADE, AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF TURKEY AND IRAN IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

(TÜRKİYE VE İRAN'IN GÜNEY KAFKASYA'DAKİ JEOPOLİTİK, TİCARİ VE EKONOMİK ÇIKARLARI)

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Abstract: *This article provides a narrative of the political and economic ambitions of both Turkey and Iran in the Transcaucasian region. It also provides insight into the web of relations between all the countries in the region not only in terms of Turkey and Iran, but amongst each other. The article points the fact that Turkey's and Iran's ambitions in the region are not motivated by an overarching ideology, but by practical considerations that involve securing energy and resources routes and becoming the dominant power in the region. In this respect, both Turkey and Iran are not only in a competition against each other, but also against Russia to the North. The US' objectives in the region, which entail limiting both Turkey's and Iran's influence in the region, further complicates the outlook in Transcaucasia.*

Keywords: *Turkey, Iran, Transcaucasia, energy and resource routes, foreign policy*

Öz: *Bu makale hem Türkiye hem de İran'ın Transkafkasya bölgesindeki siyasi ve ekonomik hedeflerini anlatmaktadır. Makale sadece Türkiye ve İran açısından değil, aynı zamanda bölgenin tüm ülkeleri açısından aralarındaki ilişkiler ağının içyüzünü okuyucuya sunmaktadır. Makale, Türkiye ve İran'ın bölgeye yönelik amaçlarının kapsayıcı bir ideolojiyle değil, bölgenin baskın gücü olmak adına enerji ve doğal kaynak rotalarını güvenceye almak için yapılan pragmatik hesaplamalarla şekillendiğine işaret etmektedir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye ve İran sadece kendi aralarında değil, aynı zamanda kuzeydeki Rusya ile de rekabet içerisindedir. Türkiye ve İran'ın bölgedeki etkisini sınırlamak isteyen ABD'nin bölgedeki hedefleri ise Transkafkasya'daki durumu daha karmaşık hale getirmektedir.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *Türkiye, İran, Transkafkasya, enerji ve doğal kaynak rotaları, dış politika*

Over the last quarter of a century, the geopolitical landscape of the Southern Caucasus has been affected by a serious change. The newly formed regional states that emerged after the USSR disintegration, have gained an opportunity to define their national interests independently and to build up relationships with the outer world on that basis. On the other hand, the neighboring states, such as Turkey and Iran, have been granted free access to penetrate into the region and to promote their own interests there. These two nations are currently the chief competitors of Russia in the struggle to get the upper hand in establishing the spheres of influence in the Transcaucasian region. The rivalry among Russia, Turkey, and Iran for getting control over the flow of energy resources is regarded as a critical factor that determines the core aspects of international relations in the region.

The Southern Caucasus has paramount relevance for Turkey and Iran as a region that is vitally important for safeguarding their trade and economic interests, as well as maintaining their national security. It should be noted that up until the early 19th century, certain regions of the Caucasus were part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire and Iran, so consequently, they have retained historical and cultural connections with them. Naturally, after the USSR disintegration, Turkey and Iran were the first nations to recognize the nascent Southern Caucasus states and to establish diplomatic relations with them. From the very beginning, the leaders of the two nations tried to act vigorously and aggressively with respect to the newly independent states.

Inversely, for the majority of the newly independent states of the Caucasian-Caspian region, the most practicable route to the open seas and a very convenient and cost-effective surface road to the Arab world lies through Iran and Turkey.

1. Turkey's Strategy in the Southern Caucasus

Most recently, Turkey has applied more concerted efforts to assert its status of a Eurasian power with growing geopolitical ambitions. It has been engaged more actively in promoting the implementation of its foreign policy program seeking to reinforce its regional positions. The fact that Turkey's neighborhood includes the states, whose territories can boast three quarters of the world's proven oil and gas reserves, allows it to make a statement about positioning itself as a "regional center of the energy". Certain steps undertaken by the Turkish government in the Caucasus have provided an indication that Turkey is indeed planning to be transformed into a robust energy transit hub for Europe and Asia in the foreseeable future. However, Turkey is confronted with such

challenges along the way that sometimes it seems to be almost impossible for it to handle them. Nevertheless, under conditions of stiff competition not only among the regional states, but also among the leading world powers, Turkey has managed to exert a tangible influence on the regional developments, and thus to facilitate its geopolitical interests.

The Role of Azerbaijan in Turkey's Energy Projects

Turkey's influence on Azerbaijan has been generally treated with a lot of skepticism on behalf of Western states. In their view, the country that possesses key oil and gas resources, as well as energy transit routes, should not be exposed to any serious influence from Turkey. After the demise of the USSR, the Western community has declaratorily hailed the Turkish secular political model being applied to the Muslim states of Eurasia.

The West preferred to see Azerbaijan as a westernized state where Islam would have a purely formal value. Currently, Azerbaijan is seen by Europe as an "Iranicized country, although speaking a Turkic language, that has a long history of atheism, deep-rooted traditions of a secular Soviet society featuring a relatively thin population, which permits to integrate the country into the European political, social and economic space "without any major problem".¹

The Southern Caucasus has paramount relevance for Turkey and Iran as a region that is vitally important for safeguarding their trade and economic interests, as well as maintaining their national security. It should be noted that up until the early 19th century, certain regions of the Caucasus were part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire and Iran, so consequently, they have retained historical and cultural connections with them.

Due to the above specificity, the West was not motivated to sustain the Turkish efforts aimed at absorbing Azerbaijan. The apprehension of the Western states that Turkey might make an attempt at getting Azerbaijan associated with it and turning Azerbaijan into a "formal, subordinate state formation" has been steadily growing over the recent period.²

The interest of the Western states towards Azerbaijan is largely related to its

1 I. Muradyan, "Turkey's Political Goals in the Southern Caucasus, ("Irates de facto", Armenia)", translated by G. Matevosyan, *Inosmi.ru*, 18/11/2009, <http://inosmi.ru/caucasus/20091118/156559040.html>

2 Muradyan, "Turkey's Political Goals in the Southern Caucasus...".

geopolitical and mineral resources potential. This has been especially conspicuous after the moves made by the Ukrainian leaders in 2008-2009 with respect to the Russian natural gas that was supplied to Europe through the Ukrainian territory. We would like to remind the reader that because of the insufficient delivery of hydrocarbons from Russia, some European countries were forced to use their last remaining energy reserves.

At the “Southern Corridor - New Silk Road” summit held in Prague, the Western countries discussed energy transportation projects dealing with the enhancement of Europe’s energy security. The summit focused on addressing the problem of how to overcome the European states’ dependence: 1) on the Russian natural gas; 2) on Russia’s intermediary functions in ensuring deliveries of energy resources from the Caspian-Asian region.³ In order to meet the declared objective, it was required to link the post-Soviet states of Central Asia and Azerbaijan with Europe by new pipelines through the Turkish territory.

Following the results of the meeting, a Joint Declaration was endorsed whereby the summit participants agreed to undertake a responsibility of providing political assistance as well as technological and financial support to the “Southern Corridor” projects, in particular, the Nabucco, ITGI, and Trans-Caspian Route projects. The above projects were designed to ensure the delivery of energy products from Central Asia and the Middle East to the European markets.

However, with a view to making sure that the Nabucco project, that was supposed to provide the foundation for the Southern Corridor, should start functioning within the designated timeframe, it was essential to sign an appropriate inter-governmental agreement. Nevertheless, Turkey, that was regarded as a most vital connecting link between Europe and Asia in conjunction with their energy collaboration, could not offer the expedient infrastructural facilities, neither did it possess a relevant legal framework to sustain the natural gas transportation plans. Moreover, the gas transportation arrangements in Turkey were substantially different from the common European standards, and it was a serious handicap for the implementation of the Nabucco and other natural gas transportation projects through the transit pipelines in Turkey. It should be also noted that the legal basis for the petroleum transportation was developed in Turkey relatively recently, in 2000, within the framework of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project.

3 “The South Corridor Is Not Sought by Everyone”, *Euronews*, 08/05/2009, <http://ru.euronews.com/2009/05/08/no-uzbek-kazakh-turkmen-gas-for-eu>

Meanwhile, the Turkish leaders have declared their stance on multiple occasions, including in the opening address at the Prague summit, essentially that Turkey was fully aware of its role in ensuring Europe's energy security and was prepared to carry out its obligations assumed in this respect with a full sense of responsibility.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (South Caucasus pipeline) gas pipeline is currently in operation in the Caucasus providing for the flow of Azerbaijani natural gas in the capacity of 2 billion cubic meters per year, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that allows to transport oil to Turkey in the amount of up to 50 million tons per year.

The future of Turkey as the "major continental transit country" depends, to a certain extent, on the implementation of the Turkish Stream project, among other things. Many experts believe that due to the delivery of hydrocarbons exclusively from the Caspian region, it will be possible not only to effectively diversify the sources of supply for Europe, but also to fully meet Turkey's own needs in energy resources. It is related to the fact that the Caspian Sea Basin Region accounts for 5% of the world's oil reserves and 4% of the world's natural gas reserves, overall. Such figures do not permit the Caspian Sea area to be considered as a powerful energy platform.

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When the energy routes in the Caucasus are explored, it should be borne in mind that in the early 1990s, when the United States developed a new political doctrine with respect to the countries of the Caspian region in the hope of building up an energy corridor to the Western nations markets there, almost all of the projects envisaged the pipelines to be laid through the territory of Armenia. However, the implementation of these projects was practically inconceivable because of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, the Turkish stance with regard to this conflict, and the existing Turkish-Armenian disagreement as such.

Existing Disagreement between Turkey and Armenia

Armenia is a country with which Turkey has to maintain ambivalent relations as a result of the demands advanced by the Western states, on the one hand, and expectations entertained by fraternal Azerbaijan, on the other hand, and, thirdly, its own foreign policy ambitions. Within the framework of negotiation process regarding Turkey's accession to the European Union, the "Armenian issue" is regarded by Turkey, in contrast to other European nations, as a condition that is outside the scope of the "Copenhagen criteria". One of the primary tasks facing the Turkish experts specializing in this field is to convince the Europeans that their attempts to restrict the Turkish participation in the EU through imposing special requirements outside the scope of general criteria applicable to the countries seeking the EU membership are not justifiable. However, as the EU member states believe, Turkey needs to handle the "Armenian issue" in accordance with the principle of establishing good neighborly relations with all of its neighboring states. It is apparent that the rigid position held by the EU, as far as the "Armenian issue" is concerned, can be accounted for by its desire to reinforce its influence in Transcaucasia.

The strategy towards expansion of economic ties maintained by the EU member states calls for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. On the other hand, the Armenian leadership has demonstrated a certain degree of interest in strengthening its economic and political cooperation with the EU. With this end in view, Armenia has carried out a number of reforms and introduced some amendments into its legislation in compliance with the Armenian Plan of Actions developed within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).

The opening of the borders between Turkey and Armenia would carry vast significance for the EU in the sense that it could relieve the EU of any additional costs associated with the construction of a new railway line linking Kars, Turkey, with Akhalkalaki, Georgia. According to the EU, it would be much more economically advantageous to restore the existing Kars-Gyumri railway line. The EU member states are interested in the full integration of the Armenian economy into the European market. It was stated by Torben Holtze, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Georgia and Armenia, at the Security in South Caucasus Seminar held by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in joint effort with the National Parliament of Armenia in Yerevan on 7th October, 2005.⁴

4 A. Kazinyan, "NATO Is Modelling the Security System in the Southern Caucasus", *REGNUM IA*, 20/11/2006, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/742254.html>

On 12th March, 2009, the European Parliament passed a resolution regarding the Turkey 2008 Progress Report No. SEC (2008) 2699, released by the European Commission on 5th November, 2008, which said that the EU urged Turkey and Armenia to accomplish the following actions: 1) to treat the past and present of both countries with mutual respect; 2) to allow to conduct open discussions on the 1915 events; 3) with the assistance of the European Commission, to embark on the “compromise process” in pursuit of normalizing the Turkish-Armenian relations.⁵

In Turkey, people tend to believe that the persistence of Armenians regarding Turkey’s acknowledgement of the “Armenian genocide” has been prompted by the following considerations: first, this is conducive to the consolidation of unity and solidarity among all Armenians not only within their native country, but also beyond its boundaries; second, it allows to achieve support and empathy on behalf of the world community, as was the case with the ethnic Jewish representatives; third, it makes it possible to use this issue as a “master card” in normalizing the Turkish-Armenian relations; fourth, consequently, after conceding guilt for the “Armenian genocide” and assuming a responsibility for it, Turkey, as a legal successor of the Ottoman Empire, will be obliged to pay a financial compensation to Armenia and its residents, as well as to recognize the validity of their territorial claims. Some Turkish experts have asserted that if Turkey recognizes the “Armenian genocide”, it might carry a threat of discrimination with respect to ethnic Turks who reside in the EU member states.⁶

Former Turkish President Abdullah Gül, during his visit to Azerbaijan, stated that the responsibility for the current vexatious relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan did not rest with Turkey. “I cannot say that we are satisfied with this situation. For the sake of regional tranquility and stability, it is required that all of the regional states maintain good-neighborly relations. As long as Armenia is continuously engaged in lobbying the 1915 events in the Parliaments of other nations, no normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia can be expected”.⁷

5 A. Iskandaryan and S. Minasyan, “Pragmatic Foundation of Politics through the Prism of Realities Reflecting the Historical Limitations: Analyzing the Armenian-Turkish Process”, *Analytical Reports of the Caucasus Institute*, Yerevan, No.1, January, 2010, http://e-i.am/research/paper%201_rus.pdf

6 G.S. Derman, “Ermeni Sorununun Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi”, *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi*, No. 60, 2004, <http://haypedia.com/makale/Osman!%C4%B1%20Tarihi/3e3378f5-750c-4c00-ab94-c057e648c21b.pdf>

7 M. Yılmaz, “Cumhurbaşkanı Abdullah Gül’ün Azerbaycan Ziyareti”, *21.Yüzyıl Türkiye Enstitüsü*, 20/08/2010, <http://www.21yyte.org/tr/arastirma/azerbaycan/2010/08/20/5343/cumhurbaskani-abdullah-gulun-azerbaycan-ziyareti>

As a brief reminder: on 10th of October, 2009, Foreign Ministers of Turkey, A. Davutoglu, and Armenia, E. Nalbandyan, signed the following documents in Zurich: 1) Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey; 2) Protocol on the Development of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey. The signing of the Zurich Protocols was largely facilitated, according to the majority of Turkish experts, by the firm stance adopted by the European Union. The process of normalizing bilateral relations that has got under way was highly assessed in Europe. EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said that the European Union was in favor of carrying forth the ongoing dialogue and supported all efforts undertaken along this direction.⁸

As long as such disagreement persists, the frontier between Turkey and Armenia will remain closed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the progress of the Turkish-Armenian relations can be impacted, to a certain extent, by the position held by the Western states. The European nations are interested in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia and insist on the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. At the current stage of the Turkish-EU negotiation process, the European Union, which seeks to enhance its geopolitical and economic influence in the Caucasus, has no intention of reneging on its demands towards Turkey. It should be noted that a certain impact has been exerted on the EU policy by the Armenian diaspora residing in the European nations.

However, the Protocols were never ratified by the Parliaments of both nations. The Turkish opposition forces voiced their stern protest against the approval of the Zurich accords. The stance taken by Azerbaijan also impeded the development of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue. Moreover, the Turkish authorities have reiterated that the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border depends on

the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh controversy. Armenia, for its part, does not intend to make any amends in connection with the acknowledgement of the 1915 events as genocide against the Armenian people.

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8 A. Gadzhiev, "On the Issue of Turkey's Weight in the Global Arena", *Middle East Institute*, 31/07/10, <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2010/31-07-10.htm>

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Geopolitical Significance of Georgia for Turkey

By the time Mikhail Saakashvili came to power, Turkey had already handled many of its problems related to its political presence in the region. The Turkish government was apprehensive that the Saakashvili team would not fulfil its obligations to resettle the ethnic Meskhetin Turks to South Georgia. But, the principal concern was that the more aggressive involvement of the Western community in the Georgian affairs would not leave any room for Turkey's influence. This could deprive Turkey of the prospect for Georgia to be included in its zone of influence, as envisaged under the Neo-Ottomanism concept.

The US was always apprehensive about the prospect of Turkey increasing its political influence in the region. The "Caucasian Factor", within the framework of Turkish-US relations, gradually started to acquire features that were not welcome by the US. Suffice to remember that over the period when the Georgian-Russian relations experienced a deepening crisis throughout 2005-2008, the US persistently tried to encourage Turkey to support Georgia. However, the Turkish authorities decided to act with restraint and to pursue a balanced policy. Turkey's stance, obviously, can be accounted for by its hopes to boost cooperation with Russia. At the same time, such a reaction was an admonishment to the US that it should not view the Georgian airfields as an alternative to the Turkish military bases.

Justifying Turkey's stance in August, 2008, Prime Minister R.T. Erdoğan then said: "We have a very substantial trade turnover with Russia. We will act in such a way that is required in connection with the national interests of Turkey".⁹

It stands to mention that the unstable civic and socio-political situation in Georgia was one of the reasons why Turkey resorted to adopting an alternative geopolitical course, whose core strategy was to absorb the non-Turkic peoples,

9 H. Yıldırım, "Türkiye-Gürcistan İlişkileri: İşbirliği Alanları, Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri", *Akademik Perspektif*, 05/01/2013, <http://akademikperspektif.com/2013/01/05/gecmisten-gunumuze-turkiye-gurcistan-iliskileri-isbirligi-alanlari-sorunlar-ve-cozum-onerileri-1>

who had formerly been a segment of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, Georgia is currently a vital element of geopolitics for Turkey. Under conditions of closed Turkish-Armenian border and restricted opportunities available for any movement through the Iranian territory, Georgia has become -de facto- the only territory providing access to Azerbaijan, the Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia. On the other hand, the Turkish-Georgian collaboration is an important factor for the economic survival of Georgia. We should not forget that the most significant political objective facing Turkey in the Southern Caucasus is to oppose Russia and, partially, Iran. On this score, Turkey and the US share a common ground and have some disagreement, at the same time. In truth and in fact, the US is interested in Turkey as an instrument of driving Russia out of the region, but not as a power capable of exerting its influence on the political processes under way in the Southern Caucasus states.

* * *

To sum up, let me repeat that Turkey's energy strategy should be viewed as a dynamic range of tasks targeted at meeting the country's needs in energy resources, maximizing the revenues of the Turkish budget generated from the transit of hydrocarbons, facilitating a greater involvement of the Turkish business in the regional energy projects, enhancing Turkey's global influence and geopolitical weight across the expanse of the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans and the Black Sea waters, overall. However, not a single of the above challenges can be met at the expense of Turkey's own resources in such a way that the Republic of Turkey would not be dependent on one or more supplying countries, such as Russia, Azerbaijan or Iran. Apart from that, as the chief user of oil and gas transported through the Turkish territory is the EU, if the European policy towards the transit states gets more stringent and is more effectively coordinated, the Turkish policy makers can run the risk of being tied up with their own desirable plan to join the EU.

The energy problems confronting Turkey can be only resolved through a comprehensive approach. This forces Turkey to follow the policy of sustaining the balance of interests in the region, which simultaneously provides it with the status of a key mediator in the regional political processes and accounts for a multi-vector orientation of the Turkish foreign policy. However, the question of political limits for such diplomatic maneuvering is moved into the domain governed by the state and requirements of the Turkish community as well as the foreign policy resources available in Turkey. Anyway, the scope of Turkey's political influence on the Southern Caucasus states is out of keeping with the small role attributed to it by its NATO allies sometime in the past.

2. Iran's Foreign Strategy in the Southern Caucasus

The current policy pursued by Teheran in the Southern Caucasus is largely in line with the Russian interests. It is primarily related to the fact that Iran, similar to Russia, is strategically averse to the NATO expansion in the East. From this perspective, it can be stated that within the framework of the Caspian-Caucasian geographic space, where a bitter geopolitical strife is under way to control new transportation corridors, energy routes and merchandise flows, Iran has acted as a strategic partner of Russia.

The Iranian authorities are motivated to have the Russian military presence in the Southern Caucasus, which is explained by their striving to counterbalance the role played the US and its allies in the region. The Russian-Iranian cooperation embraces a wide spectrum of trade and economic contacts. Since 1997, the Russian companies have been actively engaged in the operations dealing with the Iranian energy market.

After a Russian-Iranian Treaty on the Foundations of Mutual Relations and the Basic Principles of Cooperation was signed in Moscow on 12th March, 2001, ample opportunities for reinforcing the bilateral interaction have been opened.

The partnership relations between Russia and Iran in the nuclear energy industry commenced with the signing of an agreement on construction of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

A critical issue on the Russian-Iranian agenda is the military and technological cooperation. However, in this sector, similar to the situation around the construction of the BNPP, Russia has faced a powerful opposition from the US. Nevertheless, during Vladimir Putin's visit to Iran in October, 2007, the leaders of both nations reaffirmed their commitment to developing bilateral cooperation in various sectors, including the nuclear power industry.

Iran needs to ensure stability along its borders and is concerned with the lack of socio-political stability in the newly independent states, the unresolved ethnic and territorial disputes, uncertainty, and absence of a structured concept underlying their foreign policy. The point is that any dramatic escalation of regional and interstate conflicts can have an impact on the domestic environment in Iran, to a certain extent. To have an adequate idea of Iran's foreign policy strategy, it should be borne in mind that it is a multiethnic nation with its inherent local political problems that are also characteristic of Russia, in many respects.

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Relationships between Azerbaijan and Iran

Iran, like Turkey, is interested in containing Azerbaijan within the scope of its influence. In this context, a certain success was attained by Turkey, among other things, when Azerbaijan decided to switch over from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet, but not the Arabic alphabet, as would have been preferable for Iran.

The problem of "South Azerbaijan", where there has been an upsurge of Pan-Turkist sentiments among the local intellectuals, is one of the factors that can exacerbate the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan. A strong influence exerted by the Western powers on the leaders of Azerbaijan has caused discontent of the Iranian authorities. In its turn, Baku has officially accused Iran of supporting the opposition forces.

