

FACTS AND COMMENTS

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Abstract:

In this article the following issues are examined regarding the Armenian Problem during the June-Aralık 2005 period:

I- Turkey-Armenia Relations: 1. Official Statements; 2. Reopening of the Turkey-Armenia Border; 3. Kars-Akhalkalaki Railway Project; 4. Turhan Çömez's Visit to Armenia; 5. Yekta Türkyılmaz Incident

II- National and Regional Parliaments that Uphold the Genocide Allegations: 1. Venezuela; 2. Argentina; 3. Uruguay; 4. Lithuania; 5. Sao Paulo Parliament; 6. Crimean Parliament; 7. City of Edinburgh Council

III- Certain Developments Concerning the Genocide Allegations: 1. EU and Genocide Allegations; 2. Switzerland; 3. Britain; 4. Belgium; 5. Finland; 6. Assyrian and Caldean Genocide Allegations; 7. International Association of Genocide Scholars; 8. Time Magazine

Keywords: *The main words in this abstract, especially Armenia, Armenian Diaspora, Relations between Turkey and Armenian, genocide allegations*

Öz:

Bu makalede Haziran-Aralık 2005 döneminde meydana gelen aşağıdaki hususlar incelenecektir:

I- Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri: 1. Resmi Açıklamalar; 2. Türkiye-Ermenistan Sınırının Yeniden Açılması; 3. Kars-Ahalkalek Demiryolu Projesi; 4. Turhan Çömez'in Ermenistan Ziyareti, 5. Yekta Türkyılmaz Olayı

II- Soykırım İddiaları Hakkında Karar Alan Ulusal ve Bölgesel Parlamentolar: 1. Venezuela; 2. Arjantin; 3. Uruguay; 4. Litvanya; 5. Sao Paulo Parlamentosu; 6. Kırım Parlamentosu; 7. Edinburg Şehir Konseyi

III- Soykırım İddiaları ile İlgili Çeşitli Gelişmeler: 1. AB ve Soykırım İddiaları; 2. İsviçre; 3. İngiltere; 4. Belçika; 5. Finlandiya; 6. Süryani ve Keldani Soykırımı İddiaları; 7. Soykırım Bilim Adamları Uluslararası Birliği; 8. Time Dergisi

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bu özetteki başlıca sözcükler Ermenistan, Ermeni Diasporası, Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri, soykırım iddiaları*

INTRODUCTION

During the period of June-December 2005 the Armenian problem continued to be a major issue for Turkey.

The conference postponed by the Boğaziçi University took place after being switched to the Bilgi University and it continued to be the main issue the Turkish press was preoccupied with for a long time.

Talks between Turkey and Armenia have gone into a stagnant period. Unlike in the past the foreign ministers of the two countries have not met for over a year. Armenia has kept up without a break its attempts to have the Turkish-Armenian border reopened while trying to block the realization of the Kars-Akhalkalaki Railway Project.

While Balıkesir Deputy Turhan Çömez's visit to Armenia has drawn interest in that country, the fact that Yektan Türkyılmaz, who was doing research in the Armenian archives, was arrested with a pretext such as book smuggling, has raised if it is really possible to make researches in Armenian archives

During the period we are examining, Venezuelan and Lithuanian National Parliaments, the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Sao Paulo local parliament in Brazil and the City of Edinburgh Council passed resolutions upholding the Armenian genocide allegations while the parliaments of Argentina and Uruguay reiterated their earlier decisions to this effect.

The European Parliament maintained its stance of linking Turkish membership in the EU to Turkish acceptance of the Armenian genocide allegations.

Meanwhile, Turkey's relations with Switzerland have been adversely affected by the investigations opened in that country against the President of Turkish Historical Society Prof. Dr. Yusuf Halaçoğlu and Workers' Party leader Doğu

Perinçek.

The British Government has declared anew its stance vis-à-vis the genocide allegations. In Belgium, a draft resolution presented to parliament urged Turkey to recognize the “genocide”.

Erection of a monument in France to commemorate the Assyrian and Caldean “genocide” has been a surprising development. Meanwhile, the International Association of Genocide Scholars published in Herald Tribune as a paid advertisement the text of the letter the association had sent to PM Erdoğan. That move makes it obvious that the association is acting with a militant mentality rather than a scholarly one.

Finally, the way Time Magazine apologized for a DVD it had distributed in June attests to the influence exerted by the organizations of the Armenian Diaspora.

The death in June of Edward Tashji (Tasci), a friend of Turkey, has caused great sorrow both in Turkey and among the members of the Turkish community in the USA.

These issues are examined in detail below.

I. RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ARMENIA

1. Official Statements

We reported in the previous issue¹ that following the general debate on the Armenian Problem held at the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on April 13, 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan sent a letter to President Kocharyan, suggesting a joint commission of historians and other experts from the two countries. That commission would research the developments and related events of the 1915 period in all archives and declare its findings to the international community. We reported that President Kocharyan replied to that letter on April 25, expressing the view that an inter-governmental commission could be created to discuss all of the problems left in limbo between the two countries so that a con-

¹ Review of Armenian Studies, Issue No. 7-8, pp. 27-33

sensus could be reached and all these problems could be resolved.

Some time after this exchange of letters there were press reports saying that the representatives of the foreign ministries of the two countries had held a series of meetings in a third country. According to these reports, Turkish Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü and Turkish Ambassador in Tbilisi Ertan Tezgör were taking part in these meetings². Although about six months have passed since then, there has been no further news report about the talks. This brings to mind the possibility that the talks may have come to a stop at least for some time.

During his visit to Azerbaijan PM Erdoğan expressed full support for Azerbaijan's stance on the Karabagh issue and criticized the efforts aimed at making Turkey accept the genocide allegations.

During his late June visit to Azerbaijan PM Erdoğan expressed full support for Azerbaijan's stance on the Karabagh issue and criticized the efforts aimed at making Turkey accept the genocide allegations. This led to Armenian press comments to the effect that Turkey has not softened its stance³. They must be hoping that the USA and the EU would put pressure on Turkey to improve its relations with Armenia.

Later, during a visit to the USA in July, PM Erdoğan said, in reply to questions from the press, that the Armenian problem was not among the Copenhagen Criteria, that it would be better not to dig out historical hostilities, that he hoped there would be a positive response to the initiative taken by Turkey (by suggesting creation of a joint commission of historians and other experts), that Armenia should end its occupation of Karabagh, and that the dynamics that were keeping Armenia away from a far-sighted, common sense viewpoint were causing the people to lose time⁴. That speech shows that Turkey has not altered its stance regarding the Armenian problem and the Turkey-Armenia relations.

In recent years, the foreign ministers of the two countries had habitually held bilateral talks every autumn during the UN General Assembly meeting. However, this year no such meeting took place.

² cnnturk, July 13, 2005

³ RFE/RL, June 30, 2005

⁴ Milliyet, July 8, 2005

In his speech at the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul made no direct reference to the relations with Armenia. He contented himself by saying that developments towards ending the occupation of the Azerbaijani lands would create a more favorable climate in the region⁵.

In his speech to the UN General Assembly, Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan made no reference at all to his country's relations with Turkey⁶. However, in a speech he delivered at the UNESCO General Conference⁷ he said that in Turkey there were thousands of cultural monuments dating from the Armenians and that these could provide an opportunity to start a cultural dialogue and to enhance of regional cooperation. He went to say that, however, these monuments that provided striking proof of the Armenian presence in those territories, had been modified or uncaringly left alone. He expressed the hope that, however, that Turkey has taken the path towards acknowledging its pluralistic past and that this would lead to a change in Turkey's stance. He went on to say that the Turkish authorities began repairing the Ahtamar Church in Lake Van and that this could be done in many other places as well. He said that the only monument left of the Ani ruins could be repaired jointly and that the medieval town, a cultural masterpiece, could be a tie linking the two peoples. On the other hand, he bitterly criticized Azerbaijan, claiming that the Armenian monuments there are not being protected.

During his visit to Brussels in October, Kocharyan said that he had "mixed feelings"⁸ about the start of the Turkey-EU membership talks, that to meet the criteria Turkey would have to "carry out excessive reforms" and that "it is a negative moment as EU is going to start accession talks with a country that has kept its borders closed with Armenia for more than a decade and is refusing to acknowledge the dark pages of its history". Kocharyan also said, "without genuine repentance (meaning acknowledgement of the "genocide") it would be very difficult to build a modern Europe. We regret that the resolution of the European Parliament on recognizing the Armenian genocide is not mandatory for the European Commission."⁹

Meanwhile, it has been observed that Armenian officials are unwilling to con-

5 Anatolian Times, Sept. 22, 2005

6 www.armeniaforeignministry.com (Statements & Speeches, Statement by E. Vartan Oskanyan at the 60th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Sept. 18, 2005)

7 Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Oct. 7, 2005

8 Turkish Press, Oct. 26, 2005

9 Armenpress, Oct. 25, 2005

tinue talks with Turkey. President Kocharyan turned down an invitation to attend the regular annual meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It was no secret that Erdoğan would be attending.¹⁰ Thus an important opportunity was missed for a meeting between these two statesmen.

It has been observed that Armenian officials are unwilling to continue talks with Turkey.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Oskanyan carried this even further. In the course of an interview he gave to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, he said, “I do not wish to take part in merely protocol meetings to convince the world that Armenia and Turkey are holding negotiations. As a matter of fact nothing happened (at such meetings). Ankara is not ready for serious steps. Turkey is subordinate to the interests of a third state (i.e. Azerbaijan). Turkey has no courage to do what would be better for it.”¹¹

Furthermore, Oskanyan labeled as “propaganda” Ankara’s proposal¹² for a joint commission to study the events of 1915. He said, “All evidence is already here. They need first open the border and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. Only then the initiative will be useful.”

