

The Turkish Press and the Representation of the Armenian Minority during the 1965 Events

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze Turkish press discourses about the Armenian minority during the 1965 events, which were organized against Turkey by the Armenian diaspora. In the light of theoretical debates on minority-media relations, the article mainly examines and discusses the representation of the Armenian minority within the Turkish press during these protests with particular emphasis on the question of whether they were depicted as an 'ethnic threat' or 'fifth column' for Turkey. Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of 16 national newspapers, the article concludes that media representation of the Armenian minority during the 1965 events significantly deviated from the misrepresentation/underrepresentation nexus of mainstream media theories.

Keywords

Turkish Press, Armenian Minority, the 1965 Events, Minority-Media Relations, Fifth Column

Introduction

In the spring of 1965, certain segments of the Armenian Diaspora organized a number of simultaneous demonstrations in cities in Lebanon, the United States, France, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia and other parts of the world to commemorate the "50th anniversary of the genocide" and "raise the demands for the restoration of 'Turkish Armenian' lands"(Gakavian 1997).¹ From Armenian diaspora's point of view, these demonstrations were

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considered as the initial stages of a diaspora activism against Turkey which would be based on a meta-discourse around the “1915 events”, “genocide” and hate speech directed to “the common enemy”.

The significance of the 1965 events varied for the Armenian diaspora and the Armenian minority in Turkey (Koldaş 2003). In fact, the outcomes of the events emerged as initial signs of new developments in Armenian diaspora politics and Armenian affairs throughout the world, including Turkey. For scholars such as Panossian (2006: 371), these demonstrations (especially the Yerevan protests) signified the beginning of a systematic politicization of the Armenian diaspora in which the contours of the “Armenian Cause” were transformed from nationalist debates over Soviet rule into “genocide recognition” and “anti-Turkish propaganda and later terrorism.” Most importantly, they represented a turning point in the identity politics of the Armenian diaspora in terms of collective diasporic identity formation, the process of which was based mainly on the idea of alienating the Armenian people in diaspora from memories of Turkey, transforming what had formerly been expressed as feelings of yearning for the country into feelings of hatred towards it. The outcome of the 1965 events witnessed the emergence of hate speech as a socio-political tool for the formation and consolidation of the Armenian diasporic identity.

In relation to the Armenian minority in Turkey, the 1965 events engendered debates over linking Turkish foreign and domestic policy issues, particularly with regard to minority affairs in Turkey. Questions were raised about the implications the events –perceived as part of an international plot against Turkey, organized by Greece and Greek Cypriot administrative mechanisms, which manipulated Armenian diasporic groups – might have on Turkey’s domestic affairs². The main uncertainty revolved around the relationship between the Armenian minority in Turkey to the newly emerging diasporic identity being established by groups with whom they shared the same ethno-religious heritage and who had been responsible for promoting an international crisis. This in turn raised questions as to how Turkey’s majority would perceive the country’s minorities in the course of an international crisis involving the home country, Turkey, and the socio-political formations established by those outside Turkey who shared the same ethno-religious origins of the country’s minority. These questions were raised mainly within the context of debates over a ‘fifth column’ or ethnic threat’ in connection with minority-diaspora relations. In particular, in view of the high-intensity international Cyprus crisis of the 1960s and the tense relations with the Greek minority in Tur-

key, especially its religious institutions, questions arose as to how the Armenians of Turkey would react to the relatively low-intensity international crisis triggered by certain Armenian diaspora groups during the course of the 1965 events and how this reaction would be evaluated in the public discourse in Turkey.

Given the role of the press in shaping and/or consolidating public discourse and the majority's perceptions of minorities, an evaluation of the position and function of the press during the course of the 1965 events is essential to an understanding of overall public opinion vis-à-vis the Armenian minority, which may or may not have been perceived and presented as a 'fifth column' or 'ethnic threat' in public discourse.

This study offers quantitative and qualitative information about the representation of the Armenian minority in the Turkish press during two interconnected international crises confronting Turkey in 1965 –the Cyprus crisis and the activities of the Armenian Diaspora– with particular emphasis on the question of whether or not the Armenian minority was represented as an 'ethnic threat' or 'fifth column'. Following an introduction of the theoretical and methodological framework, the discussion focuses on the findings of content and discourse analyses of news texts, followed by a broader discourse analysis of the main bodies of editorial and opinion columns (and op-ed) texts, which are considered to reflect the general lines of thoughts and policies of newspapers on specific issues. It concludes with an evaluation of the significance of the overall findings with regard to their contributions to wider research on minority representation in national print media during the course of an international crisis.

Media Representations of Minorities

In theoretical debates regarding the media-minority relations, dominant approach until the late 1990s was that the mainstream media had not only been inaccurate but also individually, institutionally and culturally biased in its reports about the subordinate group in the society (Gandy 1998). Within this context Gandy (1998), for instance, argued that mass media were the primary source of indirect or mediated experiences that reinforced racial attitudes and beliefs that were integrated into cognitive structures. For scholars such as Ungerleider (1991), Wilson and Gutierrez (1995) these attitudes which were integrated into cognitive structures appeared to be negative most of the time. They mainly asserted that the media presented the minorities either as 'problem people' or as the 'causes of problems for the larger society' (Ungerleider 1991, Wilson and Guterrez 1995). In that respect, as Spoonley (1990) put it, the media

would repeat rather than challenge a highly inaccurate and negative public image of minorities. Gans (1979) and Holtzman (1980) agreed with this argument by stressing the media's causal role in replicating and confirming dominant ethnic discourse towards the minorities. Gans (1979) furthermore argued that media propagated ethnocentrism as one of the enduring values of the dominant ideology. Shah and Thornton (1994) were critical about incorporating racial ideology into journalistic routines, which might promote or reproduce such ethnocentric values of dominant ideology in media discourse about minorities. They maintained that minorities were 'depicted as being violent, primitive and politically unsophisticated' (Shah and Thornton 1994). It is also argued by van Dijk (1987a and 1991) that the news reports link ethnic minorities predominantly to problematic topics and thus represent them with a negative image. For Entman and Rojecki (2000), such a representation, which functioned through constructing a sense of the prototypical [minority] fit with [anti-minority] stereotypes that were readily served up by the culture.

