

# APPROACH OF THE TURKISH PRESS TO THE ARMENIAN TERRORISM BETWEEN 1973 AND 1984

(1973 VE 1984 YILLARI ARASINDA  
TÜRK BASINININ ERMENİ TERÖRÜNE YAKLAŞIMI)

Hazel ÇAĞAN

Specialist,

The Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)

hcagan@avim.org.tr

**Abstract:** *This study aims to examine how Turkish newspapers approached the Armenian terrorism which emerged in the years between 1973 and 1984 as the third wave of Armenian terrorism since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenian terrorist organizations officially emerged in the third wave again, in 1975 in order to show the world their claims in terms of the so-called Armenian genocide, assassinating Turkish diplomats, including ambassadors and their families, in a planned and systematic fashion within these 11 years. Along with the accelerated Armenian terror, domestic terrorism and political disorder were the other developments in Turkey. Within the context of such difficulties, the extent of Armenian terrorist activities and the changes in the politically varied Turkish newspapers' regarding Armenian terrorism between 1973 and 1984 are examined thoroughly.*

**Keywords:** *Armenian question, Armenian terrorism, Turkish press, Turkish diplomats, ideological cleavages.*

**Öz:** *Bu çalışmada, 1973 ve 1984 yılları arasında, 19. Yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren zaman zaman patlak veren Ermeni terörünün 3. dalgasının yeniden ortaya çıkışı ve bu terör faaliyetlerinin Türk gazeteleri tarafından gündeme getiriliş biçimi ele alınmıştır. Resmi olarak 1975 yılında ortaya çıkan Ermeni terör örgütleri, Ermeni soykırım iddiaları konusunda haklı olduklarını bütün dünyaya duyurmak için, aralarında büyükelçilerin de bulunduğu, Türk diplomatlarını ve aile fertlerini 11 yıl boyunca sistemli ve planlı bir şekilde katletmişlerdir. Ermeni terörünün yoğun bir şekilde yaşandığı bu dönemde, ülke içindeki siyasi karışıklıklar ve terör faaliyetleri de yoğun bir şekilde devam etmiştir. Tüm bu gelişmeler yaşanırken, Ermeni terör saldırılarının bu 11 yıllık dönemde siyasileşmiş Türk gazeteleri tarafından mevcut ideolojik ayrılıkların yaşandığı bir dönemde, Türk halkına ne kadar sağlıklı bir biçimde aktarıldığı ve Türk basınının Ermeni sorununa yaklaşımındaki değişim mercek altına alınmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ermeni sorunu, Ermeni terörü, Türk basını, Türk diplomatlar, Türk gazeteleri, ideolojik ayrılıklar*

## Introduction:

In the period between 1973 and 1984, Turkish diplomats were assassinated by Armenian terrorists in 18 different cities<sup>1</sup> all over the world. The world press closely followed developments about the Armenian terrorist attacks against Turkish diplomats as well as Turkish press coverage of these events.

It was three times that the Armenian terrorism was experienced in history. Turkey faced the first period of Armenian terrorism in the late 19th century. Armenians and Turks lived in peace for nearly four hundred years until Tsarist Russia invaded the Caucasus and the relationship between the Armenians and the Turks began to deteriorate after the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman War<sup>2</sup> as Russians made use of Armenian secret organizations and political parties. Shortly after the Russo-Ottoman War, an Armenian union was formed under the name of “Black Cross” and attacked Muslims and Armenians in Van and the surrounding area.<sup>3</sup> The rebellions started with Sassoun rebellions in 1894 by Hamparsum Boyacıyan with the promise of English support for the rebellious Armenians.<sup>4</sup>

In the beginning of the First World War, the second period of Armenian terrorism started with the second Zeitun rebellion in 1914.<sup>5</sup> British, French and Russian troops again cooperated with the Armenians and they tortured Muslims as well as Armenians in Anatolia.<sup>6</sup> The well-known “Armenian atrocities” were actually a part of Armenian terrorism.<sup>7</sup> Armenian terrorism continued even after the end of World War I, until Turkish armed forces secured these places towards the end of 1920.<sup>8</sup>

This research aims to investigate the position of the Turkish press regarding Armenian terrorism and the multi-vocal Turkish press which existed in the 1970s will be examined in relation to Armenian terrorism. The answers to questions such as to what extent Turkish press was able to understand, analyze and reflect the seriousness of the Armenian challenge to Turkish public opinion; whether the Turkish press was able to develop a common stance in relation to such a national question and if the political divisions in the domestic political arena in this period affected the capabilities of Turkish press in truly comprehending Armenian terrorism targeting Turkey abroad will be discussed.

1 Ömer Engin Lütem, *Armenian Terror*. Ankara: Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, 2008, p. 8.

2 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p. 8.

3 Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983, p. 129.

4 Ömer Karayumak, *Ermeniler, Ermeni İsyanları, Ermeni Katliamları*. Ankara: Vadi Yayınları 2007, p.172.

5 Karayumak, *Ermeniler, Ermeni İsyanları, Ermeni Katliamları*. p. 187.

6 Karayumak, *Ermeniler, Ermeni İsyanları, Ermeni Katliamları*. p. 232.

7 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p. 12.

8 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p. 12.

In the years between 1973 and 1985, Turkish diplomats began to be victimized as a result of Armenian terrorist attacks and Turkish newspapers were divided according to their political affiliations. Even if a terrorist attack was a national problem and hence required a united front to cope with it, the political division among central left and central right parties was so severe that a newspaper was even capable of using the news on Armenian terrorist attacks to accuse others with opposite political views of being part of these attacks. Such a division stemmed from the nature of the Turkish political scene of the period. From 1973 to 1980, the government mainly oscillated between the Republican People's Party (RPP – Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), whose leader was Bülent Ecevit, and the Justice Party (JP – Adalet Partisi), whose leader was Süleyman Demirel<sup>9</sup>, in addition to major political actors such as Alparslan Türkeş of the National Movement Party (NMP – Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi). Moreover, Turkey had experienced short-lived coalition governments and technocratic rule in this period. The newspapers were so blinded by their political tendencies that they were not in a position to grasp and sufficiently analyze the developments about Armenian terrorism. They focused intently on their political battles against each other.<sup>10</sup>

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After 12 September 1980, publications were banned and a state of emergency was declared.<sup>11</sup> According to the amendments in the Press Law, the articles became harsher. The penalties were increased from 5.000 to 150.000 Liras.<sup>12</sup> Especially in between 12 September 1980 and 12 March 1984,<sup>13</sup> the implementations of the law became severe. For instance, *Cumhuriyet* was closed four times, for 41 days; *Milli Gazete* was closed four times for 72 days; *Tercüman* was closed for 29 days; *Milliyet* was closed for 10 days and *Hürriyet* was closed two times for 7 days.<sup>14</sup>

Turkish press was in a very politically divided period as it faced Armenian terrorism. As the newspapers were very much linked to Turkish political parties and ideologies, journalism was shaped by these political parties and ideologies. Kabacalı expressed the link between the political parties and the newspapers, “At first, it can be seen that diversity of thoughts and the defense of all kinds

9 Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p. 39.

10 Salih Bayram, “Political Parallelism in the Turkish Press, A Historical Interpretation”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No.4, 579-611, December 2010, p. 587.

11 Hıfzı Topuz, *II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003. p. 263.

12 Topuz, *II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi*. p. 262.

13 Topuz, *II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi*. p. 259.

14 Topuz, *II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi*. p. 259.

of aspects may indicate the existence of a democratic context; it is possible to mention only a “dialogue of the deaf” for the rest of the publications except for the high-circulation newspapers share their opinion with the similar quarters. It is apparent that the reason is political polarization.”<sup>15</sup> According to Kabacalı’s analysis, the clash of contradicting thoughts demolishes the democratic system, rather than strengthening it. Kabacalı summarized the transition from the politicized political period before 1980 to the depoliticized period after 1980 in his work. The confusion and lack of experience among Turkish newspapers transformed national news like Armenian terrorism into tools of domestic political competition. Until the newspapers began to comprehend these issues as a national question, this competition carried on.