Oskanyan went on to say, “We want the EU to force Turkey to open its borders with Armenia and strengthen the freedom of speech.”¹³ According to Oskanyan, with the start of the public debates on the Armenian “genocide” the Turkish authorities would come under pressure from the public and, as a result, they would be forced to address the “genocide” issue more seriously¹⁴.

As stated above, Armenian officials do not want to have talks with Turkey at this stage. Yet, Armenia is the party that seeks an open border and establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey. Under the circumstances, satisfaction of these demands would depend on having negotiations with Turkey. However, probably because of the promises it may have received, Armenia is relying on support from certain countries as well as the EU. With the conviction that they would solve Armenia’s problems, Armenia apparently thinks there is no need for

¹⁰ *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, Oct. 28, 2005

¹¹ *Pan Armenian*, Oct. 28, 2005

¹² *Review of Armenian Studies*, Number 7-8, 2005; p. 23

¹³ *Azg.*, Oct., 28, 2005

¹⁴ *Arminfo*, Nov. 4, 2005

it to have talks with Turkey. However, Armenia's taking that path has obviously not solved the problems until now. Armenia has been pushed into inertia by the stance taken by those countries that maintain that the "genocide" must be recognized and/or the border must be reopened. As a result, reconciliation between the two countries comes to be postponed continuously.

Let us come to the Turkish Government's stance in the face of the Armenian problem. In reply to a question at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting in November, PM Erdoğan made comments in the following vein: "We have opened our air space to Armenia. The government has taken up reconstruction of a church in Van. We have opened our archives. Now let Armenia and the third states do the same. We are sure there never was genocide in our history." It is a gross mistake to call "genocide" the relocation of a rebellious community, he stressed."¹⁵

Deputy PM, Foreign Minister Gül said on one occasion that the European Parliament resolutions recognizing the Armenian "genocide" are "nothing more than a recommendation. They are not mandatory."¹⁶ He said that the decisions taken by the parliaments of certain countries were not government deeds and that, partially excepting France; none of the EU member countries had a government that had undersigned a decision recognizing the "genocide". He stressed that the resolutions in question are not legally binding. He said, "Moves like that will impede integration of millions of Turks living in Europe as well as progress in the Turkish-Armenian relations; one should leave that issue to historians."¹⁷

It is obvious that from the standpoint of the Turkey-Armenia relations the most prominent characteristic of the period we have examined is that these relations are going through a stagnant period, with the two sides maintaining an attitude of their well-known positions.

2. Reopening of the Turkey-Armenia Border

Turkey had closed its land border with Armenia in 1993 as a reaction to the Armenian forces starting to occupy as well the territories around Karabagh. Since then Armenia has sought reopening of the border. However, it is not willing to make a concession in turn for example by ending the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories or by recognizing Turkey's territorial integrity and abandoning its

¹⁵ Azg, Nov. 17, 2005

¹⁶ Anadolu Ajansi, Nov. 1, 2005

¹⁷ Milliyet, Nov. 21, 2005

genocide allegations. Turkey too does not alter its stance and the borders remain closed. The Armenians are expecting that Turkey would be obliged to open the border due to the pressure of the USA and the EU. Since the border has remained closed for 12 years this is hardly a realistic expectation.

Adam Schiff, known for the way he defends Armenian interests in the US Congress, presented to the House of Representatives on June 29, 2005 a bill titled "Bill for Ending the Turkish Blockade of Armenia" numbered H.R.3103. The lengthy section on the rationale includes the following arguments: The Turkish blockade of Armenia does serve security and welfare in the region and, therefore, undermines both the short-term and long-term US political goals. The blockade inflates Armenia's transportation costs by 30-35 percent and prevents US and international humanitarian aid to cross the border. The security and economic interests of the US, Turkey and the EU as well as NATO's Partnership for Peace Program depend on the immediate and unconditional lifting of the blockade. For that reason the US President and the Secretary of State should tell Turkey it should lift the blockade immediately to be able to reestablish economic, political and cultural ties with Armenia.

It is obvious that these arguments are meaningless and erroneous in many aspects.

The operative part of the bill urged the US Secretary of State to report to the Congress on the steps taken and the plans made by the US to have the blockade on Armenia lifted. The congressman who introduced that bill obviously thought that if the bill were to be passed the US Administration would be obliged to put pressure on Turkey to have the Armenian border opened.

About two weeks after the bill was introduced, the Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC), an institution funded by the EU, published a report estimating the potential effects on the Armenian economy of having an open border with Turkey. The report says that reopening of the border would boost Armenia's Gross National Product (GNP) by only 0.67 percent initially. Only after five years the overall effect on the GNP would be 2.7 percent. In the short run, Armenian exports would go up 5.23 percent and imports by 4.7 percent. The report also points out that, with the activation of the Kars-Gyumri railway, the reopening of the border would bring about a drop in Armenia's transportation costs¹⁸.

18 PanArmenian News, July 13, 2005, and, Eurasianet, Aug. 9, 2005

The AEPLAC report came as a great surprise because, in a report issued in 2000, the World Bank had predicted a 30 percent GNP increase in Armenia as a result of a potential reopening of the Turkey-Armenia border since then Armenians had been referring to the World Bank report at every platform available. AEPLAC officials said that their report had been prepared upon the request from

What has rendered the Parliament of Venezuela so bold is the geographical distance between the two countries and the fact that their relationship is hardly of a sizable scope.

the Armenian Government. However, Armenian Minister of Trade and Economy Karen Chshmaritian said that the government had nothing to do with the report in question.

Whose interests exactly did that report serve? That question was debated in the Armenian press. According to one argument the report supported the stance taken by Foreign Minister Oskanyan who had said that no concession would be made to Turkey to have the border reopened¹⁹. Meanwhile, Eduard Agajanov, who had served as the minister responsible for statistics during the period of 1991-1998, believed that the report was aimed at preserving Armenia's existing oligarchic economic system which supported President Kocharyan. He argued that the system in question would not be able to endure the reopening of the border and the competition to be posed by the Turkish goods.

At this stage it is not possible to tell whether the report in question reflects the truth or is geared to serve certain political interests. One may think that the Armenian Government was convinced that due to the pressure exerted by the USA and the EU, Turkey would open the border prior to the start of the Turkey-EU talks, and that, as a result, Armenia would come under pressure to pay a price in return for that. That could have caused them to arrange for a report that belittles the economic consequences of a potential reopening of the border in an effort to ward off the pressure to be put on Armenia.

Due to the contradictions between the two reports in question, one prepared by the World Bank and the other by the AEPLAC, the economic consequences of a potential reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border has become controversial. However, with a theoretical approach, one would tend to agree more with the AEPLAC report rather than the World Bank report. This is because Armenia

¹⁹ Eurasianet, Aug. 9, 2005

has a weak economy. It does not have the capacity to increase its exports or its imports to a sizable extent in a short time after a reopening of the border. That increase could be around 5 percent as the AEPLAC says in its report. However, we think that the reopening of the border would be important not because of export and import increases in the short run but from the standpoint of Armenia's economic development in the long run. This is because, for Armenia, Turkey not only would be the most reasonable economic partner but also it would provide the shortest route giving access to the countries of Europe and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, let us point out that those governing Armenia are displaying an interest in the "reopening of the border" issue with political—rather than economic—considerations, thinking that if Turkey opened its borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan would get less support from Turkey.

3. Kars-Akhalkalaki Railway Project

Establishment of railway connection between Turkey and Georgia is a subject closely related to the issue of Turkey reopening its border with Armenia.

In 1993, when it closed its border with Armenia, Turkey had closed, as a natural consequence of that decision, the railway linking the Turkish town of Kars to the Armenian town of Gyumri. Later, the idea of having a railway connection to Georgia and, via that, to Azerbaijan, was born. Suleyman Demirel, Turkey's president at that time, told Eduard Schevardnadze²⁰ about this plan during a visit to Georgia in July 1997 and the two sides reached an agreement in principle. The plan was consisting of extending the existing railway line that connected Kars to other parts of Turkey, to the Georgian town of Akhalkalaki. It was said that the new line, 68 kilometers of which would be built on Turkish soil and 30 kilometers in Georgia, would cost something in the range of \$400-500 million²¹. Later, it was said that the railway project could be realized for around \$250 million²².

Although the project, which required external financing as well, could not be started for some time, it was re-visited in 2004 and the heads of state of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey who met in Baku to inaugurate the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline signed the "Declaration on creation of international rail corridor Kars-Tbilisi-Baku" on May 25, 2005.

²⁰ Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 7, 2005

²¹ Asbarez, May 25, 2005

²² Hasan Kanbolat, Türkiye Kafkasya'ya Demir Ağlarla Bağlanacak Mı? [Will Turkey Be Connected to the Caucasus by Railway?], Stratejik Analiz, Issue No 56, September 2005, p. 57

This project disturbed Armenia because when the new railway became operational the Kars-Gyumri railway would become almost useless. Also, Armenia saw the new railway project as a move aimed at isolating Armenia. To prevent the construction of the new railway it applied to the EU and, at the same time, mobilized the pro-Armenian members of the US Congress.