As Mahtani (2001) has argued, research on media representation of minorities from the 1960s onwards has been dominated by analyses of the problematic treatment of minorities in media accounts. Such treatment can be characterized as either 'under-representation', defined as the absence or limited presentation of minority views regarding events related to them, or as 'misrepresentation', which may be described briefly as negative depictions of minorities in the media. According to Mahtani (2001), negative depictions of minorities teach minorities (and, it can be said, majorities as well) that they are threatening, deviant and irrelevant to nation-building. Some scholars (Vergeer, Lubbers and Scheepers 2000) contend that by emphasizing the adverse characteristics of ethnic minorities, the media exposes them as an 'ethnic threat.' In the example of Canada, for instance, Fleras, Kunz and Daley (2001) argue that ethnic minorities are presented as threats by an overt positioning of 'us' – the acknowledged mainstream audience – and 'them' – the ethnic minority. Similarly, in the Netherlands, Vergeer, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000) as well as van Dijk (1993a) maintain that the press generally selects news that defines minorities as different, problematic, deviant, or threatening to the overall society. This perception of domestic threat has translated into greater skepticism towards minorities in relation to foreign affairs, especially in the course of an international crisis with a country that has hereditary or historical links with the minority in question. According to this line of thought, in the event of external problems faced by a society, some media sources perceive and present the minority as a 'fifth column,' (Barrington et al. 2003: 290, Garcia 1980,

Avraham et al. 2000) i.e. ‘collaborators’ of a foreign power with whom they share common values and an ethno-cultural or religious heritage. In examining how the Turkish press represented the Armenian minority in the course of the 1965 events, two research questions served as focal points, namely, “Did the Turkish national press present a ‘negative’, ‘positive’, or ‘neutral’ image of the Armenian minority in the course of the 1965 events?” and “During a time of international crisis between the minority’s country of citizenship and the diaspora with which the minority shared a common ethnic origin, religious and cultural heritage, did the Turkish press present the (Armenian) minority as a ‘fifth column’ or ‘ethnic threat’?” Whereas the first question aimed to comprehend the general nature of the representation of the Armenian minority by the Turkish press, the second question looked at the implications of such representation with regard to the public discourse about the Armenian minority in Turkey.

Research Design and Methodology

Following the methodological approaches of Creswell (1994), Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Brewer and Hunter (1989), this study relied on a model of combined methodological research that effectively mixed different aspects of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms during each phase of the research process. Research material was evaluated using content analysis in order to map the frequency of the Armenian minority’s appearances within the content of news coverage of the 1965 events. This method provided quantitative data about the most significant components of each article, including subjects, quotations and headlines. Through its classification of content in precise and numerical terms (Krippendorff 1980, Holsti 1969), this content analysis offered a quantitative basis for understanding the attitudes of the Turkish press in its representation of the nature of the relationship between the Armenian minority and the 1965 events.

In the initial stage of the study, content analysis was applied to subjects, quotations and headlines from 112 news items and 33 editorials or opinion columns appearing in 16 national newspapers (*Adalet, Akşam, Cumhuriyet, Dünya, Haber, Havadis, Her Gün, Hürriyet, Milliyet, Son Havadis, Tercüman, Ulus, Vatan, Yeni Asır, Yeni İstanbul, Yeni Tanın*) between 20 March 1965 and 20 May 1965, i.e., the month prior to and the month following the 1965 events. Newspapers were selected based on their ability to represent a broad range of ideological and political stances³ as well as their accessibility through the main documentation centers and databases available in Turkey. In addition, discourse analysis was applied to editori-

als considered to reflect press policies regarding minority representation. These two intermingled research activities facilitated an explanation of the discursive approaches of the Turkish press in representing the Armenian minority within the context of the 1965 events.

Quantitative Findings: Content Analysis of News Items

Subject matter

Critical approaches towards the mainstream media's representation of minorities have tended to argue that the mainstream media assigns more importance to those subjects that are consistent with prevailing stereotypes and prejudices, such as minority crime and immigration (van Dijk 1993b: 241-283). For van Dijk (1987b), many of the dominant topics about minorities are either directly or indirectly associated with problems, difficulties or threats to the dominant values, interests, goals or culture. Accordingly, most studies on media representation of minorities construct and apply clusters of largely negative subjects – conflict, deviance, crime, violence, etc. – that are associated with minorities as represented by the press. In line with this approach, this study examined the Turkish press's association of the Armenian minority in Turkey with the 1965 events in terms of the categories 'ethnic threat' and 'fifth column'. Content analysis of 112 news items and 33 editorials found no empirical evidence of any emphasis of a connection between the 1965 events and the Armenian minority that could be interpreted as a sign of the Armenian minority's support for these events. Out of 35 news items and 26 editorials that mentioned acts or attitudes of the Armenian minority towards the 1965 events, none included the expression 'fifth column', 'ethnic threat' or any other similar expression or phrase. In fact, 26 of the 35 news items (74 percent) and 17 of the 26 editorials (65 percent) marked the Armenian minority's attitudes and actions as oppositional and/or disapproving. In other words, the Turkish press dismissed the discourse of 'fifth column' or 'ethnic threat' and instead presented the Armenian minority as unsupportive of these events and as not collaborating with their organizers.

After having discounted any media emphasis on possible connections between the Armenian minority and the 1965 events in terms of news and editorial content, the analysis focused on adjectives attached to the Armenian minority in news and editorials texts. The assignment of adjectives such as criminal, plotter, defector, traitor, dissenter, oddball, schemer, collaborator, betrayer or deserter to members of the Armenian minority were considered signs of a negative image, whereas the attachment of adjectives such as compatriot, patriot, loyalist, fellow citizen or brethren were

considered signs of a positive image. The subjective notion of negativity was considered mainly within the context of debates over the perception of a minority as a ‘fifth column’ or ‘ethnic threat’ during the course of a foreign-policy and international crisis.