Let us remind the reader that on 10th December, 2007, several persons were convicted in Baku on charges of planning a forcible seizure of power in Azerbaijan. It was specified that the group members were connected to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. At the same time, Iran, being a largest trading partner of Azerbaijan, like Russia, is interested in maintaining stability in Azerbaijan. The Iranian initiatives targeting the strengthening of bilateral relations were particularly manifest in 2004-2006. At that period, Teheran, being concerned with Washington's attempts to turn Azerbaijan into a potential combat outpost for a military operation against Iran, began to conduct a more thoroughly measured policy towards Azerbaijan than before.

Considering the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, we should not forget about the Nakhichevan Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan, which is practically cut off from the main area of Azerbaijan. The sole route available for the delivery of bulky loads to Nakhichevan lies today through the territory of Iran.

Highlights for Armenian-Iranian Relationships

For Armenia, Iran is one of the foreign policy primary targets. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is viewed by Iran as a serious threat to its domestic and foreign policies. The Iranian leadership could not ignore the empathy entertained by a major part of the ethnic Azerbaijani representatives towards their fellowmen in the North. On the other hand, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict led to the massive flow of refugees that reached 1,200,000 persons during the war.

Iran had difficulty in conflating the policy of strengthening its relations with Orthodox Armenia and supporting Shiite Azerbaijan in its war against the Armenian side. For this reason, the Iranian leadership announced that, in connection with resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it would be guided by the principle of “equidistance” and called for the political settlement of the problem. However, de facto, Iran sided with the Armenian party as far as the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation was concerned. It is also worth mentioning that Armenia has been constantly confronted with the challenge of finding the balance between extending its ties with Iran and retaining friendly relations with the US, who has provided substantial economic assistance to it and has been a host nation for a powerful resident Armenian community. Under such circumstances, Yerevan’s striving to resolve Iran’s nuclear issue peacefully seems to be very natural, however, the same cannot be said with respect to Azerbaijan and Georgia, which offered their territories for the construction of US military bases.

The trade and economic contacts between Iran and Armenia have been growing year after year, a simplified procedure for cargo customs clearance has been enacted, a gas pipeline has been put into operation, an agreement has been reached to lay an oil pipeline, a jointly operated oil refinery has been planned for construction on the Armenian territory, two hydro power plants have been scheduled for construction, the construction of a direct railway line has been negotiated etc. Cultural ties have been also widely promoted.

Such dynamics in bilateral relations has been the result of the geopolitical situation that both states appeared to be faced with. Armenia, blocked from the side of Turkey and Azerbaijan, needs to have access to the outer world and to Iran’s mineral resources, meanwhile Iran needs allies to resist the ambitions of the West and arguments to substantiate its claims to the regional supremacy. Iran and Armenia are united also in their common desire to minimize Turkey’s access to and influence on the Southern Caucasus, especially in Azerbaijan.

Georgia through the Prism of Iran's Foreign Policies

The Iranian-Georgian relations have a very limited magnitude. It is primarily related to the fact that Georgia has demonstrated its pro-American course very conspicuously. However, against the backdrop of higher tensions in the Russian-Georgian relations, there is a tendency towards expanding ties between Teheran and Tbilisi. Georgia's interest in diversifying energy routes with a view to reducing its dependence on Russia in that sector has prompted the Georgian leadership to approach Iran more and more often. It is noteworthy that the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline that is in operation has reduced Georgia's dependence on the Russian natural gas only partially. The Georgian authorities try to use the country's geographic position for the purpose of transporting the Iranian gas to the European nations. It is hoped that it would be possible to extend the functional Iran-Armenia gas pipeline to Georgia. In October, 2006, a Memorandum on Cooperation regarding Transmission of Iranian Electric Power to Georgia through the territory of Azerbaijan was signed. Nevertheless, the trade and economic collaboration between Teheran and Tbilisi has been pursued at a very limited level. As stated hereinabove, this is related to the explicitly pro-American and pro-NATO orientation of the current Georgian leaders.

* * *

Thus, Iran's policy in relation to the newly independent states in the Caucasus after the end of the "Cold War" can be characterized as constructive and not burdened with any ideological considerations. Iran proved to be a responsible partner during the conflicts in Chechnya and played a positive role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh clashes in 1992.

Final Word

In conclusion, it should be noted that over the recent two decades, Turkey and Iran have attained impressive results in establishing and advancing their trade, economic, political, and cultural, and other ties with the states of the Southern Caucasus. In many respects, they have assumed competitive roles, however, both have demonstrated their common striving towards stabilizing the political situation in the region. Contemplating on their influence on Azerbaijan, it should be borne in mind that Iran has two critical advantages over Turkey. First, if a land plot around Nakhichevan with an area of several kilometers is not taken into consideration, then Turkey has practically no boundary with the Azerbaijan. Currently, the surface traffic between the two states is maintained

through Iran and Armenia. Second, Iran's traditional connections with the Transcaucasian peoples, as opposed to the Turkish-Armenian relations, are not burdened with the sense of past grievances and insults.

It is also worth mentioning that despite all existing controversy between Turkey and Iran, there has been a recent trend towards fostering mutually beneficial trade, economic and, other contacts in evidence. One of the vitally important factors that can be conducive to drawing the positions of the two nations closer together is the issue regarding the transportation of both Caspian and Iranian hydrocarbons.

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TURKEY'S POLICIES IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS AND REGIONAL SECURITY MECHANISMS

(TÜRKİYE'NİN GÜNEY KAFKASYA'DAKİ POLİTİAKLARI VE BÖLGESEL GÜVENLİK MEKANİZMALARI)

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Abstract: *The disintegration of the USSR at first seemed to offer a vast area for the growth of Turkey's influence not only in the Caucasia region, but also in Central Asia. Turkey enthusiastically welcomed the three newly independent countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. While Turkey was able to forge a wide ranging level of cooperation with Azerbaijan and Georgia, it has been unsuccessful with regards to Armenia. The author contends that establishing ties with Armenia in the same vein as with Azerbaijan and Georgia, and also the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will have far-reaching implications for the Caucasia region as a whole. Continuing tensions within Turkey and tensions in the wider region present both domestic and foreign policy challenges for the country, and provide impediments to its aim to become a reliable energy transit route for the whole region.*

Keywords: *Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Caucasia, foreign policy*

Öz: *SSCB'nin dağılması ilk başlarda Türkiye için sadece Kafkasya'da değil, aynı zamanda Orta Asya'daki nüfuzunu genişletmesi için çok büyük bir alan ortaya çıkarıyor gibi gözüküyordu. Türkiye üç yeni bağımsız ülke olan Azerbaycan, Ermenistan ve Gürcistan'ı hevesle karşılamıştı. Türkiye Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan ile geniş çaplı bir işbirliği oluşturmayı başarmış olsa da, Ermenistan'la bu konuda başarısız olmuştur. Yazara göre aynen Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan ile yapıldığı gibi Ermenistan'la da ilişkilerin kurulması ve ayrıca Dağlık Karabağ sorununun çözülmesi Kafkasya bölgesinin tamamı için geniş kapsamlı sonuçları olacaktır. Hem Türkiye içerisinde, hem de geniş bölgedeki gerginlikler, Türkiye için hem iç hem de dış politika açısından zorluklar ortaya çıkarmakta ve Türkiye'nin tüm bölge için güvenilir bir enerji aktarma rotası olması hedefi önünde engel teşkil etmektedir.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *Türkiye, Ermenistan, Azerbaycan, Gürcistan, Kafkasya, dış politika*

The Southern Caucasus remains to be one of the most explosive regions across the post-Soviet territory. The current developments have taken place there against the background of continuous violence and armed clashes on the line of contact of both parties in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the entire stretch of the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier; military training and field firing exercises; high level of military spending in the national budgets; close and versatile military and political as well as defense technology cooperation of the regional states with major external players.

Modern Turkey, being a pivot state for the US, seeks to revise the existing regional order, and it has an impressive potential in this respect, *inter alia*, within the “soft power” format. Turkey’s interests comprise the areas that used to be the exclusive domain of the great nations. In 2009-2010, the Republic of Turkey was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and it has been also proactively engaged in the activities within the framework of the European, Middle East, Balkan, emerging Black Sea, and Caspian “segments” of the increasingly complicated international relations. Also, it has positioned itself as an initiator of the Supranational Integration Association of the Turkic Speaking States,¹ which resonates perfectly well with the interests of the post-Soviet states in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Russia.

The strategic importance of the Caucasian region for Turkey can be explained by a combination of political, economic (energy security considerations, in particular), cultural, historical, and ethnical factors. Over the recent years, the Caucasian vector in the Turkish foreign policy has been overshadowed by Turkey’s active involvement in the Middle East process, especially in connection with the “Syrian issue”. However, the Caucasian vector has been traditionally accorded a primary status on Ankara’s political and diplomatic agenda, this has been vividly illustrated by the activities of governmental agencies, and also by multiple non-governmental funds and organizations, who declared their commitment to science, education, and humanitarian goals. Despite the apparent problems over the implementation of the Zero Problems with Neighbors Foreign Strategy, it has been a prominent guideline for the Justice and Development Party.

The declaration of independence by Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia in 1991 was initially met with a lot of enthusiasm in Turkey and the prevailing expectation was that it would be followed by a rapid rapprochement and very close interaction. Turkey was the first to recognize the new states in the Caucasus, it established diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia with

1 V.A. Avatkov, “Foreign Policy Line of the Republic of Turkey in Relation to Transcaucasian Countries within the Context of Turkey’s Foreign Policy Ideology”, *Annual Publication of the Institute of International Studies*, GIMO (U), No. 2 (8), 2014, pp. 13-14.

no delay, offered humanitarian assistance through the delivery of foodstuffs and first necessity goods, forged trading contacts with them within a limited timeframe, being guided by protectionist goals, among other things. The Turkish business companies, who rushed to enter the new markets, were given a lot of support.² The idea of Turkic globalism was positively received among the Turkish elite, it also gave an extra impetus to the nationalistic sentiments, however, the Pan-Turkism doctrine has not been adopted as an official policy in Turkey. According to British researcher Gareth Winrow, “the sudden repeated discovery of almost forgotten peoples of the Turkic origin led to the inflated hopes and unrealistic expectations on behalf of certain Turkish officials. Ankara’s enthusiasm for its more active contacts with Transcaucasia... was to some extent sustained by the authorities of Western countries, who were apprehensive of a possibility for the Iranian influence to grow in the region”.³

Thus, the first years after the disintegration of the USSR were marked by the striving of the Turkish authorities to pursue a dynamic comprehensive policy in the Caucasus, which was viewed within the context of the geopolitical significance of this region for Turkey, and also as a basic region for a subsequent penetration into Central Asia. According to a well-known Turkish analyst Mitat Çelikpala, Associate Professor at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, at that period, for the first time throughout the newest history of the Republic of Turkey, committed to pursuing its non-interference policies, the country got a chance to expand its own zone of influence. The disintegration of the USSR and the emergence of new Turkic-Muslim republics opened new vistas for Turkey to play a critical role in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.⁴

The declaration of independence by Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia in 1991 was initially met with a lot of enthusiasm in Turkey and the prevailing expectation was that it would be followed by a rapid rapprochement and very close interaction. Turkey was the first to recognize the new states in the Caucasus, it established diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia with no delay, offered humanitarian assistance through the delivery of foodstuffs and first necessity goods, forged trading contacts with them within a limited timeframe, being guided by protectionist goals, among other things.

2 Ye. Urazova, “Turkey’s Interests and Stance in the Post-Soviet States in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus”, *MGUPublishers*, Globalistics as an Area of Science Research and Educational Discipline, Moscow, 2014, pp. 270-271.

3 Citation according to: S.A. Semedov, “Basic Aspects of Turkey’s Contemporary Policy in the Caucasus”, *Moscow University Newsletter*, Series 18: Social and Political Sciences, No. 2, 2008, pp. 41-42.

4 M. Celikpala, “From a Failed State to a Weak One? Georgia and Turkish-Georgian Relations”, *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, vol. 36, 2005.

A certain slump in the Turkish activities at the turn of the century related, inter alia, to the internal economic problems, was followed by a new wave of political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural expansion, after the Justice and Development Party headed by then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to power. However, although the Russian-Turkish trade and economic contacts experienced a plentiful growth during that period, the Turkish foreign policy on the post-Soviet territory could hardly be analyzed with no regard to the country's participation in the NATO military and political alliance or its close interaction with the US and the EU.

Euro-Atlantic Integration of Turkey as a Factor of Its Regional Policy

Initially, the foreign policy pursued by Ankara on the post-Soviet territory envisaged taking into account the US interests on a high-priority basis. Therefore, the Turkish-US Commission noted at its December, 1993, meeting that there were favorable opportunities for cooperation in the big-scale projects developed in the Middle East and Central Asia. The US Defense Ministry and the CIA suggested making large investment in the gas pipeline project in Central Asia. At the meeting of the Turkish-US Business Council held in late October, 1993, then Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin made a proposal to set up a center for economic relations to be forged with countries of various regions. He stressed that there was a huge potential for joint investment to be made by the two countries in Central Asia etc.⁵

The US attitude towards Turkey's penetration into the Caucasus is multi-faceted. On the one hand, Washington did not apply any efforts to help facilitate the Turkish expansion along the above direction, however, especially in the first half of the 1990s, there were ample possibilities for that. According to several experts, the US was aware of the limited capabilities of its partner - Turkey. Some problems that might be encountered by Turkey, whose investment and technological resources did not meet its political ambitions regarding the huge Eurasian region, had been also predicted. In addition to that, many experts believed that the US had not taken any specially targeted steps to curb Turkey's expansion into Eurasia. This viewpoint is thoroughly substantiated and justifiable, provided that non-action can be equated with politics. Nevertheless, for instance, if the US identified its priorities and interests in the energy sector, then Turkey would normally become a key partner. Thus, the Ankara Declaration of 29 October, 1998, was signed by the Presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan as well as the Prime

5 N. Kireyev (exec. ed.), "Turkey Between Europe and Asia. Results of Europeanization at the Turn of the 20th Century", *IVRANKraft*, 2001.

Minister of Turkey and US Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson in support of the efforts of the above countries dedicated to the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline that regulated the transportation of the Caspian hydrocarbons to the European markets along this route.⁶ At the same time, whenever there was only Turkey's interest in place, the US chose to ignore it.⁷ In all probability, since the early 2000s, the Turkish-US relationship have been characterized by certain changes, however, these changes have not been fully complete.⁸ The question of how far the architects of Turkey's new foreign policy course, sometimes tentatively called "Neo-Ottomanism", are prepared to go in conjunction with their opposition to such states, as the US and Israel, remains open. Turkey's strong connection to the NATO, the availability of US military bases on its territory, tactical nuclear weapons, and some elements of the global missile defense system being developed now, imply that there would be no news making the headlines in this respect, at least, in the foreseeable perspective. The internal and external policies of modern Turkey have been shaped under the influence of a whole array of factors, which have impacted Turkey's relations with the Southern Caucasus states, in this way or another.

Against the backdrop of deteriorating Russian-Georgian relations throughout the entire post-Soviet period, whose culmination point were the August 2008 events around South Ossetia, the primary trade and economic partners, that have later become military and political partners of the Caucasian state, have turned out to be Turkey and its main Caucasian ally – Azerbaijan.

Ties among Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia: Energy, Economy, Security

Against the backdrop of deteriorating Russian-Georgian relations throughout the entire post-Soviet period, whose culmination point were the August 2008 events around South Ossetia, the primary trade and economic partners, that have later become military and political partners of the Caucasian state, have turned out to be Turkey and its main Caucasian ally – Azerbaijan. Apart from the US-supported energy and other communication facilities along the East-

6 R. Ibragimov, "Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations and Turkey's Policy in the Central Caucasus", *Caucasus and Globalization*, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, 2011, pp. 19-20.

7 A. Svarants, "Major Threats to the Interests of the Russian Federation from Ideology and Politics of Pan-Turkism (External and Internal Aspects)", *Region and the World*, Yerevan, No. 1, 2010, p. 11.

8 A. Mardzhanyan, "We and RAND Corporation: Armenian-Turkish Relations", *XXI Century*, Vol. 2, 2011, p. 15.

West line, Ankara and Baku do not conceal their interest in building jointly the surface communication facilities through the Georgian territory and in weakening and blockading Armenia, to the maximum degree possible.

The Georgian-Turkish contacts over several recent years have been very intense and diversified. Back in 2002, the opening ceremony for the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was held in Baku, it was attended by Heydar Aliyev, Eduard Shevarnadze, and then Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. On 13 July, 2006, the pipeline launching ceremony was held in Ceyhan. During the visit of President A. Sezer to Georgia on 14-15 March, 2006, a remarkable agreement was signed on the use of the Baku airport for the purpose of domestic flights by Turkish air carriers and, in this connection, on the reduction of rates for bilateral air carriage up the level existing in Turkey.

In 2007, Turkey and Georgia concluded free trade agreements, including documents designed to avoid double taxation. Subsequently, a tripartite Turkish-Georgian-Azerbaijani agreement was signed on the transmission of electrical energy and on the future plans for joint sales of electrical energy to Europe.⁹ As estimated by Milli-Mejlis Deputy Rasim Musabekov, the overall investment value of all joint projects of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey is close to 100 billion dollars. According to some publications in the Azerbaijan media, the two Caucasian nations have been supported in matters regarding the oil pipeline security by the NATO through the mediation of Turkey.

Another project of critical importance is the Kars–Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Baku railway line (KATB). Its design work was started on 7 February, 2007. On the same day, R.T. Erdoğan took part in the tripartite (Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan) meeting in Tbilisi, where a Tbilisi Declaration on the Common Vision of Regional Cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the Energy Sector were signed. The construction of a railway line to Turkey bypassing Armenia, through the Georgian territory, has been delayed repeatedly for various reasons, however, the regular traffic via this railway connection is scheduled to commence in 2015. In one of the joint documents signed by the three parties, the railway line connecting Baku with Kars through the Georgian territory is presented as a “new competitive route between Europe and Asia”, which is due to facilitate the growing trade and the economic development of the region.

9 “The Tbilisi Summit 2014 Gets under Way in Georgia”, *Kavpolit.com*, 06.05.2014, http://kavpolit.com/articles/v_gruzii_startuet_tbilisskij_sammit_2014-4140/

Over the recent years, Turkey has gained a solid standing as a leading counterpart of Tbilisi in the defense sector. A considerable part of the funds provided by Ankara was spent on the modernization and re-equipment of the Marneuli Airport, Georgian Naval defense system and also special operations forces, logistical support and engineer corps. The Turkish government energetically furnished assistance to Tbilisi in building up its Armed Forces by supplying allegedly “non-offensive” weapons and military equipment, including big shipments of armored vehicles, armaments, fire arms. Assistance was also rendered in constructing military installations and personnel training.

2014 and 2015 were marked by the boosting of multi-level contacts within the Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan triangle, it made some observers talk about the formation of a new regional alliance, whose role, within the context of worsening relations of Russia and the West, might be very ambivalent. The tripartite meeting of Defense Ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia held in August, 2014, in Nakhichevan¹⁰ prompted many experts to draw a conclusion that the three countries had coordinated their policies in the development of military capabilities more thoroughly.

In mid-May, 2015, two-phase (Baku-Nakhichevan) joint military and tactical exercises of Azerbaijan and Turkey were conducted with the employment of motorized rifle forces, tank units, missile corps, artillery regiments, and anti-aircraft missile troops. A total of 1,000 service men were involved as well as 80 armored vehicles, over 60 artillery pieces and mortars, 12 Air Forces military and transport helicopters, and also “air defense missile units equipped with modern weapons”. It is worth noting that combat artillery and aircraft firing was conducted during the exercises.

Contacts along the line of military economic structures and military agencies have been complemented by the diplomatic efforts. Since 2012, Foreign Ministers of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey have held their meetings within a tripartite format regularly, and in May, 2014, the first tripartite summit of the Presidents of the three countries took place in Tbilisi.

In parallel to the Georgian-Turkish contacts, relations between Tbilisi and Baku have been developed on the basis of cooperation endeavors dealing with the energy sector and development of military capabilities. Originally, the Turkish-Azerbaijani relations were founded on the basis of good neighborly policies arising from historical, ethnic, cultural, language and religious affinity. It was

10 “Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey Have Agreed to Hold Joint Military Exercises”, *Kavkaz-uzel.ru*, 19.08.2014, <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/247727/>

Turkey, who was the first to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan on 9 November, 1991. The diplomatic relations were established on 14 January, 1992. Throughout the entire post-Soviet period, and especially over the recent several years, the contacts between the heads of state, governments, representatives of various ministries, agencies, military structures, public organizations of Turkey and Azerbaijan have intensified. According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry data, only throughout the 1991-1999 period, over 100 Turkish-Azerbaijani agreements were signed regarding cooperation in the economy, culture and other areas.¹¹ Apart from close trade and economic relations, investment collaboration of the two countries has been a matter of paramount importance: Turkey holds the first place among direct investors into the economy of Azerbaijan, it is also the leader in terms of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accumulated by Azerbaijan abroad. At the same time, as of the late 2013, Azerbaijan held 15th place (1.7%) for its FDI accumulated in the Turkish economy and 2nd place (16.3%) for the Turkish FDI accumulated abroad.¹² However, the situation has changed gradually, and the volume of Azerbaijani investment into Turkey has been rising as the ambitious pipeline projects got started. Thus, plans to develop the Star oil refinery project to the tune of 9.5 billion dollars have got under way. The construction of Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) is a key link between the currently operating Southern Caucasus gas pipeline and the future Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline (TAP) within the framework of the EU Southern gas corridor), which is scheduled to be launched for 2020. In late June, 2013, the TAP was officially chosen by the Consortium for the development of the Shah Deniz gas field as the route for the natural gas deliveries to Turkey and Europe. The project envisages the transportation of natural gas from the Caspian Sea region through Turkey, Greece, Albania, the Adriatic Sea to the south of Italy, and further to Western Europe. According to some estimates, within the next five years, the investment made by Azerbaijan into the Turkish economy can reach 20 billion dollars.¹³

Of course, the bilateral relations have not been free from disagreement which was most vividly manifest in 2008-2009, at the time of the so-called Armenian-Turkish “football diplomacy”. However, it is not rational to overestimate the importance of such differences. Turkey has consistently provided political and diplomatic support to Azerbaijan in the matters regarding the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 2010, within the framework of the visit of

11 Semedov, “Basic Aspects of Turkey’s Contemporary Policy in the Caucasus”, p. 50.

12 A.G. Pylin, “Foreign Economic Relations of Azerbaijan within the Context of Regional Integration”, *Problems of Post-Soviet Territories*, No. 1 (3), 2015, pp. 73-74.