Armenian Foreign Minister Oskanyan sent a letter to Jacques Barrot, the vice-chairman of the EU Commission who is coordinating affairs related to transportation, on May 21, that is, a week after the Baku declaration was issued. He told Barrot that a railway line linking Kars to Tbilisi via the Armenian town of Gyumri was already in existence, that in fact that line was included in the EU's TRACECA program, that the line was no longer in use because of the Turkish decision to impose a blockade on Armenia, and that construction of a new railway would require large amounts of financial resources. He said that the new railway would serve Turkey's policy of maintaining the blockade, and that the Armenia-Turkey border was the sole frontier in Europe that was put under a blockade. He maintained that if Europe wanted cooperation in South Caucasus, reopening of the Kars-Gyumri railway would make the best contribution to that. If the Kars-Gyumri line remained inactive that would constitute an obstacle to the implementation of Europe's new policy of good-neighborliness, he said²³. Meanwhile, it was claimed that, with the sole aim of obstructing the Kars-Akhalkalaki project, Armenia had informed the parties concerned that if the Kars-Gyumri line were to be reopened, Armenia would agree not to use that line to transport Armenian goods for some time²⁴. Actually, this proposal was not practical, as Armenia has, for the moment, almost no goods to be exported by this line.

Hopes for the Kars-Akhalkalaki railway project received a boost last November when EU Commission's Energy and Transportation Director General Francois Lamoureux said, during a visit to Baku, that they had examined the project and might take part in its financing²⁵. However, latest news reports²⁶ coming from Armenian sources allege that there has been a change in the Commission's attitude. According to these reports, in response to the aforementioned Oskanyan letter dated May 21, the EU Commission's General Directorate of Energy and Transportation said that since a railway line connecting Gyumri to Tbilisi was already in existence there was no need to construct a Kars-Akhalkalaki line, and that, for

23 AZG, Sept. 9, 2005

24 Milliyet, Sept. 1, 2005

25 AZG, Sept. 9, 2005

26 Noyan Tapan, Oct. 14, 2005

that reason, the EU would not support construction of the proposed new line.

The EU stance regarding construction of a railway between Kars and Akhalkalaki became clearer during President Kocharyan's visit to Brussels in October. Following his meeting with Kocharyan, EU High Representative for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, in reply to a question, said that operation of the existing transport facilities would be more preferable than investing in construction of new railroads²⁷. Furthermore, he pointed out that "The more the Armenian-Turkish border is opened the better. In that case there will be no longer the need to have this new railroad." Both sides should strive to have the border reopened, he added²⁸.

Meanwhile, it must be noted that the Yerevan Airport is operated by Corporacion America which is owned by Eduardo Eurnekian, a billionaire of Armenian origin.

Thus it has been clarified that the EU is not in favor of construction of the proposed railway. On that occasion, it has also been confirmed that the EU is insisting on having the border reopened. Meanwhile, it is quite significant that Solana did not refer at all to the reasons due to which the Turkish-Armenian border was closed in the first place. If the EU wanted to conduct a balanced policy between Turkey and Armenia it should have urged Armenia to eliminate the causes of the border closure (that is, the Armenian occupation of the Azerbaijani territories outside Karabagh as well) while urging Turkey to open the border.

On the other hand, UN Under-Secretary-General Anwarul K. Chowdhury told the sixth meeting of the ministers of the Developing Countries Group that the Baku – Tbilisi – Akhalkalaki - Kars railway would ensure passenger and cargo transportation from Baku to Europe.²⁹

Meanwhile, together with George Radanovich who has always cooperated with the Armenian Diaspora in the USA, Congressmen Joe Knollenberg and Frank Pallone, co-chairmen of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, presented to the House of Representatives on July 21, 2005 a bill titled "South Caucasus Integration and Open Railroads Act" (H.R. 3361). In the section that

²⁷ Pan Armenian, Oct. 21, 2005

²⁸ RFE/RL, Oct. 20, 2005

²⁹ PanArmenian News, Sept. 23, 2005

explains the grounds for the bill, the aforementioned negative Armenian views regarding the Kars-Akhalkalaki railway are reiterated. In the operative section of the bill the Congress is asked to prohibit U.S. assistance for the promotion or development of railroads that would link Baku, Tbilisi and Kars while bypassing Armenia. If the bill is enacted, it will not be possible to use various official US funds to help finance the Kars-Akhalkalaki railway. The newly-appointed US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson declared, in a statement he made before assuming his new position, that the US Administration has not taken a position on South Caucasian railway and has not provided any financial aid.

Efforts are being made to convince the EU too to take a similar stance. Under the circumstances, the financing needed for this route will have to be sought from other quarters. According to Azerbaijan's Transportation Minister Musa Panakov, certain Japanese establishments and the Asian Bank for Development are interested in this project³⁰. On the other hand, Asraf Sihaliev of Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry says they will seek support from the EU for the construction of the Kars-Akhalkalaki railway³¹.

Obviously the struggle continues regarding the project. Turkey and Azerbaijan need this route from the standpoint of economy and security. Since it has been already delayed for too long, it would be useful to have the construction work started as soon as possible.

4. Turhan Çömez's visit to Armenia

Justice and Development Party (AKP) Balıkesir Deputy Turhan Çömez paid an unofficial visit to Armenia in June 2005. He gave a lecture at the Yerevan University and met with various dignitaries including the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Artur Bagdasaryan, Dashnak Party Director Giro Manoyan and Yerevan Mayor Yervand Zakharyan. He mixed with the crowds, held babies in his arms, and, since he is a doctor of medicine, took part in a kidney operation performed on an elderly woman at a hospital³². Although he defends the Turkish views on the "genocide" issue as well, Turhan Çömez was met with interest and people were sympathetic towards him wherever he went because of his open, sincere attitude. His visit received extensive Armenian press coverage.

30 Les Nouvelles d'Arménie, Oct. 17, 2005

31 PanArmenian, Oct. 17, 2005

32 CNN TURK, June 10, 2005; Zaman, June 12, 2005

The press displayed great interest in his talks with Khachatur Sukiasyan, a wealthy businessman and member of parliament. While Sukiasyan focused on the possibility of Turkey reopening the border and seemed unwilling to alter the Armenian stance regarding the genocide allegations, Turhan Çömez said, "Let the two of us make a joint effort. I could make a speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly on the reopening of the border gate and, simultaneously, you could make a speech at your Parliament, saying that the 1915 incidents were not genocide, and that this is an issue for the historians to research." He also demanded from Armenia to recognize Turkey's territorial integrity, which would be a small step but an important start. However, Sukiasyan reiterated the usual Armenian argument that bilateral relations should begin without any preconditions. When Sukiasyan said that Turkey should apologize for the "genocide", Çömez reminded him of the things Armenian gangs had done during World War I and the way ASALA assassinated Turkish diplomats.

Upon his return to Turkey, Turhan Çömez recounted his impressions of Armenia in a series of articles that appeared in daily *Akşam*. Underlining the need to produce effective and rational policies to break the anti-Turkey prejudices in Armenia, to destroy the taboos and to end the obstinate stance on the "genocide", he suggested a number of steps:

- A joint working group of Turkish and Armenian members of parliament should be created.

- The journalists of the two countries should pay mutual visits more frequently, interviewing the statesmen of the two sides and relaying their views.

- Youth programs should be prepared for the students of the two sides. There should be student exchanges, with Turkish students staying at the houses of Armenian families and vice versa.

- The Armenian cultural heritage of the past that has reached our day should be repaired and gained the world tourism. (In this context, the Ani ruins can be opened up to daily tours.)

- There should be cultural exchanges, and joint artistic events should be planned.

- Joint sports contests should be staged.

- The "suitcase trade" with Armenia should be encouraged.

- In line with the demands of the two sides, meetings should be staged for specific sectors and for academics.

- All kinds of unofficial contacts should be mutually encouraged.

- The Turkish Radio-TV Corporation (TRT) should broadcast radio and TV

programs to Armenia in the Armenian language. (The TRT broadcast in 25 languages but Armenian is not one of them. The Armenian people should be able to get news of Turkey from Turkey itself rather than via France.)³³

The steps suggested by Turhan Çömez could help eliminate the Armenians' prejudices against Turkey and thus make it easier for Turkey to establish normal relations with Armenia. Whether these suggestions can be translated into action depends on the extent to which Armenia would be ready to enter into cooperation with Turkey.

5. The Yektan Türkyılmaz Incident

In early July the Armenian press reported that Yektan Türkyılmaz, a Turkish national whom Armenian newspapers defined as a "Kurdish" historian, was arrested for book smuggling. According to press reports, Türkyılmaz spoke Armenian and was doing research in the Armenian archives. Earlier, he had stated that he believed that the Ottoman administration had subjected the Armenians to genocide. He had also said that the Armenian archives were open to research and that he had met with no problems when working in these archives.

Türkyılmaz attempted to take out of Armenia a number of books without obtaining authorization. The point is, nobody had told him that authorization would be needed. As he had good intentions, the Armenian authorities could have told him to comply with that formality rather than throwing him into prison or they could have simply confiscated the books and permitted him to leave Armenia. That was not done. He was arrested according to an Armenian law under which he would face a prison sentence of up to eight years. Furthermore, he was arrested by the Armenian secret service and placed in a maximum-security prison belonging to that service.

Türkyılmaz's arrest triggered negative reactions in Turkey and in the USA. At the instigation of the Sabancı University and the Duke University where Türkyılmaz is a Ph.D. student, a solidarity committee was formed and a campaign was launched to obtain his release.

