

THE ARMENIAN QUESTION: SCHOLARLY ETHICS AND METHODOLOGY

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Abstract: *Following the assassination of the renowned Turkish Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, two Turkish authors, Temel Demirer and Sibel Özbudun, published an article dealing with the Armenian Question entitled “1,500,001st Ahbarik”. While it is understandable and necessary to express moral outrage over the horrible murder of Dink, the authors’ article goes beyond this point, and engages in the polemics over the tragic incidents of 1915. Moreover, the quotations and footnote citations presented by the authors in their article raises certain ethical questions since on close inspection, these reveal that the authors have not actually consulted or checked the sources they cite. Rather the two authors copied the references from different authors with citation errors and hence without proper acknowledgment. This article will discuss these points by presenting specific examples.*

Key Words: *Temel Demirer, Sibel Özbudun, Armenian Question, Scholarly Ethics.*

Introduction

Following the assassination of the renowned Turkish Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, two Turkish authors, Temel Demirer and Sibel Özbudun, published an article dealing with the Armenian Question entitled “1,500,001st Ahbarik”. After being published in several journals, the article finally appeared in a book, comprised of the authors’ collected essays and entitled *Hayır Evet’ten Önce Gelir, Hukuk(suzluk) Yazıları (No Comes Before Yes, Essays on (Il)Legality)*.¹ Dink, an important bridge between Armenian and Turkish peoples, was also a highly regarded journalist and intellectual of Turkey. While it is understandable and necessary to express moral outrage over the horrible murder of Dink, the authors’ article goes well beyond this point and discusses the subject on a completely different level. It should be noted that the title of the article runs parallel to the expression “1.5 million + 1,” which was earlier formulated by the English journalist and author Robert Fisk, whereby Hrant Dink’s name has become an instrument for the politicized genocide debates.

1 Sibel Özbudun and Temel Demirer, *Hayır Evet’ten Önce Gelir: Hukuk(suzluk) Yazıları (No Comes Before yes, Essays on (Il)Legality)*, Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi, 2008, pp. 161–179. The first page of the article, page 169, provides a list of journals the article has been published in previously.

In discussing the 1915 Armenian relocation, which they describe as an act of “genocide,” the authors arrived at various conclusions, some of which are highly contentious. Moreover, the authors’ article and attitude raises certain “technical and ethical” problems. This short critique, which essentially focuses on such “technical and ethical” problems, does not seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of the tragic events of 1915. It is, therefore, beyond the scope of this short article to assess whether or not there was a deliberate or systematic policy of genocide toward the Armenian population during the First World War.

Technical Problems

A close examination of the article reveals that the authors are not in command of the subject matter that they discuss, and have approached the issue from quite a narrow and ideological perspective. The article is also problematic with respect to the accuracy of the quotations presented and the cited sources. In addition, the authors do not seem to be familiar enough with certain individuals on whom they provide speculative assessments.

The authors correctly note that a greater emphasis should be placed on the human dimension of the tragic occurrences of 1915. Within this context, the authors approvingly quote another observer, Markar Eseyan as stating that “before anything else, it is necessary to develop a moral and scrupulous approach” with regard to the tragic events of 1915, and, thus, indicate their belief that the Armenian issue should be approached in this way. However, the authors’ attitude displayed in the article casts doubt on their sincerity on these points. The authors’ use of Ahmet Refik (Altınay)’s account and attempt to conceal the massacres committed against the Muslims is a case in point. In a booklet published in the armistice period, the anti-Unionist author Ahmet Refik spoke of “the Armenians’ Van massacre” (p.164), an expression which he used to describe the massacres of the Muslim population committed by the Armenians in the province of Van. In using Ahmet Refik’s account, however, the authors rendered this specific expression in modern Turkish as “Armenians’ Van battle” (p.164). Because of this seemingly minor alteration made by the authors, the readers with limited knowledge on the subject will not be able to realize that Ahmet Refik is, in fact, referring to the massacres committed against Muslims in Van. Such attempts on part of the authors to cover up the massacres perpetrated upon the Muslim population, unfortunately, do not contribute to the development of a “moral and scrupulous approach” on the catastrophic events of 1915.