The best-known Armenian terrorist organization in Turkey was ASALA. ASALA is the abbreviation of *L’Armée secrète arménienne de libération de l’Arménie*, or Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia.<sup>16</sup> After the terrorist attacks, the Turkish press perceived these various terrorist groups as branches of the ASALA. Although the attacks against Turkish diplomats started in 1973, the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA became well-known with the assassinations of Daniş Tunalıgil and İsmail Erez<sup>17</sup> in 1975. Only after these assassinations did Turkish public opinion and the Turkish government realize that these assassinations were supported and financed by other groups and countries.<sup>18</sup> It is not sufficient only to give information about ASALA while talking about the Armenian terrorism. There were some other Armenian terrorist groups which prepared attacks in Turkey and in many states. The reason behind Armenian terrorism was to express the claims of Armenians about the events of 1915, and bring forward their political and economic demands from Turkey, which was taken as the direct heir of the Ottoman State. Even though the Armenian terrorist groups were considered the same, these terrorist groups were classified into two main groups. These groups are Hinchaks and Tashnaks, and they have the same ultimate goal for Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora. However, Hinchaks and Tashnaks are in struggle in terms of ideologies. Hinchaks follow the Marxist-Leninist ideology and Tashnaks adopted right-wing principles.<sup>19</sup> The first attack on Mehmet Baydar and Bahadır Demir in Los Angeles was committed by Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan, who apparently was incited by Tashnaks to commit the crime.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand,

15 Alpay Kabacalı, *Türk Basınında Demokrasi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Milli Kütüphane Basımevi, 1994. p. 324.

16 Bilal Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız-2*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2000, p. 17.

17 Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız-2*, p. 18.

18 Michael Gunter, “Transnational Sources of Support for Armenian Terrorism.” *Conflict Quarterly*, 5, Fall 1985. p.31. [Online]. <https://www.google.com.tr/url?sa=t&rc=tj&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCsQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fjournals.hil.unb.ca%2Findex.php%2FJCS%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F14692%2F15761&ei=6AVUrPWPKf8ygPQuYLQBA&usq=AFQjCNFbTwPQyL9bwhPUjQfKcMq0iBZ2hQ&sig2=I2TWJtFbFINWYwK4nIA&bvm=bv.57155469,d.bGQ> [11.06.2011].

19 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p. 9.

20 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p. 19.

the infamous ASALA was founded by leftist-Hinchak supporters and followed leftist principles. The less well-known Armenian terrorist organization Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) was right-wing and was supported by Tashnaks. While most of the attacks were committed by leftist Armenian terrorist group ASALA and there were attacks by JCAG too. One of the attacks by JCAG was on Administrative Attaché Bora Suelkan in Bulgaria, an Eastern Bloc<sup>21</sup> country, in September 9, 1982. The ideological struggle between leftist ASALA and JCAG ended whenever they united against Turkish diplomats and Turkish foreign diplomacy. Their ultimate goal eliminated their ideological clash.

### Terrorism and Division in the Turkish Press (1973-1980)

Armenian terrorism was exacerbated when Consul General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir were murdered by an Armenian in Santa Barbara, California, 1973.<sup>22</sup> These first two assassinations could not have been identified as a part of an organized attack by Armenian organizations, but it evolved in the years to follow and by the mid-70s, Turkey had started to grasp the seriousness of a well-organized and efficient world-wide international terrorist network.

A 77-year-old American citizen professing to be of Iranian origin made an application to Turkey's Consulate General in Los Angeles to donate a painting which had been stolen from the Ottoman palace and a souvenir banknote to the Turkish Republic.<sup>23</sup> The Consul General Mehmet Baydar in Los Angeles arranged an appointment to meet the old man. Two Turkish diplomats, Consul General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir went to the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara in order to be closer to Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan as they had decided. Nevertheless, they did not foresee the exact purpose of the old American man. The old "Iranian-American" prepared two guns for his victims in order to shoot them. The two Turkish diplomats were shot by Yanıkyan in January 27, 1973 in Santa Barbara and both died.

The real identity of the murderer was revealed after the incident. He was an Armenian-American, Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan. This attack was definitely a shock both for the US and Turkey. As a result of this unprecedented event, Turkish newspapers could not conceal their denunciation of the negligence of the United States and Diaspora Armenians. The assassinations were covered

21 "Süelkan Doğu Bloku'nda Öldürülen İlk Diplomamız Oldu." *Son Havadis*, 10 September 1982.

22 Bilal Şimşir, *Ermeni Terörü ve Tehdit: Türk Diplomatları Üzerine Bazı Tespitler*, Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri, Cilt II, Ankara:2007, p. 399.

23 Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız* – I, p. 83.

widely by the Turkish press, and the press published all details about the incident.

Two days after the attack, newspaper *Akşam* published a front page item with a huge title “Our Two Consuls Were Killed in the USA”<sup>24</sup> and the subheading of the news continued, “Armenian Grudge Arose Again”.<sup>25</sup> Although this title and content of the article accused the “Armenians” of murdering the Turkish diplomats, no Armenian group accepted this accusation. However, in the following days a group appeared under the name of “soldiers of Gourgen Yanıkyan”<sup>26</sup> and gave an impression that the assassinations were not simple isolated events.

The titles of the related news encapsulated the reaction towards the attack. On the one hand Yanıkyan was described as “Despicable Assassin”<sup>27</sup>, on the other hand the newspaper questioned the power behind him: “Who enraged the insidious Armenian?”.<sup>28</sup> However, *Akşam* also published the statements of the Armenian Patriarch in Turkey in its front page under the title of “The Attack Created Hatred”.<sup>29</sup>

A few days after the incident, the American police found the letters written by the murderer Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan. Yanıkyan in these letters explained how he nurtured hatred against Turkey and by the assassination he had taken the revenge of his ancestors who had been killed in 1915. Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan claimed in court that he was not guilty and repeated that he had taken revenge for his slain ancestors who had been murdered by the Ottomans/Turks. *Akşam*, which covered these letters and Yanıkyan’s defense in the court, suggested that in fact Yanıkyan planned these murders, in all these years he spent in the USA, and strove to commit atrocities.<sup>30</sup>

*Son Havadis* was the most nationalistic newspaper among the newspapers analyzed in this study. *Son Havadis* gave the news about the first incident in the US with the title of “An Armenian Murdered Our Two Diplomats in Los Angeles”<sup>31</sup> on 29 January. The next day, *Son Havadis*’s caption read as: “Attempts of the US government for the security of our representatives”<sup>32</sup>

24 “Amerika’daki İki Konsolosumuz Öldürüldü -Ermeni Kini Yine Hortladı” *Akşam*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

25 *Akşam*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

26 Francis P. Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism The Past, The Present, The Prospects*, San Francisco: Oxford, Westview Press, 1991. p. 19.

27 “Alçak Kaatil! [sic]” *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

28 “Hain Ermeni’yi Kimler Kudurttu?” *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

29 “Ermeni Patriği: Olay Nefret Yarattı” *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

30 “Yanıkyan Masum Rolüne Büründü” [“Yanıkyan pretends as if he was innocent.”] *Akşam*, 1 February 1973, p. 1.

31 “Bir Ermeni, Los Angeles’ta İki Diplomatomızı Öldürdü” *Son Havadis*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

32 “Temsilcilerimizin Emniyeti İçin Teşebbüse Geçildi” *Son Havadis*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.



Nevertheless, this attempt for the security of our diplomats would rewind several times in the following years. On the 30th of January, *Son Havadis* published further details about the murderer Yanıkyan. Among these details, Yanıkyan's marriage to a Russian woman was highlighted as a caption on the front page.<sup>33</sup> *Son Havadis*'s special emphasis on such a minor detail was a deliberate attempt of this politically right-wing newspaper to imply a possible Soviet or communist conspiracy in relation to these assassinations. Nevertheless, the rest of the newspapers did not mention the Russian connections of Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan. In the following days, *Son Havadis* also provided the information about Turkish society's cancellation of the dinner organized by the Turkish-Armenian society in Los Angeles.<sup>34</sup> As a result of the lack of the flow of information in Turkey, Turkish people merely reacted against the USA. However, the US was not the only country which formed a base for the Armenian attacks. The connection among Armenian Diaspora, the US and the Soviet Union was underestimated by the Turkish press. Thus, the inadequate transformation of the intelligence on the first Armenian attack in 1973 started to damage Turkey's image.