Contrary to the majority of research on minority representation by the press, the analysis found the language of news items in reference to the Armenian minority to be either neutral or positive. For example, newspapers including *Cumhuriyet* (30.4.1965), *Yeni Asır* (30.4.1965) and *Son Havadis* (30.4.1965) quoted from a speech given in parliament by Prime Minister Ürgüplü, in which he referred to the Armenian citizens of Turkey as “conscientious,” “meticulous,” “patriotic” and “mindful”. News items about a protest organized by the Armenian minority in Istanbul against the diaspora activities referred to the “faithfulness” (*Milliyet*, 23.04.1965) and “brotherhood” (*Tercüman*, 25.04.1965) of the Armenian minority.

Given that most papers obtained their news items from the Anatolian Agency, the central state news agency, it is unsurprising to find no major differences among the newspapers’ representations of the Armenian minority or the characteristics and qualities attached to the minority. Nevertheless, it should be noted that neither the Anatolian Agency news items nor those supplied by private sources attached any negative or discriminatory qualities to the Armenian minority. In the final analysis, the lack of negative qualities attached to the Armenian minority by the Turkish press in the context of the 1965 events seems to represent a shared sensibility that rendered the press very cautious so as to avoid any possibility of offending the Armenian minority, creating any negative stereotypical image, or associating the minority with an ‘ethnic threat’ or ‘fifth column’ in the public discourse.

Sources of Quotations

According to many media scholars (van Dijk 1991, Sears and McCohanay 1973, Knopf 1975), the mainstream media routinely rely on the accounts of state authorities in reporting on minority and ethnic affairs. In an effort to determine whose ‘word’ was reported in connection with the Armenian minority and the 1965 events, the study examined the sources of quotations included in relevant articles appearing in 16 national newspapers at the time. These discursive word formations were classified into three categories according to their source – state authorities, individual minority members, or the minority elite – in order to identify who the media allowed to interpret the 1965 events and the relationship of the Armenian minority towards them.

Findings show that quotation sources did not vary significantly among newspapers, regardless of their relationship with the government, their position towards the state discourse or their approach towards the Armenian minority or minority issues in general. This similarity in sources is likely due to the fact that most newspapers obtained news items from the Anatolian Agency. However, some ideological differences were noted among newspapers. For instance, *Yeni Asır* limited itself to quotations from the government, without mentioning the views of the Armenian minority; *Yeni İstanbul* cited government sources and the minority religious elite; and *Yeni Tanın* and *Dünya*, in addition to citations from Anatolian Agency news releases and a declaration by the Armenian Patriarch, included quotations from a parliamentarian Sadi Kocaş, in which he criticized the government's policy towards the events. In a notable exception, *Milliyet* quoted a local administrator, Istanbul Mayor Niyazi Akı, on the place of the Armenian minority within Turkey's overall populace (12.04.1965).

Most other newspapers chose to refer solely to the news provided by the Anatolian Agency, which reported mainly on the Armenian minority's protest demonstrations against the 1965 events organized by the diaspora. These articles quoted primarily from speeches by Berç Turan and Yerdvart Bezaz, two Turkish MPs of Armenian descent, or from their statements recorded in an official notebook during a ceremony at an Istanbul memorial within the framework of the above-mentioned demonstrations. However, *Akşam* and certain other newspapers excluded coverage of the speeches by Turan and Bezaz, while *Son Havadis* and others reflected limited coverage, summarizing statements by the two Members of Parliament (MPs) about faithfulness and loyalty to Turkey.

Although few newspapers went beyond what was offered by the Anatolian Agency in terms of quotation sources in their reporting on the Armenian minority's feelings and attitudes towards the 1965 events, there were two lines of exception to this rather standardized reporting. The first line was consisted of either under-representing or completely ignoring the Armenian minority. For example, news articles that covered the 1965 events in *Havadis* included no mention of the Armenian minority in Turkey, nor did the newspaper include any quotation from either the state authorities or the Armenian minority in reporting the events. In the case of *Ulus*, notwithstanding its proportionally extensive coverage of the 1965 events compared to other newspapers, there was what appeared to be significant underrepresentation of the Armenian minority's views and a lack of em-

phasis placed on its disapproval of the events. It is possible to interpret this as either an indicator of a discursive stance in which the Armenian minority in Turkey was disassociated from the events organized by the diaspora or as indifference towards the ‘positive’ acts and discourse of the Armenian minority as insignificant within the context of the event dynamics.

The second alternative line of reporting was put into practice mainly by *Hürriyet* and *Her Gün*, which placed significant emphasis on the views of the Armenian minority in covering the 1965 events. *Hürriyet*’s reports were based heavily on the views of the Armenian minority elite as well as ordinary citizens; in fact, out of six news items on the events, four of them reflected the views of the Armenian minority (66 per cent), making *Hürriyet* the paper providing the most extensive representation of minority views. *Her Gün* also gave space to the feelings and thoughts of the Armenian minority through its use of quotations taken from interviews conducted with members of the minority community.

Overall, the number of sources signified a remarkable representation of minority views in the Turkish press. Out of 35 news items, 16 quoted representatives of the Armenian minority community; nine quoted the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul; seven quoted government officials, including the president, prime minister, deputy prime minister and a local administrator; and two quoted views of an opposition MP. Given this distribution of quotations, it is possible to argue that the views of the Armenian minority regarding its position vis-à-vis the 1965 events were represented more (25 of 35, or 71.4 per cent) than those of the government (7 of 35, or 20 per cent). In other words, contrary to the findings of many previous studies on media representation of minorities, it was the Armenian minority community and their elite, rather than state authorities, who were primarily allowed to interpret the Armenian minority’s relationship to the 1965 events. This fairly unique situation may have stemmed from the harmony in content between the quotations from state officials and those of the minority.

In fact, it is very important to note that the discourse of the Armenian minority did not differ excessively from the state discourse regarding the nature of the 1965 events and the attitude of the Armenian minority towards them. Quotations from state officials and from representatives of the Armenian minority seemed to be in harmony with each other, so that, for example, the following statement by Deputy Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel – “The Armenian community living in Lebanon has no connection or association with our Armenian citizens living in Turkey. Our Ar-

menian citizens are living in peace and tranquility...” (Yeni İstanbul, 02.05.1965) released in *Yeni İstanbul* – was quite similar to the statements by Armenian citizens, including their religious and political elites, which were reflected in the majority of news items.