The article under review also addresses some questions on several aspects of the Armenian tragedy, some of which are significant in demonstrating the extent of the authors’ research and knowledge on the subject. One such question is the following: “How close was it to the battlefield that of the 63 thousand Catholic Armenians in the State of Ankara – these were an apolitical community being culturally and politically different than the Gregorian Armenians – 61 thousand were subjected to the relocation?” (p.175). The number 63 thousand, which the authors put as the number of Catholic

Armenians in the nonexistent “State” of Ankara, in fact represents the total number of Catholic Armenians in the whole of the Ottoman Empire (63,967). It should also be clear to the readers that it would be unrealistic to argue that all of the Catholic Armenians of the empire were living only within the “province” of Ankara, which the authors incorrectly refer to as a state.

In support of their contentions, the authors also present some interesting quotations and passages from certain sources. However, some of these quotations contain serious inaccuracies and are presented in quite a different form than the actual versions in the original sources. One such quotation presented by the authors is the statement made by (Hafiz) Mehmet Emin Bey, the deputy for Trabzon, during his speech on the Armenian Question in the Ottoman Parliament:

Hafiz Mehmet, himself an ardent Unionist and a member of the Ottoman Parliament, stated that, “I saw [this] with my own eyes. They were putting the Armenians on boats in Samsun, and then were killing them by tipping them into the sea. I have talked to Talat about this, [but] I could not prevent it.” In any case, it was Talat Pasha who arranged the whole affair. (p.168)

The statement quoted above, which the authors attributed to the Trabzon deputy (Hafiz), is taken from an interview conducted with Taner Akçam by the Turkish journalist Neşe Düzel and published in 2005 by the Turkish daily *Radikal*.² Yet, the quotation has been rendered rather differently from Mehmet Emin Bey’s actual speech in the Ottoman Parliament. First of all, the incident did not take place in Samsun, but in the district of Ordu. Second and more importantly, the statements made by Mehmet Emin Bey about the incident which he saw with his “own eyes” actually indicates the opposite of what the authors made him say:

There was a prefect in Ordu district. He loaded a boat with the Armenians on the pretext of sending them to Samsun, and had them tipped into the sea. I heard that Governor [of Trabzon] Cemal Azmi had treated them in the same way. I could not go that far. I had to return from the district of Ordu. As soon as I arrived here, I told what I witnessed to the Interior Minister [Talat Pasha]. Thereafter, they sent an inspector and dismissed the prefect. They put him on trial.³

2 Neşe Düzel, “Atatürk ‘katiller’ diye bağırıyordu (Atatürk was screaming ‘murderers’),” *Radikal*, 30.05.2005. The complete interview can be found on the following website: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=154213>

3 In the rest of the speech, Mehmet Emin Bey states the following about Governor Cemal Azmi: “But I could not have them do anything about the Governor. Perhaps I have struggled for three years but nothing happened.” Here, the difference between a witnessed incident and a rumor should also be kept in mind. In addition to this, in the same speech Mehmet Emin Bey also related how he and the Greek deputy Kofidi Efendi complained to Talat Pasha about a lieutenant-governor that engaged in violent acts against the Greek population in Samsun and how Talat Pasha had dismissed the governor the following day: “We came here together with Kofi Efendi and told Talat Pasha. Thereafter, he [Talat Pasha] dismissed the lieutenant-governor the following day.” *Meclisi Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term 3, Assembly year 5, vol. 1, Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1992, p.300.

As can be seen from the above passage, Mehmet Emin Bey does not speak of an event that he saw with his “own eyes” and which he could not prevent after having talked to the Interior Minister Talat Pasha. On the contrary, according to Mehmet Emin Bey’s statements, the district prefect was removed from his post and put on trial. Therefore, the authors seem to have not been careful enough with regard to the reliability of the sources they utilized and accuracy of the quotations they presented.

The authors also discuss the role and activity of the prisoners that were released during the war. According to the authors, these people were released so as to annihilate Armenian convoys which were subjected to the relocation:

Upon an amnesty decreed by the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Justice, thousands of ferocious criminals have been released from the prisons of Istanbul and other provinces to be used in the massacres, and after receiving the military training, they have been sent in the form of bands to their “mission” zones to eliminate the Armenian problem. Their mission was to ambush and destroy the Armenian convoys which were deported, and it can be said that they have thoroughly fulfilled their duties (p.173).