In this framework, some two hundred scholars from various countries sent a letter to President Kocharyan, calling for Türkyılmaz's release³⁴. That letter said

³³ Akşam, June 29, 2005

³⁴ Hyetert, Aug. 1, 2005

that Türkyılmaz was one of the few Turkish scholars that approached the 1915 events in a critical manner (that is, by accepting the genocide allegations). It went on to say that his arrest created serious doubts as to the extent to which Armenia supports independent academic studies into Armenian history. Those signing the letter included a number of Turks such as H. Berktaş, T. Akçam, M. Belge, F.M. Göçek, O. Pamuk and R. Zarakolu who have been persistently defending the Armenian genocide allegations as well as a number of American Armenians who have the same conviction including P. Balakian, V.N. Dadrian, D.R. Papazian and A. Sarafian.

Obviously the Armenians have managed to persuade a number of Lithuanian parliamentarians including Algis Kaseta, the leader of the Liberal Party group in Parliament.

Among the participants of this campaign was Senator Bob Dole who was a presidential candidate in the US elections and who has been striving to meet the demands of Armenia and the Armenians. In a letter he sent to President Kocharyan, he stressed that he and his wife, also a senator, have been old friends and supporters of Armenia, adding that Türkyılmaz's arrest created doubts as to the democratic development and rule of law in Armenia. He urged the Armenian authorities to release him immediately. Also, he called for a revision of the Armenian Penal Code which he described as a strange law³⁵.

Thanks to all these initiatives, especially the letter sent by Dole, a highly important figure in the USA, Türkyılmaz was released from prison. The court gave him a suspended one-year prison sentence and he was released from custody. He returned to the USA in early September.

It is not clear even today why the Armenian authorities arrested a person who has been defending the Armenian views. The only possibility that comes to mind is that the Armenians do not want any research conducted in their archives by Turkish or other foreign independent scholars, and that they arrested Türkyılmaz as a deterrent measure in an effort to give the impression that if even a person arguing that the "Armenian genocide" had taken place can be arrested, those who do not support the Armenian allegations would be in for heavy-handed treatment indeed. In short, one cannot help but conclude that contrary to the age-old

35 ANN/Groong, Aug. 6, 2005

Armenian argument, the Armenian archives are “open” only in name. In reality, the archives remain closed to the independent researchers.

II. NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARLIAMENTS THAT UPHOLD THE GENOCIDE ALLEGATIONS

1. Venezuela

The Parliament of Venezuela passed unanimously on July 14, 2005 a resolution supporting the Armenian genocide allegations³⁶.

The introduction part of the resolution argues, in brief, that the first scientifically planned, organized and executed genocide in the history of humanity took place 90 years ago, perpetrated against the Armenian people by the “Young Turks and their ideology of Pan-Turkism”, involving the extermination of almost two million people. It says that crimes of this nature should be denounced in order to prevent them from happening again, and that the “Armenian genocide” should be repudiated by the Turkish people and all the peoples of the world. It says that due to political causes and interests, there is an ongoing attempt to change history “through the negation of this genocide”.

Translated into English, the operative section of the resolution is as follows:

“The National Assembly resolves

First: To express to the Armenian people, to their government and to the strong Armenian-Venezuelan community, support on their valid and delayed humanitarian aspirations of justice.

Second: To request the EU to postpone Turkey’s membership bid until the recognition by Turkey of the Armenian genocide.

Third: To designate a committee in charge of delivering this resolution to the Armenian Parliament and to the Armenian Religious authorities.

Fourth: To form a “Parliamentary Group of Friendship to the Armenian People.”

³⁶ Yerki, July 20, 2005

A number of elements (the use of the phrase, “the first scientifically planned, organized and executed genocide in the history of humanity”, the claim that almost two million people had been exterminated, and the fact that the EU was urged to postpone the Turkish bid until Turkey recognized the “genocide”) make this resolution the harshest and the most exaggerated among the resolutions adopted on this issue by the parliaments of various countries to date.

Having failed to elicit from the British Parliament a resolution supporting their genocide allegations, Armenian organizations focused on the British local parliaments.

This is due to a variety of reasons. Undoubtedly what has rendered the Parliament of Venezuela so bold is the geographical distance between the two countries and the fact that their relationship is hardly of a sizable scope. Another factor which enabled it to take such a decision with ease is the presence in the country of a wealthy, in other words, influential, Armenian community whereas few Turks live there. Furthermore, the resolutions adopted in Uruguay and Argentina certainly set a precedent for the Parliament of Venezuela. One Armenian source has written that with this resolution, President Chavez of Venezuela, who has been criticized by the US for his authoritarian rule and his populist attitude, has found a chance to urge the westerners, especially the European countries, to do their conscientious duty.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Committee of the Catholic Churches of Venezuela adopted on Aug. 3, 2005 a resolution “aimed at preventing genocides in the future”. It said, “considering that the year 2005 marks the 90th anniversary of the first planned and organized genocide of the 20th Century”, it condemned “such criminal acts” perpetrated against the Armenian people and prayed that “such actions may never be repeated between human beings”. It expressed to the Armenian people of Venezuela support for their “just humanitarian claims as a people, which have been postponed for so long.” Also, it expressed solidarity with “the memory of faithful Armenian Christians who preferred death rather than renouncing their faith”.

The Catholic Church’s resolution is clearly similar to the resolution passed by the Venezuelan Parliament except in one significant aspect. It refers to “Armenian Christians who preferred death rather than renouncing their faith”. These words

³⁷ Armennews, July 22, 2005

obviously mean that Armenians had come under pressure to convert to another religion and that some of them chose death not to do that. Even the “major” Armenian sources had not made such a claim up to now. One cannot help but conclude that the Catholic Church of Venezuela fabricated that claim in an effort to include a religious element in the resolution.

2. Argentina

We had reported earlier³⁸ that on April 20, 2005 Argentinean Senate had passed a resolution confirming a number of earlier resolutions recognizing the “Armenian genocide” adopted in the years 1993, 2003 and 2004, and that the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement denouncing and rejecting that resolution on May 5, 2005. On July 27, the Argentinean Senate passed yet another resolution, confirming its April 20 resolution and saying that since there is no statute of limitations for crimes against humanity; Turkey should recognize the “Armenian genocide”. This latest resolution has worsened the disagreement that exists between the two countries on this issue.

Meanwhile, on July 30, 2005, a “monument to the victims of the Armenian genocide” was unveiled in Rosario, Argentina.³⁹

Argentina’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Rafael Bielsa had a warm welcome when he visited Armenia in late August. He was received by President Kocharyan and he visited the Genocide Museum and Monument in Yerevan. Bielsa said that the Armenian community in Argentina constituted the main element of the good relations between the two countries⁴⁰. He stressed that the 100,000-strong Armenian community was an inseparable part of the Argentinean society.⁴¹ During the visit Bielsa announced his country’s intention to open an embassy in Armenia.⁴² Armenia already has an embassy in Argentina.

Meanwhile, it must be noted that the Yerevan Airport is operated by Corporation America which is owned by Eduardo Eurnekian, a billionaire of Armenian origin, and that the company in question has pledged to make a \$105 million investment to construct a new terminal building at the airport⁴³.

38 See, Review of Armenian Studies, Issue no. 7-8, pp. 33-34

39 PanArmenian News Network, Aug. 2, 2005

40 Rfe/RI, Aug. 31, 2005

41 Armenpress, Aug. 31, 2005

42 Asbarez, Aug. 31, 2005

43 Armenpress, Aug. 31, 2005

3. *Uruguay*

As we had previously mentioned⁴⁴, Uruguay is the first country to acknowledge the Armenian genocide allegations, with its House of Representatives passing a resolution to this effect. Since then, the House has confirmed that resolution repeatedly – on May 3, 2005 in the latest instance. On that day the House asked the Foreign Ministry of Uruguay to suggest to the UN that April 24 be declared the “Condemnation and Repudiation of All Kinds of Genocide Day”. Also in Uruguay, a member of parliament who is of Armenian origin has been waging a campaign to collect signatures with the aim of urging the EU to demand that Turkey recognize the Armenian “genocide”.

The investigation has been opened because Prof. Halaçoğlu expressed his views on an historical issue, which was quite normal for he is serving as the President of Turkish Historical Society for many years.

Turkish Ambassador to Argentina Şükrü Tufan, who is accredited to Uruguay as well, went to Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, where he had met with the members of the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, explaining to them PM Erdoğan’s proposal for creation of a commission consisting of historians.⁴⁵ He told them that his government was ready to accept the findings of such a commission and he asked them to support that proposal. Armenians held a demonstration to protest against the ambassador’s initiative⁴⁶. The Armenian ambassador in Uruguay met with the members of the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee and told them that the Armenian “genocide” required no proof. He urged Uruguay to support reopening of the Turkish-Armenian border and establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries⁴⁷.

To date, the Uruguay Government has not applied to the UN to have April 24 declared the “Condemnation and Repudiation of All Kinds of Genocide Day” though the country’s House of Representatives had urged it to do so in the resolution it passed on May 3, 2005. However, the Armenians keep up their anti-Turkey activities in Uruguay. In fact, on Oct. 3, 2005, that is, the day on which

⁴⁴ See Review of Armenian Studies, Issue no. 7-8, p. 34

⁴⁵ See Review of Armenian Studies, Issue no. 7-8, pp. 23-25

⁴⁶ Armenews, Aug. 2. 2005

⁴⁷ PanArmenian News Network, Aug. 4, 2005

the Turkey-EU accession talks began, a large crowd demonstrated in front of the EU representation office in Montevideo, urging the EU to reject the Turkish candidacy⁴⁸.