To sum up, quantitative and qualitative analyses of the quotations that appeared in news articles indicate that albeit the Armenian minority suffered some degree of under-representation in newspapers such as *Ulus*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Havadis* and *Yeni Asır*, the Armenian minority was not subject to under-representation in the Turkish press as a whole. While this may be due in part to the harmony of the content of the statements by state and minority representatives, in general, the Turkish press seemed to avoid representing the Armenian minority as a ‘fifth column’ and/or ‘ethnic threat’ in their selection of quotations.

Headlines

According to van Dijk (1987b and 1988a), headlines are particularly important in the analysis of news items in that they define the most prominent and relevant news information and the top of the underlying semantic macrostructure from a subjective or biased point of view. van Dijk (1988a) argues that minorities frequently appear in headlines in association with negative acts. Similarly, Stuart Hall (1982) asserts that the mainstream press predominantly presents minorities as negative-active actors in headlines, mainly in association with activities that would not be considered acceptable by the majority.

In contrast to these assumptions, the Armenian minority was found to be represented in most headlines as an active-positive or neutral agent rather than an active-negative agent with regard to its relationship to the 1965 events. Within the context of press discourse, ‘being against the events’ and ‘acting against the events’ were considered signs of a positive attitude that meant ‘being on Turkey’s side’ rather than ‘being a collaborator of rival foreign plotters’. Headlines were categorized as either indicating a positive-active role for the Armenian minority, such as those headlines that mentioned denunciation of the 1965 events by the minority, or as negative-active agency, such as mention of any act supporting the events, or as neutral, i.e. those headlines that did not put any emphasis on the meaning or characteristics of acts, as, for instance, with news articles in which only the act or name of a well-known member of the Armenian minority community appeared in the headline, with any comments and/or interpretations placed in the main body of the text. A large number of headlines representing the Armenian minority as positive-active or neutral agents

would signify that in the process of creating or influencing public opinion and public discourse regarding the 1965 events, the Turkish press disseminated positive messages about the Armenian minority, underlining its disconnection from the 1965 events and emphasizing its positive-active agency in denouncing or condemning them. These two points were apparent in the findings of both quantitative and qualitative analyses of headlines.

In quantitative terms, 18 out of 34 headlines (53 per cent) relating to the acts of the Armenian minority were neutral, reporting on them without attaching any specific details or definitions of their nature. The remaining 16 headlines (47 per cent) may be considered to have attached positive-active agency to the Armenian minority in that none of them mentioned any support or negative act against Turkey. In discursive terms, as mentioned above, more than half of the headlines reported only acts or names of members of the minority community, with comments relegated to the main text of the news items. Thus, headlines such as *Armenians place flowers on Ata's [Atatürk, founder of Turkish Republic] monument yesterday* (Adalet, 25.04.1965); *Armenians of Istanbul at the Taksim Monument* (Cumhuriyet, 25.04.1965); *Armenians lay flowers* (Hürriyet, 25.04.1965); *Armenian citizens place flowers on the monument* (Haber, 25.04.1965); *Armenians lay flowers at the monument of the Republic in Istanbul* (Vatan, 25.04.1965); and *Turkish Armenians place flowers at the monument of the Republic* (Yeni Tanin, 25.04.1965) represented the Armenian minority as a neutral agent by not attaching any significance of their acts with regard to the 1965 events. In fact, these headlines could just as well be interpreted as attaching a positive-active role to members of the Armenian minority, since laying a wreath at the monument to the founder of the Turkish Republic was interpreted as a sign of loyalty to the Republic and to the principles of its founder.

Another cluster of headlines emphasizing the positive-active agency of the Armenian minority defined the nature and significance of their actions by either stressing the minority's disapproval (*Dünya*, 10.04.1965), denunciation and condemnation (*Her Gün*, 23.03.1965) of all activities against Turkey's interests or by emphasizing the minority's disconnection from 'them', (i.e., the Armenian diaspora groups). Acts of protests organized by the Armenian minority in Turkey against the demonstrations of the Armenian diaspora that targeted Turkey were reflected in the headlines as acts of the Armenian minority at the individual communal and institutional levels. In addition to headlines pointing out the 'positive acts' of

individual members of the Armenian minority, the Armenian Patriarch, or the Armenian minority community as a whole, other headlines noted the attitude of Turkish state officials towards the Armenian minority in relation to the 1965 events. These headlines made use of the views of state officials to confirm the disconnection between the Armenian minority in Turkey and the Armenians organizing the demonstrations. Such headlines also mentioned the views of officials regarding the Armenian minority's integration into Turkish society as a whole.

Overall, these headlines underlined a number of specific messages that reflected the attribution of positive qualities to the Armenian minority in the press discourse and the lack of representation of the minority as an 'ethnic threat' or 'fifth column'. First, the headlines indicated that the Armenian minority disapproved of and denounced the 1965 events and protested them at the individual, communal and institutional levels. Second, they emphasized the Armenian minority's disassociation with the 'ill-intentioned Armenians' organizing the events and provoking hatred against Turkey. Third, they contended that the Armenian minority lived in 'peace and tranquility' in Turkey and could not be separated from this country. Finally, they argued that the members of Armenian minority were patriots loyal to Turkey, which they considered their homeland.

In sum, the findings from the headlines show quantitatively and qualitatively that the Turkish press presented either a positive or neutral image of the Armenian minority and avoided representing it as an 'ethnic threat' or 'fifth column' during the course of the 1965 events.