The political struggle among the newspapers prevented them from researching and transmitting information clearly to Turkish society. For example, *Son Havadis* was affiliated with Süleyman Demirel's JP<sup>35</sup>, which was in opposition in that period.<sup>36</sup> Hence it gave Demirel's condemnation of the terrorist attack its front page.<sup>37</sup> What is more interesting is that *Son Havadis* only provided Demirel's statements about the murders. So, this one-sidedness did not let newspapers like *Son Havadis* transmit the news as it was. *Son Havadis* continued to follow the case of Yanıkyan in the following days and reported that in his defense, Yanıkyan had urged the Armenians to act everywhere as he did in Los Angeles.<sup>38</sup> *Son Havadis* also reported that Yanıkyan claimed he was not guilty but the judge refused the demand of release.<sup>39</sup>

The emotional editorial front page of *Son Havadis* published on 31st January, 1973 provides important clues about the standpoint of the newspaper vis-à-vis the Armenian terrorism:

33 "Katil Ermeni Bir Rus Kadımla Evli" ["Assassin Armenian had been married to a Russian lady."] *Son Havadis*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

34 "Türk Cemaati, Los Angeles'taki Türk-Ermeni Derneği Yemeğini İptal Etti" ["Turkish side in Los Angeles cancelled the supper in Turko-Armenian Council"] *Son Havadis*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

35 Kabacalı, *Türk Basınında Demokrasi*, p. 324.

36 <http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/pCabinetRoot.aspx> [01.12.2012].

37 "Demirel: Cinayeti Nefretle Karşıladık" ["Demirel: We Condemn The Assassination with Hatred"] *Son Havadis*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

38 "Katil, 'Ermeniler Her Yerde Bu Taktiği Uygulamalı', diyor." ["Yanıkyan has told that Armenian should apply this method everywhere."] *Son Havadis*, 31 January 1973, p. 1.

39 "Yargıç, Kaatilin [sic] Serbest Bırakılması Talebini Reddetti" *Son Havadis*, 1 February 1973, p. 1.

Our newspapers are interpreting the hideous assassinations as “a new view of enmity against Turks”. As usually, this is a quick judgment taken feverishly. In our opinion, it is wrong to evaluate this incident as a fanatical revenge attempt of a furious Armenian. It is inconceivable for a psychopathic Armenian who interpreted the historical Turkish-Armenian relationship in a wrong way, waited until his seventy to take revenge by killing two Turks by chance.<sup>40</sup>

*Son Havadis*, in its news on the burial of the two diplomats, referred to Yanıkyan as “a Maniac Armenian”, a description in the Editorial quoted.<sup>41</sup>

*Son Havadis* did not simply provide intelligence or views on the current murders, but also focused on the historical roots of the Armenian enmity towards Turks. Kemal Bingöl in his column “Fikir Meydanı” questioned how people could be so cruel and build their relations on atrocity. According to Bingöl, the brotherhood between Turks and Armenians had been damaged. Bingöl, who was from Erzurum, directed the attention of his readers to the fact that Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan was also born in Erzurum, and condemned the seeds of hatred planted between these two ethnic groups.<sup>42</sup>

*Son Havadis*, nine days after the assassinations, published an article written by Armenian origin Turkish citizen Torkom İstepanyan. *Son Havadis*’s giving a space for this author was related to the fact that İstepanyan openly expressed his feelings of belonging to Turkish nation and pointed out the strong link between the Armenian statesmen and the Ottoman Empire through his publications in the following years.<sup>43</sup> İstepanyan began his article with a quotation from *Ansiklopedia Americana*, claiming that “In 1915, the ‘Turkish’ government, because of the fear of Russian invasion of ‘Turkey’, decided to solve the Armenian question and massacred the Armenians and forced women and children to convert to Islam.”<sup>44</sup> İstepanyan says in his article that the

40 “Başyazı” [“Editorial”] “Gazetelerimiz, Los Angeles’taki işlenen iğrenç cinayeti, ‘Türk düşmanlığının yeni bir görüntüsü’ olarak yorumluyorlar. Bu çoğu zaman olduğu gibi, olayın heyecanı sırasında verilmiş acele bir hükümdür. Bu olayı fanatik bir intikam teşebbüsü, gözü dönmüş bir Ermeni’nin kişisel bir tecavüzü olarak değerlendirmek kanatımızca yanlıştır. Tarihsel Türk-Ermeni ilişkilerinin tatsız bir dönemini, yanlış yorumlayan bir Ermeni’nin hasta bir ruhla, intikam alması için bunca yıl beklemiş olması rastgele iki Türk’ü tuzağa düşürerek arkadan vurması için yetmiş yaşını beklemiş olması, aklın alacağı bir durum değildir.” *Son Havadis*, 31 January 1973, p. 1.

41 “Bir Manyak Ermeni Tarafından Öldürülen 2 Şehit Hariciyecimiz Toprağa Verildi” [“The two Turkish Diplomats who were murdered by a maniac Armenian had been buried”] *Son Havadis*, 4 February 1973, p. 1.

42 “Fikir Meydanı – Hınçaklar ve Taşnaklar” [“Hinchak or Tashnaksutian”] *Son Havadis*, 31 January 1973, p. 7.

43 Torkom İstepanyan, *Atatürk’ün Doğumunun 100. yılında Türk-Ermeni ilişkileri*, “Mareşal Garabet Artin Davut Paşa (P.T.T. Bakanlığı ve Bayındırlık Bakanlığı) (Ministry of Organization of Post and Telegraph and Ministry office, responsible for Urbanism), Andon Tıngır Yaver Paşa (P.T.T. Bakanı), Oskan Mardikyan (P.T.T. Bakanı) (Ministry of Organization of Post and Telegraph), Bedros Hallacyan (Bayındırlık Bakanı) (Minister of Urbanism), Avukat Krikor Sinapyan (Bayındırlık Bakanı) (Minister of Urbanism), Krikor Agaton (Bayındırlık Bakanı) (Minister of Urbanism), Gabriel Noradunkyan (Bayındırlık Bakanlığı ve Dışişleri Bakanlığı) (Ministry of Urbanism and Ministry of Foreign Affairs)” İstanbul: Bolis-Constantinople, 1984.

44 *Son Havadis*, “1915’te Türk hükümeti Ruslar Türkiye’yi işgal ederse Ermenilerin onlarla birleşmesinden korkarak Ermeni meselesini halle karar verdi, katliam yaptı kadınlar ve çocuklar zorla müslüman yapıldı.” 06 February 1973.



Armenians had never been Islamized. This truth is known by Armenians themselves including American, Lebanese, Syrian and French Armenians.<sup>45</sup> İstepanyan further argued that Armenians were not forced to convert in mass numbers and this is a truth known by Armenians living in the USA, Lebanon, Syria and France. For hundreds of years, according to İstepanyan, Turks and Armenians lived peacefully together and Islam allowed such a peaceful co-existence. He boldly argued that claims of genocide did not make sense in such a cosmopolitan empire as the Ottoman Empire.