4. Lithuania

The Lithuanian Parliament adopted on Dec. 15, 2005 a resolution recognizing and denouncing the Armenian “genocide” and urging Turkey to recognize it since “there is no sense in denying the historical truth”⁴⁹.

The 141-member Parliament adopted the resolution at a session where 55 members were present. Of these, 48 voted in favor of the draft while three abstained. Although resulting from a “fait-accompli” the resolution is legally valid. Obviously the Armenians have managed to persuade a number of Lithuanian parliamentarians including Algis Kaseta⁵⁰, the leader of the Liberal Party group in Parliament. The resolution’s tone is quite strong. Not contenting itself with recognizing the alleged genocide the Parliament urged the Turkish Government to recognize it as well. On the other hand, the Turkish Government has been urged not to deny the “historical truth”. Considering the fact that the events of 1915 do not concern Lithuania even in the slightest manner, the tone of the Lithuanian resolution is surprising indeed. It has generally been observed that the smaller a country the harsher the resolutions it adopts.

Deputy spokesman of the Armenian Foreign Minister has said that the resolution has strengthened the position of Armenia in the international sphere⁵¹. Meanwhile, Armenian Assembly Speaker Bagdasaryan has sent a letter to his Lithuanian counterpart to express his thanks⁵².

In a statement issued on Dec. 16, 2005, the Turkish Foreign Ministry denounced the Lithuanian resolution, pointing out that it is not a duty for parliaments to pass judgment on controversial periods of history and that history must be assessed by historians. It stressed that the resolution can negatively affect the relations between Turkey and Lithuania and the process of normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia.

48 Asbarez, Oct. 5, 2005

49 Pan Armenian, Dec. 16, 2005

50 REF/RL, Dec. 16, 2005

51 Noyan Tapan, Dec. 16, 2005

52 RFE/RL NEWSLINE, Dec. 19, 2005

5. *Sao Paulo Parliament*

The parliament of Brazil's Sao Paulo region passed unanimously on Oct. 20, 2005 a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations and calling for recognition of the "genocide" at a "federal level" as well⁵³.

Meanwhile, the Sao Paulo University is setting up a "Tolerance Museum" involving the crimes committed against humanity including the Holocaust. One understands that the museum will have a section on the Armenian "genocide"⁵⁴.

6. *Crimean Parliament*

The parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea had passed on May 19, 2005 with 59 votes against 3 a resolution that said that April 24 would be marked as the "Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Victims" day every year. However, the speaker of the autonomous parliament, Boris Deich, refrained from undersigning the resolution on the grounds that it could have undesirable political consequences. There were press reports which said that the government of Ukraine -- to which Crimea is attached -- was seeking a number of amendments in the resolution, suggesting, for example, that the word "genocide" be dropped in favor of "tragedy". Talks were held on this issue on June 22, 2005 but the Crimean Parliament refused to make changes in the text⁵⁵. Thus, Crimea too has ended up recognizing the alleged genocide.

This resolution resulted from the political conditions reigning in the Crimea region. The real owners of the territory, the Crimean Tartars, were exiled from their country and few of them have been able to return. And those who have managed to return do not have the strength to have a say in the region. The parliament they have set up, which is not legal, has taken a stance against the resolution in question but its efforts have not proved effective. Although Crimea is part of Ukraine it has a large Russian population and it was the ethnic Russian members of the parliament who had proposed the resolution in question in the first place. However, it is a fact that their ethnic Ukrainian colleagues have supported that move.

⁵³ Arka News, Oct. 22, 2005

⁵⁴ Milliyet, Sept. 7, 2005

⁵⁵ PanArmenian News, June 25, 2005

7. Edinburgh City Council Decision

Having failed to elicit from the British Parliament a resolution supporting their genocide allegations, Armenian organizations focused on the British local parliaments. As a result of their efforts a draft resolution recognizing the Armenian “genocide” was submitted to the Edinburgh City Council.

For foreign dignitaries Armenian protocol calls for a visit to the genocide monument and a great majority of them do comply with that request so as to act according to local custom.

Ian White, the leader of the conservative group at the Edinburgh City Council, pointed out that was not an issue for the City Council. He stressed that the Council should focus on repairing the roads and keeping them open. The Labor Party group and its leader, Mayor Donald Anderson, defended the opposite idea. Anderson even sent a letter to the Turkish Embassy in London, saying that he had no doubt that the Armenian community had been subjected to genocide by the Ottoman regime.

The Federation of Turkish Associations in UK arranged for a meeting at the Edinburgh City Council hall on Oct. 24, 2005. ASAM Chairman Gündüz Aktan and Prof. Norman Stone of Koç University took part in the meeting to provide information about the 1915 relocation, explaining why those events could not be considered genocide. Mayor Anderson attended the meeting, listening to the speeches without raising objections. However, he found himself in a difficult position when he could not give satisfactory answers to the questions posed to him.

Following that meeting one would normally expect the Edinburgh City Council to shelve the motion. That was not to happen. The motion was debated on Nov. 16 as scheduled and passed with 29 votes cast by the Labor Party and Liberal council members in favor of the motion while 16 members voted against it.

In the end, this obviously turned into a partisan tug-of-war at the City Council rather than a debate on whether the 1915 relocation was genocide or not. Meanwhile, there seems to be no logical reason for Mayor Anderson to strive so hard to have the motion passed, displaying an attitude that runs against the stance taken

by Britain's ruling Labor Party. Anderson may have personal reasons to do so.

The motion adopted by the City Council says, in short, that a number of parliaments around the world have recognized as genocide the events in Anatolia in 1915, that atrocities and tragedies occurred on all sides in the conflicts but that the Ottoman actions against the Armenian community did constitute genocide. It expresses support for dialogue and reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples but does not support the view that genocide recognition should be made a condition for membership of the European Union.

III. CERTAIN DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE GENOCIDE ALLEGATIONS

1. *EU and the Armenian Question*

It may be remembered that the European Parliament adopted in 1987 a resolution that recognized the Armenian genocide allegations and stressed that Turkey would not be able to become a member of the EU unless it recognized the "genocide". Since then this resolution has been confirmed many times by the European Parliament on the EU progress reports on Turkey.

Although the European Parliament has thus taken a stance in favor of the Armenian allegations the European Council and the European Commission have kept silent on this issue not counting an indirect reference made in a European Commission report to the need for reconciliation⁵⁶.

On Sept. 28, 2005, that is, a few days prior to the start of the Turkey-EU accession talks, the European Parliament adopted a resolution expressing the EU countries' demands on and complaints about Turkey. These demands included also the Armenian genocide claims.

The Article "J" of the "introduction" section of the resolution puts on record that Turkey has not complied with the European Parliament demands regarding the Armenian issues specified in an earlier resolution dated June 18, 1987. In Article 5 of the operative section of the resolution Turkey is invited to recognize the Armenian "genocide" as a precondition to Turkish membership in the EU.

⁵⁶ PanArmenian News, June 25, 2005

Some Turkish newspapers⁵⁷ saw that resolution as the European Parliament's way of putting forth new conditions for Turkey's EU membership. However, as we explained above, that condition has existed since 1987. Besides, it can hardly be said that this condition has proved effective. This is because European Parliament decisions are not binding. They are mainly of a recommendatory nature and they indicate the European Parliament's tendencies. The need for Turkey to recognize the genocide allegations is not one of the Copenhagen Criteria. There is no record of any such requirement in the other documents pertaining to Turkey's candidacy (including, in the latest instance, the Negotiating Framework Document) either. Accordingly, as an organization, the EU will not be demanding that Turkey recognize the genocide allegations during the Turkey-EU accession talks. However, since talks would be conducted with EU countries as well, these countries will have an opportunity to raise "individually" the issues of their choice. In fact, France, the Netherlands and Austria have already announced that they would tackle the Armenian "genocide" during the talks. However, if Turkey refused to discuss this issue or stressed that it would not recognize the "genocide" there is nothing these countries could do other than exercising their veto. And that would go against the EU tradition of member countries acting together. Under "normal" circumstances it would be hard to think that Turkey's accession process would be suspended only because of the "genocide" issue. Coming to the European Parliament, if, in the future, that is, at least a decade from now, Turkey manages to bring the accession talks to a successful conclusion and if an accession agreement can be prepared, there will be the possibility that the European Parliament would, during the ratification process of that agreement, take into consideration its 1987 decision and the subsequent European Parliament decisions on the same subject, and refuse or postpone to ratify the accession agreement until Turkey recognizes the "genocide".

Meanwhile, it must be noted that the Brussels-based *Fédération Euro-Arménienne pour la Justice et la Démocratie* founded by the Tashnaks to shape the public opinion according to the Armenian views during the process of Turkey's EU accession process, has carried out an intense propaganda campaign to have Turkey recognize the "genocide" prior to the start of the accession talks. In cooperation with the Christian Democrat group in the European Parliament, the Federation in question staged a conference on the "December 2004-October 2005: Has Turkey Changed?" theme at the European Parliament building on Sept. 22, 2005,

57 *Hürriyet* and *Radikal*, Sept, 29, 2005

that is, about a week before the start of the Turkey-EU accession talks. The speakers argued that Turkey has not fulfilled yet the criteria to be able to join the EU⁵⁸. Meanwhile, on Oct. 3, 2005 when the accession talks were due to start, Armenians held a large-scale demonstration in Luxembourg, demanding that Turkey recognize the “genocide”⁵⁹. However, their efforts did not yield results -- obviously because governments are harder to influence than parliamentarians. Indeed, after intense quarrels and stiff bargaining the Negotiating Framework Document was issued and, to the great disappointment of the Tashnak circles, it did not include any reference pertaining to the Armenian demands. The Comité pour la Défense de la Cause Arménienne (CDCA), the main Armenian organization in France, issued a statement⁶⁰, saying that by agreeing to start negotiations with a genocidal and “negating” country Europe had lost its values. It vowed to keep up the struggle “after this betrayal” as well until the Armenian “genocide” is recognized and retribution (compensation and territory) for Armenians takes place.