13 Pylin, “Foreign Economic Relations of Azerbaijan...”, p. 74.

Turkish President Abdullah Gül to Azerbaijan, an Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support between Turkey and Azerbaijan was signed. In the same year, at the tenth Summit of Presidents of the Turkic Speaking Countries, a Joint Declaration on the Formation of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council was signed.¹⁴ The year 2014 witnessed multiple visits of the Turkish Army commanders to Baku and it gave rise to assumptions that a more advanced extensive agreement between the two countries was being prepared to set out security and mutual assistance guarantees in the event of war. Heightened activities between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the military area have prompted some Armenian sources to assert that since early 2015, the Turkish special operations troops have taken part directly in the commando-type reconnaissance sorties in the region of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.¹⁵

Turkish-Armenian Stalemate in the Southern Caucasus

The original attempts to start a dialogue between Turkey and post-Soviet Armenia were made in the early 1990s, when Yerevan was visited by some Turkish diplomats. However, the developments in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it, the military advances of the Armenian side rendered the planned dialogue impossible. The Turkish government provided substantial financial and administrative assistance to official Baku in its efforts to counteract Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Regardless of that, the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, capable of altering the geopolitical situation in the Southern Caucasus in a tangible manner, has remained an indisputable priority for the external players, who embrace not only several individual countries, but also a number of international organizations. Thus, already in the mid-1990s, some expressed their ideas about “reconciling” Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey by means of “pipeline diplomacy”. A joint Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission was entrusted with the responsibility to handle the contentious and painful issues, which customarily constituted the reason for mutual accusations. Although the Commission’s work was only relatively successful, in 2003, a series of bilateral consultations got under way in Switzerland; a number of cultural and humanitarian projects designed to build up contacts between separate groups of the Turkish and Armenian communities were launched.

14 Avatkov, “Foreign Policy Line of the Republic of Turkey...”, p. 16.

15 M. Agadzhanian, “Azerbaijan and Turkey Are Getting Close on the Anti-Armenian Platform with the NATO Silent Agreement”, *Kavkazoved.info*, 09.02.2015, <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2015/02/09/azerbajdzhan-i-turcia-sblizhajutsja-na-antiarmjanskoj-voennoj-platfome-pri-molchalivom-soglasii-nato.html>

Some authors tend to link the idea of normalizing the Turkish-Armenian relations with the prospect of formulating the so-termed Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) advanced by then Turkish Prime Minister R.T. Erdoğan in August, 2008, in the period when the Russian-Georgian relations worsened in connection with the developments around South Ossetia.¹⁶

However, the above Platform, despite certain efforts on behalf of interested parties, has never materialized. In his fundamental research for the RAND Corporation, F. Stephen Larrabee lists the essential benefits that can be obtained from the improvement in the Armenian-Turkish relations, from the point of view of the US-Turkish partnership. First, it would allow Armenia to reduce its economic and political dependence on Moscow. Second, it would impart momentum to the process of Turkey's accession to the EU. Third, it could allow Armenia to be integrated into the projects dealing with the regional energy and economic development, from which it is currently isolated. Finally, fourth, it would allow to reduce the pressure exerted by the Armenian lobbyists on the Capitol Hill.¹⁷

According to the assumption made by some Armenian experts, the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations was one of the priorities for the Western centers of power, and for this reason, the leadership of both sides experienced certain pressure from the outside.

In September, 2008, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan invited his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gül to Yerevan to watch the match between the national teams of the two countries, who appeared to be in the same group of the World Cup Qualification in 2010. The invitation was not ignored, and later the Armenian President made a reciprocal "football" visit to Bursa. The culmination of the "football diplomacy" was the signing of the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations on 10 October, 2009, in Zurich by the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Turkey. The documents envisaged the restoration of relations between the two countries without any preconditions attached, involving the opening of the diplomatic missions and unblocking the frontier and transport service. As regards the sensitive issues in the history of bilateral relation, the sides agreed

16 Ibragimov, "Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations and Turkey's Policy...", p. 21.

17 F. Stephen Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership. U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change", *Rand Corporation*, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG899.pdf, pp. 51-54.

to set up joint commissions for exploring all the circumstances involved, if appropriate. However, the process of ratification of the two Protocols in the Parliaments of Armenia and Turkey was suspended due to a number of internal and external reasons, and it has not been fully completed until now.

Despite the recurrent consultations that take place on a period basis, the former optimism over the soonest normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations is no longer in place. In 2014-2015, the activities of the structures operating under the aegis of the Islamic State terrorist group in Syria and Iraq were on the rise, although a US-led coalition was created. This is especially relevant to the situation around Syria, where, despite a substantial outflow of Armenians, a large Armenian community has remained. Within the context of its security, all actions made by Turkey are perceived in Yerevan with a considerable degree of mistrust and anxiety. The Turkish authorities, as a minimum, did not prevent the Islamic State forces from being redeployed using its territory, in 2014-2015 they attacked the Kurdish towns of Kobani and Haseke in Syria.

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It is not excluded that Yerevan and Ankara can be presented with alternative proposals. The resumption of the negotiation process between Yerevan and Ankara is one of the priorities for the US policies in the region, as it provides additional opportunities for the US to exert its influence on the situation in a more comprehensive manner. At the same time, the question regarding the Russian stance on the feasible resumption of the Armenian-Turkish negotiation process is very interesting. As is well known, in 2009, Moscow welcomed the signing of the Zurich Protocols. It was perfectly logical within the context of the Russian-Turkish dialogue gaining momentum at that time and the declared “reset” in the Russian-American relations, which was supposed to include the Caucasian and Middle Eastern dimension.¹⁸ Notwithstanding, many illusions were dispelled afterwards, moreover, the Turkish authorities have persistently stood their ground that the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations should be linked stiffly to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the preferential terms suggested by Azerbaijan. The Turkish politicians have repeatedly asserted that they treat the Nagorno-Karabakh problem as if it were their own one, and they will have it on their immediate agenda, insisting on the non-acceptance of the prevailing status quo. Thus, in early March, 2015,

18 For more information, please refer to: A. Areshev, “A New Round of Armenian-Turkish ‘Game’ and Russia”, *Fondsk.ru*, 03.10.2011, <http://www.fondsk.ru/news/2011/10/03/novyj-raund-armjano-tureckoj-igry-i-rossija.html>

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan again said that Turkey would not open its border to Armenia unless the latter surrendered the territories seized from Azerbaijan. “If at least one of the occupied Azerbaijani areas is surrendered, Turkey might open the frontier with Armenia”, said Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu at a meeting with representatives of Turkey’s national minorities.

Notwithstanding the public statements made by First Deputy Defense Minister of Armenia David Tonoyan to the effect that no threat is seen in Armenia in connection with the strengthening of defense, military and political cooperation among Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, the situation does not seem to be so unambiguous in reality. There is a prevailing opinion in Yerevan in relation to the willingness of Ankara and Baku to use the existing problems in the Armenian-Georgian relations for the sake of exacerbating the Georgian-Armenian relations.

It can be assumed that the new attempts at reinvigorating the Armenian-Turkish negotiation process will be made upon the resolution of the 2015 political crisis in Turkey and after the election (most probably - after the adoption of a new Constitution for the country that would imply a transition to the Parliamentary form of governance) of the new members of the National Assembly of Armenia.¹⁹

Conclusion

Today, in matters of domestic policy, as well as in its foreign policy, Turkey is faced with a lot of difficulties. The year 2015 has been marked by the rising tensions over the Syrian crisis and the increasing number of refugees that have provoked internal conflicts around social issues and other problems. Some communication facilities have been subjected to the attacks by Kurdish military formations, which can challenge Turkey’s position as a reliable transit country for energy resources. All of these processes have developed against the backdrop of tensions that have persisted since March, 2014, over the upcoming elections, lack of consensus among major political forces on the issue of forming the new government, which is an extra factor triggering internal political instability.²⁰

All of the above can negatively affect the security structure in the Southern Caucasus, which is far from being fully and adequately designed, as it depends

19 The appropriate conclusion can be drawn, although indirectly, if the election lists presented by different parties (which include quite a lot of those who support the ratification of the ballot results reports) are subjected to analysis.

20 Yu. Mavashev, “Will Turkey Be Factionalized?”, *Kavkazgeoclub.ru*, 25.08.2015, <http://kavkazgeoclub.ru/content/raspadetsya-li-turciya>

on the regional environment as well as on the relationships among the major regional players. In the long-term perspective, in contrast to the anti-Western rhetoric of some political figures, Turkey's connections with the US and NATO will not get any weaker, as a minimum. Apart from that, Ankara's policy in the Caucasus direction will be dictated, among other things, by the logics of geopolitical interests of this country, and also by some external factors (for example, the activities pursued on the country's territory by representatives of the Southern Caucasus diasporas, primarily those who come from Azerbaijan).

Even if a close tripartite format of interaction among Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia is not fully reflected in the statutory legally binding international documents, it has *de facto* proved a very strong nature. Moreover, this alliance sustained by common interests, cannot fail to be the focus of attention for the US and NATO, who have declared their tasks of "containing" Russia.

Despite its closeness and *de facto* allied relationship with Ankara, Baku remains Russia's partner, and is fully aware of the fact that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not possible without Moscow. There are no "full-format" Turkish military bases on the territory of Azerbaijan, and the level of its military and technological cooperation with Ankara has not reached its maximum. Theoretically, it can be expanded, however, Baku's military and technological cooperation with Moscow is a deterrent along this road.

Turkey's policy towards Armenia will depend on the dynamics of the resolution of the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh, as before, and also on the feasible desire of external forces to actualize the dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan, as a result of which there can be at least a partial normalization of relations between the two states. Armenia's membership in the military and political Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), close relations with Russia will remain to be critical elements of its external security architecture, *inter alia*, in the light of unsettled differences with Turkey and the increasing risks posed by the Islamic State.

The concrete plans and measures to build up joint military formations of the three countries are on the current agenda, as before, and military assistance from Turkey to Georgia and Azerbaijan continues to be a powerful factor, which gives rise to apprehension and suspicions on behalf of other players, who are not included in the format of interaction of the above three states. The development of the system of regional security in the Caucasus with emphasis on the key role of Russia, Turkey, and Iran, will depend on the level of trust among the countries, which constitute this "triangle", and on the efficient handling of the Russian-Turkish and Iranian-Turkish controversy concerning their approach to the resolution of the Syrian crisis and a number of other urgent problems.

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NORTH-WESTERN CAUCASUS IN THE POLICIES PURSUED BY RUSSIA AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AT THE FINAL STAGE OF THE CAUCASIAN WAR

(KAFKASYA SAVAŞININ SON AŞAMASINDA KUZEY BATI KAFKASYA'DA
RUSYA VE OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NUN İZLEDİĞİ POLİTİKALAR)

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Abstract: *In the opinion of the author, the terms underlying the 1856 Treaty of Paris exacerbated the North-Western Caucasus problem within the context of the Russian-Turkish relations. The differences between Russia and the Ottoman Empire were aggravated: due to the unstable position maintained by Russia along the Caucasian coast, the assistance provided by Ottoman Empire to the Circassian tribes and also the resumption of the Black Sea slave trade after the Crimean War. In view of these factors, the author has arrived at the conclusion that at the end of the Caucasian War, the North-Western Caucasus had a crucial impact on the Russian-Turkish relations.*

Key Words: *North-Western Caucasus, Russia, Ottoman Empire, the Black Sea, Circassia*

Öz: *Yazara göre 1856 Paris Antlaşmasının koşulları, Rus-Türk ilişkileri bağlamında Kuzeybatı Kafkasya sorununu daha da kötüleştirmiştir. Kafkas sahili boyunca Rusya'nın muhafaza ettiği konumunun istikrarsızlığı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Çerkez aşiretlerine verdiği destek ve Kırım Savaşı sonrasında Karadeniz'de tekrar başlayan köle ticareti sebebiyle Rusya ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu arasındaki anlaşmazlıklar daha da ciddileşmiştir. Bu etkenleri göz önünde bulundurarak yazar, Kafkas Savaşının sonunda Kuzeybatı Kafkasya'nın Rus-Türk ilişkilerine çok ciddi bir etki bıraktığı sonucuna varmaktadır.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *Kuzeybatı Kafkasya, Rusya, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Karadeniz, Çerkesya*

The end of the Crimean War (1853-1856) intensified the North-Western Caucasus problem in the Russian-Turkish relations. The Black Sea military neutralization opened its waters to the “commercial navigation of all nations”.¹ Under the circumstances when the Russian Black Sea Navy was destroyed, a ban on building up military arsenals imposed on Russia and the disruption of the Black Sea coastal line made the Russian positions on the Caucasian coast extremely vulnerable and shaky. A military journalist, General-Major R.A. Fadeyev wrote that the lack of Russian control over the Black Sea coastline had led to the situation when the Caucasian shore was totally open to forging connections with the outer world, primarily with Turkey. The view articulated by R.A. Fadeyev was upheld by his contemporaries.²

The situation was compounded by the commitment made by Russia and Turkey to admit European consuls into their Black Sea ports, pursuant to the terms of the 1856 Treaty of Paris.³ This provided an opportunity for Great Britain not only to offer military assistance to the Circassian tribes, but also to reinforce its economic influence in the region. Russia’s weaker standing and Turkey’s dependent status allowed Great Britain to conduct trading activities in the Middle East countries and to resort to their exploitation. Consequently, despite Russia’s efforts, British contraband merchandise flooded the Caucasus.⁴

Under such conditions, Turkey’s posture was of paramount significance for Russia. Turkey’s position within the period under review was very complicated. On the one hand, Istanbul was perfectly satisfied with the fact that the Caucasian shore was not controlled by Russia. On the other hand, it was Turkey who bore the brunt of responsibility before Russia, as it was the country through whose territory the military contraband merchandise was smuggled to the Caucasian coast. Overall, Turkey’s policy was a follow-up on its pre-war course, while its assistance to mountain dwellers grew to be more intensive. Russian Ambassador Apollinary Butenyov reported that although the claims launched by the Russian government regarding the smuggling operations were accepted by the Porte, it did nothing to counteract the illicit activities. Apart from that, according to Ambassador Butevyov, the illicit military trafficking was encouraged by the Grand Vizier Reşid Pasha, Minister of War Riza Pasha, Minister of the Navy Mehmed Pasha.⁵ Eventually, Ambassador Butenyov made

1 *Compilation of Russian Treaties with Foreign States, 1856-1917* (Moscow, 1952), p. 26.

2 “Letters about Turkey”, Letter No.13. 15 (27), October, 1858 [in]; P. A. Chikhachyov, *The Great Powers and the Eastern Issue* (Moscow, 1970), pp. 135-136.

3 *Compilation of Russian Treaties with Foreign States*, p. 26.

4 A. Kh. Kasumov, *North-Western Caucasus in the Russia-Turkey Wars and International Relations in the 19th Century* (Rostov-on-Don, 1989), p. 151.

5 “A. P. Butenyov – to A. M. Gorchakov”, 11 (23) February, 1857 [in]; *Shamil – Henchman of Sultanic Turkey and British Colonizers. Collection of Documentary Materials* (Tbilisi, 1953), pp. 456-467.

a conclusion that despite its friendly reassurances, Turkey did not seek any real improvement in the Russian-Turkish bilateral relations. Throughout the subsequent years, the situation was not subject to any change. In August, 1863, Alexey Lobanov-Rostovsky, who replaced Apollinary Butenyov as Russian Ambassador to Turkey, informed Russian Foreign Minister Alexander Gorchakov that the Turkish government had been inciting the resistance put up by the Black Sea Circassians by turning Istanbul into the center of illicit military trafficking.⁶ Great Britain acted in such a way that only promoted the escalation of tensions between Russia and Turkey. The British government disclaimed Russia's right to own the Western-Caucasian coast and supported the ongoing smuggling operations. A considerable portion of such smuggling operations was conducted due to the military assistance provided to the Circassians. British agents were given a helping hand by the Turkish authorities.⁷

The policies pursued by Istanbul complicated the relationships between Russia and Turkey. Russian Minister of War Dmitry Milyutin was Chief of Staff of the Caucasian Corps within the period from 1856 through 1862. He wrote that at that time the Russian Naval Forces were not sufficient to carry out an effective blockade of the Caucasian coast at all.⁸ Ultimately, a decision was taken to set up a fleet of cruisers. It meant that the private trade vessels were fitted out specifically to safeguard the Caucasian coastline. Unfortunately, the materials published in Russia did not focus on the success scored in combatting the Turkish smuggling operations, but mainly asserted that it was impossible for the Russian shore service to guarantee a full blockade of the Black Sea coast.⁹ Hence, the Black Sea slave trading, which had been widely practiced over the post-war period because of Russia's inability to cope with it, was

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6 Kasumov, *North-Western Caucasus in the Russia-Turkey Wars ...*, p. 160.

7 Absedariy, "The 1857 Landing of the Polish-British Troopers on the Circassian Coast" [in]; *Caucasus Compilation*, Vol. XI (Tbilisi, 1887), p. 586.

8 D. A. Milyutin, *Memoirs (In the Caucasus). 1856-1860* (Moscow, 2004), p. 57.

9 "Cruising along the Abkhazia Coast by the 'Vepr' (Wild Boar) Corvette", Excerpts from Reports made by Corvette Captain, Lieutenant Commander Dobrovolsky, 3 October and 2 November 1859) [in] *Nautical Collection*, Vol. XLV (No. 2., 1860), pp. 131-136.

resumed. It was described in a series of political essays entitled “Letters about Turkey” by a well-known Russian geographer and Oriental scholar Peter Chikhachyov.¹⁰ The Russian press ran a lot of articles on the vulnerability of the Caucasian coast. The “Caucasus” newspaper ran stories on how the Turks went poaching near the Abkhazian shore.¹¹ The military press featured recollections of the Caucasian Corps officers about the Turkish propaganda among the Black Sea resident in the Caucasus.¹² The Russian magazines published articles that revealed that Great Britain had encouraged the illicit trafficking along the Circassian coastline.

The restricted capabilities of the Russian Navy in the Black Sea coupled with the inefficient attempts to blockade the Black Sea coast by cruiser operations forced Russia to expedite measures trying to finally annex the Caucasian region. In 1856-1859, the commanders of the Caucasian Corps, having left some troops with a view to shielding the Black Sea coastal strip, concentrated their efforts on conquering the Eastern Caucasus, which was controlled by Imam Shamil. This would provide an opportunity for precluding a reunification of the Eastern and Western Caucasus tribes. After being detained in 1859 Shamil, conquest of the Black Sea coast started. In the late 1859, a most talented leader of the Circassian resistance – Shamil’s naib in the North-Western Caucasus Muhammed Emin laid down arms. The success was accounted for by the deployment of additional military troops and the commencement of a campaign to evict Circassians from their former places of residence. The Black Sea coast in the Caucasus began to be settled by the Cossacks and people born in the European part of Russia.¹³ The war for the North-Western Caucasus lasted until mid-1864. On 20th May, 1864, the last fortified point on the Western Caucasian coast - the village of Gubaadva (Kbaada, Kbaade) was seized.

The final seizure of the Black Sea region was hailed in Russia. A military Orientalist Major General Mikhail Venyukov wrote that the outcome of the Caucasian War “was received with gratification in Russia, the country could eventually breathe a sigh of relief after a six-year war with the Circassians”.¹⁴ A most comprehensive description of the situation related to the “Circassian

10 “Letters about Turkey” [in] *The Great Powers and the Eastern Issue*, pp. 135-136.

11 *The Caucasus*, No. 77, 29 September (11 October), 1866.

12 S. Smolensky, “Memoirs of a Caucasian Man” [in] *Military Collection*, 1872. No. 10.

13 M. I. Venyukov, *Historical Essays on Russia. From the Crimean War Until the Conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin, Vol. 1* (Leipzig, 1878), pp. 171-172; *Essays on the History of Adygeya, Vol. 1-2, Vol. 1* (Maikop, 1957), pp. 383-384; E. D. Felitsyn and F. A. Scherbina, “Kuban Cossack Troops. 1696-1888” [in]; *Compilation of Summarized Data about the Troops* (Krasnodar, 1996), pp. 221, 224-228.

14 Venyukov, *Historical Essays on Russia*, p. 125.

issue” was given by Major General Rostislav Fadeyev. He noted that “the geographic position of Circassia did not allow us to be limited to the conquest of peoples who inhabited it in the normal sense of this word. ... We had to turn the Eastern shore of the Black Sea into the Russian land and, with this aim in view, to clear the entire coast of all mountain dwellers”.¹⁵

The opinion of Rostislav Fadeyev reflected the stance of those military circles who considered it appropriate to prevent a new extrication of Russia from the Caucasian coast in the event of another military conflict with Turkey or the great powers. The likelihood of such a scenario was not excluded, as Russia did not possess a large naval force in the Black Sea. Consequently, if Russia happened to lose the Black Sea region again, it could run the risk of losing it forever.

This explains why Russia resorted to very rigid and even brutal measures in handling the “Circassian issue”. Circassians positioned themselves as a self-supporting force. However, this factor did not make things easier for Russia, as the existence of an “independent Circassia” meant a constant precedent for external interference. For this reason, Russia was compelled to adopt repressive measures with respect to the population of the Caucasian shore. Those measures were applied to the new settlers as well, primarily Cossacks, who had been frequently resettled to new locations against their will.¹⁶ As a result, according to Rostislav Fadeyev, only “in 1864, the Western Caucasus was not populated by force already”.¹⁷ The attitude towards repressive measures was not homogeneous in the Russian society and among the government members. Dmitry Milyutin maintained that the idea of evicting the local population from the coast and settling the Cossacks there was met with resentment in St. Petersburg, where there was a lot of doubt over the expediency of such rigid initiatives.¹⁸ In subsequent years, the policies were subjected to changes. The place of residence for the Black Sea tribes was

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15 R. A. Fadeyev [ed.], *Letters from the Caucasus to the “Moscow Vedomosti” Editor, 1864-1865* (St. Petersburg, 1865), pp. 69, 74-76.