The authors, however, fail to adduce anything in support of this critical assertion while also indicating their lack of knowledge in that the use of prisoners for military duty during wartime had precedent and was used by other countries during the First World War.⁴ Moreover, the authors seem unaware that the persons whose names they held in high esteem and whom they mention with praise also rejected this allegation. For instance, in his testimony given at the Yozgat Trial “Cemal Bey, the lieutenant governor of Yozgat” whom the authors list in their article among the “real and sane Turks” and whom they praise as the “honor” of Turks, had indicated that this accusation was not correct. At the 11th session of the Yozgat Trial, the public prosecutor asked Cemal Bey the following question: “When we entered the Great War, a band was formed out of the able-bodied men from the prisons. There is the possibility that this could be about the Armenians. Is this the case?” In response, Cemal Bey stated that “These [prisoners] have not been released for the Armenians. In fact, I had been hearing that those who still kept misbehaving among these murderers were being hanged by the telegraph poles.”⁵

Ethical Problems

Throughout the article, the two authors present various passages dressed in quotation marks by referring to certain sources. However, a careful inspection of the footnotes provided by the authors reveal that the two authors have not actually seen or checked the

4 For example, “During World War I, U.S. courts released almost 8,000 men convicted of serious offenses on condition of their induction into military service.” Guenter Lewy, “Revisiting the Armenian Genocide,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol.12, No:4, 2005, p.8.

5 Nejdet Bilgi, *Yozgat Ermeni Tehciri Davası (Yozgat Trial)*, Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006, p.256; ?İkdam Version”.

sources they cited. Rather the authors seem to have copied these quotations and references, along with citation errors, from the works of other authors who had earlier utilized these sources. The limited examples discussed below may help to give the readers an idea on these points.

Plagiarism: On the Figures Given by Eşref Kuşçubaşı

In discussing the treatment accorded to the Christian populations in Western Anatolia in 1914, Temel Demirer and Sibel Özbudun provide the following information:

Eşref Kuşçubaşı, a leader in the Special Organization, says that alone in 1914, and in the first months of the war, the number of deported from “the Greek-Armenian population...who were settled and concentrated in the Aegean region, especially in the coastal areas” was 1,115,000 (p.172).

As their source for the sentence given within quotation marks in the above quote, the authors refer to the sixth page of a book by the Turkish author Cemal Kutay entitled *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa ve Hayber’de Türk Cengi (The Special Organization in WWI and the Turkish Battle at Khayber)* which comprises Kutay’s interviews with Eşref Kuşçubaşı, a prominent member of the Ottoman Special Organization (hereafter S.O.). Unfortunately, the general flow of the sentence given above, which the authors present as their own sentence, has been lifted from another book without proper acknowledgement. In discussing the deportation of Christians in Western Anatolia, in his book entitled *Ermeni Tabusu Aralanırken Diyalogdan Başka Çözüm Var mı? (As the Armenian Taboo is Exposed, Is There Any Solution Besides Dialogue?)*, Taner Akçam wrote the following:

Kuşçubaşı says that alone in 1914 and the first months of the war, the number of deported from ‘the Greek-Armenian population... who were settled and concentrated in the Aegean region, especially in the coastal areas’ was 1.150.000.⁶

As his source for the sentences given within quotation marks in the above passage, Akçam refers to the sixth page of Kutay’s aforementioned book. However, page six of the book in question does not contain any number or information which could form any basis for the above quotation. The sixth page is the last page of Cemal Kutay’s preface for his book and does not contain any statement made by Eşref Kuşçubaşı. Rather the number mentioned above can be found on the 60th page of Kutay’s work:

[I]t was plainly visible that if the Greek-Armenian population of 1,150,000 in the Aegean region, settled and concentrated especially in the coastal areas, had not

6 Taner Akçam, *Ermeni Tabusu Aralanırken Diyalogdan Başka Çözüm Var mı? (As the Armenian Taboo is Exposed, Is There Any Solution Besides Dialogue?)* Istanbul: Su Yayınları, 2002, p.225.

*been taken to the interior a short time before the outbreak of the war and during the first months of the war, then even the defense in Çanakkale [Gallipoli] would not have been possible.*⁷

When referring to this sentence and the figure given on the 60th page of Kutay's book, Taner Akçam mistakenly refers to the page "6" of the book in question. Taner Akçam repeats this reference error in all of his works that use this specific figure and statement from Kuşçubaşı.⁸ Following this reference error, Demirel and Özbudun, who have copied the quotation and reference word for word from Taner Akçam, also cites the incorrect page number of "6" in Kutay's work as a reference for their assertions. In addition, the two authors also make a copying error by incorrectly giving the number as "1,115,000", the correct version of which is given by Akçam and Kutay as 1,150,000. The figure of "1,150,000" deported, which is given for "1914 alone" is grossly exaggerated. There is no other source that verifies and corroborates the existence of a population movement on such a massive scale "in 1914 alone". That Akçam and the authors make this assertion by referring to Kuşçubaşı also does not change this reality.