Torkom İstepanyan continued that Turkish-Armenian hostility stemmed from the fact Armenians were armed by Russia, the United Kingdom, and France and were promised independence by these powers. These armed Armenian mobsters attacked Turkish villages. İstepanyan in his article also addressed the Armenians in the USA:

*For hundreds of years, according to İstepanyan, Turks and Armenians lived peacefully together and Islam allowed such a peaceful co-existence.*

...It is reality that there are still people who are insulted, tortured just because of being Muslim, Buddhist and black people are still being tortured. Besides these tragedies, Turkish people have succeeded to heal their wounds.<sup>46</sup>

The day *Son Havadis* published İstepanyan's article, the newspaper also reported the Armenian Patriarch Kalustyan's view on the assassinations. Especially his remark on cursing "The fingers of a maniac which intends to reopen the healed wound" was highlighted. Like İstepanyan, Kalustyan gave a message of "let bygones be bygones."<sup>47</sup>

*Son Havadis* however, did not stop covering the incident even one month later. This time the issue was covered by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, the famous author, journalist and politician who was also a close associate of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Unlike the previous articles, Karaosmanoğlu focused on the international connections of the Armenian terror. He highlighted the significance of the French attitude against Turkey especially in terms of the Armenian question. Karaosmanoğlu, accused Nihat Erim's government (1971-1972) of not pursuing effective foreign policy despite Erim's visits to foreign countries and Turkey was perceived "powerless" and "inadequate" abroad

45 *Son Havadis*, 06 February 1973.

46 "Yemek Listesindeki 1914 Ermenistan'ı ve Bir Türk Ermenisi'nin Dünya Ermenilerine Açık Mektubu," ["Armenia of 1914 in Menu and the Open Letter to Armenians in the World."] *Son Havadis*, 06 February 1973, p. 4.

47 "Bir manyağın kapanan bir yarayı deşmeye yeltenen parmaklarını lanetliyoruz." ["We deeply curse the fingers of a maniac which intends to reopen the healed wound"] *Son Havadis*, 06 February 1973, p. 7.

owing to the image created by him.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Armenian authors, Karaosmanoğlu's article in *Son Havadis* moves away from the emphasis of brotherhood between Armenians and Turks. Rather, he accused Erim's government of not representing Turkey abroad properly. Especially, Erim's statements during his visit to France did not please Karaosmanoğlu as according to him, Erim spoke about his loyalty to "democracy, human rights and principles of justice" to every statesmen he met as if he wanted to account for Turkish internal affairs to the foreigners.<sup>49</sup> In his article, Karaosmanoğlu not only accused the Armenian Diaspora, France, the French press, European Council and even M. Yanıkyan, but also Nihat Erim's government of being guilty. Karaosmanoğlu highlighted that Yanıkyan had been supported by both the East and the West.<sup>50</sup>

*Son Havadis* continued to pursue the news on the incident such as Yanıkyan's defense until the beginning of March.<sup>51</sup> However, the approaching presidential elections changed the agenda.<sup>52</sup>

As *Son Havadis* did, *Tercüman* released the first news about the assassinations under a headline written in large fonts. "Two Turkish Diplomats Murdered in the United States".<sup>53</sup> *Tercüman* did not simply provide the information about the assassinations, but also provided photograph of the location of the murder as well as Mehmet Baydar's family. The following day, Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan's words "I took revenge"<sup>54</sup> became the main headline on the first page once again. At every opportunity, Yanıkyan expressed that he was the pioneer of the battle against Turks.<sup>55</sup> The editorial published in the first page of *Tercüman* argued that the attack was not personal but was against Turkishness and this attack was a result of Hinchak and Tashnak manipulations, which created the grudge of Yanıkyan and revealed itself in his murders. Like *Son Havadis*, this article also emphasized the good historical relations between Turks and

48 "Fransız Basını, Erim Hükümeti, Avrupa Konseyi ve M. Yanıkyan" ["French Press, Erim Government, European Council and M. Yanıkyan"] "Nihat Erim Bey biraz sonra Fransa'ya gittiğinde, sanki, dış kamuoyuna açıklayacak başka birşeyimiz yokmuş gibi her görüştüğü devlet adamına demokrasiye, insan haklarına ve adalet prensiplerine sadakatinden bahsedişini onu hiç yoktan yabancılara kendi devlet ve hükümet işlerimizin hesabını vermek ister gibi göstermiştir." *Son Havadis*, 26 February 1973, p. 5.

49 "Fransız Basını..." *Son Havadis*, 26 February 1973, p. 5.

50 "Mesela, son seksen veya yüz yıl boyunca Ermeni teröristlerinin Türkiye'de yaptıkları suikastları, kurdukları komploları gözlerimiz önünden geçebilir ve Washington Büyükelçimizin yukarıki sözüne ekleyerek bütün bu cinayetlerin kâh doğudan kâh batıdan büyük devletlerin himayesi altında yapılmış olduğunu, fakat, eski yaraları desmek ne bunları açanları ne açtırınların hayrınadır." *Son Havadis*, 26 February 1973, p. 5.

51 "Yanıkyan, mahkemede "masumum" diye konuştu." ["Yanıkyan expressed that he was innocent in the court"] *Son Havadis*, 28 February 1973, p. 1.

52 "Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimine 10 gün kaldı" ["10 Days for the Presidential Elections"] *Son Havadis*, 3 March 1973, p. 1.

53 "Amerika'da iki Türk Diplomati öldürüldü." *Tercüman*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

54 "İntikam Aldım!" ["I have taken revenge!"] *Tercüman*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

55 "Yanıkyan: Türklere Karşı Savaşın Öncüsüyüm!" ["Yanıkyan: I am the Pioneer of the War Against Turks!"] *Tercüman*, 31 January 1973, p. 1.

Armenians.<sup>56</sup> Ahmet Kabaklı, the famous literary figure and *Tercüman* columnist since 1961, condemned the groups of Hinchak and Tashnaks and did not view these assassinations as an isolated event in his column “Gün Işığında”.<sup>57</sup>

Kabaklı continued to write on the Armenian issue parallel to excerpts from Mayewski’s book which will be discussed shortly. According to Kabaklı, Russia had never been influential over the Armenian culture. However, Russia had never intended to make any other minorities work for them. There had been an opportunity for Armenians to continue their lives without being assimilated. Kabaklı asks The Soviet Union did not assimilate Armenians.<sup>58</sup>

### Murders in Vienna and Paris

Two and a half years after the assassinations in Los Angeles, Daniş Tunalıgil, the Turkish ambassador in Vienna, was killed on October 22, 1975. He was the first ambassador who was murdered by the Armenian terrorist organizations. Three gunmen with two Hungarian-made Wallam automatic guns, one British-made MP Sten and one Israeli-made MP Uzzi entered the Turkish Embassy in Vienna located in Prinz Eugen Strasse 40 in the daylight and killed Tunalıgil in his office, which was on the first floor of this historical building. Tunalıgil was 60 years old when he was murdered.

The confusion in the Turkish press was denoted by Bilal Şimşir. According to Şimşir’s book, *Tercüman* reported that “The Greek Cypriots want to blame Armenian organizations with murdering our Ambassadors”.<sup>59</sup> The Turkish press was not able to comprehend who were the murderers of Tunalıgil. Initially, the assassination of the ambassador was blamed on anarchist Greek Cypriots by the press. The reason why the press focused on the Greek Cypriots as culprits of the crime was the Cyprus Peace Operation led by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in 1974. Turkish newspapers thus drew a correlation between the resentment of Greek Cypriots and the assassination. For instance, *Tercüman* argued that the murderers might have been Greek Cypriots or Armenian anarchists.<sup>60</sup> The day after the murder of Tunalıgil, *Tercüman* carried on publishing repetitive news on the assassination.

56 “Başyazı” [“Editorial”] *Tercüman*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

57 Ahmet Kabaklı, “Gün Işığında” *Tercüman*, 30 January 1973, p. 2.

58 Kabaklı, “Gün Işığında - Erivan” [“Yerevan”] *Tercüman*, 04 February 1973, p. 5.

59 Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız – I* “Rumlar, Elçilerimizin öldürülüşünü Ermeni örgütlerinin üzerine yıkmak istiyorlar.” p. 122.

60 “Daniş Tunalıgil” *Tercüman*, 23 October 1975, p. 1.