16 Venyukov, *Historical Essays on Russia*, pp. 171-173; Felitsyn, “Kuban Cossack Troops. 1696-1888” [in]; *Compilation of Summarized Data about the Troops*, p. 227.

17 Fadeyev, *Letters from the Caucasus to the “Moscow Vedomosti”*, p. 154.

18 Milyutin, *Memoirs. 1856-1860*, p. 417.

designated to be the flat-bottomed land of Kuban, which was located at a distance from the Black Sea coast. Besides, while being resettled between the rivers Kuban and Lab, the mountain dwellers appeared to be constrained between the lands occupied by the Kuban Cossacks troops and the Russian settlers on the Black Sea coast. Thus, the mountain dwellers were isolated from the outer world and their fellow tribesmen in the Eastern part of the Caucasus.

The government measures targeted at the dispossession of Circassians were often the cause of resentment in the Russian society. Before the Crimean War, there was a lot of protest in Russia against the methods used in conquering the Caucasus. In 1841, the Chief of the Black Sea Coastline Lieutenant General Nikolai Rayevsky had to resign over his disagreement over the policy pursued by St. Petersburg in the North-Western Caucasus.¹⁹ In the period of final conquest of the Caucasus, contemporary witnesses specified what price had been paid by Russia while “clearing” the Circassian coast. Dmitry Milyutin admitted in his memoirs that the mountain dwellers did not want to be resettled on a stretch of open terrain and to adopt the lifestyle of Cossack settlements.²⁰ The “Caucasus” newspaper chronicled the tragic developments in a truthful manner.²¹ Rostislav Fadeyev in his “Letters” conceded that the measures undertaken by Russia over the period of conquering the North-Western Caucasus had been cruel.²²

Thus, the Russian society tried to exert its influence on the government and to mitigate the measures undertaken by the latter in an effort to solve the problem of the Caucasian shore.

Over the period under review, the Russian-Turkish relations were affected by the Muhajirum problem (muhaceret - resettlement, emigration) - the resettlement to the Ottoman Empire of those Circassian residents who did not want to live in Kuban. The Muhajir phenomenon was ubiquitous in the 19th century. Ultimately, it grew to acquire massive proportions.²³ The resettlement of the Caucasian mountain dwellers to Turkey continued until 1910.²⁴

19 S. F. Oreshkova and Ulchenko N. Yu, *Russia and Turkey: Problem of Designating the Frontiers* (Moscow, 2006), p. 85.

20 Milyutin, *Memoirs. 1856-1860*, pp. 446-447.

21 *The Caucasus*, No.18, 2 (14) March, 1867.

22 Fadeyev, *Letters from the Caucasus to the “Moscow Vedomosti”*, pp. 131-134.

23 A. K. Cheucheva, *North-Western Caucasus in the Policies of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire over the Last Quarter of the 18th Century-60's of the 19th Century* (Maikop, 2007), p. 174; G. A. Dzidzaria, *Muhajir Communities and Problems in the 19th Century History of Abkhazia* (Sukhumi, 1975), pp. 194-245, 276-293; Cheucheva, *North-Western Caucasus...*, pp. 174-209.

24 Dzidzaria, *Muhajir Communities...*, p. 68.

According to such Russian researchers, as Svetlana Oreshkova, Angela Cheucheva, Georgy Dzidzariya, Turkey was the chief initiator and planner of the Muhajir movement.²⁵ The same view was held by the US researcher E. Toledano, who had explored this subject profoundly.²⁶

The reason for that lied in Turkey's desire to strengthen the combat capability of its army at the expense of Circassians, to consolidate its power on the Balkan Peninsula and to increase the number of Muslim subjects of the Turkic descend. Throughout the period of 1858-1864, a total of 175-200 thousand Circassians were resettled to the Balkans.²⁷ In Christian villages, the locals were obliged to build houses for the emigrants and to provide them with all basic necessities at their own expense.²⁸ This gave rise to multiple conflicts between the local population and the emigrants. The conflicts were further exacerbated due to the religious and cultural differences. As a consequence, after several years, the Turkish authorities resettled the greater part of Circassians to Asia Minor. After the 1877-1878 Russian-Turkish War, the Turkish government sent the Circassian resettlers to the remote areas of Anatolia. They were supposed to defend the troublesome border with Syria.²⁹ Thus, apart from Russia, Turkey was also responsible for the tragic consequences that the Circassian resettlement entailed, as it was not prepared to accommodate a large number of Caucasian refugees. This eventually resulted in a reduced number of Circassian emigrants.³⁰

Russia sought to reduce the Muhajir movement in order to free the Caucasus from disloyal population, avoiding the displacement of the entire mass. In his letter to Russian Emperor Alexander II, Russian Vicegerent in the Caucasus Alexander Baryatinsky wrote that it was impossible to put an end to the

25 Oreshkova, *Russia and Turkey: Problem of Designating the Frontiers*, p. 85; Cheucheva, *North-Western Caucasus...*, pp. 175-179, 183, 194, 196, 201, 204-205; Dzidzaria, *Muhajir Communities...*, pp. 197-200, 222.

26 E. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and Its Suppression. 1840-1890* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 151-152.

27 G. V. Chochiev, "Resettlement of North-Caucasian Emigrants in the Arab Provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Second Half of the 19th Century – Early 20th Century)" [in]; *The Ottoman Empire. Events and People* (Moscow, 2000), p. 98.

28 Kasumov, *North-Western Caucasus in the Russia-Turkey Wars...*, p. 167.

29 Kasumov, *North-Western Caucasus in the Russia-Turkey Wars...*, pp. 167-168; Cheucheva, *North-Western Caucasus in the Policies of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 199-206; Chochiev, "Resettlement of North-Caucasian Emigrants..." [in]; *The Ottoman Empire. Events and People*, pp. 98-111.

30 *Essays on the History of Adygeya*, pp. 374-377; Dzidzaria, *Muhajir Communities...*, pp. 194-245; Kasumov, *North-Western Caucasus in the Russia-Turkey Wars...*, pp. 171-173; Cheucheva, *North-Western Caucasus...*, pp. 189-199.

Circassian emigration and suggested measures that could regulate the process.³¹ With this aim in view, the Russian authorities set up a commission to deal with the Circassian resettlement in the cities of Taman, Novorossiysk and Tuapse. To transport the mountain dwellers, the Russian authorities chartered the freight carrying vessels owned by the Russian Navigation and Trade Society. The poorest of the emigrants were carried at the expense of the Russian state. They were provided with foodstuffs, small hospitals were set up for those who were ill. Designated naval officers saw to it that the passengers were not loaded on board in overcrowded conditions.³²

Russia's position was set out in the "Letters" by Rostislav Fadeyev. He asserted in his work that the issue of resettling the mountain dwellers had been approached by Russia on the basis of its own national interests. For this reason, the policies pursued by St. Petersburg were justified, as the question at issue was the territory whose population refused to recognize the legitimate authority of Russia. The international environment after the Crimean War made it mandatory for Russia to adopt measures for the protection of its security in the Eastern part of the Black Sea region. In connection with the above, the actions accomplished by Russia in the North-Western Caucasus were considered a normal practice for a great power that defended its interests.³³

Russia was not indifferent to the subsequent fate of its Caucasian emigrants. Rostislav Fadeyev gave credit to Turkey for its management of the Muhajir movement. At the same time, he underscored that owing to Russia, the number of victims involved in the resettlement policies had not grown higher. His statement carried a propaganda tinge to it. It was meant to diminish the responsibility of the Caucasian authorities for the occurrence of inevitable victims that the decision to "clear" the Caucasian coast was fraught with, and to influence those who did not make up their mind in favor of getting resettled to Turkey irrevocably. The attitude of the Russian authorities and the society towards those emigrants who wished to return was different. The Caucasian administration and the Turkish government did not want the Muhajirs to return. The Russian press displayed a sympathetic attitude towards the situation of Circassians in Turkey and did not carry any objection against their return.³⁴

31 "A. I. Baryatinsky – to Alexander II", 11 (23) May, 1860, Enclosure to Chapter IX [in]; A. L. Zisserman, *Field-Marshal Prince Alexander Ivanovich Baryatinsky. 1815-1879. Vol. 1-3, Vol. 3* (Moscow, 1889), p. 342.

32 Fadeyev, *Letters from the Caucasus to the "Moscow Vedomosti"*, pp. 146-151.

33 Fadeyev, *Letters from the Caucasus to the "Moscow Vedomosti"*, pp. 146-151.

34 *The Caucasus*, No. 70, 8 (20) September, 1866; *St. Petersburg Vedomosti*, No. 19, 25 January (7 February), 1864.

After Russia conquered the Caucasus, the British press ceased to publish any pro-Circassian materials. Despite the public protests in Great Britain, on 26 May, 1864, the British government had to recognize the “Big Caucasus” being included in the Russian territory. Thereafter, Great Britain lost all interest in its Circassian allies and came to terms with their resettlement.³⁵ An important role was played by the economic factors. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 provided the British with a direct route to India. For this reason, Great Britain did not try to assert its monopolistic right to the ownership of the Trabzon-Tabriz trade route.

The Caucasian Black Sea coast had traditionally fueled a lot of controversy into the relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. After the Crimean War, this problem grew to be more acute. The terms of the 1856 Peace Treaty of Paris brought Russia’s sovereignty in the North-Eastern part of the Black Sea region into question. Russia sought to perpetuate its territorial expansion into the Black Sea basin, while the Ottoman Empire endeavored to retain its influence on the Caucasian coast and to use the Circassian human resources to the fullest extent possible. As a result, the North-Western Caucasus had all the attributes inherent to the international problem: it was a source of controversy between Russia and Turkey, it was the focus of attention for the European nations and it was one of the major transportation nodes in the Middle East. The list of most acute controversies included: Russia’s position in the Black Sea region and military contraband, slave trading on the Circassian shore, the resettlement of a significant part of the population of the Black Sea Circassia to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, after the Crimean War, the North-Western Caucasus was the centerpiece of the Eastern issue and had paramount importance for the Russian-Turkish relationships.

The Caucasian Black Sea coast had traditionally fueled a lot of controversy into the relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. After the Crimean War, this problem grew to be more acute. The terms of the 1856 Peace Treaty of Paris brought Russia’s sovereignty in the North-Eastern part of the Black Sea region into question. Russia sought to perpetuate its territorial expansion into the Black Sea basin, while the Ottoman Empire endeavored to retain its influence on the Caucasian coast and to use the Circassian human resources to the fullest extent possible.

35 A. P. Berger, “Expulsion of Mountain Dwellers from the Caucasus” [in]; *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. XXXIII (No. 1, 1882).

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**North-Western Caucasus in the Policies Pursued by Russia and the
Ottoman Empire at the Final Stage of the Caucasian War**

Fadeyev, R. A. [ed.]. *Letters from the Caucasus to the "Moscow Vedomosti" Editor, 1864-1865*. St, Petersburg, 1865.

Felitsyn, E. D. and F. A. Scherbina. "Kuban Cossack Troops. 1696-1888" [in]; *Compilation of Summarized Data about the Troops*. Krasnodar, 1996.

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A GLIMPSE OF HISTORY: HOW THE TREATY OF KARS WAS SIGNED (MARCH THROUGH OCTOBER, 1921)

(TARİHE KISA BİR BAKIŞ:
KARS ANTLAŞMASI NASIL İMZALANDI (MART-EKİM 1921)?)

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Abstract: *The signing of the Treaty of Kars was not a simple follow-up to the signing of the Treaty of Moscow (1921). Although the Treaty of Kars took the Treaty of Moscow as a template for many of its provisions, prior to the treaties, many considerations were made both by Turkey and Soviet Russia regarding the outlook on Transcaucasia and each other's intentions. During this time, Turkey was forced to make a defining choice between choosing the support of either Western powers or Soviet Russia. It was also reluctant to let go of the gains it acquired from the Treaty of Alexandropol, which the Treaty of Kars would replace. Meanwhile, Soviet Russia viewed Turkey's hesitation on this issue with suspicion. The author indicates that in the end, both countries viewed stable and friendly relations between each other as paramount, and the signing of both the Treaties of Moscow and Kars were seen as a pledge to maintain such positive relations.*

Abstract: *Soviet Russia, Turkey, Treaty of Moscow, Treaty of Kars, Treaty of Alexandropol*

Öz: *Kars Antlaşmasının imzalanması 1921 Moskova Antlaşmasının basit bir devamı niteliğinde değildi. Kars Antlaşması pek çok maddesi için Moskova Antlaşmasını örnek almış olsa da, antlaşmaların imzalanmasının öncesinde, hem Türkiye hem de Sovyetler Birliği Transkafkasya'nın durumu ve birbirlerinin niyetleri konularında pek çok hususu dikkate almıştır. Bu zaman dilimi içerisinde Türkiye Batılı güçlerin mi yoksa Sovyetler Birliğinin mi desteğini almak konusunda dönüm noktası niteliğinde bir tercih yapmak durumunda kalmıştır. Aynı zamanda Türkiye, Kars Antlaşmasıyla geçersiz sayılacak Gümrü Antlaşmasında elde ettiği kazanımlardan feragat etmek konusunda tereddüt etmiştir. Bu zaman zarfında ise Sovyetler Birliği Türkiye'nin bu konudaki tereddüdüne*

şüpheyle yaklaşmıştır. Yazar; en sonunda iki ülkenin de birbirleri arasında istikrarlı ve dostane ilişkileri elde etmenin her şeyden daha önemli olduğu kanaatine vardıklarını ve Moskova ve Kars Antlaşmalarının imzalanmasını bu olumlu ilişkilerin muhafaza edilmesinin vaadi olarak gördüklerini belirtmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Sovyetler Birliği, Türkiye, Moskova Antlaşması, Kars Antlaşması, Gümrü Antlaşması*

A Glimpse of History: How the Treaty of Kars Was Signed (March Through October, 1921)

The Treaty of Kars is often regarded as a document entered into by the Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian Soviet republics and Turkey in pursuance of the earlier Treaty of Moscow, dated 16 March, 1921, in other words, as a successor treaty that embraced the tenets and extended the application of provisions set out in the Treaty of Moscow to the Transcaucasian republics. However, the signing of the Treaty of Kars was preceded by its own history that gives us a clue to assume that its significance is not reduced merely to the formal accession of the Transcaucasian republics to the Treaty of Moscow.

The Treaty of Moscow was signed on 16 March, 1921. On behalf of Soviet Russia, the signatories were G. Chicherin and J. Korkmasov, on behalf of Turkey, the signatories were Yusuf Kemal-Bey, Riza Nur-Bey, Ali Fuad-Pasha. The Treaty cemented the territorial acquisitions of Turkey established in accordance with the Treaty of Alexandropol (Gumru),¹ with the exception of Alexandropol itself (subsequently renamed Leninakan, and now again Gumru), which was deemed to be returned to Armenia. Artvin and Ardahan were ceded to Turkey. Commenting on the outcome of negotiations, Russian historian S.

1 In late May, 1920, Moscow was the venue of negotiations between the government delegations of Soviet Russia and Armenia, in which the Russian side offered to act as a mediator for the resolution of Armenian-Turkish territorial controversy. On July 19th, 1920, a delegation from Turkey headed by Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Kunduh arrived in Moscow to conclude a friendship treaty with Russia. In connection with the signing of the treaty, the Russian side advanced a request that the aspirations of the Armenians related to the resolution of its border issues should be met to some extent, albeit not fully to their satisfaction. The conditions put forward by Russia caused a painful reaction from Turkey. It refused to comply with them referring to the premise that there were no Armenian areas in Turkey as such, Armenians were residing in mixed communities with Turks, and nowhere in the East did the Armenian residents constituted the overriding majority.

The borderline issue was addressed again by the parties during a meeting of the Turkish delegation with Lenin that took place on August 14th, 1920, the negotiation process resulted in Russia's consent to the resolution of the frontier problem between Turkey and Armenia through an advancement of Turkish troops eastwards. The reason behind such a drastic turn of events was the indecisiveness shown by the Armenians who hesitated over the final approval of Russia's role as a mediator for the settlement of its borderline controversy with Turkey. However, soon enough, the advancement of the Turkish troops to the east was too obvious to go well beyond the boundaries set out under the accords with Russia. Having crossed the boundary established by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the Turks captured Kars on October 30th, and on November 7th they occupied Alexandropol (Gumru). On December 3rd, the Peace Treaty of Alexandropol was concluded with the Dashnak government of Armenia, who was living on borrowed time: earlier, on November 29th, the Soviet government was proclaimed in Armenia, and a brief period of diarchy ensued in the republic. According to the Treaty, Turkey regained control not only over territories which had been supposed to be allocated to Armenia within the framework of the Treaty of Sèvres, but also a fraction of the Armenian territory - the Kars area and contiguous land - which had been annexed to Russia under the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. The government of Soviet Russia declined to acknowledge the Treaty of Alexandropol, however it was the Treaty of Alexandropol that laid the foundation for the determination of Armenia's frontiers under the Treaty of Moscow in 1921. As it was admitted by R. Kazanjan, "...it was not under the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Moscow of March 16th, 1921, that the Armenian territories were allocated to Turkey. Russia never granted these territories to Turkey. They were captured by the latter during its invasion of Armenia in September-November, 1920, and assigned to Turkey under the notorious Treaty of Alexandropol..." (R. Kazanjan, "Ominous Treaty. Glimpses of History Highlighting the Signing of the 1921 Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Moscow [in]; *Republic of Armenia*, 25.03.1995).

I. Kuznetsova noted that “while seeking a viable solution to settling differences in its relations with Turkey, the Soviet delegation conceded that the Kars, Ardahan and Artvin areas should be ceded to Turkey.”²

The Treaty with Turkey was ratified by an extraordinary session of the VTsIK (All-Russia Central Executive Committee) RSFSR as early as on March 20th, 1921. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) ratified the same Treaty only on July 22nd, 1921,³ although before, at the Moscow conference it was agreed between the parties that on its way home, the Turkish delegation would make a stop in Tiflis, Georgia, and enter into agreements with all the

It is most often observed that the Treaty is important as an instrument that set the stage for the establishment of Soviet-Turkish friendly relations and also crucial for strengthening the position of Turkey on the international arena.

three Transcaucasian republics. However, when the Turkish delegation arrived in Transcaucasia in mid-April, Yusuf Kemal, head of the Turkish delegation for the talk in Moscow, made an unexpected statement that he could only conclude the agreements with Georgia and Azerbaijan, but he was not entitled to enter into any negotiations with Armenia.⁴ As a result, the Turkish delegation left without signing the Treaty.

What are the milestones that marked the development of bilateral relations over a period spanning between the Moscow talks and ratification of the Treaty by the Turkish Meclis (Parliament) and subsequent signing of the Treaty, similar to the Moscow Treaty, with three Transcaucasian republics by Turkey?

To answer this question, it is necessary to shift the emphasis in assessing the significance and ramifications of the signing of the Treaty of Moscow which can be most frequently encountered in historiography of the Soviet epoch. It is most often observed that the Treaty is important as an instrument that set the stage for the establishment of Soviet-Turkish friendly relations and also crucial for strengthening the position of Turkey on the international arena.⁵ But it is essential not to overlook the fact that, literally, a few days prior to the beginning of talks in Moscow, on February 21st, to be precise, a conference of the

2 S. I. Kuznetsova, *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations* (Moscow, 1961), p. 47.

3 S. I. Kuznetsova, *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations: USSR and Turkey (1917-1979)* (Moscow, 1981), p. 38. A publication titled *Documents of USSR Foreign Policy* indicates another date when the Treaty was ratified by VTsIK – July 20th, 1921. See; *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1959), p. 604.

4 Kuznetsova (1961), *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations*, p.65.

5 See, e.g., Kuznetsova (1981), *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations*.

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European nations opened in London to review the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres for the benefit of Turkey.⁶ The delegations representing Kemalist Turkey participated in the talks both in London and in Moscow. That is why a British newspaper “Manchester Guardian” wrote on January 26th, 1921, that the government led by Mustafa Kemal was confronted with a challenging choice it had to make between the Allies (the Entente Powers) and the Bolsheviks.⁷ Notwithstanding the atmosphere filled with doubt and uncertainty surrounding the beginning of talks in Moscow, the choice was made by the Kemalists in favor of Soviet Russia, as it was found to be more in line with the Turkish national interests. As it was later acknowledged by G.V. Chicherin, People’s Commisar for Foreign Affairs in the Soviet government, “our rapprochement with nationalist Turkey at that time was an act of self-preservation both for it and for us.”⁸

However, as before and in the very course of the Moscow talks, Turkey was still in the process of making a hard choice between the West and Russia, the ultimate decision that was made by it meant a more or less final definition of its allies and adversaries rather than a settlement of the entire range of foreign policy problems facing the country. For this reason, effectively, the eventual result associated with the signing of the Treaty of Moscow was that a foreseeable possibility for Turkey to be engaged in fighting a war on two fronts was precluded, but, at the same time, it was apparent that the front where the fight was still ahead had been clearly identified by now. Therefore, having chosen Russia to be its political ally, Turkey then approached it with a persistent request of being provided with aid in finances and armaments to counteract the military pressure exerted by western nations. Immediately, upon signing the Treaty of Moscow, Russia made available to Turkey such an aid package through armaments and also provided 5 million Rubles (4 million Rubles, according to some sources) worth of gold as part of the total amount promised, equal to 10 million Rubles.⁹ Soon after the first tranche was disbursed to Turkey upon the conclusion of the Moscow talks (in April, 1921), another 1.4 million

6 The Peace Treaty of Sèvres was drafted in the course of the Paris Peace Conference, which was convened by the Allied victors with a view to drawing and concluding peace treaties with the defeated Central Powers following the end of World War I and was signed on August 10th, 1920. Turkey under the sultan’s government was bound by the Treaty to recognize Armenia as an independent state, as had been already done by the Allied Powers. The issue of determination of the mutual boundaries of the two nations was transferred for an arbitral award to be passed by the President of the United States. The arbitral award was passed on November 22nd, 1920. It stipulated for Armenia to receive a territorial augmentation roughly equal to the half of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum and Trapezund provinces. However, the Treaty was not ratified by the government of the Ottoman Empire.

