

Conference On Ottoman Armenians Continues In Istanbul

Turkish Press.com
Sep. 25, 2005

ISTANBUL -- "Ittihat & Terakki Party (Party of Union & Progress) had a plan to purify whole Anatolia from the non-Turks, starting from the Aegean Region, before the World War I, and this plan was carried out in entire Anatolia during the years of the war (World War I)", argued associate professor Taner Akçam of Minnesota University.

Taking the floor on the second day of the Conference titled "The Armenians during the Collapse of the Ottoman Empire" held at Istanbul's Bilgi University, Akçam said that the relocation decision was made at the end of long discussions and debates.

"The Ottoman documents indicate that the decision to relocate the Armenians was made to end a deeper problem defined as the 'eastern problem' and to end the dissolution process of the Ottoman Empire. This decision was not a result of a need that erupted during the war. There are many documents in hand with respect to the destruction of Armenians," claimed Akçam.

On the other hand, Dr. Ahmet Kuyas of Galatasaray University referred to the four leading members of the Ittihat & Terakki Party, and said that a serious massacre was made those days. According to Kuyas, the architect of this massacre was Enver Pasha. Kuyas expressed his view that the other three people who were responsible for these massacres were Talat Pasha, Dr. Bahattin Sakir and Dr. Nazim.

Also speaking at the conference, professor Baskin Oran of Ankara University's Political Sciences Department said, "the concept of class, criticisms of Atatürk, Cyprus, socialism, communism and Kurdistan are no more taboos in Turkey. There was only one taboo left, and it was the Armenian issue. Now, it is no more a taboo."

Referring to the Armenian diaspora, Oran said, "The diaspora talks about 'recognition, compensation and territory', and this prevents 'recognition'. Nobody in Turkey can think of paying compensation for things that an empire (Ottoman Empire), the alphabet of which you have abandoned, did. Moreover, territorial claims are nonsense."

Oran pointed out that the assassins of Turkish diplomats should not remain unpunished, and added, "assassins of 35-40 Turkish diplomats were not punished or sentenced to minor punishments. And, this caused as much reaction in Turkey as the 1915 incidents caused in Armenia. And, this was the factor which increased this taboo in Turkey."

Before the conference started, a group of people who were the members of the [nationalist] Grand Unity Party (BBP) threw rotten tomatoes and eggs to participants and the building where the conference is being held. Also, the audience was protested by the group.