Plagiarism: Celal Bayar and Numbers

Immediately after quoting the statement of Eşref Kuşçubaşı examined above, the authors contend that:

Celal Bayar, who quotes extensively from Kuşçubaşı's memoirs, gives separate figures for specific cities. The total number of these is the same as the figure above [i.e. 1,150,000] (p.172).

As their source for this assertion, the authors refer to the fifth volume and the 1576th page of Celal Bayar's memoirs, the title of which the authors give as *Ben de Yazdım (I, too, Have Written)*, and which they likely have not seen or checked. Unfortunately, this sentence, too, has been copied word for word and without proper acknowledgement from Taner Akçam's book mentioned above. In his footnote, Taner Akçam, after having provided an (inaccurate) reference to Kutay's book, adds the following information:

*Celal Bayar, who quotes extensively from Kuşçubaşı's memoirs, gives separate figures for specific cities. The total number of these is the same as the figure above.*⁹

7 Cemal Kutay, *Dünya Harbinde Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa ve Hayber'de Türk Cengi (The Special Organization in WWI and the Turkish Battle at Khayber)*, İstanbul: Tarih Yayınları, 1962, p.60.

8 Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu, İttihat ve Terakki'den Kurtuluş Savaşı'na*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002, p.191 footnote 452 Taner Akçam, *Armenien und der Völkermord: Die Istanbul Prozesse und die türkische Nationalbewegung*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2004, p.43; p.373, note 102. Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*, London: Zed Books, 2004, p.147, p.156 note 120. Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006, p.106, p.403 note 150. Taner Akçam, *Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008, p.100 footnote 77.

9 Taner Akçam, *Ermeni Tabusu...(As the Armenian Taboo...)*, p.205 footnote 251

In support of this assertion, Akçam refers to page 1576 of the fifth volume of Bayar's work *Ben de Yazdım: Milli Mücadeleye Giriş (I, too, Have Written: Joining the National Struggle)*. However, since Akçam earlier referred to Bayar's memoirs in his study, in his subsequent references to these memoirs, Akçam provides an abridged version of its title as *Ben de Yazdım (I, too, Have Written)*. Not realizing this, Demirer and Özbudun, who lifted the sentence and the reference exactly from Akçam, assume that this abridged version, provided in Akçam's footnote, is the full title of the Bayar's memoirs and therefore they cite the title of this memoir in this incomplete form in their article. Another point demonstrating that the authors have copied the sentence and reference from Akçam is that they are again repeating a mistake made by Akçam. Notwithstanding Akçam's claims, the total of the figures given in Bayar's memoirs do not make 1,150,000 as had been claimed. The total of the figures given in Bayar's memoirs is 760,000:

*There were 120,000 Greeks concentrated in the region of Ayvalık gulf; 90,000 in the Çanakkale region (including the town itself); 190,000 in the capital of İzmir; 130,000 in the region from Urla peninsula and southeast İzmir to Çeşme; 80,000 in the environs of Aydın; 150,000 in and around Akhisar, Manisa, Alaşehir, and Uşak.*¹⁰

As Demirer and Özbudun have not actually seen or checked the source they cite, they could not notice this discrepancy and repeated Akçam's mistake in claiming that the total of the figures given in Bayar's memoirs is 1,150,000. Within this context, it is necessary to draw attention to another issue. Immediately after the above figures, Bayar's memoirs provide the following information as an addition: "As a result of the continuous emigration made from Greece [to these islands], there gathered a population of up to 150,000 in Mitylene, 70,000 in Chios, and 100,000 in Samos."¹¹

Presumably, adding these figures given for the islands to the other numbers mentioned above, Akçam reaches a figure close to "1,150,000". From this point, Akçam, thus, concludes that the figures provided by Bayar confirms and corroborates the number given by Kuşçubaşı in Kutay's aforementioned book. However, it should be noted that none of these three islands, which were lost to the Ottomans in 1912, were within the borders of the Ottoman Empire by 1914. Therefore any Ottoman-controlled population movement on these islands would be out of question. Moreover, a closer inspection of Bayar's memoirs reveal that the figures provided are given for population concentration in specific regions and have no relation whatsoever to the number of people deported. In addition as the figures in question seemed exaggerated, Bayar has added a footnote of caution stating that "[the accuracy of] these numbers have not been checked by myself."¹² Furthermore, upon hearing these figures, İsmail Canbolat, the general director