While there was confusion over the culprits of Tunalıgil's murder, *Tercüman* was the first Turkish newspaper to name the terrorist organization ASALA and claimed that ASALA members had been trained in Lebanon, Beirut.<sup>61</sup> According to the news that *Tercüman* reported, Austrian police officials reported that, the Armenian terrorists had been trained in Lebanon along with the Greek Cypriot terrorist group Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston (EOKA-B). Thus, EOKA-B had been among the possible responsible terrorist groups.<sup>62</sup> In the following days, *Tercüman* was certain that the attackers were Greek Cypriots and the headline ran: "The Greek Terrorists murdered our diplomats".<sup>63</sup>

*Only two days after the assassination of Daniş Tunalıgil, Turkey's ambassador to Paris İsmail Erez and his driver Talip Yener were shot by Armenian terrorists, while they were on their way to the Turkish embassy.*

This headline demonstrates the confusion of the Turkish press about Armenian terrorism. Ahmet Kabaklı in his column asked who the murderers were<sup>64</sup> and listed the possible candidates: Hinchak, Tashnak, EOKA-B and Turkish Communist Groups<sup>65</sup>; the last possibility in particular was clear proof of how internal political differences blurred the perceptions related to the attacks on Turkish diplomats abroad.

Only two days after the assassination of Daniş Tunalıgil, Turkey's ambassador to Paris İsmail Erez and his driver Talip Yener were shot by Armenian terrorists, while they were on their way to the Turkish embassy.

Later it was learned that the assassination was executed by three or four terrorists who ran away after the attack. Ambassador Erez received bullets to his heart and neck and died on the spot, as did the driver. After the attack a phone call from the ASALA threatened the Turkish embassy with a possible explosion. *Son Havadis* grew suspicious about Greek Cypriots, running a headline reading "Greek Cypriots raised doubts"<sup>66</sup> and reporting the news as follows:

The assassination of İsmail Erez led to various speculations about the identity of the murderers. According to *Akşam*, Turks, Greeks and Armenian citizens in Paris were interrogated after the incident.<sup>67</sup> There was a phone call to Turkish

61 *Tercüman*, 23 October 1975.

62 *Tercüman*, 25 October 1975.

63 "Elçilerimizi Yunanlı Tedhişçiler Öldürmüş" *Tercüman*, 25 October 1975, p. 1.

64 Kabaklı, "Katil Kim?" *Tercüman*, 29 October 1975.

65 Kabaklı, *Tercüman*, 29 October 1975.

66 "Bütün Şüpheler Kıbrıslı Rumlar Üzerinde Toplandı" *Son Havadis*, 26 October 1975.

67 "Paris'teki Rumlar Sorguya Çekiliyor" *Akşam*, 26 October 1975.

embassy in Paris and the person on the phone said that the murder had been committed by the Armenians. However, in another phone call another person on the phone claimed this time that EOKA-B was responsible for the murder of Ambassador İsmail Erez. But, *Akşam* apparently did not give credit to the allegations about EOKA-B and so mentioned the possibility of EOKA-B terrorism only once. *Akşam* also published condemnations of and protests against the terrorist activities.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike *Akşam*, *Tercüman* published news and comments supporting the allegations of EOKA-B's responsibility for killing the Turkish ambassadors.<sup>69</sup>

In October 26, 1975, the information that Turkish newspaper provided enlightened the assassination of Turkish ambassadors. For instance, *Tercüman* reported the release of three Greek suspects.<sup>70</sup> This discredited the previous observations and assumptions of *Tercüman*. In any case, as the real murderers were not found, the confusion and speculations about the identities of the terrorists continued.<sup>71</sup>

Among the political party leaders, Vice Prime Minister Alparslan Türkeş had been given place in *Son Havadis*. According to the news in *Son Havadis*, Türkeş stated that these attacks were against the existence of Turkey.<sup>72</sup> There was not any political party leader who was given place in *Son Havadis*. This constituted an example of diversity not only among Turkish political parties, but also showed the diversity in the rightist Turkish political parties.

*Tercüman* columnist Ahmet Kabaklı, in line with the front page of the newspaper, threatened that the ones who dared to attack Turkish ambassadors would give an account of this attack. He also put the blame on EOKA-B, which Kabaklı described as a "blood thirsty terrorist group,"<sup>73</sup> for committing this attack. Moreover, in his article, Ahmet Kabaklı asked Turkish public opinion to unite against the Cypriot terrorists.<sup>74</sup>

The 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation and enmity of Greek Cypriots towards Turkey led *Tercüman* to believe that the murderers of the Turkish diplomats

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68 *Akşam*, 26 October 1975.

69 "Elçilerimizi Yunanlı Tedhişçiler Öldürmüştü" *Tercüman*, 25 October 1975.

70 "Atina Şüpheli 3 Rum'u Serbest Bıraktı." ["Athens has released 3 Suspicious Greeks"] *Tercüman*, 26 October 1975, p. 1.

71 "Caniler Hakkında İpuçları Aranıyor" ["The Clues About the Murderers is Being Searching"] *Tercüman*, 26 October 1975, p. 1.

72 "Devletimize karşı siyasi bir tavrıdır." *Son Havadis*, 27 October 1975.

73 Kabaklı, "Kimsenin Yanına Kalmaz" ["Nobody Got Away With What They Had Done"] *Tercüman*, 26 October 1975, p. 7.

74 Kabaklı, "Kimsenin Yanına Kalmaz" ["Nobody got away with what they had done"] *Tercüman*, 26 October 1975, p. 7.

were Greeks. Although Yanıkyan's murders for the Armenian cause had happened only two years before, the link between these two incidents was not established, but instead *Tercüman* searched for the reasons behind the assassinations not in the past but in the present. This attitude can also be interpreted as a sign of lack of understanding of the Armenian terrorism in 1975. Hence, *Tercüman* put great emphasis on the ungrounded intelligence leaked from the French Police Department such as "a vast number of Greek and Armenian officers in Turkish embassies helped the murderers."<sup>75</sup>

The murders triggered a strong nationalist response among the Turkish nationalist groups and parties which emphasized national solidarity, and *Tercüman* gave substantial space to such calls. For instance, the leader of the Youth Section of the NMP, Sami Bal, declared that "It should be known well that such perfidious and insidious attacks may have an effect on another nation but it only shows its effect on great Turkish nation by uniting it."<sup>76</sup>

For the nationalist newspapers it was important to highlight the nationalist factors to bind people to each other in order to show a strong stance. Therefore, it was not important which country or which terrorist group was behind the terrorist attacks. The idea of nationalism was the ultimate concern for the newspapers. That is why *Tercüman* put the blame on the Greek Cypriots, who were the usual suspects.<sup>77</sup>

When the Austrian Police Department released the three Greeks arrested after the assassination of Ambassador Tunalıgil, *Tercüman* stopped accusing the Greeks of murders. But the failure of the French and Austrian authorities finding the real culprits created an atmosphere of defeat and frustration among Turks both at home and abroad. For instance, Turks in Paris protested the French press and the murders.<sup>78</sup> The atmosphere of frustration stemming from the fact that the murderers would go unpunished led to Ahmet Kabaklı's strong reaction in his column "Gün Işığında". After listing terrorist organizations such as Hinchaks, Tashnaks, EOKA-B and Greek Cypriots which targeted Turkey and Turks, he declared that Turkish nationalists were getting stronger and would not give in to such terrorist attacks. He also expressed that he had been yearning for the period of Süleyman the Magnificent's rule.<sup>79</sup>

75 "Caniler Paris'te" ["The Murderers are in Paris"] *Tercüman*, 27 October 1975, p. 1.

76 "Çok iyi bilinmelidir ki bu gibi kahpece ve alçakça saldırılar, bir başka millet üzerinde belki etkili olabilir, ama büyük Türk milleti üzerinde ancak ve ancak birleştirici bir tesir icra eder." *Tercüman*, 28 October 1975, p. 1.

77 *Tercüman*, 28 October 1975, p. 1.

78 "Yürüyüş Yapan Gençler İntikam Diye Haykırdı" *Tercüman*, 26 October 1975.