Qualitative Findings: Discourse Analysis of Editorials and Opinion Columns

Discourse analysis can be viewed as a methodology for investigating processes of social construction and constitution of the social world (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Phillips and Hardy (2002) see it not just as "a way of approaching data collection and analysis," but as a perspective that "brings with it a particular view of social phenomena" from structured sets of various texts and contents. Discourse analysis is grounded mainly in textual analysis through the use of evaluative and qualitative methods of semantics -global and local coherence- (Tomlin, et al. 1997) ; schematic structures or superstructures -hierarchy of propositions- (van Dijk 1997); and stylistics (Sandig and Selting 1997) that refer to social, cognitive and ideological processes. The press is one of a number of important socio-economic, political and cultural actors involved in these processes through its presentation and release of mediated discourses "as forms of social in-

teraction about the different issues (Scollon 1999) through subtraction and management of semantics, news schemata and stylistics by denoting and connoting cognitive and ideological processes.” (van Dijk 1988b) In the current study, discourse analysis is employed to examine the representational processes of press texts dealing with the Armenian minority in Turkey during the course of the 1965 protests by the Armenian diaspora. It allowed analytical assessment of signifying practices as discursive forms and to observe linguistic, semiotic, cultural and ideological implications of editorials and opinion columns.

Despite differences in emphasis in line with the political leanings of the owners of the ideas represented in the editorials and opinion columns, the majority touched on some common points, important among them, the Armenian minority’s integration into Turkish society at large. Emphasizing the Armenians’ historical contributions to the culture and politics of Turkey, the editorials praised the Armenian citizens of Turkey for mixing and integrating with ‘us’, in effect arguing that the Armenian minority had become a part of ‘us’. In other words, the Armenian minority was part of the overall Turkish society and should therefore be differentiated from the Armenians organizing and participating in anti-Turkey demonstrations.

The need for such a differentiation was emphasized in a feature column in *Havadis* by Lale Alev that compared the acts of the Armenian and Greek minorities in Turkey. Alev managed to differentiate the Armenians of Turkey not only from the organizers of the 1965 events, but also from the Greek minority, which was criticized explicitly for remaining silent in the face of allegations against Turkey and implicitly regarded as a ‘fifth column.’ In contrast, Alev (*Havadis*, 29.04.1965) praised the Armenian minority – represented as “our Armenian brothers and sisters” – for raising their voices against accusations that targeted Turkey by issuing a declaration that mentioned their ‘Turkishness’, their devotion to Atatürk’s principles and their satisfaction with their living conditions in Turkey.

Kadircan Kafılı⁴, in his article in *Tercüman*, also made a distinction between the two minorities. Kafılı (*Tercüman*, 28.04.1965) praised the historical services of the Armenians by mentioning the Armenians who resisted against the Armenian committees for the sake of their duty for their Ottoman citizenship and their friendship for Turkey during the Ottoman period. He also emphasized that during the Republican period, “thanks to the absence of provocative acts of the Armenian Committees, there had not been any harmful activity against the state by the innocent and honest Armenian fellow citizens”. In fact, for Kafılı “the Armenians had declared

their unity with their Muslim brothers by stating that they were Turkish and Atatürk's children as well as by denouncing and condemning the demonstrations of the Lebanese Armenians" (*Tercüman*, 28.04.1965). Kafılı also elaborated on the Armenian minority's integration with Turkey, pointing out how Armenians living in Turkey, including such well-known ethnic Armenians as the former parliamentarian Berç Turan, had taken Turkish names. Regarding the Greek minority, Kafılı drew a totally different picture. After listing examples of the Greek minority's historically unresponsive attitude towards Turkey, he criticized the Greek minority and the Greek Patriarch for their apathy towards the unpleasant developments that had taken place in Cyprus against innocent Turks. Noting the noble behavior of ethnic Armenian fellow citizens in opposing the anti-Turkish demonstrations organized by the diaspora, Kafılı noted that no similar move had been observed from the Greek minority with regard to the Cyprus issue. He even suggested the "Greek minority can go wherever they like if they do not like the Turks or do not feel the emotions of the Turkish nation in their hearts and if they are not honest in their Turkish citizenship" (*Tercüman*, 28.04.1965)

Alev and Kafılı both clearly present a discourse of an Armenian minority integrated with the Turkish majority, in contrast to a discourse of skepticism with regard to the Greek minority. Kafılı, in particular, provides a very good example of the presentation of two different discourses in one article. In fact, the straightforward representation of the Greek minority as a 'fifth column' and/or 'ethnic threat' comes in stark contrast to the praise heaped on the Armenian minority and may be taken as clear evidence that the Armenian minority was *not* presented as a 'fifth column' or 'ethnic threat' in the editorials of Kafılı and Alev.

Another columnist, Mehmet Ali Yalçın⁵ of *Haber*, also underlined the integral role of Armenian citizens in Turkey. Highly praising the approach taken by the Armenian citizens of Turkey towards the 1965 events, he emphasized their unreserved loyalty to the country, characterizing their attitude as "cautious" and "patriotic" (*Haber*, 11.04.1965). Yalçın argued that despite attempts at provocation in Turkey as well as in Beirut, Paris and the United States, "our [Armenian] brothers" in Turkey gave no credence to what Yalçın referred to as a "bizarre plot." (*Haber*, 11.04.1965).

Yalçın's views received support in the column of Va-Nû⁶ writing in *Haber*, who quoted Armenian friends, neighbors and associates. Va-Nû (04.04.1965) argued that although Armenians lived peacefully and contentedly as a minority in Turkey, attempts were being made to drag them

into the Cyprus issue, and, as mentioned by Yalçın, they had reacted to this situation. Columnists Bedii Faik⁷ and Ecvet Güresin⁸ also praised the reactions of the Armenian minority in Turkey against the demonstrations of the diaspora. While Faik (*Dünya*, 18.04.1965) in *Dünya* considered these to be acts of “mindful” Armenian fellow citizens that reflected their love of the Turks, Güresin (*Cumhuriyet*, 10.04.1965), for his part, commented in *Cumhuriyet* on the “sincerity” of the reactions of the Armenian minority, which he saw as being more than merely a symbolic act, and to prove this he referred to the integration of the Armenian minority into Turkish society throughout history.