10 Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım: Milli Mücadeleye Giriş (I, too, Have Written: Joining the National Struggle)*, Vol.5, İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967, p.1576

11 Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım... (I, too, Have Written)*, p.1576

12 Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım... (I, too, Have Written)*, p.1576, footnote 1.

of security, is said to have remarked “How can this be possible? If a fourth of this number arrives at Mtylene, they would not be able to find a place to sleep.”¹³

Another book by Kutay, which apparently neither Akçam nor the authors have seen, provides a more accurate and precise information with regard to the origin of the figures in question. According to this work by Kutay, which also includes detailed statements of Kuşçubaşı, the figures in question were obtained from a book prepared by the University of Athens upon the request of Greek Government. Under a subtitle which reads “Why Are the Greek Offices Prone to Exaggerations?? Kutay’s book provides the following information about these figures:

In addition, we had the information which our agents at Athens relayed from the Archives of the Greek Foreign Ministry. This was the information taken from a book entitled “The Greekdom in the Aegean” and which the Greeks had the University of Athens prepare. According to the figures given here:

There were 120,000 Greeks living in the region of Ayvalık gulf; 90,000 in the Çanakkale region (including the town itself); 190,000 inside İzmir; 130,000 in the region from Urla peninsula and southeast İzmir to Çeşme; 80,000 in the environs of Aydın; 150,000 in and around Akhisar, Manisa, Alaşehir, and Uşak.

The same book also noted that as a result of the continuous emigration made from Greece [to these islands] only in the last two years, there was a population upwards of 150,000 in Mtylene, 70,000 in Chios, and 100,000 in Samos. İsmail Canbolat [general director of security], who listened to these figures, smiled and said “How can this be possible? If a fourth of this number arrives at Mtylene, they would not be able to find a place to sleep.”¹⁴

As can be clearly seen from the above passage, the figures given are identical to those provided in Bayar’s memoirs. In addition, the figures (which are described as being exaggerated) refer to the amount of population living in specific regions, and are entirely unrelated to the number for deported or relocated. As Demirer and Özbudun have never seen or checked the source they refer to, it has not been possible for them to take note of any of these confusing issues and figures.

Plagiarism: Colonel Seyfi, İsmail Canbolat and Teşkilatı Mahsusa

According to the authors the Ottoman Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa) had conducted operations to exterminate the Armenian convoys during their relocation. The authors even provide names of certain people who were supposedly in charge of these operations:

13 Cemal Kutay, *Emiki Eterya’dan Günümüze Ege’nin Türk Kalma Savaşı*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1980, p.213.

14 Cemal Kutay, *Emiki Eterya’dan Günümüze...*, pp. 212–213

Colonel Seyfi (Seyfi Düzgören who became a brigadier-general of the Turkish Republic which was to be established some time later), Director of Security Canpolat were also among the prominent persons in charge of S.O.'s annihilation campaign (p.172).

In support of their allegations, the authors refer to two different sources which again appear to have not been consulted or seen by them. The first one is a British Foreign Office document for which the authors give the following reference “Archive of British Foreign Office, FO 371/4173 File 345,” but provide no information on the date and the author of the document and to whom it was sent.

The other source that the authors use is one that does not actually exist: the 297th page of the second volume of Fuat Balkan's memoirs. Following the authors' false reference, the readers who do not have any preliminary knowledge on the subject may try to find, in vain, the second volume of Fuat Balkan's memoirs, which does not exist. What the authors are actually trying to refer to is the memoirs that were partially published in the 23rd issue (on pages 296 and 297) and the second volume (August 2, 1962) of a journal entitled *Yakın Tarihimiz (Our Recent History)*.¹⁵ In the previous and subsequent issues of the journal, the other parts of the memoirs were also published.¹⁶

Both of these sources cited by the authors as a reference for their claims have been lifted from the Turkish translation of the Armenian scholar Vahakn N. Dadrian's articles, which are published in Turkish in the form of collected essays¹⁷ It is remarkable that in neither of these sources is there any information on or any reference to İsmail Canbolat, the general director of security, whom the authors incorrectly name as “Canpolat”. It, thus, becomes rather difficult to comprehend how, on the basis of these two sources, Demirer and Özbudun could arrive at the conclusion that İsmail Canbolat was among the prominent persons in charge of “S.O.'s annihilation campaign” toward the Armenians.