79 "Batıya karşı korunmanın iki yolu kalmış görünüyor: Biri sersem batıcıların istediği tarzda Hristiyan olarak, manevi teslim bayrağını çekmek... İkincisi: İslam aleminin önündeki yerimizi tavizsiz ve dürüst bir tarzda alarak güçlenmek ve batıya Kanuni gibi, ısıramadığı elimizi öptürmek..." *Tercüman*, 30 October 1975.



The exact name of the terrorist group had never been heard until 1975. As the news on the assassinations reached the newspapers, *Akşam*, reported the news as: "It is denounced that the ASALA and its members are acting in order to take revenge of the Armenian massacre and to found an independent Armenia."<sup>80</sup> Armenia was not free from the Soviet Union and was under the Soviet regime. Correspondingly, ASALA was a left-wing Armenian terrorist organization. Armenian terrorism was adduced as a communist threat by the nationalist based Turkish political parties. Moreover, *Akşam*, as a left-wing daily, reported the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's fear about communism: "The ones who support the leftists do not consider communism as a danger."<sup>81</sup>

*Akşam* found it necessary to highlight Demirel's words. While the rightist political parties ended with their comments on the assassinations in Paris and Vienna, Ecevit criticized the Demirel administration: "The government has faced accelerating difficulties which could not take positive decisions within six months,"<sup>82</sup> addressing the rising Armenian violence.

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Like *Tercüman*, *Son Havadis*, too reached a conclusion about the murderers of Turkish Ambassador to Vienna Daniş Tunalıgil, on the basis of the Austrian Police Department's arrests of three Greeks who were suspected to be members of the EOKA-B.<sup>83</sup> *Son Havadis*, like *Tercüman*, did not establish any immediate link between the murder in Vienna and ASALA, but focused on EOKA-B and further supported its thesis by claiming that three Greek terrorists had arrived in Vienna two days before the attack against Daniş Tunalıgil.<sup>84</sup> However, there was a contradiction in *Son Havadis*'s news on the assassination. On the front page there was a big caption read as "All Suspicion Focused on the Greek Cypriots".<sup>85</sup> One of the main reasons for such great confusion in the Turkish press over the real identities of the murderers in Vienna and Paris was the different intelligence provided by the French and Austrian police. For instance, *Son Havadis* reported in one news item that the

80 "Beyrut'ta 'Ermenistan Gizli Kurtuluş Ordusu'nun kurulduğu, üyelerin de Ermeni katliamının intikamını almak ve bağımsız bir Ermenistan kurmak için faaliyette bulundukları açıklandı." *Akşam*, 24 October 1975, p. 1.

81 "Demirel: Sol Düşünceli Benimsenler Komünizmi Tehlike Saymıyor." *Akşam*, 24 October 1975, p. 1.

82 "Ecevit: Altı Ayda Olumlu Kararlar Alamayan Hükümetin Zorlukları Daha da Arttı" *Akşam*, 28 October 1975, p. 1.

83 "Tunalıgil'i Öldüren 3 Yunanlı'nın Olaydan 2 Gün Önce Viyana'ya Geldiği Açıklandı." ["Reported that, 3 Greeks had just arrived in Vienna 2 days before they shot Tunalıgil."] *Son Havadis*, 25 October 1975, p. 1.

84 *Son Havadis*, 25 October 1975, p. 1.

85 *Son Havadis*, "Bütün Şüpheler Kıbrıslı Rumlar Üzerinde Toplandı" ["Suspicion is on the Greek Cypriots"] 26 October 1975, p. 1.

French police pointed out Greek terrorists while the Austrian police released Greek suspects.<sup>86</sup>

*Son Havadis*, as it did after the assassinations in Los Angeles, opened its pages to Turkish-Armenian authors. One of these was Torkom İstepanyan who also published a series of articles in the same newspaper in 1973. İstepanyan basically underlined the brotherhood between Turks and Armenians living in peace together and claimed that the recent events were the outcomes of international terrorism, not the results of grievances of Armenians in Turkey.<sup>87</sup>

On the left of the spectrum of the Turkish press, *Cumhuriyet* provided news about the assassinations and its columnists focused on the dynamics behind these incidents. One day before the assassination of Erez, *Cumhuriyet* published a piece on the inadequacy of the Viennese police to find the murderers of Tunalıgil on its front page.<sup>88</sup> Even after the Viennese police release of information about the possible identity of the attackers, *Cumhuriyet* was cautious and did not name EOKA-B as the organization responsible for the murder of Tunalıgil like the other newspapers, but instead gave the news as, “this time, it is claimed that the murderers whose identities have not been determined were the members of EOKA-B”.<sup>89</sup>

While *Cumhuriyet*, as a newspaper, was cautious not to put definite blame on EOKA-B, its columnists were not. Uğur Mumcu, who would be the pioneering journalist in analyzing the Armenian terrorism correctly, did not link the attacks in Vienna and Paris to Armenian terrorism but relied on the speculative news about the role of Greeks/Greek Cypriots in the assassinations. He commented that, “According to the initial clues, both assassinations were committed by Greeks or Greek Cypriots. If these clues reflect the truth, we are exposed to an organization which intends to solve the Cyprus issue by individual terrorism.”<sup>90</sup> Uğur Mumcu was one of the confused journalists in 1975. Mumcu expressed that there could be some groups which intended to retaliate, but that this was not a solution and there was not any international problem which could be solved by terrorism.<sup>91</sup> Mumcu considered the retaliation to Cyprus Peace

86 “İki cinayetin de profesyonel katiller tarafından işlendiğine muhakkak nazarı ile bakan Avrupa polisi meçhul örgütü meydana çıkarmak için alarm durumunda çalışmaktadır.” *Son Havadis*, 26 October 1975. p. 1.

87 İstepanyan, “Fikir Meydanı ‘Ermeniler ve Son Olaylar’” *Son Havadis*, 27 October 1975. p. 7.

88 “Viyana Polisi Yeteri Kadar Çaba Sarfetmemiştir” *Cumhuriyet*, 23 October 1975. p. 7.

89 “Kimlikleri Saptanamayan Katillerin Bu Kez de EOKA-B Mensubu Oldukları İddia Edildi” [“It is claimed that the murderers whose id’s have never been determined were the members of EOKA-B”] *Cumhuriyet*, 24 October 1975, p. 1.

90 Uğur Mumcu, “Cinayetlerin Ardından” [“After the Assassinations”] “Ele geçen ilk ipuçları, her iki cinayetin de Yunanlılar ya da Kıbrıslı Rumlar tarafından işlendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu ipuçları gerçeği yansıtıyorsa, Kıbrıs sorununu bireysel terörle çözmeye çalışan bir çeteyle karşı karşıyayız demektir.” *Cumhuriyet*, 26 October 1975, p. 7.

91 Mumcu, “Cinayetlerin Ardından”, *Cumhuriyet* “Bazı çevreler misilleme yapmayı düşünebilirler, bu çözüm değil, uluslararası hiçbir sorun terörle çözülemez.” 26 October 1975.

Operation by the possible responsible actors, Greeks and Greek Cypriots, in his column in *Cumhuriyet*. Ali Sirmen, who was a columnist in *Cumhuriyet*, also asked what the aim of Greek Cypriots was in killing two Turkish ambassadors.<sup>92</sup> There was not even a word on Armenian terrorist organizations by these columnists.