Let us come to Armenia’s views on the EU decision to start the accession talks with Turkey. Foreign Minister Oskanyan said that if Turkey wanted to join the EU Turkey should comply with the EU standards, and, for that, it would have to establish normal relations with its neighbors. He expressed the hope that the “border reopening” issue too would be taken up during the talks. He stressed that discussions on the Armenian issues would make a positive effect on the relations between the two countries. Regarding the aforementioned European Parliament resolution of September 28 that Turkish recognition of the “Armenian genocide” was a precondition for Turkish accession to the EU; Oskanyan contented himself with saying that the decision was “positive and natural”.⁶¹

Obviously the Armenian Foreign Minister is not thinking of solving the problems via negotiations with Turkey. Instead, he is thinking of benefiting from the pressure the EU is expected to put on Turkey on this issue. Meanwhile, it has been seen yet another time that, contrary to the Diaspora, the Armenian Government attaches secondary importance to the recognition of the “genocide” issue.

During his visit to Belgium and the EU in October, President Kocharyan had talks with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, European Par-

58 Milliyet and Hürriyet, Sept. 22, 2005; Armenews, Sept. 24, 2005

59 According to an Armenian source (CDCA, Oct. 3, 2005), 2,500 people took part in that demonstration. Meanwhile, some 5,000 Kurds in Europe staged on the same day an anti-Turkey demonstration.

60 CDCA, Oct. 3, 2005

61 Pan Armenian News, Sept. 29, 2005

liament President Josep Borrell, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Belgian Senate President Anne-Marie Lizin. In all these meetings he reiterated his demands, saying that Turkey should open its border with Armenia, establish diplomatic relations with Armenia and recognize the Armenian “genocide”. Although his demand for an open border triggered a sympathetic reaction from all of his interlocutors, he received support on the “genocide” issue only from European Parliament President Borrell and Belgian Senate President Lizin. On another occasion, European Council Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden called on Turkey to take a sober look at the historical facts⁶², thus joining, albeit indirectly, those that recognizes the “genocide”.

Also, by visiting the Armenian “genocide” monument at Ixelles in the company of Kocharyan⁶³, Lizin has shown that she favors the Armenian views. Her stance conflicts with the Belgian proposal⁶⁴ to mediate between Armenia and Turkey. Meanwhile, Belgium will undertake the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) presidency in 2006. Her spokesman has announced that Belgium targets to convene the parliament speakers of the 55 OSCE member countries in January 2006 and bring together the speakers of Turkey and Armenia in a special meeting.⁶⁵

As to EU, Commission President Barroso gave a lecture at the Harvard University, USA, in mid-October. A newspaper report quoted him as expressing full support for Turkish accession to the EU and then to say that Turks should acknowledge the reality of Armenian “genocide”, that Europeans disliked the words “there was no genocide”, that Ankara’s best move would be the acknowledgement of the Armenian “genocide” and opening borders with Armenia. Armenians were elated by the news⁶⁶. European Armenian Federation Chairwoman Hilda Chobanian said, “We welcome the statement of Mr. Barroso as a reflection of the European values and return to a principled approach on the part of European Commission.” With the declaration the three main bodies of the EU – the Parliament, Commission and Council – have taken a common stand that can no longer be ignored by Turkey, she added. She also said, “As a next step we will work towards the Commission incorporating these demands into relevant chapters of the Acquis and into the screening procedure for Turkey.”⁶⁷

62 Pan Armenian, Nov. 10, 2005

63 Zaman, Oct. 24, 2005

64 Zaman, Nov. 4, 2005

65 Anadolu Ajansi, Nov. 2, 2005

66 Hurriyet, Oct. 24, 2005

67 European Armenian Federation Press Release, Oct. 26, 2005

However, their elation was short-lived. Deputy Spokesperson of the EU said that the European Commission President did not state that Turkey should acknowledge the Armenian genocide.

The allegation that the Assyrians and the Caldeans had been subjected to genocide is not new.

Indeed, it would not be possible for Barroso to make such a statement in the absence of a European Commission decision to this effect. As a matter of fact, Barroso did not refer to the “genocide” issue in his statement to the press on his Oct. 22 meeting with President Kocharyan. He merely said, “Turkey has to establish good relations with all its neighbors.”⁶⁸

The European Commission’s ‘Turkey Progress Report’, which was released soon after that incident, did not contain the word “genocide”. The report simply referred to the “tragic incidents of the year 1915”.⁶⁹ That came as a disappointment to the Armenians who had been striving to have their demand for “recognition of the genocide”⁷⁰ inserted in the report. Chobanian said, “We expect that the European Commission will finally take into account demands of European citizens and especially the European Parliament resolution instead of providing demands convenient to Ankara. The EU should put forward demands of recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish state.”⁷¹

2. *Switzerland*

The Armenian allegations continue to poison the Turkey-Switzerland relations.

It may be remembered that Turkey had a strong reaction to the resolution the Swiss Parliament adopted on Dec. 16, 2003 to recognize the Armenian “genocide”. The Turkish Foreign Ministry vigorously condemned and rejected the resolution. Due to this resolution Swiss Foreign Minister Ms. Calmy-Rey’s planned visit to Turkey was postponed. After that, bilateral relations faltered until, due to the persistent requests of the Swiss side, Ms. Calmy-Rey visited Turkey in late March 2005 and the process of returning the bilateral relations to their normal state began.

⁶⁸ Pan Armenian, Oct. 22, 2005

⁶⁹ Arminfo, Nov. 5, 2005

⁷⁰ Pan Armenian, Nov. 10, 2005

⁷¹ Pan Armenian, Nov. 10, 2005

However, about a month after that visit, the prosecutor of the Swiss canton of Zurich started an investigation into President of the Turkish Historical Society Prof. Dr. Yusuf Halaçoğlu on the grounds that he had “denied the Armenian genocide” in a speech he had made at a meeting in Zurich in May 2004. This incident was reflected by some Turkish newspapers along the lines that a warrant was issued for his arrest and that the Interpol issued the red alert for his capture.⁷² Gnehm, the Swiss prosecutor dealing with this issue, made a statement to clarify the situation. He pointed out that an investigation was opened into Halaçoğlu due to a speech the latter had made, and that, according to the Article 261/B of the Swiss Penal Code those who denied or misrepresented a genocidal act or a crime against humanity, would face a one to three year jail sentence or a SF 5,000 fine⁷³.

Taking into consideration the anti-Swiss sentiments starting to build up among the people in Turkey, the Swiss Embassy in Ankara issued a statement on this issue. The embassy said that Halaçoğlu was being investigated due to a complaint filed by a third party, and that in Switzerland it is a requirement of the judicial procedure to open an investigation to clear the matter upon receiving a complaint⁷⁴. It turned out that the complaint had been filed by the Armenia-Switzerland Association. Meanwhile, Halaçoğlu refused to go to Switzerland, saying he would not go and make a statement at a court “that was founded on injustice”.⁷⁵

The investigation has been opened because Prof. Halaçoğlu expressed his views on an historical issue, which was quite normal for he is serving as the President of Turkish Historical Society for many years. For a long time that was one of the main issues with which the Turkish press remained preoccupied. This issue triggered reactions from the general public as well. Meanwhile, a total 353 historians from 29 universities issued a communiqué to express their support for the president of the Turkish History Society⁷⁶. Significantly, some of the historians that refrained from undersigning that communiqué were later among the organizers of the postponed Boğaziçi University Conference.

This incident had political effects as well. State Minister responsible for foreign trade Kürşad Tüzmen demanded cancellation of the Turkish-Swiss Business

72 Milliyet, May 1, 2005

73 Hürriyet, May 3, 2005

74 Milliyet, May 3, 2005

75 Hürriyet, May 5, 2005

76 Yeni Şafak, May 8, 2005

Council meeting scheduled for June 22-24.⁷⁷ Also, Swiss Economy Minister Joseph Deiss's planned visit to Turkey in September was cancelled.⁷⁸

In the face of these negative developments in Turkey-Switzerland relations, the Swiss authorities tried to find a way out. They started claiming that no warrant had been issued for Halaçoğlu's arrest and that no restrictions had been imposed on his potential visits to Europe, Switzerland included. There were even press reports to the effect that the Swiss Ambassador in Ankara had visited Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek and presented to him a document attesting to all that.⁷⁹

Nothing could be more natural for scholars whose chosen topic is genocide to examine the Armenian genocide allegations and publish the conclusions they reach.