Colonel Seyfi (Düzgören)'s name is mentioned in both sources. However, the information contained in these sources is entirely unrelated to the authors' allegations. According to the memoirs of Fuat Balkan, Colonel Seyfi had spoken rather positively on the services of Fuat Balkan in Western Thrace during the First World War and requested that Fuat Balkan be sent to the same region to assume new duties:

Starting the conversation, Seyfi Bey recounted, at length, how I worked under his command in the Special Organization throughout the whole First World War, especially the services I rendered for the motherland through the blows I have inflicted on the enemy forces in Western Thrace – with such praising expressions

15 “Fuat Balkan'ın Hatıraları,” *Yakın Tarihimiz (Our Recent History)*, Vol.2, No: 23, August 2, 1962, pp.296–297.

16 In 1998 these memoirs were republished in the form of a book by Arma Yayınları. See Metin Martı (haz.), *İlk Türk Komitacı Fuat Balkan'ın Hatıraları (Fuat Balkan's Memoires)*, İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 1998.

17 Compare, Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Ermeni Soykırımında Kurumsal Roller (The Role of Institutions in the Armenian Genocide)*, Collection of Dadrian's Articles, İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004, p.45, footnote 5 and 6. See also: the same book page 132, footnote 75; p.133 footnote 78; p.134.

that blushed me. And he wanted my appointment with the utmost possible speed for the duty which would be carried out in Western Thrace rather than being uselessly kept here. Addressing İsmet Bey, he said:

“- You’ll not have any financial difficulties. I have transferred the entire secret funds of the S.O. to you. He should be immediately sent to the duty.”¹⁸

The above passage is the only instance in the relevant source which contains any reference to Colonel Seyfi Bey, and which Sibel Özbudun and Temel Demirer attempted to refer to when declaring Colonel Seyfi among “the prominent persons” in charge of the S.O.’s annihilation campaign toward the Armenians.

The British document, which the authors refer to without examining, concerns the ill treatment which Colonel Seyfi is said to have accorded the prisoners of war during the war. There is no mention of either Armenians or the S.O. in the entire text of the document, which provides the following information in regards to Colonel Seyfi:

Seifi Bey, Chief of Military Intelligence at the Turkish War Office. It was chiefly owing to the studied and brutal indifference of this man to the constant requests of the American Embassy on behalf of the prisoners of war in Turkey that a great part of the mortality and suffering among them was due. Seifi Bey was vested with great power and might have relieved the conditions of the prisoners and it may be stated that he did as much as, if not more than, his associates to check and prevent the extension of assistance.¹⁹

To conclude on the basis of this document that Colonel Seyfi was among “the prominent members” of the S.O. “charged with the extermination” of the Armenian deportees requires quite a vivid imagination. However, as the authors have not actually consulted the document which they refer to, they also see no problem in using this document in this manner.

Plagiarism: Eşref Kuşçubaşı and Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa

In discussing the activities and the assignments of the S.O., the two authors, by referring to Kutay’s interviews with Kuşçubaşı, write that:

Eşref Kuşçubaşı, one of the principal leaders of the S.O., described the function of the organization as accomplishing the duties which the Government and the security forces “absolutely could not”, and also as the “execution of measures against non-Turkish nationality population clusters” (p.172).

18 “Fuat Balkan’ın Hatıraları... (Fuat Balkan’s Memoires), p.297. Also see: Metin Martı, *İlk Türk Komitacıları...*, p.50.

19 Public Record Office F.O. 371/4173, Folio 345. Report by the US Acting Secretary of the State William Philips, dated 20 Mach 1919, and sent to the US Ambassador in England.