7 Kuznetsova (1961), *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations*, p. 31.

8 Kazanjan, “Ominous Treaty...” [in] *Republic of Armenia*.

9 D. Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi, 1838-1995*, İkinci kitap (İstanbul, 1993), p. 822.

Rubles was received by Turkey for the purchase of armaments from Germany.¹⁰ But, afterwards, the provision of aid was suspended.

Soviet Russia was disposed to be wary about the fact that the Turkish side procrastinated with launching its troops' withdrawal from the Alexandropol area, as had been stipulated under the Treaty of Moscow. As it happened, in February, 1921, the Dashnaks succeeded in regaining its power over a substantial part of Armenia, inter alia, in capturing Yerevan, where they formed a Committee for the Liberation of the Fatherland. Thus, there was no reason for Turkey to take any rapid measures to withdraw its forces from Alexandropol, which was supposed to be annexed to Turkey. As a result, according to a Turkish historian and publicist Avcioglu, the Turks' contacts with the Dashnaks were the factors that only heightened Russia's distrust towards Turkey.¹¹ "The Turkish government," wrote a Russian Turkologist B.M. Dantsig commenting on that situation, "was firmly adhering to the view that the Treaty of Alexandropol (Gumru), which had been earlier entered into with the Dashnaks, remained in full effect and persistently declined to conclude a peace settlement with Soviet Armenia..."¹² In other words, Turkey adopted a wait-and-see approach while watching the progress of developments in Armenia and entertaining hope that if the Dashnaks could retain power, it would continue to keep Alexandropol under its control. At the same time, the Turks explained their presence of their forces in Alexandropol to the Soviet side by referring to the counterrevolutionary factors in place (the overthrow of the Soviet rule in Armenia), which induced them to maintain vigilance before resorting to military action on the Eastern front.¹³

In March, 1921, Russia signed a trade agreement with Britain. The termination of Russian aid supplies was construed by Turkey against the backdrop of prevalent conditions as a gesture of goodwill seeking to benefit their common adversary at that time - Britain. Consequently, even the fact that the Russian-Turkish Treaty was signed in Moscow failed to fully relieve the tensions stemming from mutual distrust interwoven into the fabric of mutual relations for years. As the message was expressed by D. Avcioglu, "it was not sufficient to sign a friendship treaty to create an atmosphere of mutual trust. Mutual distrust that was caused by imperialistic maneuvering has been observed until 1922."¹⁴ Then D. Avcioglu quotes the words from an address of the Turkish

10 See, e.g., M. Saray, *Atatürk'ün Sovyet Politikası* (İstanbul, 1990), p. 75.

11 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, pp. 830-831.

12 B. Dantsig, *Turkey* (Moscow, 1949), p. 94.

13 See, e.g., "Response of the Turkish Ambassador to RSFSR", Ali Fuad to a diplomatic note by G.V. Chicherin, April 6th, 1921 [in]; *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, Vol. 4 (Moscow, 1960), p. 49.

14 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, p. 824.

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Ambassador to Russia, Ali Fuad, made in April, 1921: “If you... weaken our friendship and reduce your assistance, the British imperialism will deceive each of us separately.”¹⁵

The arrival of the French Senator, Henri Franklin-Bouillon, in Ankara in June, 1921, was accompanied by enthusiastic commentaries in the West-European and Istanbul media on the reconciliation of Turkey with the Triple Entente and the deployment of Turkish troops in Kars and Ardahan. In fact, as S.I. Kuznetsova put it, “the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey refused to join the anti-Soviet coalition and cease the war of independence.”¹⁶ So, the Triple Entente attempted to crush the Turks with the use of weapons - it became known that the Greeks were planning an attack on Ankara. It was precisely during those days that Britain was trying hard to spread the rumors that the Bolsheviks were preparing to launch an attack against Turkey. Ali Fuad also informed the leaders of the nationalistic movement in Turkey that the public opinion in Britain was being influenced to believe that the areas in close proximity to the Aras River as well as Van and Mush would be soon allocated to Armenia.¹⁷ Under those circumstances, Mustafa Kemal did not rule out such a likelihood that the Bolsheviks would launch an attack, and he wrote to the Commander of the Eastern Front, Karabekir Pasha, about the necessity to be vigilant and prepared to deal with such developments, to be on the safe side. In his letter of response, Karabekir Pasha stressed that the propaganda of the Allied Powers commenced at the time when the Turkish forces were engaged in accomplishing their redeployment to the Western front was targeted at impeding their progress and inducing them to keep their presence in the East.¹⁸

As a matter of fact, the relentless reluctance of the Turks to withdraw their troops from Alexandropol aggravated the rumors that they were getting prepared for a war in Transcaucasia and aroused a lot of suspicion within the RSFSR government over Turkey’s intention to observe the Treaty of Moscow. The outcome of that situation was a suspension of Russian military aid to Turkey. Thus, the circle of mistrust and mutual suspicion of the parties was closed already at a new phase of relationships between the two states following the signing of the Treaty of Moscow in 1921.

In April, 1921, the Red Army launched a whirlwind attack across the territory held under the Dashnaks’ rule. On April 11th, 1921, the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow, Ali Fuad, sent an encrypted message to his government that ran as

15 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, p. 837.

16 Kuznetsova (1961), *The Establishment of Soviet-Turkish Relations*, p. 62.

17 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, p. 838.

18 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, p. 840.

follows: “In the event that the assistance of Russia might be needed to promote our foreign policies and the supply of money promised by it, armaments and ammunition could be secured as soon as possible, it should be our top priority to begin the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty [the Treaty of Moscow - N.U.], especially those relating to the Eastern frontiers, and not to pave the way for any suspicion to be harbored by the Russians, but also to conclude a Treaty with Armenia, that has again become Soviet, Georgia and Azerbaijan... If we fail to comply with the provisions that relate to that part of the Treaty [Eastern frontiers - N.U.] now that Armenia has again come under Soviet rule, the suspicions will start to be on the rise once again.”¹⁹

The Soviet side also gave a clear indication to Turkey that it was essential to honor the Treaty of Moscow under new conditions when the Soviet power in Armenia had been restored. In its diplomatic note addressed to Ali Fuad, dated April 8th, 1921, G.V. Chicherin wrote: “In so far as the entire area of Alexandropol and Erevani are back under control of the Armenian Soviet Government again, the time has come for the Turkish troops to withdraw beyond the boundary established under the Treaty of Moscow...”²⁰ “To desire the implementation of the Treaty of Alexandropol is tantamount to the cancellation of the Treaty of Moscow”, G.V. Chicherin wrote as a concluding remark to his note.²¹

On the same day, in his telegram addressed to G.K. Ordzhonikidze (Commander of the Eastern Front of the Red Army), G.V. Chicherin wrote: “Point out what fatal consequences might be incurred in connection with a confrontation between the Turkish troops and the Red Army forces and also the fact that all of the Soviet republics are part of an inseparable and close union with Soviet Russia.”²²

To avert an imminent exacerbation of relations with Russia, the Turkish troops left the town of Alexandropol on April 23rd, 1921.

On July 5th, 1921, the Greeks waged an onslaught against Ankara. Such a turn of events, likewise a final resolution of the Russian-Turkish controversy over the borderline with Armenia by that time, had convinced the Turkish side of the expediency of making a final positive decision on the reinforcement of the Russian vector in its foreign policies: the Treaty of Moscow was urgently ratified by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) on July 31st, 1921.

19 Avcioglu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi*, p. 837.

20 “Response of the Turkish Ambassador to RSFSR” [in]; *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, p. 49.

21 “Response of the Turkish Ambassador to RSFSR” [in]; *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, p. 54.

22 “Response of the Turkish Ambassador to RSFSR” [in]; *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, p. 55.

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On July 14th, 1921, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR received a letter from Ali Fuad testifying to Turkey's consent to sign a Treaty with the three Transcaucasian republics. In July-August, 1921, an agreement was reached on the venue and date for the conference to be convened with the aim of signing the Treaty. The conference opened in Kars on September 26th, 1921. On October 3rd, 1921, a discussion focusing on the draft framework of the general agreement got underway. As the wording of the Treaty of Moscow was taken as a basis, no protracted discussion ensued. The Treaty was signed on October 13th, 1921. The bulk of articles of the Treaty of Kars have the same wording as the appropriate articles of the Treaty of Moscow, including the articles that set out the establishment of a new borderline with Turkey.²³

The Treaty of Kars was not only a formal, but also a factual testament to Turkey's acknowledgement of the borderline as had been established under the Treaty of Moscow, dated March 16th, 1921, as well as the result of overcoming the credibility crisis in bilateral relations. In late 1921, the provision of financial assistance to Turkey was resumed by Soviet Russia: during a historic visit of a legendary Army Commander M.V. Frunze to Turkey in December, 1921, Ankara was given 1,100,000 Rubles in gold. The last "tranche" in the amount of 3.5 million Rubles was received by the Turkish side in May, 1922.²⁴

The Treaty of Kars was not only a formal, but also a factual testament to Turkey's acknowledgement of the borderline as had been established under the Treaty of Moscow, dated March 16th, 1921, as well as the result of overcoming the credibility crisis in bilateral relations.

The Treaty of Kars and the Treaty of Moscow entered into in 1921 have provided a principal settlement of the borderline issues facing the Soviet republics and Turkey, they have also paved the way for the beginning of political rapprochement between them, which was finalized by the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, dated December 17th, 1925, (Treaty of Non-Aggression and Neutrality).²⁵

23 See wording of the Treaty: *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, Vol. 4 (Moscow, 1960), pp. 420-429.

24 Saray, *Atatürk'ün Sovyet Politikası*, p. 76.

25 See wording of the Treaty: *Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy*, Vol. 8 (Moscow, 1963), pp. 739-741.

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THE CAUCASUS AND TRANSCAUCASIA AS PART OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (16TH–17TH CENTURIES)

(OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NUN BİR PARÇASI OLARAK
KAFKASYA VE TRANSKAFKASYA)

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Abstract: *This article provides a narrative of the administrative control exerted by the Ottoman Empire on the Caucasus region during the 16th and 17th centuries. It also provides a narrative on the political ties between the Ottoman Empire and its vassal states and also on the economic activities prevalent in the region. The author indicates that although the Ottoman Empire officially exerted control over Crimea and Transcaucasia, in reality these regions were poorly integrated with and carried political customs different that of the center of the empire. Since their control was taken for granted, they were in fact poorly defended from the advances of the Russian Empire and the raids carried out Cossacks that had a destabilizing effect on the region.*

Keywords: *Ottoman Empire, Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Crimea Khanate, Circassians, Black Sea Region*

Öz: *Bu makale Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun 16. ve 17. yüzyıllarda Kafkasya bölgesindeki idari denetimini ele almaktadır. Makale aynı zamanda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile ona tabi devletler arasındaki siyasi ilişkileri ve bölgeye hâkim olan ekonomik faaliyetleri ele almaktadır. Yazar, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kırım ve Transkafkasya üzerinde resmi olarak hâkimiyeti olmasına rağmen, gerçekte bu bölgelerin imparatorluğun merkezine ancak zayıf bir şekilde bağlı olduğunu ve siyasi geleneklerinin merkezden farklılık göstermiş olduğunu belirtmektedir. İmparatorluğun bu bölgelerdeki hâkimiyetine kesin gözüyle bakılmasından dolayı gerekli önlemler alınmadığı için, aslında bu bölgeler Rusya İmparatorluğunun ilerlemelerine ve Kosaklar (Rus Kazaklar) tarafından gerçekleştirilen akınlara karşı yetersiz bir şekilde savunulmaktaydı. Yazara göre bu durum, bahsi geçen bölgenin dengesini bozan bir etkiye yol açmıştır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Kafkasya, Transkafkasya, Kırım Hanlığı, Karadeniz Bölgesi*

In the late 15th century, having defeated the last remnant of Byzantium - the Empire of Trebizond in 1461, the Ottomans began to use Trebizond-Trabzon as a residence of the Sultan's sons. There, the would-be Sultans, Bayezid II and Selim I, got familiar with the administrative affairs and military activities. They were the first to set out on a march to the areas in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia, in particular, they accomplished raids on Childir and Kutaisi¹ (the center of the Georgian kingdom of Imeretia).

Any further advance of the Ottomans in that direction was hampered by the new Iranian state of the Safavids set up in 1501, which brought to heel the Turkic state formations of Kara Koyunlu and AkKoyunlu² located on the Ottoman border, but preserved many traditions of the local tribes. This made the state of the Safavids attractive to the Anatolian Bayliks of noble origin, who had been bent to submission by the Ottomans shortly before, yet had not been fully assimilated within the Ottoman Empire structure. The Ottomans and the Safavids fought a battle for the territories and their population that was complicated by the ideological differences. The Safavids were engaged in propagating Shiism. Whereas, the Ottomans were the followers of Sunni Islam. In Anatolia, some groups practiced adherence to the cult of Ali from olden times, and it drew a segment of local population closer to the Safavids. The fight for retaining Eastern Anatolia within the structure of the Ottoman Empire, and later the submission of Mamelukes in Syria and Egypt, who proved unfit to meet the challenge of being the leader of the Islamic (Sunni) world,³ diverted the attention of the Ottomans from the problems of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia.

It was only after 1555, when the Peace Treaty of Amasya on the demarcation of the territories of the Ottoman Empire and the State of the Safavids was signed, that the Ottomans began to move their troops in the direction of the Caucasus. The frontier established in 1555 was the dividing line that the two conflicting states constantly came around to, however, in the meantime, the border appeared to be moved further into the adversary's territory by one side or the other from time to time. It is known that the Ottomans spread their rule as far as the Caspian Sea region, although for a short period. Meanwhile, the territories in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia were conquered and kept constantly subdued during their rule.

1 M.F. Kirzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Ellelerini Fethi (1451-1590)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1998), pp. 83-99.

2 Sh.M. Mustafayev, *Eastern Anatolia: From Akkoyunlu to the Ottoman Empire* (Moscow, 1994).

3 N.A. Ivanov, *The Ottoman Conquest of the Arab Countries (1516-1574)* (Moscow, 2001).

After 1555, the first to be subdued was Batum, it was annexed to the Trabzon Eyalet (Province). According to Evliya Çelebi⁴, Trebizond itself was often called Lower Batum in the mid-17th century. In 1578, the Eyalet of Childir (or Akhazik) was formed in the territory of Southern Georgia and was firmly incorporated into the Ottoman state structure. In the late 16th century, a number of campaigns were carried out in the North direction. The Turkish troops occupied Poti, Kutaisi, and Sukhumi (the latter fortress was visited by the Turkish Navy even earlier -back in 1454).⁵ However, these seaside fortresses did not serve as platforms for permanent deployment of the Ottoman garrisons, although the area was declared to be controlled by the Ottoman Empire and was even named the Gürcistan Eyalet. The 1590 and 1639 agreements with the Safavids also set out that it belonged to the Ottoman Empire.⁶ However, Evliya Çelebi, who visited those locations in the 1640s, wrote that the natural conditions there were such that “it was impossible to infiltrate that area even if you had troops that were as big as the ocean”. Moreover, “there were no favorable spots on the coast”. For this reason, he considered the Gonio Fortress in the Trabzon Eyalet to be the last Ottoman territory in the region, where a 1,500 men strong garrison was deployed. The men-at-arms, as the Turkish traveler noted, did not participate in any military campaigns, their mission was to safeguard the town only.⁷

The Georgian kingdoms of Guria, Imeritia, and Megrelia were located further to the North. Apart from them, especially along the Rioni banks, there was a land plot occupied by the “unsubmissive Aznaurs”. There was no Ottoman administration in those areas, the rulers remained “disloyal” Christians. However, they did not pay any kharaj, they only sent gifts, through failed to do it regularly. It is known that there were multiple manifestations of defiance there, which the central authorities had to curb with the employment of military force. One of such expeditions into the depth of Georgian territories, was described by Evliya Çelebi, who was a participant in that expedition. He maintained that the Ottoman troops had behaved there as if they had found themselves in a “country at war” (darul-harb), “the Army was simply drowned in the prisoners of war and in its trophies”.⁸

4 Evliya Çelebi, *Siyahatname*. Three volumes of materials from the first (1897–1938) printed edition of this most interesting work were translated into Russian [Evliya Çelebi, *Book of Travelling. Excerpts from the Work of a Turkish Traveller of the 17th Century, Translation and Comments, ed. 1* (Moscow, 1961); *ed. 2* (Moscow, 1979); *ed. 3* (Moscow, 1983)]. These translations are used by the author in citing the data communicated by the source. They are published in Volume Two and Volume Seven in the Turkish edition comprising Ten Volumes, overall.

5 For the description of these military activities, please refer to: Kirzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Ellerini Fethi*, pp. 1–21, 382–384.

6 Kirzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Ellerini Fethi*, pp. 89–98, 384; Çelebi, *Book of Travelling, ed. 3*, p. 32.

7 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling, ed. 3*, p. 45.

8 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling, ed. 3*, p. 47.

The Ottoman authorities built up their relations with the local rulers following the vassal pattern. At the same time, the terms underlying individual arrangements varied, while the payment of scat and presentation of gifts could be required annually or even twice or three times a year.⁹ Evliya Çelebi wrote that in the mid-17th century, the Imeretia rulers had sent their annual gifts to Istanbul, which included slaves, falcons of various types, hawks, mules, and Georgian women of exceptional beauty.¹⁰ Similar information was conveyed by foreign observers. Thus, Italian missionary A. Lamberti, who had stayed in Megrelia in the early 17th century for over 30 years, asserted that the gifts were forwarded to Istanbul to keep the Sultan with his troops from entering the kingdom.

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The gifts were sent to Viziers on an annual basis, and once in every two years they were sent to the Sultans. In this way, “Princes Dadiani maintained their friendly relations with Turkey”.¹¹ Another missionary Pietro della Valle, in his communication about Georgia to Pope VII, underscored that the rulers of Guria, Imeretia, and Megrelia, while paying the scat, did not allow the Ottoman troops to enter their kingdoms “either for exercising their sway or even for their troops to pass through”.¹² Of course, the testimony by Evliya Çelebi about the military expedition into the depth of Georgia indicated that everything had

not been so perfect, as reported by the missionaries. There were cases of incursions and burglaries, rebellions, and peaceful coexistence, nevertheless, the Ottoman rule and domination in the Western Black Sea region was unchallenged. It would have been impossible for Evliya Çelebi to travel across the entire region from Trabzon to Caffa, if it had not been so.

In Abkhazia, which was located further to the North, the Ottomans explored and cultivated only a narrow strip of land on the seashore. The tribes that resided in the mountains were called “disobedient and rebellious” by Evliya Çelebi.¹³

9 M.Kh. Svanidze, “Georgia, Countries of the Black Sea Region and Eastern Europe in the First Half of the 17th Century” [in]; *Russia, Poland and the Black Sea Region in the 15th – 18th Centuries* (Moscow, 1979), p. 237.

10 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 3, p. 185.

11 A. Lamberti, “Description of Kolkhida” [in]; *Compilation of Materials for the Description of Localities and Tribes in the Caucasus*. Ed. 43 (Tbilisi, 1913), pp. 27-28.

12 Svanidze, “Georgia...” [in]; *Russia, Poland and the Black Sea Region...*, p. 238.

13 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 3, p. 108.

The Northern areas were penetrated into by the Ottomans from the side of the Crimean Peninsula.

Back in 1454 and 1475, the Ottoman Navy accomplished two marine expeditions to the Northern Black Sea region. The first expedition was, basically, a reconnaissance mission. As a result of the second one, the Black Sea trading positions of Genoa, that was an adversary of the Ottomans during the seizure of Constantinople and a rival in the fight for the benefits from the Asian-European caravan trade, were totally eliminated.

Caffa (Feodosia), that had been earlier the chief European trading post in the Crimea, was a Muslim city,¹⁴ according to Crimean Kahn Mengli Girey, and was subordinate to the central Ottoman imperial rule. In 1568, it became the center of the Eyalet set up in the region, which encompassed the South-Western Crimean Black Sea area, the Eastern Azov area, and the adjacent Northern Caucasus areas¹⁵.

The Baylerbay of Caffa was awarded the title of the Black Sea Defender (Karadeniz muhafızı).¹⁶ The Black Sea was eventually closed for foreign vessel navigation and was turned into the inner “Turkish lake”,¹⁷ as they said. The Crimean Khanate was transformed into a vassal of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸

Simultaneously with the conquest of the Crimea (in 1475-1479), the fortresses of Anapa and Kapa were taken under the Ottoman control in the Northern Caucasus. The Circassian (Adyghe) tribes in the North-Western Caucasus fell into dependence on the new authorities. The Pasha of Caffa ruled over the Taman and Adakhun areas (between Taman and Temryuk). The other tribes were considered to be under the aegis of the Ottoman Vassal of the Crimean Khanate.¹⁹

The relations of the North-Caucasian tribes with the Crimean Khans were built on the basis of personal vassalage of the tribal chiefs, which implied the execution of certain responsibilities. Thus, the Kabartay Circassian chiefs were

14 A.N. Kurat, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivindeki Altınordu, Kırım ve Türkistan Hanlarına Ait Varlık ve Bitikler* (Istanbul, 1940).

15 H. İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age (1300-1600)* (L.-N.Y., 1973), p. 106.

16 Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhîsü'l-Beyân Fi Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, Dr. Sevim İlgürel [ed.] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), p. 123.

17 H. İnalçık, *The Question of the Closing of the Black Sea under the Ottomans*. ArxcionPontou. 33. (Athens, 1974), p. 33.

18 Kirzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Ellerini Fethi*; A.M. Nekrasov, *International Relations and the Western Caucasus Peoples. The Last Quarter of the 15th Century-First Quarter of the 16th Century* (Moscow, 1990).