As Uğur Mumcu highlighted, national unity and solidarity is the name of the domestic union.<sup>93</sup> Uğur Mumcu was not alone in pointing to the Greeks as the main suspects for the murders. Ali Sirmen in his column accused the Greek terrorist groups of murder. Moreover he claimed that Greece's hesitation in condemning the assassinations strengthened this accusation.<sup>94</sup> Uğur Mumcu was one of those journalists who followed the developments and shared them with the Turkish public. In 1979, Mumcu argued that even if EOKA-B was not the only terrorist group which committed the terrorist attacks, EOKA-B was one of the supporters of ASALA. Nevertheless, Uğur Mumcu would express that Armenians were not alone in the organization of these terrorist organizations, and the terror inside Turkey was related to international terrorism. Moreover, he would argue that drug smuggling was closely related to the hidden leaders of these terrorist groups.<sup>95</sup> The journalists in Turkey were blinded by the international questions that Turkey was subjected to. The thought which had been wanted to be created was chauvinism or real patriotism. The Turkish press played a role in social engineering. Even if the newspapers' intention was not to create a public mind, those newspapers are in competition to deliver news to the public. Whatever the released latest news, newspapers conveyed the news to people without any filters. The journalists realized that Turkey faced international isolation and expressed their annoyance under the title, "The loneliness that we have been left day by day" Turkey's problems about the Cyprus issue has been a focus of analysis. According to the governments in Turkey, the key question for domestic politics is the Cyprus issue. Nevertheless, the international terrorism was another important problem that Turkey had to cope with. As the newspapers highlighted the domestic problem became an international issue.

### Assassinations in Ottawa and Burgas

The assassination of Kemal Arıkan was the beginning of an acceleration of

92 Ali Sirmen, "Acaba Rum militanlar iki Türk diplomatını öldürürken ne gibi hesaplar peşinde koşmuşlardır?", *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1975.

93 Mumcu, "Cinayetlerin Ardından" ["After the Assassinations"] *Cumhuriyet*, 26 October 1975, p. 7.

94 Sirmen, "Dünyada Bugün 'Cinayetler ve Sağduyu'" ["In the World Today 'Assassinations and The Common Sense'"] "Gelen haberler ve Atina'nın tutumu, cinayetlerin Kıbrıslı Rum ya da Yunanlılar tarafından işlendiği kuşkularını yoğunlaştırmaktadır." *Cumhuriyet*, 26 October 1975, p. 5.

95 Mumcu, "Gözlem - İç terörle diplomatlarımıza karşı gerçekleştirilen saldırılar, üstelik uyuşturucu ve silah kaçakçılığı birbiriyle doğrudan alakalıdır." *Cumhuriyet*, 27 December 1979, p. 5.

Armenian terrorist attacks. From April until August, each month an attack against the Turkish diplomatic corps was executed in different parts of the world. Kani Güngör, who was Counselor for Commercial Affairs, was shot in Ottawa on April 8, 1982.<sup>96</sup> Less than a month later, Orhan Gündüz, Honorary Consul was murdered in Boston on May 4.<sup>97</sup> Erkut Akbay, Administrative Attaché and his wife Nadide Akbay were assassinated in Lisbon on June 7.<sup>98</sup> Following the murders of these diplomats, for the first time, a military member, Military Attaché Air Pilot Staff Officer Colonel Atilla Altıkat was murdered in Ottawa, Canada in his car.<sup>99</sup> The terrorist attack was undertaken by JCAG and Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA).<sup>100</sup>

The frequency of these attacks was closely related to the martial law that Turkey was subjected to.<sup>101</sup> The militarist image of the state made the Armenian terrorist organization more active than before. According to Laçiner, Turkey's image was not positive in Europe due to the coup and Turkey failed to communicate its case to the European countries properly.<sup>102</sup> Kamuran Gürün, too, criticized the Turkish failure to even follow the publications on Armenian allegations and have an archive about the matter.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, Turkish administrations did not even look into their own archives, let alone research foreign archives and have serious debates on them.<sup>104</sup>

Besides this lack of knowledge and intelligence about the Armenian allegations on the part of the Turkish state, the Turkish press failed to present a better understanding of Armenian terrorism. These all emboldened Armenian terrorist organizations; hence they aimed to harm Turkey, especially its new military regime, as much as they could. The assassination of Atilla Altıkat was planned to serve this purpose.

Armenian terrorist attacks were not limited to the murder of Turkish diplomats.

96 "Yeni bir Ermeni saldırısı olduğu öne sürülüyor - Ottawa Ticaret Müşaviri Güngör vuruldu." *Milliyet*, 09 April 1982, p. 1.

97 "Boston Fahri Konsolosumuz Orhan Gündüz şehit edildi - Reagan: Ermenilere ödün verilmeyecek" *Milliyet*, 05 May 1982, p. 1.

98 "Evren: Suçluların yakalanmasını sabırla bekliyoruz - FBI Uyardı: Hedef Washington Büyükelçiliği - Şehit ataşe Akbay'ın eşi Nadide Akbay'ın sağlık durumu çok ciddi." *Milliyet*, 09 June 1982, p. 1.

99 Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız* - 2, p. 551.

100 Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism The Past, the Present, the Prospects*, p. 199.

101 Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*, p. 203.

102 Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*, "Özellikle Avrupa ile ikili ilişkileri büyük sekteye uğrayan askeri yönetim, Ermeni saldırıları karşısında Batılı ülkeler ile ciddi bir iletişim eksikliği yaşamış ve argümanlarını dünyaya ikna edici bir şekilde anlatamamıştır.", p. 203.

103 Kamuran Gürün, *Fırtınalı Yıllar, Dışişleri Müsteşarlığı Anıları*, "Türkiye henüz o tarihe kadar Ermeni iddialarını içeren kitapları, belgeleri, dergileri vb. dahi takip etmemiş, bu konuda bir arşiv dahi oluşturamamıştır." İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1995, p. 205.

104 Laçiner, *Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*, "1980 tarihi itibarıyla Türk arşivleri kapalıdır ve diğer ülke arşivlerindeki bilgiler ise Türkiye'ye getirilmemiş, ciddi bir değerlendirmeden geçirilmemiştir.", p. 203.

By 1982, in a period of strict martial law in the country, ASALA was able to commit crimes in Turkey.<sup>105</sup> Three Armenian terrorists killed 3 security guards and 5 civilians, also injuring 72 people at Ankara Esenboğa Airport on August 8, 1982.<sup>106</sup> One of the terrorists was killed and two others were captured wounded. The terrorists were members of ASALA. Levon Ekmekjian, who was captured, was taken to court and sentenced to death<sup>107</sup> by the military court.<sup>108</sup> After the declaration of his sentence, Ekmekjian expressed his regret and cried.<sup>109</sup> While the Bulgarian police searched for the Armenian terrorists who were members of ASALA, the Ekmekjian case became a tool of propaganda for the benefit of Turkey. For instance, ASALA terrorist Levon Ekmekjian's regretful expressions were intended to be integrated into a documentary on the Armenian genocide claims.<sup>110</sup> On January 29, 1983, Armenian terrorist Levon Ekmekjian was executed in Ankara.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, the news on Armenian terrorism provided a contribution to ASALA's goal with the mass destruction in Ankara Esenboğa Airport.

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According to *Son Havadis*, Ekmekjian's statements of regret over killing innocent Turks and his apologies from Turks were circulated in the press both abroad and in Turkey by Turkish authorities. Ekmekjian's blame of historians writing about the Armenian representation of history took its place in newspapers, too.<sup>112</sup> But in any case, Ekmekjian was executed in Ankara at the beginning of 1983.<sup>113</sup>

### An Assassination in the Eastern Bloc and more

While the case of Ekmekjian was on the agenda, five days after the funeral of Military Attaché Air Pilot Staff Officer Colonel Atilla Altıkat in Ankara, on

105 "ASALA Cinayetlerini Türkiye'ye Taşdı" *Milliyet*, 08 August 1982, p. 1.

106 "3 Terörist Esenboğa'da, 3'ü güvenlik görevlisi 8 kişiyi öldürdü, 72 kişiyi yaraladı." *Milliyet*, 08 August 1982, p. 1.

107 "Ekmekçiyân İçin Karar Tek Celsede Verildi." *Milliyet*, 08 September 1982, p. 1.

108 "Ankara Özel Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı 3 no.'lu Askeri Mahkemesi'nce ölüm cezasına çarptırılan Esenboğa katliamı sanığı Ermeni terörist Levon Ekmekçiyân'ın dosyasına Askeri Yargıtay 1. Dairesi bakacaktır." *Milliyet*, 29 September 1982, p. 12.