Just when the Halaçoğlu incident was being dropped from the Turkish newspapers' agenda a fresh development took place, preventing improvement of bilateral relations. Workers Party Chairman Doğu Perinçek too had made a statement to the press in Switzerland on May 7. Standing in front of the building where the Lausanne Treaty had been signed, he had said, "The Armenian genocide claims are an international lie."⁸⁰ Later he went to Switzerland once again to attend the ceremonies organized by the Workers Party and the Kemalist Thought Association to mark the 82nd anniversary of the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. At a press conference he held in Switzerland on July 22 he repeated the words, "The Armenian genocide claims are an international lie." He was summoned to the Winterthur prosecutor's office where he was asked to make a statement.⁸¹ Since Perinçek chose to explain his views about the incident in detail the interrogation lasted for three-and-a-half hours. In the end he was released. However, in a statement he issued the next day he reiterated his views.⁸²

The news of Perinçek's interrogation triggered a reaction from Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül as well. Gül said that the interrogation was unacceptable and entirely against the principle of freedom of expression.⁸³

⁷⁷ Radikal, June 10, 2005

⁷⁸ Neue Zürcher Zeitung

⁷⁹ Armenews, June 9, 2005

⁸⁰ Tercüman, May 22, 2005

⁸¹ Milliyet, July 24, 2005

⁸² Swissinfo, July 17, 2005

⁸³ Ibid

Perinçek went to Switzerland once again in September this time to face a magistrate. Before he made speeches in Berne and Zurich to announce yet another time that he did not believe that the Armenians had been subjected to genocide. He accused Switzerland of taking action without studying the Armenian problem adequately. Further investigations were opened against him on account of these speeches.⁸⁴ On Sept. 21 Perinçek was interrogated by Jacques Antenen, the magistrate to whom all the relevant files had been sent. After the interrogation the magistrate said that for the time being Perinçek would not be accused of any crime, and that he wanted to examine certain documents.⁸⁵ Thus the judicial procedure initiated against Perinçek in Switzerland has been suspended for the time being.

Since Perinçek said clearly and repeatedly that no “Armenian genocide” had happened, it is not clear at first glance why the magistrate felt the need to examine more documents. According to press reports, Article 261 of the Swiss Penal Code links the crime of “negation of genocide” to the presence of racial, ethnic or religious motifs, Perinçek can be indicted and tried only if it can be proved that he negated the “Armenian genocide” due to any such motif.⁸⁶ That, however, would be extremely difficult if not impossible to prove if the magistrate carried out the investigation in a fair manner. This is because the Turks, probably because they are the descendants of the Ottomans who had created a multinational empire, obviously are not inclined to harbor sentiments of racial, ethnic or religious enmity.

There is also the possibility that with political considerations the Swiss do not want Perinçek to be put on trial and that they are looking for an excuse to avoid further judicial proceedings. Firstly, if Perinçek were to be convicted and, especially, if he were to be imprisoned, that would deliver a massive blow to the Turkey-Switzerland relations. Secondly, if Perinçek were to be convicted he would no doubt appeal against the verdict at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). And, to be able to reach a decision, the ECHR would have to decide whether the relocation of the Armenians in 1915 had been genocide. Then it would become obvious that the “genocide” resolutions passed by the parliaments of a number of countries were not in line with the provisions of the 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Seeing that these resolutions cannot be used to “prove” the Armenian “genocide”

⁸⁴ The Anatolian Times, Sept. 20, 2005

⁸⁵ Schweizerische Depeschagentur, Sept. 21, 2005; Le Temps, 20

⁸⁶ Ibid

the ECHR would, most likely, overturn the Swiss court's verdict without feeling the need to examine the historical events. That would deliver a heavy blow to the Armenians' genocide allegations. For this reason it is quite possible that neither the Swiss nor the Armenians want Perinçek to be sentenced.

3. *Britain*

Baroness Caroline Cox, a veteran member of Britain's House of Lords where she serves as deputy speaker, is famous for her protection of the interests of Armenia and the Armenians on every occasion. She spends a great part of her time in Armenia and she has visited Karabagh sixty times by now. Due to her services she was decorated with a golden medal, the "Mkhitar Gosh", by President Kocharyan on Sept. 17, 2005. The medal was awarded for her "input in the development of the Armenian-British relations as well as for fruitful and self-denying humanitarian work of many years".⁸⁷

It is known that Britain does not see the 1915 incidents as genocide. Yet, the baroness posed a question on this subject to Lord Triesman, the parliamentary undersecretary of state for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, during a session of the House of Lords on July 14, 2005. She asked the lord whether the government would review its stance in favor of "recognizing the 1915 massacre as genocide". Lord Triesman's reply was along the following lines: The stance the British Government has maintained on this issue all these years is well known. The British Government concedes that this terrible period of history triggers strong emotions, and that it does consider the 1915-1916 massacre a tragedy. However, just as its predecessors the present British Government has resolved that there is no adequately clear evidence that would have caused these incidents to be put into the genocidal acts category defined by the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

Thus, thanks to the question posed by Lady Caroline Cox, the British Government's stance regarding the Armenian genocide allegations has been reiterated.

While the British Government thus refuses to recognize the 1915 incidents as genocide, the Armenian circles in Britain have adopted the policy of trying to elicit "recognition of the genocide" resolutions from the regional parliaments. First they tried their hand in Wales. Then they made an attempt in Scotland. As

⁸⁷ Arminfo, Sept. 17, 2005; Sept. 17, 2005

a matter of fact the City of Edinburgh Council adopted a motion on November 17, recognizing Armenian genocide allegations. This issue is separately studied in Chapter II entitled “National And Local Parliaments That Uphold The Genocide Allegations”

4. *Belgium*

The Belgian Senate had accepted the Armenian genocide allegations with a resolution it passed in 1998. The resolution had urged Turkey to recognize it as well. There exists in Belgium a law (dated March 23, 1995) that makes negation of genocide a crime to be punished. In April 2005 the Senate rejected a proposal to expand the scope of that law to cover the Armenian genocide allegations as well.⁸⁸

In September 2005 a new draft resolution was presented to the Senate regarding the Armenian genocide allegations. The draft urges the Turkish Government to recognize the Armenian “genocide”, to open all of its archives to researchers and historians, to refrain from intervening in the scientific work carried out by the Turkish historians (this is a reference to the then postponed Boğaziçi University conference), and to encourage public debates on this issue.⁸⁹ In its current form the draft does not introduce anything new. As stated above, the Senate has already recognized the alleged genocide. And it is all too clear that Turkey would not accept any such allegations. On the other hand, the conference in question did take place albeit at a different university. Furthermore, the Armenian problem is being debated by the Turkish public in a way that can be described as “heated”. Considering all these, the draft has obviously been submitted merely with the aim of keeping the Armenian “genocide” issue alive on the agenda.

5. *Finland*

During a visit to Armenia in late September 2005 President Tarja Halonen of Finland laid a wreath at the genocide monument in Yerevan and planted a tree there.

According to the Finnish press, journalists asked Halonen whether she would recognize the events as acts of genocide. She avoided a direct response, making a statement along the following lines: “Finland is not in the habit of giving

⁸⁸ Ermeni Arastirmalari, Issue No 16-17, pp. 64-65

⁸⁹ Armenews, Sept. 16, 2005

recognition to historical events. Every generation has the right to re-examine history, and every country has the right to its own history. Countries should not become prisoners of history.”⁹⁰

On the other hand, the Armenian press carried a report that quoted Halonen as saying that her country was, together with Armenia, commemorating the Armenian genocide victims with sorrow.⁹¹

Alongside that letter Time Magazine published a “note from the editor” expressing regret over having disseminated the DVD and for the offense it had caused

During state visits of foreign dignitaries Armenian protocol calls for a visit to the genocide monument and a great majority of the visitors do comply with that request so as to act according to local custom. Halonen’s visit to the memorial should be assessed in this context.

6. *Genocide Allegations of the Assyrians and the Caldeans*

A monument built for the memory of the “victims of the genocide committed against the Assyrians-Caldeans by the Ottoman Empire in 1915” was inaugurated with a ceremony in Sarcelles, a town near Paris, on Oct. 15, 2005. The memorial is situated near the “Armenian genocide” monument in the same city. Speaking during the ceremony, Mayor Francois Pupponi said, “Turkey will never be able to be an EU member as long as it fails to recognize the Armenian and the Assyrian-Caldean genocide.”⁹²

This triggered a statement from the Turkish Foreign Ministry in the following vein: “We have an adverse reaction to the inauguration of the monument that reflects an allegation that is put forth though no one knows which historical data it is based on. Those who groundlessly accuse a state of committing genocide, that is, the gravest crime that can be committed against humanity, are doing nothing but demeaning themselves by acting in ways that lack in seriousness.”⁹³

The allegation that the Assyrians and the Caldeans had been subjected to genocide is not new. It is known that, during the relocation of 1915-1916, some members of the Assyrian and Caldean communities too had been relocated since they

⁹⁰ Helsingin Sanomat, Sept. 28, 2005

⁹¹ Arminfo, Sept. 27, 2005

⁹² Hürriyet, Oct. 17, 2005

⁹³ Hürriyet, Oct. 18, 2005

were living nearby the Armenians in mixed settlements. However, the Ottoman Government had ended that practice, making it clear that the relocation process would be limited to the Armenians. More recently, some members of these two communities immigrated to Europe and, soon after the Armenians said that they too had been subjected to acts of genocide. However, wary of any development that could overshadow their own cause; the Armenians wanted these allegations to remain in a secondary position. The monument erected in Sarcelles shows that this Armenian stance is now beginning to change. A reference Armenian Catholicos (patriarch) Karekin II made in a recent speech⁹⁴ constituted another sign of that change. After voicing the Armenians' genocide allegations Karekin II said that the Greeks and the Assyrians living in the Ottoman Empire too had met with a similar fate.

