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## TURKISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY XV. TURKISH HISTORY CONGRESS 11-15 SEPTEMBER 2006

**X**V. Congress of the Turkish Historical Society was convened in Ankara on 11 September 2006 under the auspices of the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. 310 academicians attended to the Congress.

In his inaugural speech, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that the allegations posed by irrelevant states on the Armenian question were totally unacceptable. He also reminded that he had sent a letter to President of Armenia, Robert Kocharian, including to offer of establishment of a joint commission and that he had not been answered positively yet.

The speeches, which can be considered within the scope of our Institute, and the academicians that presented them are examined below briefly.

In her speech entitled “The Establishment and Activities of Eastern Legion in the Light of Archival Documents of French Foreign Ministry”, Prof. Bige SÜKAN argued that the Armenian question has been a project designed by Great Powers to disintegrate the Ottoman Empire. She mentioned how the French utilized Armenians during World War I in their occupation of the Southern Anatolia through establishment of an Armenian legion and how this legion was trained in the island of Cyprus.

Prof Dr. Aygün ATTAR examined the activities of Armenian committees in the late nineteenth century and the emergence of Armenian-Azeri inter-communal strife in 1905 as well as the establishment of Difai Committee founded by Ahmet Ağaoğlu in order to prevent further Armenian atrocities, in her speech entitled “An Organization Founded against Armenian Pressure: Difai Committee”

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In his speech entitled “The Armenian Question Policy of Willam Ewart Gladstone and the Sultan Abdulhamid II’s Initiatives for Convincing Gladstone” Assoc. Prof. Dr. Taha Niyazi KARACA introduced one of the most significant British politicians of the Victorian era and his animosity towards the Turks as well as his attempts of establishing a Christian Union against the Ottoman Empire. He also mentioned that Gladstone used Armenian question to create a pressure on the Ottomans through his attempt to create an independent Armenain state. Finally he examined the attempt of Sultan Abdülhamid II to convince Gladstone for giving up this dangerous project.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet HALAÇOĞLU, argued in his speech entitled “The General Amnesty Adopted in the Era of Abdulhamid II and Its Implementation to the Armenian Culprits” that the Armenians were influenced from the ideas disseminating after the French Revolution and the independence of Balkan states, that the Armenian question became an international problem after 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian Wars, that the Armenians resorted to rebellion and violence to resolve this question. He also mentioned about the general amnesty declared by Sultan Abdulhamid II and its implementation on the revolutionary Armenians in the light of archival documents.

In his speech entitled “The Process of Enemization of the Ottoman Armenians in Bursa and Their Rebellion (1878-1922)” Prof. Dr. Yusuf OĞUZOĞLU first informed the audiences on the Armenian community of Bursa in the aforementioned period. He mentioned that it was only in the mid-nineteenth century that there emerged a massive Armenian immigration to Bursa because of establishment of French-owned factories in the region. He stipulated that the Armenians benefited much from the modernization moves and the Armenian religious leaders had utilized the Church for political purposes together with the foreign missionary schools opened in the region. All these developments, according to Prof. Oğuzoğlu, resulted in the Armenian rebellions and massacres in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saime YÜCEER, emphasized in her speech entitled “Armenian Incidents in Bursa, Relocation of Bursa Armenians and their Return” that in the process of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, likewise other parts of the Empire, Bursa Armenians had been utilized by imperialist powers.

In his speech entitled “The Implementation of Relocation and the status of US Citizen Ottoman Armenians” Prof. Dr. Kemal ÇİÇEK examined the status of

Ottoman Armenians, who somehow obtained US citizenship in the light of the consular investigations and explained how these group of Armenians had relocated during the process of relocation.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Mithat AYDIN analyzed in his speech entitled “The Activities of American Missionaries among Armenians and Its Implications on the Ottoman-American Relations” the provocative and protective role of American missionary organizations on the Armenian rebellions as well as the measures taken by the Ottoman governments especially in the form of developing diplomatic relations with the United States

In his speech entitled “The Military, Political, Economic and Social Situation of the Republic of Armenia According to the Reports of the British Representatives (1919-1920)” Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaya Tuncer ÇAĞLAYAN argued that the British interests in Caucasia led that state to provoke Armenian rebellions against the Ottoman Empire. By relying on the reports written by Captain George Gracey, who had appointed as the British Representative to the Republic of Armenia in 1919, Prof. Çağlayan examines the relations between Armenia and its neighbors at that time.

Dr. Hilmar KAISER presented a speech entitled “The German Red Cross Mission to the Ottoman Third Army” In this speech, in the light of the memoirs of German medical officers serving in the Ottoman Third Army, he reviewed the health problems and epidemics that the Ottoman soldiers encountered during World War I and he claimed that some Ottoman military doctors had experienced lethal experiences on Armenians.

In his speech entitled “The Role and Significance of Marseilles on Armenian Events” Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet ALTINTAŞ, examined the establishment of Armenian committees in this city as well as their activities. He claimed that Marseilles turned out to be a center of Armenian activism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which connected other centers of Europe.

Prof. Dr. Zeki ARSLANTÜRK delivered a speech on “The Social Structure of Eastern Black Sea Region, The Ethnic Group Claims and Missionary Activities”. After touching upon the implications of globalization on micro-ethnic groups, he underlined that Turkish society has been a rich society including many micro-ethnic groups. Then he mentioned the Georgion insults on the Acara Turks, the Pontus policy of Greeks and Greater Armenia dream of Armenia and its implica-

tions on the population moves in the region.

In his speech entitled “Gregorian Kıpchaks and Töre Bitigi (The Book of Law), Prof. Dr. Reşat GENÇ examined a detailed and unexplored issue. He emphasized the religious division of Kıpchaks between Georgian and Armenian churches. He also underlined that the Kıpchaks adhered themselves to Armenian-Gregorian church left a significant contribution to the Armenian culture and literature.

Dr. Dilşen İNCE-ERDOĞAN examined the Armenian rebellions at Van in the last three years of the nineteenth century in her speech entitled “The Activities of American Missioners in Van between the Years 1897-1900”. She particularly focused on the 1896 Van rebellion and its aftermath with reference to the interventions of Russia, Iran and Western states on this rebellion.

In his speech entitled “War, Aid and Corruption: The Assyrian Brigades Formed with the Money Given by American Humanitarian Relief Organization, The Near East Relief, in the First World War”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bülent ÖZDEMİR, underlined the Russian-Nesturian collaboration and the establishment of Assyrian brigades fighting against the Ottoman Empire with the money coming from humanitarian relief organizations.

Good organization of the Congress, chronological sequence and thematic categorization of the speeches eased systematic following of the Congress and increased its degree of contribution to the participants.