Other newspapers expressed similar sentiments. In the opinion and editorial columns of *Yeni İstanbul*, the Armenians of Turkey were represented as an integral part of the Turkish nation. A column by MP Fethi Tevetoğlu explicitly stated in *Yeni İstanbul* that the “non-Muslim citizens of the new Republic of Turkey of Mustafa Kemal Pasha were not members of this nation solely according to their identity documents,” but belonged to the Turkish Republic and possessed all their rights as such, especially their freedom of religion (*Yeni İstanbul*, 28.04.1965). In this respect, Tevetoğlu had no doubt at all that the Armenians of Turkey who affixed their fate and destiny to Turkey had been as upset as the Turks by the Armenian sabotage in Lebanon. Quoting Turkish Armenian former Member of Parliament Berç Turan, Tevetoğlu argued that Turkish Armenians had been living in Turkey under constitutional guarantees and inspired by feelings of brotherhood towards the Turkish nation. Tevetoğlu’s column also made an apparent distinction between the Armenian minority and the ‘enemies of the Turks and Islam’ (*Yeni İstanbul*, 28.04.1965).

In another article in *Son Havadis*, Orhan Seyfi Orhon⁹ stressed the intimacy between Turks and Armenians by listing examples of their commonalities in different aspects of life ranging from customs and traditions to cuisine to music and theater (*Son Havadis*, 27.04.1965). He emphasized as noteworthy Armenian contributions to Turkey’s theater, literature and music from the Ottoman period onwards, and he argued that the shared experiences connecting the two communities brought them closer to each other. Praising earlier statements by the internationally recognized oil entrepreneur Calouste Gulbenkian, an ethnic Armenian of Istanbul origin, as an example of the historical welfare and comfort of Turkey’s Armenians, Orhon argued that foreign elements, political manipulators, provocateurs and avengers were trying to estrange Turkey’s Armenians from the Turks (*Son Havadis*, 27.04.1965).

An editorial that appeared in *Tercüman* on 21 April 1965 also seemed quite confident that the Armenians in Turkey would not become a part of what the newspaper said was “a plot” being promoted by Lebanese Armenians. Mentioning the integral place of Armenians in Turkish society throughout history and referring to the Armenian Patriarch’s declaration that Turkey’s “reliable and uncorrupted fellow citizens of Armenian-origin were disconnected from the events,” the *Tercüman* editorial argued that the Armenians in Turkey would continue to live as loyal citizens of the Turkish Republic. Alluding to the duties of citizenship such as military service and other legal and economic responsibilities, the editorial further asserted that “members of the Armenian minority community would live in peace and happiness in the lands of Turkey as any other honest fellow citizen.”

In his article in *Milliyet*, Refi Cevat Ulunay¹⁰ also emphasized the closeness of the lifestyles, customs and traditions of Armenians and Turks. Mentioning his “personal love” for the Armenian citizens, Ulunay stressed his appreciation for the greatness of their contribution to the science, culture and artisanship of Turkey, presenting the contributions and services in a broad range of fields such as economics, music, theater, jewelry arts, medicine and the press in which Armenian citizens had participated throughout history as a sign of the closeness between the Turkish and Armenian communities (*Milliyet*, 10.04.1965). Furthermore, he argued that “it would not be possible for the Greek Orthodox Church or rival enemy states to divide these two nations, which are by nature integrated and mixed with each other.”

Another important point reflected in most of the articles of the time regarded the need to avoid further emphasis “on the unpleasant events of the past”, which were manipulated in the course of the 1965 events against Turkey. In this context, writing in *Haber*, Mehmet Ali Yalçın criticized the politicization of the events of World War I by the Armenian diaspora. Indeed, he stressed the attitude of Armenian citizens in Turkey, who accepted an apolitical understanding of the commemoration. In *Yeni Tanin*, too, the case of the Armenian minority in Turkey was given as an example of the success of both Armenians and Turks in their efforts towards forgetting the unpleasant memories of the past. The majority of other articles also reflected the need to avoid becoming mired in the terrible memories of the past. Orhon’s main emphasis in the above-mentioned *Milliyet* article, for instance, was on the necessity of forgetting old, painful memories and not allowing foreign political manipulators to feed any

lingering animosity between the two communities. Burhan Felek¹¹, on the other hand, advised the Lebanese Armenians and others not to agitate the Armenian minority with political interests of diaspora that were designed in line with such historical dreams and lingering disputes (*Milliyet*, 17.04.1965).

Similar ideas regarding inter-communal integrity, the Armenian minority's reactions to the 1965 events and concerns about destructive and disturbing linkages with memories of the past were also expressed in articles and opinion columns that reflected the views of the Armenian minority. The main arguments put forward in the Turkish press by members of the Armenian minority community can be categorized within the context of four clusters of messages: First, the Armenian minority lived contentedly under the protection of the law and with equal rights and freedoms; second, they did not want to dwell on the unpleasant events of the past, and they believed that manipulating past events as political tools of the present was inappropriate; third, they did not have any connection with the events of 1965, they did not approve of the 1965 demonstrations, and they would not allow these events to disturb their happiness and peace in Turkey; and four, they were loyal compatriots and children of Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and they would confront any attempt, provocation or propaganda that could damage the Turco-Armenian brotherhood and the interests of Turkey.

These points were raised in some editorials and opinion columns that provided space to the views of the Armenian minority and in interviews conducted with members of the Armenian minority community. *Akşam*, for instance, presented a letter written by Bagsadur Paluyan, an ethnic-Armenian Turkish citizen who belonged to the Armenian Narlıkapı Church in Istanbul, who argued that Armenians in Turkey had already forgotten the Ottoman period and benefited from all kinds of rights as citizens of the Turkish Republic, adding that they held no interest in what he referred to as “the protest demonstration” to be held in Lebanon. Paluyan's letter also claimed that “the Armenians of the world were being manipulated in the interests of ill-intentioned people” (*Akşam*, 26.04.1965)

Another letter, sent to *Yeni İstanbul* by Torkom İsteyan, mentioned the necessity of “taking lessons from history and taking care not to dig the pains of history.” Mentioning the historical closeness of the two communities, İsteyan argued that the Armenians in Ottoman lands had been provoked by foreign powers, just like the Lebanese Armenians, who, he

believed, did not know whose interests they were serving by gathering in Lebanon. He concluded by stating that “he was proud of being an Armenian as well as being Turkish as a member of the loyal and hardworking Armenian nation.” Other members of the Armenian minority interviewed by *Hürriyet* and *Her Gün* supported these views, mainly saying that they considered the 1965 demonstrations abroad to be ugly, unacceptable and beyond any moral limits (*Her Gün*, 24.03.1965, *Hürriyet* 10.04.1965). They rejected any connection, link or association with the Armenia diaspora participating in the international events.