19 V.D. Smirkov, *The Crimean Khanate under the Rule of the Ottoman Porte. Vol. 1-2* (Moscow, 2005).

obliged to send Circassian captives each year to the Khan and his heirs - the Kalga and Nureddin, this was done to prevent the raids from the Crimean Khanate on their territories, i.e. the situation was similar to the one existing in Georgia, however, it should not be forgotten that the Circassians were regarded Muslims. Therefore, they were a closer sense of affinity between them and the new authorities. They participated in the Crimean and Ottoman military expeditions, while the Crimean Khans sent their sons to be trained by the Circassian Beys. This custom that was called Atalyk and it testified to a certain tribal dependence on the Khanate. A Turkish author of the 17th century, H. Hezârfen wrote, “to acknowledge their obedience, (the Circassian Beys) accepted them (the Khan’s sons) and brought them up until they came of age.” On the other hand, it also bore evidence of the Khans’ particularly respectful attitude towards the Circassian Beys. “After reaching adulthood, the Khan-Zade (son of the Khan) paid respect to his Atalyk teacher, in the same way as he did to his father. If the Khan-Zade who had been trained in this way was endowed with power from the Great State, he tried to make his Atalyk... richer than anyone else.”²⁰ Such relations, undoubtedly, heightened hostilities among the tribes, but helped the suzerain to somehow manipulate and manage them.

As for the fellow tribesmen, the tribal chiefs were their sole masters. It was also written by H. Hezârfen that the *reaya* (people) of tribes were the Bey’s “Myulk”. Myulk means absolute (full) ownership. For the Ottomans, same as for all of the Muslim communities, the use of this term in relation to people was not a typical practice. Consequently, that remote periphery of the Ottoman world was characterized by social relations that were very different from those pertinent to the inner areas of the Ottoman Empire.

Evliya Çelebi, who visited the Circassian territories in 1641-1643 and then again in 1666, described the local inhabitants as “rebels with an obedient appearance”.²¹ He also wrote about the ongoing Islamization of the region. Thus, under the reign of Crimean Khan Muhammed-Giray (1641-1644, 1654-1660), according to Evliya Çelebi, the Kabarda inhabitants “were honored to be initiated into Islam”, however, after the Khan was replaced, he (Evliya Çelebi) began to doubt the successful completion of Islamization. “Who knows what will happen there afterwards, but today... the Kabarda inhabitants have become Muslims.”²²

In the North-Western areas of the Caucasus, that were subordinate to the Caffa Eyalet, i.e. directly to the Ottoman administration, the Islamization had a more

20 Hezârfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhîsü'l-Beyân...*, p.172.

21 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 2, p. 26.

22 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 2, p. 85.

profound impact. Qadis (Muslim judges) were summoned there from Istanbul, and there was a Qadi justice system in place there. Meanwhile, the tribes, subordinate to the Crimean Khans, remained only superficially Islamized. Such a situation persisted throughout the entire Ottoman rule in the Northern Caucasus. Even in 1778, Janikli Ali Pasha, sent on a mission into the region by the Ottoman government, reported in his official communication: “There are not too many Muslims among the Circassians, however, while all the others intrinsically feel close affinity with Islam.”²³ Consequently, there were the same hopes as in the 17th century, however, no radical internal change was carried out. Administratively, the status of tribes was different. All the territory embraced by the Caffa Eyalet was deemed to be allocated to the Anatolia region of the Empire. Meanwhile, the Crimean Khanate was included into Rumelia. The Crimean Tartars could not enter the territories that were under the Caffa control, without obtaining a special permit.²⁴

In the early second half of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire tried to use the territories of the Black Sea region, Lower Volga river basin and the Northern Caucasus areas for the movement of its European Army troops across Transcaucasia to the Persian theatre of war. A military expedition to Astrakhan was accomplished precisely with this aim in view (1569). It was the first clash of the Ottomans with Russia, who had conquered Astrakhan in 1556. At that time, the Ottomans did not seek to continue their expansion into Eastern Europe. Their aim was merely to build a canal between the Don and Volga rivers, which would provide a waterway for them from the Crimea and the Balkan Peninsula to Iran. A considerable part of the Ottoman troops dispatched then to Astrakhan was made up of auxiliary forces, i.e., in plain terms, they were ditchers sent there for the implementation of the conceived project. A severe failure and huge human losses related not so much to Russia’s counteraction, but to harsh natural conditions - heat, lack of water,²⁵ diverted the attention of the Ottoman

23 P. Berzej, *Expulsion of the Circassians (Cause and Consequences)* (Maikop, 1998), p. 50.

24 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 2, p. 51. Also refer to A.N. Kurat, *Türkiye ve İdil Boyu (1569) Astarhan Seferi, Ten-İdil Kanalı ve XVI-XVII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1961); A. Bennigsen, “L’expédition turque contre Astrakhan en 1569 d’après les registres des ‘Affaires importantes’ des Archives ottomans” [in]; *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, V. VIII, N 3, 1967, pp. 427-446; T. Gökbilgin, “L’expédition ottoman contre Astrakhan en 1569”, V. II, N 1, 1970, pp. 118-123. For a different opinion regarding this event, please refer to; P.A. Sadikov, “Expedition of the Tatars and Turks to Astrakhan in 1569” [in]; *Historical Records*, No. 22 (Moscow, 1947), pp. 132-166; H. İnalçık, *Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei ve Don-Volga Kanalı Teşebbüsü (1569)*, Belleten 12/46 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1948).

25 A.N. Kurat, *Türkiye ve İdil Boyu (1569) Astarhan Seferi, Ten-İdil Kanalı ve XVI-XVII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1966); Bennigsen, “L’expédition turque contre Astrakhan en 1569 d’après les registres des ‘Affaires importantes’ des Archives ottomans”, pp. 427-446; T. Gökbilgin, “L’expédition ottoman contre Astrakhan en 1569”, pp. 118-123. For a different opinion regarding this event, please refer to; P.A. Sadikov, “Expedition of the Tatars and Turks to Astrakhan in 1569” [in]; *Historical Records*, No. 22 (Moscow, 1947), pp. 132-166; İnalçık, *Osmanlı-Rus Rekabetinin Menşei...*

authorities from the remote Northern periphery of the Empire. The North-East remained poorly explored in the administrative, economic and even religious and ideological sense.

Up until the late 18th century, i.e. until the loss of Crimea, the Ottomans had not deemed it necessary to reinforce that area. It had been considered their inherent property, calm and not in need of any efforts to build up its defense system because of its remote location from the major empire territories. Before, Grand Vizier Gedik Ahmed Pasha, who had led the military operations in the Crimea and in the Northern Caucasus in 1475-1476, ordered for the destruction

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of many fortresses in that area. The fortress of Anapa, for instance, was declared useless. In the mid-17th century, Evliya Çelebi wrote: “Today, it is a dilapidated fortress..., there is no one inside the fortress”, although it “is so beautiful as if it had been just finished by the consummate master of his craft”.²⁶

Taman, the place of stay for the Sanjakkbey and Qadi, was considered the main Ottoman fortress in the North-Eastern region of the Black Sea. It also accommodated a dizdar and 300 fighting men. In Tempyuk, there were 200 fighting men, and in a small fortress of Kyzyltash - 60 men.²⁷ In 1657 (in connection with

the Ukrainian events), Azov was referred to a separate Eyalet, where 1,894 fighting men were deployed.²⁸ For all intents and purposes, only Azov could represent a powerful military force. All the other fortresses, including Caffa with its 260 fighting men,²⁹ could only oversee the borderline Vassals.

In the early 16th century, a Cossack settlement oriented towards Russia emerged in the Fore-Caucasus. They built their first fortification in the delta of the Sunja River, a right-side tributary of the Terek River. This caused strong discontent with the Crimean Khanate. The Terek-based township featured prominently in the discussions with Russian Ambassador Ivan Novoseltsev, who came to Istanbul in 1570. The first round of negotiations focusing on the delineation of the zones of influences between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the Fore-

26 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 2, p. 51.

27 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 2, pp. 42-52.

28 Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân...*, p. 151.

29 Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân...*, p. 151.

Caucasus ended up with Russia yielding to the Ottoman pressure. At the behest of the Ottomans, the Cossack township was resettled to the delta of the Terek River (Terki or the Tyumen fortress).³⁰

In the 1580s, after the end of the Livonian War, Russia made an attempt at reclaiming the territory of the Lower Volga River Basin. Russian fortresses sprang up again along the Terek River. This time around, there were not merely Cossack settlements, but Russian troops with permanently deployed garrisons. The Persian Shah sent his diplomatic envoys to Moscow (1587), they delivered a proposal to forge friendly relations and an alliance to fight the Ottomans. The Crimean Khan demanded that the Russian fortresses should be removed from the Terek River, as they hindered the operation of the traditional Crimea-Derbent route. However, in 1594 and 1604-1605, the Russians accomplished two campaigns against the Dagestan Shamkhal, who was considered a most loyal ally of the Ottomans in that area. Both campaigns turned out to be a failure for the Russians,³¹ and Russia cancelled any attempts to move further into the Caucasian region. Moreover, it abandoned its positions earlier secured along the Terek River. As a result of the Ottoman-Safavid standoff in the region, the control over Dagestan and the Caspian Sea in the 17th century appeared to be in the hands of the Safavid Empire, while problems related to the Caucasus and Transcaucasia began to surface in the Russian-Ottoman relations only in the 18th century.

In the 17th century, Kabarda and some other Adyghe and Dagestani rulers tried to resort to the Russian patronage on multiple occasions, while stating their wish to accept allegiance to Russia. However, this did not mean (and Russia was fully aware of it) that they were willing to reconfigure the existing spheres of influence in any serious manner. At that time, Russia adhered to the same rules underlying the maintenance of relations that were generally practiced in the Caucasus. Shirt' (friendly, allied) credentials issued by the local rulers spoke of temporary relations only, they did not carry an implication that the vassal relations with other states and rulers would be terminated. The double (or even triple) vassalage of borderline tribes was acceptable for Russia and the Ottoman Empire as well. They did not intend to make a more stringent differentiation then. H. Hezârfe wrote about the Great Nogai tribes, who resided between Perekop and Azov, for instance, that they were obedient to the Crimean Khans, had participated in military expeditions under their command, but sometimes "had become Cossacks", which meant that they had refused to obey the Khan's

30 *Travelling by the Russian Ambassadors of the 16th-17th Centuries*, Lists for Articles (Moscow-Leningrad, 1954), pp. 63-99.

31 A.S. Shmelyov, "Russian-Dagestani-Ottoman Conflict in the Early 17th Century" [in]; *The Slavs and Their Neighbors*, Ed. 4 (Moscow, 1992).

orders. “They went to ask for mercy from the Moscow King and lived in his territory for a while, but then they returned to their previous dwelling place and stayed there”.³²

The Black Sea was totally closed for foreign vessels after 1592. Since that time, there had not been a single mention of it in the capitulation documents signed by the Ottoman Empire with the European nations.³³ The trade connections and economic activities in the region were part and parcel of the business routine of the Ottoman Empire.³⁴ Various regions of the Greater Black Sea Area and Transcaucasia maintained close ties with each other. In Trabzon, according to Evliya Çelebi, the most respectful segment of the city was “the merchants who traded with Azov, Cossacks, Megrelistan, the Abaz countries (Abkhazia), Circassians, the Crimea”. On top of that, Sinop was famous for carpet making, in Samsun, they weaved and exported hemp products etc. The entire seacoast specialized in ship building, and seafaring was considered a very honorary pursuit.³⁵

The trade and customs services were treated with utmost scrutiny by the authorities, and they were strictly regulated, like all activities in the Ottoman Empire. As for Eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia, a major role was attributed, as before, to Trabzon,³⁶ which had retained its high trading profile from the time of the Trebizond Empire. Trabzon, similar to the Samsun-Sinop region, was accorded a separate customs status, as a special area.

The ports in the South-Eastern Black Sea region served as an export channel for the products made in the deepest areas of Eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia, including rice, iron, cotton articles, wool, carpets, shipbuilding timber, nuts etc. Many transit products were imported from Iran along the Great Silk Road as well as spices and dyestuff from the Arab countries and India along the Anatolian Route.³⁷

32 Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyân...*, p. 172.

33 C.M. Kortepeter, “Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 86 (No.3, 1960), pp. 86-113; H. İnalçık, *The Customs Register of Caffa. 1487 – 1490* (Cambridge/Mass., 1996); H. İnalçık, “Bursa and Commerce of the Levant”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, N 3/2. Leiden, 1960; İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire*.

34 İnalçık, *The Customs Register of Caffa*; İnalçık, “Bursa and Commerce of the Levant”; İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire*.

35 Çelebi, *Book of Travelling*, ed. 3, p. 40; M.T. Gökbilgin, *XVI. Yüzyıl Başlarında Trabzon ve Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi*, Belleten 24/102 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1982).

36 Gökbilgin, *XVI. Yüzyıl Başlarında Trabzon ve Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi*.

37 İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 129-130; İnalçık, *The Customs Register of Caffa*, pp. 91-111.

In the 17th century, when trading with Iran was impeded due to the Iranian-Ottoman wars, the Ottoman vassals in the Eastern Black Sea region, who had been actively engaged in boisterous trading with the Crimea and Istanbul earlier, tried to handle the mainstream flow of transit merchandise themselves.³⁸

In the 1630-1640s, Prince Levan II Dadiani conducted diplomatic talks with a number of European nations with the aim of making the Iranian silk transportable to Europe through Georgia and the Black Sea. The plan seemed to be very attractive, as all of the silkworm breeding areas in Iran were located relatively in close proximity with the Black Sea coast. Silk could be transported through the Black Sea in 10-20 days. Further, it was supposed to be delivered to Poland and other European nations by using the traditional routes in Moldavia and the Balkans. The route through Ormuz and Aleppo was longer than that through the Black Sea, moreover, the further transportation across the Mediterranean Sea lasted for 2-3 months. A journey across the ocean lasted for 8-10 months. Prince Dadiani tried to negotiate the issue with Poland, France, Italian cities and the Persian Shah. To capture the fancy of merchants, Dadiani sold silk at lower prices.³⁹ Nevertheless, the Ottoman authorities offered

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no support to his plans. They did not want to change the traditional cargo flows within the country or the practice of imposing inner taxes, nor did they want to allow foreign merchants to enter those borderline areas of their Empire. The pretext for refusal was, in particular, the risks associated with the Zaporozhye Cossacks who had committed plunder and robbery in the Black Sea region. Indeed, in the late 16th century and in the first half of the 17th century, the Zaporozhye Cossacks were involved in plundering the coastal cities of the Southern, South-Eastern, Western, and Crimean Black Sea region. Sometimes, they even successfully fought sea battles with the Ottoman Navy. It happened that they had joined forces with the Don Cossacks (although in the 17th century, the Don Cossacks were largely occupied with the internal Russian affairs) and the Transcaucasian Aznaurs. Such robbery and plunder was the cause that led to the demise of the Black Sea region in the 17th-early 18th century, according to H. İnalçık and a number of European authors.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, the Cos-

38 *List of Embassies to Imeretia throughout 1650–1652 for an Article drawn by Alexander Ievlev* (Tbilisi, 1969).

39 Svanidze, "Georgia..." [in]; *Russia, Poland and the Black Sea Region...*, pp. 236-247.

40 C.M. Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism during Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus* (N.Y.-Leiden, 1972); İnalçık, *The Customs Register of Caffa*.

sack raids had a destabilizing effect on the trading activities and welfare of the inhabitants of the Black Sea region and deeper areas of the Ottoman Empire that were related to it (including the Caucasian and Transcaucasian areas). However, it should be borne in mind that not only the raids or the wars with Iran were the sole factors at work, but also the social, economic and political crisis that had affected the Ottoman Empire since the late 16th century.

All the above factors exerted their combined influence and led to the weakening of the Ottoman rule in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. The entire territory remained unexplored and poorly cultivated, not sufficiently fortified, poorly connected with the center, economically, socially and culturally isolated, which eventually had an impact on its subsequent fate.

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ON A BOOKLET DEALING WITH THE “RIGHTEOUS TURKS”

(“HAKKANİYETLİ TÜRKLER” ÜZERİNE BİR KİTAPÇIKLA
İLGİLİ DEĞERLENDİRME)

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Abstract: *This essay is devoted to the in-depth review of a booklet titled “Turkish rescuers. Report on Turks who reached-out to Armenians in 1915”, authored by sociologist Taner Akçam and journalist Burçin Gerçek. The booklet focuses on, as the authors put it, the Turks who have “displayed a conscientious attitude in 1915 through a variety of motivations and approaches.” Despite the booklet’s attempt at being perceived as a serious work on history, it is fundamentally inaccurate, failing to convince because of a non-scholarly use of sources; some are distorted, some are not used with the necessary precautions, and others are neglected. Furthermore, despite the authors attempt to frame the 1915 events as a genocide, nowhere in the booklet do the authors present a convincing case about a genocidal intent from the Ottoman central government and also about a fundamental contradiction between the positive actions of local authorities such as Celâl Bey and Faik Ali Bey on one side, the Committee for Union and Progress regime of the Ottoman Empire on the other side. As a result, this booklet cannot be considered as an example for proper historical research.*

Key Words: *relocation, Armenians, Celâl Bey, Faik Ali Bey, Cemal Paşa, Talat Paşa*

Öz: *Bu makale, sosyolog Taner Akçam ve gazeteci Burçin Gerçek tarafından yazılan “Turkish rescuers. Report on Turks who reached-out to Armenians in 1915” (“Türk Kurtarıcılar. 1915’te Ermenilere Yardım Elini Uzatan Türkler Hakkında Rapor”) başlıklı kitapçığı derin bir incelemeye tabi tutmaktadır. Yazarların tabiriyle, kitapçık “1915’te çeşitli hareketleri ve yaklaşımlarıyla vicdanlı bir tutum sergilemiş olan” Türklere odaklanmaktadır. Ciddi bir tarih çalışması gibi gözükme çabalarına rağmen, kitapçık aslında özünde hatalı bilgi ve beyanatlar içeren bir çalışmadır. Çalışma, kaynakların akademik kurallara aykırı bir şekilde kullanılmasından dolayı inandırıcılıktan da yoksundur; zira bazı kaynaklar çarpıtılmakta, bazıları gerekli açıklamalar yapılmadan*

kullanılmakta, bazı kaynaklar ise göz ardı edilmektedir. Dahası, yazarların 1915 olaylarını soykırım olarak yansıtmaya çabalarına rağmen, kitapçığın hiçbir yerinde Osmanlı merkezi hükümetinin soykırım yapma niyeti içerisinde olmuş olduğunu inandırıcı bir şekilde ortaya koyan savlar öne sürülmemiştir. Kitapta aynı zamanda Celâl Bey ve Faik Ali Bey gibi yerel yetkililerin olumlu davranışlarıyla, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti yönetimi arasında mühim bir tezat olduğunu inandırıcı bir şekilde ortaya koyan savlara da yer verilmemiştir. Tüm bunların sonucu olarak, bu kitapçığın düzgün bir tarihsel araştırma çalışması olarak nitelendirilmesi mümkün değildir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *sevk ve iskân, Ermeniler, Celâl Bey, Faik Ali Bey, Cemal Paşa, Talat Paşa*

This 74 pages booklet¹, devoted to the Turks who have “displayed a conscientious attitude in 1915 through a variety of motivations and approaches,” was released online in 2015 by the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation. This choice was particularly strange for an organization devoted to the study of the Holocaust and the saviors of Jews who proved their courage during that genocide. In other words, they went well beyond the limits of their mission. Quite regrettably, the main author is not a professional historian, but a journalist, Burçin Gerçek, and the “research supervision” was carried out by German sociologist Taner Akçam, whose fundamental dishonesty is now widely known in the academia, including among the historians sympathetic to the Armenian side of the Turkish-Armenian controversy.² The fact that a third person was needed for the “transcription of Ottoman archives documents” speaks volumes about the mastering of Ottoman language by the two other writers.

The surprise of the reader only increases with the quotation put in exergue of the text: it does not come from any historical source, but from a theater play written in 2011. The “genocide” claims³ are endorsed without discussion, and the authors nowhere provide their interpretation of the actual orders sent by the central government, forbidding killings.⁴ “If the Ottoman government really had ordered the massacres, why would it send confidential orders to provincial

1 Author: Burçin Gerçek, Taner Akçam and Ömer Türkoğlu, *Turkish rescuers. Report on Turks who reached-out to Armenians in 1915 (2015)*, available at: http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/wp-content/files_mf/1435335304ReportTurkishrescuerscomplete.pdf

2 See, among others, Maxime Gauin, “Review Essay — ‘Proving’ a ‘Crime against Humanity’?,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, XXXV-1, March 2015, pp. 141-157, http://www.academia.edu/11715403/Review_Essay_Proving_a_Crime_against_Humanity; by the same author, “A true or false story by Torossian,” *Daily Sabah*, 2 October 2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2015/10/02/a-true-or-false-story-by-torossian>; Erman Şahin, “A Scrutiny of Akçam’s Version of History and the Armenian Genocide,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, XXVIII-2, August 2008, pp. 303-319, <http://tc-america.org/files/news/pdf/Erman-Sahin-Review-Article.pdf>. Even a favorable reviewer recently wrote that the last chapter of *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity* (2012) is based on “evidentiary manipulations.” Kent Schull, “Book review,” *The Journal of Modern History*, LXXXVI-4, December 2014, pp. 975-976. I could not find a single person ready to defend Taner Akçam during the largely pro-Armenian workshop that took place at Zurich University from 28 to 31 October 2015. On the contrary, the comments I got at this occasion, from Donald Bloxham and Hilmar Kaiser, on my review essay, were positive. Correspondingly, I received by e-mail favorable appreciations from Margaret Lavinia Anderson and Ara Sarafian about my piece on Sarkis Torossian, but no answer at all from Taner Akçam.