109 "Ermeni Terörist Konuşurken Ağladı - Ekmekçiyân: Bin Kere Pişmanım" *Milliyet*, 06 October 1982, p. 6.

110 "Ermeni ASALA Örgütü teröristi Levon Ekmekçiyân'ın Ankara'da yargılanırken yaptığı açıklamaların dünyaya dağıtıldığı, bu konuda bir de film hazırlandığı bildirildi. *Son Havadis*, 11 September 1982, p. 1.

111 "Ekmekçiyân İdam Edildi." *Milliyet*, 29 January 1983, p. 1.

112 "Ekmekçiyân'ın yargılanması, ölüm cezası ve mahkemede söyledikleri, pişmanlığı ve Türklerden özür dilemesi anlatılmış. Ekmekçiyân'ın Ermeni tarihini yazan tarihçileri suçlaması ve terörün hatalarını belirtmesi de gazetelerde yer aldı." *Son Havadis*, 11 September 1982, p. 6.

113 "Ekmekçiyân İdam Edildi." *Milliyet*, 29 January 1983, p. 1.

September 9, 1982, Administrative Attaché to Burgas Bora Süelkan was murdered<sup>114</sup>. Bulgaria was the first Eastern Bloc country in which Armenian terror showed its face. A phone call to the Associated Press expressed that the murder was undertaken by ASALA.<sup>115</sup> Around the location where Süelkan was murdered, a surgical glove, 7.65 mm “Walter” pistol and a piece of cloth, on which “We shot the Turkish diplomat” was written were found.<sup>116</sup>

Three days after Süelkan’s murder, some newspapers were celebrating the anniversary of the September 12 coup. *Son Havadis* declared: “A peaceful September 12”<sup>117</sup> and “Terrorism Had Been Drained”.<sup>118</sup> However, Armenian

*This terrorist attack was undertaken by rightist Armenian terrorist groups JCAG and ARA. The JCAG and the ARA increased the density of their attacks. In the following four months, two more Turkish diplomats were murdered in two different cities.*

terrorist activities continued as the Ambassador Galip Balkar in Belgrade was killed on March 9, 1983. This terrorist attack was undertaken by rightist Armenian terrorist groups JCAG and ARA.<sup>119</sup> The JCAG and the ARA increased the density of their attacks. In the following four months, two more Turkish diplomats were murdered in two different cities. Dursun Aksoy, Administrative Attaché to Brussels was murdered on July 14, 1983 and Cahide Mihçioğlu, wife to the Counselor in Lisbon, was murdered on July 27, 1983.<sup>120</sup> However, it was observed that after the execution of Levon Ekmekjian in January

1983, ASALA stopped its activities until April 28, 1984, and with the assassination of Embassy secretary Sadiye Yönder’s husband Işık Yönder in Tehran<sup>121</sup>, ASALA activities started again.

## Cessation of Armenian Terrorism

ASALA’s bloody bombing in Orly Airport, in front of the Turkish Airlines Bureau on 15 July 1983, is considered the beginning of the end of ASALA’s terrorism. According to Lütem, “Especially the death of four Frenchmen in

114 Şimşir, *Şehit Diplomatlarımız* – 2, p. 584.

115 “Associated Press ajansına telefon eden biri olayı ASALA’nın üstlendiğini söylemiştir.” *Milliyet*, 10 September 1982, p. 8.

116 “İdari ataşemizin şehit edildiği yerde, bir cerrahi eldiveni, 7.65mm’lik bir ‘Walter’ tabanca ve üzerinde ‘Türk diplomatını biz vurduk’ yazılı beyaz bir kumaş parçası bulundu.” *Son Havadis*, 10 September 1982, p. 1.

117 “Huzur ve Barış İçinde Bir 12 Eylül” *Son Havadis*, 12 September 1982, p. 1.

118 “Terör Kurutuldu” *Son Havadis*, 12 September 1982.

119 Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism, The Past The Present The Prospects*, p. 206.

120 Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism, The Past The Present The Prospects*, p. 211.

121 Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism, The Past The Present The Prospects* p. 216.



this incident changed the attitude of French government.”<sup>122</sup> France exerted its influence upon other European countries and terrorists began to be taken under surveillance.<sup>123</sup> Interestingly, Varoujian Garbidjian, who had been educated as a commando in Palestine terror camps since 1975 and organized the bombing at the Orly Airport, was given a valid passport and resident permit in France.<sup>124</sup> Eight people were killed and more than 60 wounded as a result of the attack. One French, one American with his Turkish fiancé, and one Greek-American were killed besides the Turks.<sup>125</sup> Among the casualties were French citizens and hence this weakened the French support to the ASALA. In any case ASALA and other Armenian organizations achieved their goal of making the Armenian case known world-wide and created a unity in the Armenian Diaspora around the aim of making genocide claims accepted by international public opinion.<sup>126</sup>

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The Armenian terrorist activities took place in 19 different countries including Turkey and caused the death of 70 people while 524 were injured during these attacks. Not only Turkish people but also citizens of the host countries were killed, injured or taken hostage. The Orly Massacre, which was considered a mistake even by ASALA itself<sup>127</sup> led to the cessation of support for Armenian terror from France and similar countries and forced ASALA to abandon its murder policy.

## CONCLUSION

In the period when Armenian terrorist activities started to target Turkish diplomats in 1973 (officially in 1975), the Turkish political scene was polarized. Each newspaper in general represented an ideological stance and was affiliated with a political party and its leader. Within this polarized atmosphere, the Turkish press could not initially comprehend the seriousness of the terrorism targeting Turkey abroad. Even in 1975, with the killings of Turkish ambassadors in Paris and Vienna, the Turkish press focused on the

122 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p.44.

123 Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, p.44.

124 Laçiner, “*Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*”, p. 172.

125 Laçiner, “*Ermeni Sorunu, Diaspora ve Türk Dış Politikası*”, p. 270.

126 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşı’ndan Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2010. p. 409. The Armenian terrorism was stopped with the efforts of National Intelligence Organization (MİT - Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı). The operations on cessation of Armenian terrorism run with the help of Abdullah Çatlı. For more detailed information see: Tuncay Özkan, *MİT’in Gizli Tarihi*, İstanbul: ALFA Basım Yayım Dağıtım, 2003. p. 298-300.

127 Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism The Past, The Present, The Prospects*, p. 59.

possibility of Greek terrorism towards Turkey due to the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation, rather than understanding that although the Armenian terrorist organization had links with Greek and Greek Cypriot paramilitary groups, they had a separate agenda to pursue and challenge Turkey accordingly.

Instead of finding out the roots and connections of Armenian terrorism and putting pressure on Turkish governments to solve this problem, the Turkish press indulged in using this national issue as a part of its domestic quarrel. Nationalist newspapers published heroic speeches and articles representing the benevolence of Turks towards Armenians, while accusing the Turkish left of being in cooperation with Armenian terrorist organizations. On the other hand, Turkish leftist newspapers accused the other newspapers of ignoring the connections of Armenian terrorism and hence implying a general conspiracy against Turkey, in which these newspapers somehow took a part.

After the September 12, 1980 coup, Turkey entered a new political phase in its history, the political parties were closed, their leaders were jailed, thousands of people were arrested, but the Armenian terrorist activities accelerated rather than stopping. Within this atmosphere of pressure, the Turkish press's attitude did not change dramatically, but it changed dimensionally.

On the whole, the years between 1973 and 1984, the political cleavages were the ultimate question for Turkish newspapers. Between 1973 and 1980, the political challenge was explicit. When martial law was declared on September 12, 1980, the clash at least appeared to have ceased. Even a national question could not prevent the newspapers and political groups in Turkey from challenging each other. The insufficient intelligence of the newspapers prevented Turkey from expressing herself even domestically. Furthermore, even today, Turkey cannot defend herself abroad. Turkey will become much better equipped and effective about the Armenian question only if information is transferred to the Turkish public. Hence, Turkey should take the Armenian question seriously and use the fertility of historical materials. Thus, Turkey will be able to persuade the countries which are blinded by Armenian allegations.

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