Overall, qualitative analyses of editorials and articles marked several points regarding the representation of the Armenian minority in the Turkish press in connection with the 1965 events. First, the majority of articles and editorials agreed on the inter-communal intimacy between the Armenian minority and the remainder of society, so that while there were cases of under-representation or reluctance to acknowledge their existence as in the case of Kafli, press articles and editorials generally represented the Armenian minority as an integral part of society. Second, the articles and editorials stressed the disconnection between the 1965 events and the Armenian minority, with the majority of news articles stating that they were confident that ‘plots’ to drag the Armenian minority into these events would be unsuccessful, since the Armenian minority was composed of loyal and patriotic citizens of Turkey who would not serve as a ‘fifth column’ or represent an ‘ethnic threat’. Third, many articles argued that the events should not be allowed to disturb the peace and tranquility in which the Armenian minority in Turkey lived. Finally, the articles presented a discourse about the meaninglessness of attempts to manipulate past events in order to serve the political interests of Turkey’s rivals in the international political arena. Rather, proposed moving beyond the unpleasant memories of history, which were painful for both communities.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated that the majority of the Turkish press did not represent the Armenian minority as either a ‘fifth column’ or an ‘ethnic threat’ within the context of the 1965 events. On the contrary, most newspapers appeared to emphasize the distinctions between the Armenian minority and the Armenian diasporic groups organizing demonstrations against Turkey. Consequently, according to the majority of the Turkish press, if it was necessary to draw a line between ‘us’ –Turkey– and ‘them’ –Armenian diasporic groups– then the Armenian minority in Turkey should be placed on the same side as the Turkish majority.

The great bulk of news articles, editorials and op-eds placed their emphasis on the friendship and brotherhood of the Turkish and Armenian communities in Turkey and blamed ‘others’ for disrupting the peaceful relations between the two communities all over the world. In this way, the Turkish press promoted a discourse of internalization of the Armenian minority in Turkey as ‘us’ and a discourse of externalization and alienation of the Armenian diasporic groups conducting an anti-Turkey campaign as ‘others’.

It can thus be concluded that media representation of the Armenian minority during the 1965 events significantly deviated from the misrepresentation/under-representation nexus of the media theories examined at the beginning of this study. In this respect, the Turkish press did not “propel certain traits, most often negative, about minorities into the spotlight.” (Mahtani 2001) Rather than pursuing a stereotypical approach shaped by replications of negative depictions, the Turkish press revealed a discourse that dismissed discriminative perceptions of the Armenian minority.

Owing to the absence of any clash or inconsistency with the state discourse on this issue, the Turkish press faced no serious conflict in releasing such a positive portrayal of the Armenian minority within the context of 1965 events. Turkish newspapers disseminated to their readers the clear message that as loyal citizens of the Turkish Republic, the Armenian minority had nothing to do with the offensive campaign against Turkey organized by certain groups in the Armenian diaspora. Through its extensive stress on the straightforward distinction between the Armenian minority in Turkey and the Armenian diaspora, the Turkish press represented Armenian citizens as an integral part of ‘us’ rather than ‘them’. In so doing, the Turkish press discourse functioned in line with that of the state and the Armenian minority in promoting a public discourse that would prevent any possibility of translating the ‘unpleasant developments’ in the Armenian Diaspora into a domestic political crisis by dragging the Armenian minority into the fray.

Nevertheless, the question as to why, contrary to the dominant expectations of the literature on media representation of minorities, the Turkish national press did not present and reproduce a discourse of the Armenian minority as an ‘ethnic threat’ or ‘fifth column’ remains to be addressed in a more comprehensive analysis. Further interdisciplinary research is required that examines the specific dynamics of the period in explaining the ideological choices of the Turkish national press in its representation of the Armenian minority in connection with the 1965 events of the Armenian diaspora.

Comments

- ¹ In the demonstrations of Lebanon, the Armenian diaspora organizations declared their claims to self-determination, which would supposedly grant certain towns of Turkish Republic such as Trabzon, Kars, Ardahan, Bitlis, Van and Erzurum to the Armenian community (Laçiner 2008, 153). Similar claims were also raised in the demonstrations which took place in the United States, France and Soviet Union. The Armenian diaspora in those countries pursued propaganda campaigns against Turkey by utilizing the different means of mass media (Laçiner 2008, 154-5). For a detailed analysis of the 1965 events, see Koldaş (2003), Laçiner (2008).
- ² Several events seemed to indicate a linkage between the Armenian demonstrations and the Cyprus issue. Greek Cypriot support to the ceremonies for anniversary of deportation, which was organized in Nicosia in 24 April 1965 under the patronage of Kleridis, president of Council of Greek Cypriot Representatives (appeared as one of those indicators. In addition, efforts of the Greek Cypriot Representative to the United Nations (the UN) towards promoting the Armenian claims in the UN (Laçiner 2008, 164) and founding of Armenian National Committee Greece in 1965, which would maintain offices in various cities of Greece (see official website of A.N.C.G) could also be perceived as signs of possible strategic cooperation between the Greek / Greek Cypriot authorities and newly emerging political establishment of Armenian diaspora against Turkey.
- ³ *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Yeni İstanbul*, and *Akşam* were generally considered as examples of mainstream press, which did not follow a particular ideological path. Main concern of these newspapers was to attract the attention of the mass audience and to increase their nation-wide circulation. Among them, *Hürriyet* was the first newspaper, which extensively put emphasis on the Cyprus issue in 1950s and 1960s. *Her Gün* was established by Mehmet Faruk Gürtunca and followed a mainstream political path in 1960s until it was bought by Zeki Saraçoğlu in early 1970s. From 1973 onwards *Her Gün* became an ardent supporter of the *Nationalist Movement Party*. *Son Havadis* was founded in 1960 by Cemil Sait Barlas and it soon became voice of the *Justice Party* (a center-right political party) in the national press. *Tercüman* was another national daily newspaper, which became ideological adherent of the *Justice Party* especially after its possession by Kemal Ilıcak in mid-1960s. *Yeni Tanın* was a newspaper that tried to pursue a critical stance towards the social and economic problems. However, there was a disagreement between the proprietor (İzzettin Turanlı, a supporter of the *Justice Party*'s policies) and the executive editor of the newspaper on its publication policies. *Haber* and *Adalet* were also supporters of center-right ideas, which were represented by the *Democratic Party* in 1950s and the *Justice Party* in 1960s respectively. *Ulus*, *Dünya* and *Cumhuriyet*, on the other hand, were

