

Conference by USAK & TOBB-ETU: "Germany's Role on Armenian Resettlement"

Friday, 17 April 2009

USAK (International Strategic Research Organization) and TOBB-ETU (TOBB University of Economics and Technology) jointly hosted a conference on "Germany's Role on Armenian Resettlement" on April 17, 2009 in Ankara.

After a welcome speech of Bahadır Dincer of USAK, Prof. Dr. Tahsin Kesici (TOBB-ETU Board of Trustees Chairman Advisor), Assoc. Prof. Sedat Laciner (Director of USAK), and Assoc. Prof. Cihat Goktepe (TOBB-ETU Chair of History Department) made short opening speeches. Prof. Kesici stated that a generation is growing up without any information regarding the Armenian issue. "If you make a search on Google, you will find at least ten times more sources in English rather than in Turkish," he said. Prof. Kesici stated that former governments and administrators of Turkey tried to forget the Armenian problem and make the issue forgotten by the others, but this was not the way they had to follow. Director of USAK Sedat Laciner made a short opening speech and focused on the importance of gathering of both sides. Dr. Laciner said that during the resettlement, Germany and Ottoman Empire were in alliance, so there is no way for Germany to be unaware of the issue. Germany's role was important and it should be defined, he added. Chair of History Department of TOBB-ETU Cihat Goktepe stated that the Ottoman Army has had several German generals during the World War - I and Armenian resettlement.

Following the opening speeches, session chair retired ambassador Omer Engin Lutem (Director of Center for Eurasian Studies) touched upon the current headlines regarding the Armenian issue. He mentioned Obama's visit to Turkey and stressed that there were many issues talked during the visit; however, media has focused on the issues related to the Armenian problem. Some major American newspapers exaggerated the issue and even declared dates for the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border which made Azerbaijani people uncomfortable. Today, it is easy to find articles on several newspapers regarding the Armenian problem; however, nobody talks about the Germany's role on it, Mr. Lutem added.

Headlines from Director of USAK Sedat Laciner's speech;

- Turkey has the best relations with Germany among the Western European countries. Turkey didn't fight against Germany during the World War - I and World War - II.
- Armenia accuses Turkish, German, and Jewish people regarding the 1915 events.
- Germany has been trying to exculpate themselves from the issue since 1918.

Headlines from Prof. Dr. Selami Kilic's speech;

- Turkey began to talk over the Armenian issue in 1980s.
- Germany's role in the Ottoman Army was too important on behalf of commanders and Germany also supplied arms for the Ottoman Army.



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- Germany has tried to clear their name of the issue because they lost the war.
- German researchers have used the German archives from 1910s and 1920s, so Turkish researchers also have to make researches on those archives.

Headlines from Baris Ozdal's speech;

- Armenian problem is a part of "Eastern Question".
- Russia also has official documents regarding the 1915 Armenian issue. These archives should also be analyzed with the German archives by Turkish researchers.
- Germany's position seems far from the "Eastern Question", but they still indirectly get involved with the issue.

The conference has ended with questions of audiences. Mr. Laciner and Mr. Lutem emphasized that they are planning to make new conferences specifically focus on this issue at the end of the conference.

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By Salih Dogan, JTW

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