3 On these claims, see, in particular, Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians. A Study in Counter-Insurgency* (New York-London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); and Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

4 For example the telegrams of the Minister of Interior to the governorates (vilayets) of Diyarbakir, Elazığ and Bitlis, 14 June 1915; to the governorate of Erzurum, same date; to the governorate of Elazığ, 26 June 1915, in Hikmet Özdemir and Yusuf Sarıay (ed.), *Turkish Armenian Conflict Documents*, Ankara: TBMM, 2007, pp. 107, 109 and 117 (hereafter *TACD*). Also see Stanford Jay Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, volume II, *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, 1978), p. 316.

officials instructing them to safeguard the lives of the Armenians during the relocations?”⁵ Correspondingly, Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam do not explain how they conciliate their theses with the 1915-1917 trials organized by the Ottoman state as a repression of crimes perpetrated against Armenians:

The biases are also obvious in the choice of both primary and secondary sources. The booklet refers to the archives of the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem, which are not open, even to Armenian researchers perceived as not sufficiently nationalist: It also relies on the archives of the Nubarian library in Paris. The author of this review essay was never allowed to work there, in spite of repeated demands in 2011 and 2012.

1,397 people sentenced, with a peak from February to May 1916.⁶ Even more remarkably, the crucial role of Cemal Paşa, number three of the Committee Union and Progress (CUP) regime from 1913 to 1918, who largely contributed to the relief for relocated Armenians,⁷ is almost completely ignored. Cemal's efforts for relocated Armenians is now accepted by historians who support the “genocide” charge,⁸ but the authors prefer to neglect this evolution of the historiography.

The biases are also obvious in the choice of both primary and secondary sources. The booklet refers (p. 51, note 194) to the archives of the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem, which are not open, even to Armenian researchers perceived as not sufficiently nationalist: “Partisan scholars have used these archives in their work, though their assertions cannot be checked.”⁹ It also relies (p. 5, p. 50, notes 186 and 188; p. 57, p. 61, note 241) on the archives of the Nubarian library (*Bibliothèque Boghos Nubar*) in Paris. The author of this review essay was never allowed to work there, in spite of repeated demands in

5 Jeremy Salt, “The Narrative Gap in Ottoman Armenian History,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, XXXIX-1, January 2003, p. 22.

6 “Turks Avenge Armenians—Fifty-one Muslim Soldiers are Shot for Mistreating Christians”, *The Washington Post*, 4 June 1916, p. A2; Kâmuran Gürün, *The Armenian File—The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (London-Nicosia-Istanbul: K. Rüstem & Brothers/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985), pp. 212-213; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915—What Happened to the Ottoman Armenians* (Ankara: TTK, 2008), pp. 82-87; Yusuf Sarıncı, “The Relocation (Teheir) of Armenians and the Trials of 1915–1916,” *Middle East Critique*, XX-3, Fall 2011, pp. 299-315.

7 Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and the Armenian Case in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Plymouth: University Press of America, 2012), pp. 68-79; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 196-198 and 218-220.

8 Hilmar Kaiser, “Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, XII-3/4, 2010, pp. 173-218.

9 “Study the Armenian Genocide With Confidence, Ara Sarafian Suggests,” *The Armenian Reporter*, 16 December 2008, <http://www.gomidas.org/press/show/14>

2011 and 2012.¹⁰ Correspondingly, the booklet recommends (p. 12, note 20) the discredited study of Vahakn N. Dadrian on the German role in the Armenian “genocide”¹¹ and uses nine times the more than questionable book written by the same Vahakn N. Dadrian and Taner Akçam on the trials that took place in İstanbul during the armistice period (p. 3, note 2, p. 15, note 35, p. 21, note 65, p. 23, note 73, p. 24, note 84, page 37, note 141, page 39, note 146, p. 52, note 199, p. 65, note 268).¹²

The case of Celâl Bey

The case of Celâl Bey, governor of Aleppo then of Konya, is the one presented with the most of details in this booklet. Nobody in Turkey will deny that Celâl Bey was good towards Armenians. In fact, one of the first, if not the first, book mentioning, as early as 1922, his positive role is sympathetic to the Turkish/Ottoman point of view towards the Armenian issue.¹³ As a result, pretending to re-discover the actions of Celâl Bey is hardly better than claiming to reinvent the wheel. The whole issue is: Were his actions in fundamental contradiction with the policy of the central government in 1915? If they were not, the thesis of the authors on Celâl Bey collapses and more generally the conclusions of their booklet are seriously undermined.

The core of the booklet’s reasoning in this regard is exposed on p. 14: “His [Celâl’s] departure was also the beginning of disaster for Armenians of Konya.” The only document provided to support this key allegation is presented as follows (p. 14, note 28): “Immediately after Celâl left, local authorities reported to the Ministry of the Interior that 10,000 Armenians have been deported from Konya in three days. BOA. DH.EUM.2.Şb. 68/92, 07/Z /1333.” By every aspect, this reference exemplifies the kind of unscholarly method shown throughout the years by Taner Akçam.¹⁴ Formally, the exact date and the nature

10 Maxime Gauin, “The Turkish-Armenian dispute: Who has something to hide?”, *Daily Sabah*, 14 October 2014, <http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/2014/10/14/the-turkisharmenian-dispute-who-has-something-to-hide>

11 On this point: Donald Bloxham, “Power Politics, Prejudice, Protest and Propaganda: A Reassessment of the German Role in the Armenian Genocide of World War I,” in Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik Schaller (ed.), *Der Völkermord and den Armenien und die Shoah* (Zurich: Chronos, 2002), pp. 213-244; Mary Schaeffer Conroy, “Book Review,” *The Social Science Journal*, XXXVII-3, July 2000, p. 481; Hilmar Kaiser, “Germany and the Armenian Genocide: A Review Essay,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, VIII, 1995, pp. 127-142.

12 In this regard: Ferudun Ata, “Ermeni Tehciri Yargılamaları (1919-1920),” *Yeni Türkiye*, n° 60, 2014, <http://haypedia.com/makale/Osman%C4%B1%20Tarihi/48ef29a5-d846-40d9-b1d4-5d8ad06d2bb4.pdf>

13 Jean Schlicklin, *Angora... L’aube de la Turquie nouvelle* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1922), p. 145.

14 “Akçam’s way of citing Ottoman archival materials denies his readers even basic information such as whether a mentioned document was a letter, an internal report or minutes from a meeting, or, crucially, the date of its writing.” Yücel Güçlü, “Kitap Tanıtma—A Shameful Act,” *Belleten*, LXXI/260, April 2007, p. 226 (also see p. 223).

of the document is not provided; it is not specified that his document was likely not found by any of the authors in the Ottoman archives, as it was published and translated years before the release of the booklet reviewed here. And much more importantly, it is misleading to present the content of the document in this way, as the full text proves:

“It is hereby reported that between the dates 13 October 1915 and 16 October 1915 a total of nine thousand and six hundred Armenians have been sent from Konya, *including those who have come from other stations*. Out of the total, two thousands and five hundred have been sent on foot and the rest by train.”¹⁵

Verification proves that the actual figure is not 10,000 but 9,600 and, more seriously, this figure is not made of Konya’s Armenians only. Out of these 9,600, only 1,990 were actually from the province of Konya.¹⁶ By comparison, the total population of Armenians in that province was about 16,808 (24,858 with the independent sancaks) at the eve of the First World War.¹⁷ As a result, it is safe to conclude that the overwhelming majority of the Armenians in Konya remained at home during the war. In these conditions, it is hard to call a “disaster” their fate after the departure of Celâl Bey. However, this is not the only problem regarding the way the Ottoman sources are used in the booklet reviewed here. Indeed, a telegram of Minister of Interior Talat Paşa, dated 13 October 1915 and published eight years before the booklet reviewed here, also orders the local authorities of Konya to protect the Armenians, and actually to be the order the previously quoted document answered:

“Ref. Cipher Message dated 10 October 1915. It is understood that the Armenians to be transferred to other places are being sent via the land route. Request provisions of their rest on their way and the necessary measures is taken to ensure their safety.”

And ten days later, Talat ordered the governorate of Konya:

“The Armenians being in other parts of the province shall be not moved and sent to other places unless an order to that effect is received from our ministry.”¹⁸

15 Telegram sent by the deputy governor of Konya to the ministry of Interior, 16 October 1915, *TACD*, p. 323.

16 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Facts on the Relocation of Armenians (1914-1918)* (Ankara: TTK, 2002), p. 102.

17 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities. The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York-London: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 80 and 110.

18 *TACD*, pp. 319 and 345. Also see the telegram of 10 July 1916, *ibid.*, p. 459.

It is difficult to understand how the authors could have missed these documents. It is more probable that they deliberately ignored them.

Ottoman sources are not the only ones distorted to “prove” a fundamental contradiction between the actions of Cemal and the policies of the CUP central government, particularly Talat. Indeed, also on p. 14, note 28, the booklet explains us: “Wilfred M. Post, who works with Dr. Dodd at the American hospital in Konya, tells that on the day of Celâl’s recall, a policeman came to his pharmacy and cried out of happiness: ‘We won!’” So one may assume that Dr. Post is a reliable source for Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam. As the result, they should explain how they conciliate their hypothesis of a “disaster” in Konya after the departure of Celâl with the final observation of the same Dr. Post: There were *more* Armenians in the province of Konya in 1917—namely when the relocation had stopped—than at the eve of the First World War, because “the number of exiles introduced to the vilayet is much greater than that of the emigrants [from Konya].”¹⁹ The conclusion of Dr. Post is in perfect conformity with the Ottoman document evaluating the number of Konya Armenians expelled from the province to be less than 2,000. Similarly, the report of the French Navy’s intelligence service on Konya emphasizes that the Armenians of this province never suffered at the hand of the Turks, either during the reign of Abdülhamit II, or during the Young Turks decade.²⁰

A last confirmation of the fact that the departure of Celâl Bey from Konya was actually not a “disaster” for the Armenians of Konya is the arrest of his successor, Ahmet Muammer Bey, by the British after the armistice. Muammer was sent to Malta, and so he was one of the former CUP officials about whom the British investigators failed, after trying for two years, to find any evidence for an involvement in crimes against Armenians.²¹

This misuse of Ottoman and American sources and the neglect of British and French archives are enough to refute the thesis of Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam in this part of their booklet; however it is possible to go further. Indeed, their claims are primarily based on the series of articles published by a former

19 O. J. Campbell, Report on the Vilayet of Konya, p. 8, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University (California), Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), U.S. territorial section, box 4. On Post and the Armenians in 1915, also see Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War and the Forced Migration of Armenians* (Belfast: Athol Books, 2011), pp. 197-203.

20 S.R. Marine, Turquie, n° 1351, 25 novembre 1919, Service historique de la défense (SHD), Vincennes, 1 BB7 235.

21 Letter of R. W. Woods, on behalf of the general prosecutor, to the Foreign Office, 29 July 1921, The National Archives, FO 371/6504/E 8745; Letter of Judge Lindsay Smith to the British High Commissioner in İstanbul, 24 August 1921, FO 371/6504/E 10023. Also see Bilal N. Şimşir, *Malta Sürgünleri* (Ankara-İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2008).

governor in *Vakit* at the end of 1918, after the armistice. Nowhere have the authors of the booklet asked themselves if writing in this context was not a way to distance himself from the CUP he had served for years. Similarly, they mention the fact that he served as governor of Adana in 1919-1920 and then joined the Kemalist movement (p. 14), but they do not discuss this part of his life as a proof of a particular talent for changing side at the right moment, and for the best of his personal interests.

Even more strikingly, the authors confess (p. 11, note 16): “There is no trace of the ‘secret and personal’ letter in the Ottoman Archives, like of other letters mentioned in the memoirs of Celâl.” Probably understanding that this fact would undermine the credibility of Celâl Bey, they continue by saying: “It is likely that some correspondence exchanged between Celâl Bey and the Ministry of Interior are in the Atase archives, which are accessible only to a limited number of users approved by the Turkish General Staff.” The reader will conclude himself what must be thought about the speculation regarding the presence in the Turkish *military* archives of “some correspondence exchanged between Celâl and the Ministry of Interior,” namely two civilian officials. The main point here is that the Ottoman military archives are actually open. In addition to Turkish historians, Harvey Broadbent, Gwynne Dyer, Edward J. Erickson, Benjamin Fortna, Hilmar Kaiser, Michael A. Reynolds, Philip H. Stoddard, and Tim Travers have worked here since more than fifty years.²² If Burçin Gerçek, Taner Akçam, and Ömer Türkoğlu had a real intention to fully verify the claims of Celâl Bey in his Memoirs, they would have worked in the military archives as well.

The worst speculation, however, is the following, in the same note: “A telegram evoked by Aram Arkun and mentioned in a publication of the General Staff suggests such a possibility [an alleged correspondence between Talat and Celâl in the Turkish military archives]. (Zeytun and the Commencement of the Armenian Genocide, Aram Arkun, in *A Question of Genocide, Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, Edited by Suny, Gocek, and Naimar [sic: Naimark], p. 393, Oxford University Press, 2011). This telegram without signature, which is in the Atase archives, points out – relative to the events in Zeitun - the need for the state to only punish the guilty and avoid ‘offensive and humiliating’ treatments to those Armenians about whom ‘there is no doubt and hesitation on their loyalty to the country.’ These lines - as the phrase ‘I released the delegate’ - have many similarities with what Celâl wrote in his memoirs.”

22 Yücel Güçlü, *Historical Archives and the Historians’ Commission to Investigate the Armenian Events of 1915* (Lanham-Boulder-Toronto-Plymouth: University Press of America, 2015), pp. 63 and 92-93.

This is a manipulation of the document, also present in a previous book by Taner Akçam. The actual content is different of what Aram Arkun, Taner Akçam and Burçin Gerçek claim:

“As I have received your telegram, dated March 14, 1915, this morning I did not have time to reply during the night. As far as I am concerned about the events in Zeytûn, the only information I have is limited to the martyring of several gendarme soldiers during a clash that broke out upon the attack of several people to the prison. *I do not have enough information* neither on the identities of the aggressors nor about the sources that led to the occurrence of the events. However, I am definitely of the opinion that the aggressors who attempted to violate the soldiers and dared to commit massacres ought to be punished with the heaviest penalties.

I have read one or two of telegrams, sent by the people of Zeytûn to İstanbul Armenian Patriarchate and to Sis Armenian Catechumenate, as shown by the censor officer. As far as I have gathered from those telegrams and from the Armenian delegate as well as from the notables here, the Armenians are in a great hurry. *They are claiming that* these events were incited by couple of discreditable people, and that all of the Armenian people were in fact truly loyal and devoted to the government. I believe that, punishing of the murderers and the aggressors will be sufficient for the sake of delicacy of the situation; however, we should pretend that we believe in *their so-called sincerity*.

Under the present circumstances, the holding of the Armenian notables and spiritual leaders in Maras, and Aleppo in pledge might lead to a misunderstanding that the government considers the Armenians residing in Zeytûn as accomplices, and this will eventually lead to a more severe sense of insecurity among the Armenians, and to a severe hatred and anger among the Muslims. At this point, when the major states, which used to defend them no matter the circumstances were, whether they were right or wrong, are struggling with their own problems, the wise Armenians will conceive the delicacy of the situation and evaluate the reasons of upheavals better, and therefore, I do not think that the Armenians will rise.

Nevertheless, all of these are nothing but my personal evaluations, right or wrong, as *I am not equipped with thorough investigations on the issue.*²³

23 *Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents* (Ankara, ATASE, volume I, 2005), pp. 71-73.

It is quite clear that Burçin Gerçek repeated here the distortion of this document by Aram Arkun and Taner Akçam, perhaps without having checked anything. Far from having taken the statements on Armenian loyalty at face value, this anonymous official (the one they believe to be Celâl Bey) expressed skepticism on “their so-called sincerity.” The author of the document indeed said he did not think “the Armenians will rise,” but crucial words are conveniently neglected: He was not in position to investigate the matter deeply. It should be added that another report describes the seizure of the gendarmerie’s armory, the cutting of the telegraphic line and the killing of Ottoman soldiers by Armenian insurgents of Zeytun.²⁴ At the end, the suppression of this rebellion costed the life of 500 Ottoman soldiers.²⁵

More generally, the quotes from Celâl’s series of articles written at the end of 1918, and translated in the publication reviewed here, far from giving a strong credibility to his testimony, provided evidence on his lack reliability. P. 15, the authors quote him the following way:

“The duty of the government is to arrest and punish only the guilty ones, and if that is not possible, to settle the Armenians of the region in other places but not in a hostile manner, in contrary, with a friendly approach and temporarily. A member of an armed band can do anything. Because he is a bandit. [...] But the government sues only those who have committed crimes. Unfortunately, the government leaders of that time never lost their “Committee” spirit, and implemented this deportation in such a way that the most daring and bloody bandits could not have imagined.

The government of that time said they had extended the deportation to Ankara, Konya and Eskişehir as a precautionary measure, claiming that the Russians were going to attack the Sakarya Valley and that Armenians were going to help them. At that time [...] we were able to control to a certain extent the Black Sea, through the war cruisers Yavuz and Midilli. In these circumstances, it was not possible for the Russians to land in the Sakarya Valley. Now, assume that their hypothesis was correct. Why Armenians of Bursa, Edirne and Tekirdag were deported? Were these places also part of the Sakarya basin?

24 Yusuf Sarıncay (ed.), *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni İsyamları* (Ankara, volume IV, 2008), pp. 105–108 and 113–115.

25 Yücel Güçlü, *The Holocaust and the...*, pp. 23 and p. 56, Note 20. Also see Gwynne Dyer, “Correspondence,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, IX-3, 1973, pp. 383–384.

What did they want from the Armenians of Aleppo, which represented less than the twentieth part of the population of the vilayet?”

The concern about a possible Russian landing at the Sakarya mouth was never a leading reason for the Armenian forced relocation in 1915 and Celâl feigns to ignore the main problem faced by the Ottoman Empire: As the Empire was now at war on several fronts, it was not possible anymore to mobilize big units, to find the insurgents and to eliminate them; the only remaining solution was to forcibly displace the Armenian population to prevent them from providing supply to the insurgents—a solution similar to the one used by the Spanish army in Cuba, the U.S. army in the Philippines, and the British army in South Africa.²⁶ Regarding Bursa (where more than 20% of the Armenian population was exempted of relocation²⁷), the concerns had obviously very little to do with a Russian landing on the Black Sea coast, and almost everything to do with the insurrectional activities of the Armenian committees of this province,²⁸ in the context of the Çanakkale (Gallipoli) battle.²⁹ In spite of these insurrections, no massacre of Armenians in Bursa is mentioned in the report of the French Navy’s intelligence service written in 1919 about that province.³⁰ Concerning Edirne, the claims of Celâl Bey about a general expulsion of the Armenians are simply wrong.³¹ Even more strikingly, the former governor of

As the Empire was now at war on several fronts, it was not possible anymore to mobilize big units, to find the insurgents and to eliminate them; the only remaining solution was to forcibly displace the Armenian population to prevent them from providing supply to the insurgents.

26 Note of Talat to Sait Halim Paşa, 26 May 1915, *TACD*, pp. 58-59; Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*; Kâmuran Gürün, *The Armenian File...*, pp. 186-210; Jeremy Salt, *The Unmaking of the Middle East* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 60-70; by the same author, “The Armenian ‘Relocation’: The Case for ‘Military Necessity,’” *Review of Armenian Studies*, n° 29, 2014, pp. 65-75, <http://www.avim.org.tr/uploads/dergiler/ras-29—1—pdf.pdf>; Stanford Jay Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I* (Ankara: TTK, volume II, 2008), pp. 859-931 and 1034-1069. It also bears noting that Taner Akçam himself, in his 528 pages book *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity* (2012) never mentions, even to contest it, a claim of the Ottoman government regarding a possible Russian landing at the Sakarya mouth.

27 Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians...*, p. 216. Also see the telegram of Talat to the governorate of Bursa, 17 August 1915, *TACD*, p. 215.

28 Telegram of Talat to the governorate of Bursa, 29 August 1915, *TACD*, p. 233; Aspirations et agissements; Stanford Jay Say, *The Ottoman Empire...*, p. 1073.

29 Edward J. Erickson, *Gallipoli: Command under Fire* (Oxford-New York: Osprey Publishing, 2015).

30 S.R. Marine, Turquie, n° 1504, 30 décembre 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 234.

31 Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War...*, p. 208; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of 1915. What Happened to the Ottoman Armenians?* (Ankara: TTK, 2008), p. 94; Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires. The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908- 1918* (New York-Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 149.

Aleppo seems to forget that, out of 22,000 Armenians in that city, only six or seven families were expelled during the First World War.³²

Correspondingly, Celâl Bey mirrored, at the end of 1918, the war-time propaganda³³ against his own country (quoted p. 16):

“When ordering the transfer of Armenians to Der Zor, did the government think how these poor people could survive without food and housing, among the nomadic Arab tribes? If they did, I must ask: how much food did they send in these regions? How many houses did they build for the immigrants’ settlement?”

Writing such questions, he deliberately neglected, not only the very difficult context of the Ottoman Empire (naval blockade, flow of Muslim refugees from the Caucasus³⁴) but also the money sent by the central government for the relocated Armenians and the authorization given to Americans, Germans and Swiss to improve this relief by their own efforts. The life in Der Zor was quite different than what was widely spread via caricatures -the main cause of mortality was, on the contrary, the second relocation, out of Der Zor, in 1916.³⁵ The role of Cemal Paşa in relief for Armenians has already been evoked at the beginning of this review essay, I will not come back to this subject.

32 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 191.

33 Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America. The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), pp. 158-248; Pat Walsh, *Forgotten Aspects of Ireland's Great War on Turkey* (Belfast: Athol Books, 2009), pp. 192-210.

34 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 54-62; Stanford Jay Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 992-1027; by the same author, “The Resettlement of Refugees in Turkey during World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, 1917-1923,” reprinted in *Studies in Ottoman and Turkish History. Life with the Ottomans* (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), pp. 463-499.

35 See, among other sources: Regulations dated 30 May and 7 October 1915, *TACD*, pp. 80-81 and 311-315; Telegrams of the Ministry of Interior to the governorate of Mosul, 9 June 1915 and to the governorate of Aleppo, 13 September 1915, *TACD*, pp. 93 and 263; Letter of Annie Allen to William W. Peet “16 September” (1915 or 1916), American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) archives, Harvard University, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Houghton Library, 16.10.1, box 8; Letter of Abram Elkus to Charles Vickrey, 5 October 1917, Library of Congress, manuscript division, W. Wilson papers, reel 337; Report of Consul Jesse Jackson, dated March 4, 1918, reproduced in Ara Sarafian (ed.), *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton-London: Gomidas Institute, 2004, p. 595; *Relief of Armenians. Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916, pp. 12-13; Kemal Çiçek, *The Great War...*, pp. 212-233; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of...*, pp. 73-80; Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 215-218. Also see the positive appreciation of governor Abdülhalik by Jesse Jackson as late as 1921 in the handwritten note of R. C. Lindsay (who spoke with Jackson) to D. G. Osborne, FO 371/6499/E 1445 (the note has not date, but the response of Osborne is dated 29 January 1921).