As their source for the phrases given within quotation marks in the above passage, the authors refer to the pages 18, 38, and 78 of Kutay's aforementioned book that contains the interviews he conducted with Kuşçubaşı. Unfortunately, the phrase "*execution of measures against non-Turkish nationality population clusters*" given within quotation marks does not exist in the book, neither in the pages to which the authors refer nor in the other pages. Instead, there is another sentence that may seem similar, but essentially different to the one above:

*It is certain that during these years, the S.O. had rendered services which the visible forces of the government and law enforcement agencies could absolutely not accomplish, not only through the secret intelligence [gathering], but also through measures taken outside the Ottoman State, as well as in areas lying within its borders, but whose commitment and loyalty to the central [government] always raised suspicions and in which the non-Turkish races and nations formed the majority.*²⁰

Although the passage given above may seem similar to the text provided by the authors, the phrase offered by the authors within quotation marks (which reads "*execution of measures against non-Turkish nationality population clusters*") does not actually exist in the book. The discrepancy between these two versions of quotations creates a rather difficult situation for the authors to explain, who are expected to cite their sources by actually checking and reading these sources. Again, the real source of the authors' quotation is another work by the Armenian scholar Vahakn N. Dadrian that has been translated into Turkish. In this study, Dadrian states the following:

*[t]he other, a principal Special Organization Chief who had "assumed duties" in connection with the Armenian deportations, admitted to having accomplished things which the government and the law enforcement agencies "absolutely couldn't," namely, "the execution of measures against non-Turkish nationality population clusters".*²¹

As the source for the quoted passage above, the Turkish translation of Dadrian's article cites the pages 18, 38 and 78 of Kutay's book. The main reason for the difference between Kutay's original text and the quotation given by Dadrian is that the text has been translated twice. Dadrian had first used the quoted passage in his lengthy essay published in *The Yale Journal of International Law* in 1989 in English.²² Subsequently in 1995, this lengthy essay was translated into Turkish by Yavuz Alogan and was published in the form of a book by Belge Yayınları. Therefore, the quoted passage has been subjected to translation twice, first by Dadrian from Turkish to English, and then by Dadrian's

20 Cemal Kutay, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde... (The Special Organization in WWI...)*, p.18

21 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Ulusal ve Uluslararası Hukuk Sorunu Olarak Jenosid: 1915 Ermeni Olayı ve Hukuki Sonuçları (Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law)*, İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1995, p.58.

22 Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications," *The Yale Journal of International Law*, Vol.14, No:2, 1989, p.276.

translator from English to Turkish. Not realizing this point and the discrepancy that occurred between the two versions of the texts, Temel Demirer and Sibel Özbudun seem to have seen no harm in attributing their quotation and reference to Cemal Kutay's original book while, in fact, copying the sentence and the reference from Dadrian.

Within this framework, it is necessary to note that even though the text preserved in the original book by Cemal Kutay, and the version presented by Dadrian may seem similar, there exists a crucial difference between the two versions of quotations. In the original book, Eşref Kuşçubaşı spoke of the S.O.'s measures taken "*in areas?* in which the non-Turkish races and nations formed the majority" and not against a group of population. Dadrian, on the other hand, alters this expression into another one which reads "the execution of measures against non-Turkish nationality population clusters," and whereby he renders a certain population group as a target. Other scholars have also noted that Dadrian has on different occasions misrepresented the words of Eşref Kuşçubaşı.²³

Conclusion

On the basis of these examples, it seems appropriate to conclude that the author's article engages in serious violations of scholarly ethics and constitutes an act of disrespect toward their readers. Throughout, the authors arrive at inaccurate, controversial and even distorted conclusions on the basis of sources which they have not actually consulted or seen. The authors, who write and pass judgments on history, do not respect the scholarly and ethical requirements of the task, even at a minimum level.

The authors need to update and expand the level of their knowledge on the tragic events of 1915 since they are not familiar enough with the existing literature on the subject. Their interpretations of these tragic incidents remain bounded by a biased line drawn by scholars such as Dadrian and Akçam, which fail to provide a fair and accurate assessment of the tragic events of 1915. However, the in-depth knowledge on any given event alone cannot guarantee the accuracy of the conclusions that would be drawn since conformity to scholarly ethics and methodology are the indispensable preconditions in reaching accurate conclusions. Unfortunately, the article under review fails to fulfill both of these indispensable preconditions.

Demirer and Özbudun also dress their subtitles with rather meaningful quotations such as "*One of the most difficult things in the world is to think and say what everyone says without thinking*" (p.164). They seem, however, not to have grasped the essential message conveyed in this quotation, especially when one takes into consideration their conduct in the article in question. Therefore, Temel Demirer and Sibel Özbudun have to think more seriously about what this quotation might actually signify in relation to their article and the shortcomings associated with it.

23 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2005, p.85.