Why have the Armenians started to alter their stance? This is probably because the fact that a number of countries –and the European Parliament-- have recognized their genocide allegations one after another, has given the Armenians the hope that Turkey too will have to accept these allegations in a not-too-distant future. Probably they worry that in such a case the international pressure on Turkey would be eased. To prepare for such a situation, they now drive into the arena the Assyrians and the Caldeans that they have kept in reserve.

In the coming days, goaded by the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Caldeans can be expected to put forth their genocide allegations more intensely in Germany and the Scandinavian countries where they mostly live. In fact, Sweden's liberal party (Folkpartiet) that is expected to be a coalition partner if the Socialists lose the parliamentary elections to be held next year, said in a communiqué issued at its 19-21 August, 2005 congress, that for a long time the "genocide" committed against the Armenians, the Assyrians, the Caldeans and the Pontian Greeks had been seen as Turkish-Armenian problem. It said that pressure should be put on Turkey to make it accept its responsibility in these "acts of genocide" and to disclose the facts. It said that to encourage research Turkey and the other countries should open their archives, stressing that an effective lobbying activity was needed to ensure that Turkey would respect the rights of the Kurds and the Christian population.⁹⁵ Also, on Sept. 24, 2005 a seminar was held in Stockholm on the "genocides" committed against the Assyrians, the Armenians and the Greeks by the Turks.⁹⁶

94 At the 19th interfaith gathering for peace organized by the Sant'Egidio Community in Lyon on 11-13 September 2005

95 AINA (Assyrian International News Agency), Oct. 4, 2005

96 AINA, Sept. 23, 2005

7. *Activities of the International Association of Genocide Scholars*

The “International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)”, which is said to be bringing together the genocide experts in North America and Europe, was founded in 1994 by four academicians, who argued that the world was not attaching adequate importance to the genocide threat. It examines issues related to genocide, holding conferences every two years.⁹⁷ At its latest conference, held in Boca Raton, Florida on June 4-7, 2005, the text of a letter to be sent to Turkish PM Erdoğan was approved unanimously.⁹⁸

The letter conveyed to PM Erdoğan on June 16, 2005 referred to the PM’s proposal for an “independent inquiry into the fate of the Armenian people by historians”⁹⁹ It said, in brief, that the PM might not be fully aware of the abundance of the studies made on the “genocide” issue or of the compatibility of this event with the UN Genocide Convention, that it was the generally-held view of not only the Armenians but also the scholars examining the genocide issue that an Armenian “genocide” had occurred. It said that scientific evidence indicated that more than one million Armenians had been killed. It claimed that the Armenian “genocide” was documented by the US, Austrian and Hungarian archives, the Ottoman martial court records and the testimonies of the missionaries and diplomats, also citing in this context the statements made a number of scholars and the activities of certain organizations. Without mentioning any of them by name, the letter said that “so-called scientists that give their opinions to the Turkish Government on this issue” were not impartial. Furthermore, it claimed that by preventing the conference that was to be held at the Boğaziçi University on May 25 the Turkish Government showed that it was against academic and intellectual freedom.

The letter concluded that the Turkish people would benefit from recognizing the responsibility of a former government¹⁰⁰ in the “genocide committed against the Armenian people” just as the German government and people had done regarding the Holocaust.

97 University Press, FL (Florida Atlantic University), June 30, 2005

98 International Herald Tribune, Sept. 23, 2005

99 This is a reference to the letter PM Erdoğan had sent to President Kocharyan following the April 13, 2005 session of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the letter in which he had suggested creation of a commission consisting of historians and other experts to examine the genocide allegations. See: Review of Armenian Studies, Issue No. 7-8, pp. 12-14 following the April 13, 2005 session of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the letter in which he had suggested creation of a commission consisting of historians and other experts to examine the genocide allegations. See,

100 This is a reference to the Unity and Progress Party government.

Nothing could be more natural for scholars whose chosen topic is genocide to examine the Armenian genocide allegations and publish the conclusions they reach. What is not normal is that they have written a letter to the Turkish PM with a “preaching” tone and gave a copy of the letter to the press. Furthermore, in an unprecedented move, these scholars have published the letter in question as a highly expensive paid advertisement in the International Herald Tribune on Sept. 23, 2005. It is all too clear that the International Association of Genocide Scholars has embraced the Armenian theses without any reservations at all and has been acting in a militant rather than academic mentality to spread these theses. In this context it must be noted that the current IAGS President Israel Charny is the executive director of the Jerusalem-based Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide. He has actively worked to win recognition for the Armenian “genocide” for years. And he has harshly criticized the Israeli Government for not having recognized the 1915 incidents as “Armenian genocide”.

8. *Time Magazine*

A four-page tourism advertisement with photographs, titled “Crossroads of Culture: Turkey”, appeared in the June 6, 2005 issue of the world-renowned Time Magazine. Attached to the advertisement was a DVD cassette in several languages. It consisted of four sections. In the first three sections Turkey was promoted from a tourism angle. The fourth section included a not-too-brief summary of the documentary, “Sarı Gelin” (Bride from the highlands), that looks into the Armenian problem. These cassettes were distributed to the 494,000 subscribers of the magazine in Europe. Furthermore, there were 116,000 more of these cassettes being sold directly with the magazine in Europe. The advertisement was placed by the Chamber of Trade of Ankara (ATO). Its Chairman Sinan Aygün said that the cost of the advertisement, no less than \$1 million, was met with donations.¹⁰¹

The Comité pour la Défense de la Cause Arménienne (CDCA) founded in France by the Dashnaks issued a statement denouncing Turkey’s “campaign of negation” and the “irresponsible complicity” of Time Magazine on this subject. The Committee said that it was a move aimed at creating doubts about an historical fact confirmed by the archives of the world with the exception of the Turkish archives which were closed (!) and recognized by the European Parliament, the UN (!), and some 50 states (!) and organizations including France. Committee

101 Milliyet, June 2, 2005

Chairman Harout Mardirossian said that Time Magazine had lost its honor by selling out its journalistic credibility for the sake of profits. The statement stressed that the Fédération Euro-Arménienne pour la Justice et la Démocratie, which represents some 100 Europe-based Armenian organizations, had moved to use its “right of reply” vis-à-vis Time Magazine. It said that the CDCA would apply to the French authorities and demand measures against the accusations directed at France in the DVD. With the support of the Armenian National Committee of the USA, the CDCA would start a protest campaign against Time Magazine, reserving the right to go to court on this issue depending on the nature of the response to be obtained from the magazine, it added.¹⁰²

Soon after that, Armenians began to shower Time Magazine with letters of protest. Also, legal steps were initiated to ensure that the magazine would give the Armenians the “right of reply”. About four months later, obviously impressed by all these, the magazine published in the letters to the editor section of its October 17, 2005 issue a lengthy letter sent by an organization called “Mémoire 2000” on behalf of a number of organizations waging a struggle in France against racism and anti-Semitism, and for the “memory of the Armenian genocide”. Reiterating the well-known Armenian views about the “genocide” the letter made demands for a “compensation of the damage”. It asked the magazine to disclose the standards it employs in accepting or rejecting advertising. It asked whether Time would have accepted a similar DVD denying the Holocaust. It asked the magazine to distribute free of charge a DVD prepared by the EAFJD on the history of the Armenian problem and its modern-day consequences. Also, it asked the magazine to donate the advertising revenues from the Turkish tourism promotion campaign to nonprofit organizations that reflect the “truth” about the “Armenian genocide” and “other genocides”.

Alongside that letter Time Magazine published a “note from the editor” expressing regret over having disseminated the DVD and for the offense it had caused. Referring to the “Sarı Gelin” it said that the “so-called documentary” portion of the DVD presented a one-sided view of history and did not meet the magazine’s standards for fairness and accuracy. It stressed that the DVD would not have been distributed if they had been aware of its content. It said that unfortunately the DVD had not been adequately reviewed by anyone at the magazine because it was believed to be an ordinary advertisement. It said, “We have changed our review process so as to guarantee more vigilance in the future. We

¹⁰² CDCA, June 8, 2005

apologize to the Armenian community and to our readers.”

Obviously Time Magazine is trying to end this issue by expressing regret and by extending an apology, using the excuse that the DVD had not been properly reviewed. One understands that the Time officials are wary of the possibility of facing a lawsuit in France. Considering the fact that renowned historian Bernard Lewis has been convicted in France for expressing doubts about the Armenian “genocide”, they must be thinking that Armenians could win if they opened a case in France. For a major magazine with enormous financial resources such as Time, losing prestige would be more important than losing money.

On the other hand, though the magazine has published in full the statement sent by the Armenians and extended an apology, the Armenians may not be satisfied with that. In fact, CDCA Chairman Mardirossian has said, “If Time Magazine thinks that this ‘right of reply’ will settle the score on this issue it is seriously mistaken.”

Edward Tashji's Death

Edward Tashji (Tasçı), the US-born author of the book, “The Armenian Allegations: The Truth Must Be Told”, passed away on June 22, 2005. Tashji, who had an Armenian mother and an Assyrian father, was known for the way he held Turks in such great esteem, praising and defending Turkey everywhere, on every occasion, unruffled by the threats issued by the Armenian militants. His coffin, covered with a Turkish flag, was taken to the St. Marks Syrian Cathedral in New York where a religious service was held. Turkish Consul General in New York Ömer Orhun and Chairman of the Turkish-American Associations Dr. Ata Erim made speeches during the service. Then he was laid to rest at the Christian Karachai Turks’ cemetery in New York.

The Institute for Armenian Research extends its condolences to the bereaved family and friends and to everybody who appreciated his work.

May he rest in peace.