Diyarbakır

Besides the case of Celâl Bey, the issue of the forced relocations and massacres in Diyarbakır is one of the most present in the booklet reviewed here. As early as on p. 10, Note 13, a discredited legend is used, showing a deep contempt of the authors for their reader:

“Hüseyin Nesimi, Kaimakam of Lice and Ali Sabit, Kaimakam of Besiri, were assassinated because of their opposition to deportation and massacre orders.”

No source is provided for this very serious allegation. Taner Akçam previously presented the same charge, giving as reference the Memoirs of Nesimi’s son and accusing governor Mehmet Reşit to have ordered the murder of Nesimi.³⁶ This is a complete manipulation of the source, as explained five years before the publication of the booklet analyzed here.

“When Dr. Reşit was in Iraq and later during his governorship of Diyarbakır, many crimes were committed whose perpetrators could not be found. Most important among these were the murders of Ferit, the governor-general of Basra, Bedi Nuri, the lieutenant-governor of Muntefak, my father Hüseyin Nesimi, the prefect of Lice, and Sabit, the deputy prefect of Besiri and the journalist İsmail Mestan... It was impossible to carry out the relocation of Armenians with the Circassian gendarme units and with the members of the tribes of Bedirhani, Milli, Karakeçili who were actually the Kurdish militia. For this group was a cadre of pillage and plunder. Therefore, this group could not carry out the relocation and turned it into a massacre. And the elimination of the [administrative] staff who would oppose the pillage and plunder was inevitable.”

“Did Dr. Reşit give any order for the murder of my father? Or did this event occur without his knowledge? We can find the answers of these questions in Reşit’s memoirs... In these memoirs Dr. Reşit writes that he was extremely respectful towards my father and that my father had possessed the quality of rendering great services to the nation and that it was impossible for him to give any order for the murder of my father. Quite naturally I cannot be expected to have sympathy for Dr. Reşit, as my father was killed by a mobile gendarme regiment that was recalled

36 Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London–New York: Zed Books, 2004), pp. 173-174, and, by the same author, *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 196.

by this name. I have done research on Dr. Reşit. I have inquired about Dr. Reşit from his friends who had been in exile in Tripoli, where he was also in exile, and from other persons, especially from the governor of Tripoli, Celâl Bey, from Crete. Both the deceased Cami Baykurt and Celâl Bey had given testimony in his favor. I am of the opinion that Dr. Reşit was a well-intentioned, yet narrow-minded, person.”³⁷

The lack of footnotes is equally regrettable when the booklet explains, on p. 12: “They [members of Parliament Krikor Zohrab and Vartkes Serengulian] were then sent to Diyarbakir and murdered in an ambush by Ahmet the Circassian before reaching their destination.” The double assassination actually happened and one of the murderers is rightfully identified, but Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam does not say that the perpetrators were arrested, put on trial and executed, as early as 1915, and that Cemal Paşa, number 3 of the CUP regime, played a decisive role in the choice of death penalty.³⁸ Even more problematically for the “genocide” charge in general and for the claims of the booklet in particular, a telegram sent by Talat to the governorate of Konya on 9 September 1915 proves that the Minister of Interior was behind the choice of Cemal to supervise the punishment of the murderers:

“Ahmet from Siroz and his friend Halil have been sent to Konya today, to be prosecuted by the Military Court of the 4th army for the crimes of murdering Armenians and usurping their possessions. The said individuals should definitely not be permitted to escape and they should be kept imprisoned in Konya, until receiving the request and written note of Cemal Paşa in that regard.”³⁹

This document is devastating for the assertions of Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam regarding both Diyarbakir and Konya. That is probably the reason why they do not comment on it.

Another published telegram of Talat Paşa, this time to the governorate of Diyarbakir, is also carefully neglected in the booklet reviewed here:

“Previously it had been planned to have the Armenian convoys departing Urfa to follow the route of Resülayn and Nusaybin. However, the

37 Abidin Nesimi, *Yılların İçinden*, İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1977, pp. 45-46, quoted and translated in Erman Şahin, “Review Essay: The Armenian Question,” *Middle East Policy*, XVII-1, spring 2010, p. 152, http://www.turkishcanadians.com/wp-content/uploads/armenian_question.pdf

38 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, pp. 112-113; Yusuf Sarıay, “The Relocation (Tehcir)...”, p. 309.

39 *TACD*, p. 261.

convoys sent through the said route had to turn back due to attacks by the Arabs and the [Kurdish?] tribes. Therefore, it is considered that the convoys must be sent through the route via Siverek under all conditions. Necessary instructions to that effect have already been communicated to Urfa. Accordingly, when the convoys arrive there, they will not be made to turn back but be transferred to Mosul.”⁴⁰

It is actually quite difficult to conciliate the “genocide” charge, and so the thesis of Turkish “rescuers” who allegedly risked their life, with such orders sent from İstanbul.

In some cases, it is not even necessary to look for neglected documents. Especially on p. 27, the authors, who have praised sub-governor of Mardin Hilmi Bey explain: “After this date [July 1915], Hilmi Bey is appointed to Hakkari, Nablus, Malatya, Der Zor and Bayezid subgovernorships.” Nothing bad happened to him, as they explain, during the whole war. Once again, they fail to explain how they conciliate this fact with the charge exposed at the beginning of the booklet: “objecting to deportations and genocide that the Armenians were subjected to at this time was greatly risky too.”

Central and Western Anatolia

The goal of this paper is not to refute the booklet paragraph by paragraph, however, some other examples shall be provided, to show that the pages on Celâl Bey and Diyarbakir are not aberrations but typify this poorly written study.

Concerning the province of Kastamonu, the authors repeat a not so new claim of Taner Akçam and Vahakn N. Dadrian: “According to his testimony read in Responsible Secretaries of the Union and the Progress trial in 1919, Reşid Pasha received an official message ordering the deportation of Kastamonu by Bahaeddin Şakir. Because he refused to obey this order, he was called “The governor of not the Turks’ but of the Armenians”, and a short time later he was discharged from duty.” There is a series of problems which should prevent any serious historian to endorse this kind of argument:

- 1) The “testimony” was delivered on a written form only, and was never submitted to any cross-examination, like the other “testimonies” submitted to the 1919-1920 court martials;⁴¹

40 *TACD*, p. 357.

41 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres...*, p. 79.

- 2) The authors themselves explain us (p. 38) that Reşid did not repeat these claims in his Memoirs that were published after his death;
- 3) The “message” allegedly sent by B. Şakir was “signed ‘Head of the Special Organization,’”⁴² which is enough to discredit this claim. Indeed, if Şakir had in practice responsibilities in the Special Organization for eastern (not central) Anatolia, he was never the “head” of this elite unit and could not have signed any “message” with this title;⁴³
- 4) After the removal of Reşit, the Ministry of Interior repeated that there was no need to expel the Armenians from Kastamonu. On 1st September 1915: “The Armenians within the province shall remain.” On 28 September 1915: “At present, the removal of Armenians within the province is not necessary.”⁴⁴ And again on 23 October of the same year: “There is no need, for the time being, to remove the Armenians living in your province. However, legal proceedings should be carried out against the individuals in whose houses weapons have been found, and a register book indicating the types and the quantities of those weapons should be prepared and sent to the ministry.”⁴⁵ This telegram is another refutation of Celâl Bey’s post-war claims on the alleged refusal, by the CUP government, to distinguish between the guilty and the innocent.

Eventually, in 1916, a part of the Armenians of Kastamonu were “randomly distributed to the villages and districts where no Armenians or the people of other nations are living” to leave space for refugees “coming from the 4th Army region.”⁴⁶

Failing to find in the Ottoman archives any document ordering to expel or to kill the Armenians of Kastamonu, Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam use, in addition to this spurious “testimony” submitted in 1919, the book written by Grigoris Balakian. Not only the reliability of this book must be questioned because of the political fanaticism of the author, his selection of facts and his anti-Semitism,⁴⁷ but Ms. Gerçek and Mr. Akçam are equally selective in their choice of Armenian sources. Indeed, they allege (p. 37): “the province would stage the savage killings of majority of Armenians transferred from İstanbul

42 Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime...*, p. 416.

43 Yücel Güçlü, “Mislabeling Genocide?”, *The Middle East Quarterly*, XIII-2, Spring, 2006, pp. 67–68, <http://www.meforum.org/969/the-great-game-of-genocide>

44 Erman Şahin, “Review Essay: the Armenian...,” p. 159, Note 16.

45 *TACD*, p. 341.

46 Telegram of the minister of Interior to the governor of Kastamonu, 20 April 1916, *TACD*, p. 439.

47 Yücel Güçlü, “Book review,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, XX-4, Fall 2009, pp. 102-104.

to Çankırı.” Doing so, they neglect the testimony of an arrested Armenian who took the American citizenship under the name of Matthew A. Callender: “There never were any massacre of Armenians in Changri [Çankırı] while we were there for several months.”⁴⁸ The study of Yusuf Sarımay, based on Ottoman documents not used by Ms. Gerçek and Mr. Akçam, confirms that the majority of the Armenian arrested in İstanbul in April 1915 were not killed: out of 235, 19 were sentenced to death for betrayal and executed; one died in jail in 1918. Considering that the police found 19 Mauser guns, 74 Martini rifles, 111 Winchesters and 3,591 handguns (among other weapons), the charge of betrayal had a very concrete basis.⁴⁹

Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam’s use of sources on Ankara is at least as tendentious as on Kastamonu. At the beginning of their development on this province, they quote governor Mazhar as having said (p. 51):

“As you know, even though deportation process was started in some other provinces, I had not. Atıf Bey came, he announced the oral orders from the Ministry of Interior concerning the massacre and the extermination of Armenians during their deportation. I thought ‘No Atıf Bey. I am a governor, not a bandit. I cannot do that, I can get up from this chair, you can come and do it yourself!’ I said.”

And the footnote justifying this strange quote explains:

“Radi Bey’s testimony, transcribed into Turkish in Latin alphabet, from the fragments of archive on İstanbul trials investigations, which we found in Nubarian library. Select copies from Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate archives, Reel 3. The original of the testimony in Ottoman

Failing to find in the Ottoman archives any document ordering to expel or to kill the Armenians of Kastamonu, Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam use, in addition to this spurious “testimony” submitted in 1919, the book written by Grigoris Balakian. Not only the reliability of this book must be questioned because of the political fanaticism of the author, his selection of facts and his anti-Semitism, but Ms. Gerçek and Mr. Akçam are equally selective in their choice of Armenian sources.

48 Matthew A. Callender, “The Shock of Komitas,” *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 17 October 1959. I express my thanks to Yeşen Dursun for having found this letter to the editor.

49 Yusuf Sarımay, “What Happened on April 24, 1915? The Circular of April 24, 1915, and the Arrest of Armenian Committee Members in İstanbul,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, XIV-1 & 2, Autumn 2008, pp. 75-101, http://www.turkishcanadians.com/wp-content/uploads/april_24.pdf

is not present among the documents. There is no information as to when and by who the transcription was done, but “Armenian Catholic Community, New York” has been noted down onto inscribed papers.”

As already seen in the introduction of this review essay, such documents of the Nubarian library are not accessible for the researchers who do not agree with the “Armenian genocide” charge. However, the most striking in that footnote is the confession that the “original” is impossible to find, and that this copy arrived from the “Armenian Catholic Community [of] New York.” What historian could take such a dubious copy at face value? Not embarrassed by this question, the authors continue, at the same page, by explaining that Mazhar, after this alleged statement, received the proposition to become governor of Aleppo. If there was even a part of truth in this statement and if, as the authors assume without providing evidence, the goal of the CUP was “genocide,” how a governor who had expressed such views would be not only maintained, at the same rank, in the administration, but would be proposed as governor of a sensitive province like Aleppo?

A similar dubious allegation on Ankara is based (p. 52) on “accounts” by Armenian “witnesses” that Burçin Gerçek found in (or received from) the Nubarian library. Even if the “account” was freely accessible, and even if a verification would prove the summary to be accurate, a much bigger problem would remain. Indeed, this compilation of accounts comes from the “Fonds Andonian.” In other words, it is a part of the “testimonies” collected in 1919 by Aram Andonian (1875-1952), the same person who, at the same time, prepared his compilation of crudely forged Ottoman “documents,” published in 1920 with openly racist comments.⁵⁰ Bernard Lewis rightfully compared the false “documents” edited by Andonian to another forgery prepared with racist purposes, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁵¹ Any person familiar with oral history, and actually anybody with common sense, knows that the accuracy of a testimony largely depends on the way the person is interviewed. Andonian was hardly an impartial, or even honest interviewer, and himself he apparently did not regard his own work as impressive. Indeed, he never published the “testimonies” to promote Armenian nationalist claims, either in 1920 for the conference of San Remo, either for the conferences of London (1921 and 1922), or either during the negotiations of Lausanne (1922-1923).

50 On this point: Maxime Gauin, “Aram Andonian’s ‘Memoirs of Naim Bey’ and the Contemporary Attempts to Defend their Authenticity,” *Review of Armenian Studies*, 2011, n° 23, pp. 233–292; Jean-Louis Mattei, *Belgelerle Büyük Ermenistan Peşinde Ermeni Komiteleri*, Ankara-Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2008, pp. 261–284; Şinasi Orel and Sürreya Yuca, *The Talat Pasha telegrams: Historical Fact or Armenian Fiction?* (Nicosia/Oxford: K. Rüstem & Brothers/Oxford University Press, 1986).

51 Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans. Interpreting the Middle East* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 389.

This use of spurious sources is associated with an insufficient attention toward the Ottoman documents. For example, the telegram sent by Minister of Interior Talat to the governorate of Ankara on 29 August 1915 shows him trying to *protect* the Armenians of Ankara, instead of ordering their extermination:

"The Armenian issue pertaining to the Eastern provinces has been solved. Therefore, there is no need to harm the reputation of our nation and government by conducting unnecessary cruelties. Particularly the recent attack conducted on the Armenians at a place close to Ankara has caused great regret of the Ministry, considering its way of occurring, the obvious incompetence of the officials charged with supervising the transfer of Armenians, and audacity on part of the gendarmes and the local people who acted on their bestial instincts to rape and rob the Armenians. The transfer of Armenians, which is desired to be carried out in an orderly and prudent manner, should henceforth never be left to the individuals having fanatical feelings of enmity, and that the Armenians, whether or not they are subject to relocation, will be definitely protected against any assault and attack. At the places where such a protection could not be provided, the transfer of Armenians should be postponed. From now on, all of the officials in charge shall be held responsible with respect to their ranks for any attack, which may occur and shall be brought before the military courts. It is necessary to give very strict orders to the relevant personnel in this regard."⁵²

The threat of military tribunals by Talat Paşa was real. From 1915 to 1917, 32 Muslims were sentenced in the province of Ankara only for their crimes committed against Armenians.⁵³

Even clearer, regardless, is the failure of Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam to present a convincing case about Kütahya (p. 62):

"In Kütahya, which became an independent sub-governorship in May 1915, the most well-known conscientious attitude was that of Faik Ali Bey. In 1915, he would manage prevent the deportation of Kütahya Armenians without being attacked or risked his life, he also made sure that those who came from other provinces were able to stay in Kütahya.

52 *TACD*, p. 235. The question of this telegram and his manipulation by Taner Akçam have been exposed several times during the last seven years, most recently by Edward J. Erickson: "Book review," *The Middle East Journal*, LXIX-3, Summer 2015, p. 494.

53 Kâmuran Gürün, *The Armenian File...*, p. 213. For more information on the relocation from Ankara, see Taha Niyazi Karaca, *Ermeni Sorununun Gelişim Sürecinde Yozgat'ta Türk Ermeni İlişkileri* (Ankara: TTK, 2005), pp. 189-237.

[...] There is little information in the Ottoman Archives as to how he managed to do this exceptional resistance.”

Simple logic is already devastating for this way of reasoning. Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam had argued from the beginning: “An attitude of this sort meant being relieved of duty or being dismissed from a position as civil servant, and in some circumstances it meant risking death.” (p. 3). And now, they give us the example of a sub-governor who was “not attacked,” who did “risk his life,” in spite of his “conscientious attitude,” and they do not give any explanation on this contradiction. Moreover, this is not a surprise if “There is little information in the Ottoman Archives as to how he managed to do this exceptional resistance.” Indeed, there is no document in the Ottoman archives requesting the relocation of the Armenian community of Kütahya.⁵⁴ Trying to find documents to substantiate their claims about a “resistance” of sub-governor Faik Ali Bey, the authors quote (p. 62) three telegrams sent to Kütahya, but as the quotes they provide themselves prove, these telegrams are about Armenians from other provinces and sent to Kütahya. In other words, they have completely failed to prove any intention of the central government to relocate the Armenian community from this very province. This is not a minor issue, as this community counted more than 5,000 persons at the eve of the First World War,⁵⁵ as this province was not far from İstanbul, and as, to use the words of the authors, Kütahya “became an independent sub-governorship in May 1915,” precisely the month during which the law on forced relocation was adopted.

Concerning the Armenians relocated to Kütahya, and who were eventually not sent to Arab provinces, the authors show once again their penchant for selective quotes. Indeed, they write: “we see that in August 1915, the government began to worry about Armenians deported from other places gathering in Kütahya and remaining there for long a time. First, the Ministry of Interior reminded that ‘The Armenians arrived in Kütahya should be sent to Aleppo.’” Once again, the exact date of the document is not provided, however it is not difficult to find the full text:

“All the Armenians arriving in Kütahya shall be transferred to Aleppo. Any expense to be made for the Armenians shall be met from the Immigrants Fund. A money order of a hundred thousand kuruş is about to be sent for that purpose.”⁵⁶

54 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *The Story of...*, p. 91, n. 220.

55 Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities...*, p. 80.

56 Telegram of Suhbi, on behalf of the Minister of Interior, 19 August 1915, *TACD*, p. 227.

The reason of this omission is clear: Such an order is in formal contradiction with the claims of Celâl Bey (previously analyzed) and Taner Akçam on an alleged absence of care, from the Ottoman central government, toward the relocated Armenians.

The end of the booklet has an even slimmer basis. The example studied here is the one of İzmir (p. 65):

“French Marine [sic: Navy] Archives [more exactly the Intelligence service of the Navy] describe how Manisa sub-governor Tevfik executed orders only superficially and saved Manisa Armenians. In the same way, it was mentioned that Aydın Gendarme Commander Nuri tried to prevent the deportation. It was not possible for us to reach any other witness accounts or detailed information on their attitude.

Brigitte Balian with whom we met in Marseilles, expressed that her family was protected in İzmir by Tabbah Dede. Brigitte Balian’s grandfather had a pharmacy in İzmir. Tabbah Dede was an acquaintance of the family. In front of their house, Tabbah Dede announced that no one could touch that family unless they trampled over his body.”

The first paragraph is not based on any research in the French military archives at Vincennes, but are a pure and simple repetition of Raymond Kévorkian’s claims. Due to a technical, temporary problem, I could not check the accuracy of Mr. Kévorkian’s summary. However, another report of the French Navy’s intelligence service observed in 1920 that the Armenians of İzmir had no serious problems with the Turks, “even during the war,” without attributing this difference with eastern Anatolia to any “rescuer” who would have bravely opposed the CUP regime.⁵⁷ Concerning more precisely the city of Ödemiş, the same intelligence service explained in 1919 that the Armenians “prospered even, during the war, because *they were not molested*” (emphasis in the original). Once again, the report does not try to explain this absence of molestation by any “rescuer.”⁵⁸

Regarding now the allegations of Brigitte Balian, it must be noticed that the interview with her took place in 2014, that she was not a witness of the events during the war, and that she could not provide any evidence. Any serious study on the Armenians in İzmir during the First World War should consider first the correspondence between governor Rahmi Bey and the central government.

57 S.R. Marine, Turquie, 16 décembre 1920, SHD, 7 N 3211.

58 S.R. Marine, Turquie, n° 833, 14 juin 1919, SHD, 1 BB7 232.

Rahmi was praised by French, British and American citizens for his actions during the war,⁵⁹ including as far as the Armenians of his whole province were concerned.⁶⁰ Preferring the allegations of a person who was not even born in 1915 to a work in the relevant archives speaks volume on the scholarly level of this booklet.

Conclusion

As we could expect from a research supervised by German sociologist Taner Akçam, this booklet is fundamentally inaccurate, failing to convince because

As we could expect from a research supervised by German sociologist Taner Akçam, this booklet is fundamentally inaccurate, failing to convince because of a non-scholarly use of sources: Some are distorted, some are not used with the necessary precautions, and others are neglected.

of a non-scholarly use of sources: Some are distorted, some are not used with the necessary precautions, and others are neglected. Nowhere in the booklet do the authors present a convincing case about a genocidal intent from the central government and about a fundamental contradiction between the positive actions of local authorities such as Celâl Bey and Faik Ali Bey on one side, the CUP regime on the other side. Orders from İstanbul and punishment of perpetrators in 1915-1917 prove an intention to relocate *a part* of the Ottoman Armenian population, for security reasons, without giving any license to

kill innocents. Neglecting the perfectly well documented actions of Cemal Paşa in favor of Ottoman Armenians, Burçin Gerçek and Taner Akçam even failed to attain the level of sophistication attained by the most subtle supporters of the “Armenian genocide” charge—namely people who graduated in history instead of sociology or journalism.

As a result, this booklet cannot be considered an interesting contribution to the historiography, even a flawed one, but an example favoring prejudice and pre-conceptions over scholarship.

59 Pétition de notables français, britanniques et américains en faveur de Rahmi Bey, 8 février 1919, Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes, 36 PO/1/42, dossier Smyrne.

60 Letter of Charlton Whittal to General Townshend, 10 February 1921, FO 371/6499/E 2265.

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France

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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, Palabiyk 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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