the supporters of center-leftist *Republican Party*. *Vatan* can also be considered as a newspaper which was sympathetic to the political stance of the *Republican Party* under the ownership of Naim Tiralı in this period. *Yeni Asır* was a political daily newspaper, which was published in İzmir since 1895. It claimed to be the guard of the republic and its works after the establishment of Turkish Republic. For further details on the political and ideological stances of the newspapers of this historical period, see Özgentürk (2008) and Topuz (2003).

⁴ He was a teacher, author and columnist. He was known with his nationalist and anti-communist stance in the political arena⁴. He was a MP from nationalist *Republican Peasant and Nation Party* between 1961 and 1965. He resigned from the party on July 1965.

⁵ He was a journalist, publisher and politician. He started his career in journalism in 1941 in *Vakit*. He consequently worked in *Tan*, *Yeni Sabah*, *Vatan*, *Akın*, *Havadis*, *Son Havadis*, and *Haber*. He is the founder of *May Publishing House*. He was known to be very close to the center-right *Democratic Party* and the *Justice Party* in 1950s and 1960s.

⁶ Ahmed Vâlâ Nureddin (Vâ-Nû) was a journalist, columnist, reviewer and writer. He was well known with his friendship with Nazım Hikmet as well as his work on biography of Nâzım Hikmet titled 'Bu Dünya'dan Nâzım Geçti' (Nâzım has left this world) which includes an account of their time together in Russia in 1922-1925. He graduated at the Communist University of the Workers of the East) in 1925; Following his return to Turkey, he worked in the newspapers *Aksam* and *Cumhuriyet*. He became editor of the newspaper *Haber*. He also contributed to the newspapers *Köroğlu*, *Yeni Sabah*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Havadis* and periodicals like *Yeni Gün*, *Olay* and the satirical *Şaka*. He was the author of over “a hundred books and thousands of humorous columns, stories, plays, fairy tales, reports and accounts”. He used various pseudonyms such as Hatice Süreyya, Ali Marmara and other names to sign his journalistic works. For further information about Vala Nureddin see Vala Nureddin Papers at International Institute of Social History (at <http://www.iisg.nl/archives/en/files/n/10818156full.php#N10CC6>)

⁷ He was one of the founders of *Dünya* with Falih Rıfkı Atay in 1952. He was known with his unsympathetic stance against the *Democratic Party*. However, he became one of the ardent supporters of the center-right *Justice Party* after the 1965 elections.

⁸ He was the executive editor of *Cumhuriyet* between 1963 and 1970. He was known as a balanced leftist journalist, who did not want to allow an ideological shift of *Cumhuriyet* towards radical leftist lines. He rather tried to maintain the newspaper's center-leftist stance intact by disapproving changes in its editorial policy under the impact of the revolutionary journalists

- ⁹ He was a nationalist poet, journalist, lawyer, and author, who published a number of literary and humorous magazines. He was one of the defenders of Turkism and Turkish nationalism in his literary works (Canatak 2005). He was one of the members of the group of Turkish poets known as the “Five Syllabists”. Like the other members of the group, Orhon’s work was affected by the national literature movement, which put emphasis on the use of plain and non-ornamented language in Turkish literature. Their main subject matters were the “patriotism, the beauties of the fatherland, heroism, and bravery”. (For further information about Five Syllabists”, see, Turkish Cultural Foundation webpage <http://www.turkishculture.org/search.php> and about their emphasis on social themes see Karpat 1960.) He was elected Member of Parliament from the Republican Party in 1946. He became a member of the *Justice Party* in 1960.
- ¹⁰ He was a conservative journalist who was expelled from Turkey between 1922 and 1938 due to his opposition against the Turkish republican independence movement and his writings, which emphasized the need for the British assistance to save the country (Öztoprak 1989). After his return to Turkey, he worked in *Tan*, *Yeni Sabah* and *Milliyet* (Çeviker 2001) and followed a mainstream political path and wrote about issues in the agenda of country generally with a humorous style.
- ¹¹ He was one of the leading photographer, sports journalist and columnist, who pursued an independent political stance throughout his professional life notwithstanding his membership to the *Republican Party*. He is known as the “dean of Turkish journalists” (Mitler 1988). He was chairman of the *Turkish Journalist Association* between 1949 and 1952 as well as between 1959 and 1982. His prudent use of humor in describing the everyday lives of people and socio-political affairs of the time in his column in *Cumhuriyet* won the admiration of a large mass of readers (Akgül, 2001). He was also known with his expertise and writings about sports (particularly Olympics).

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1965 Olayları Sırasında Ermeni Azınlığın Türk Basınındaki Temsili

Umut Koldaş*

Öz

Bu makale Ermeni Diaspora grupları tarafından Türkiye'ye karşı düzenlenen 1965 olayları sırasında Ermeni azınlığın Türk Basınındaki temsilini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda makale, azınlık-medya ilişkilerine odaklanan kuramsal ve yönetsel yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde söz konusu olaylar sırasında Ermeni azınlığın Türkiye için “etnik bir tehdit” ya da “beşinci kolon/sütun” olarak yansıtılıp yansıtılmadığını analitik bir şekilde irdelemektedir. O dönemde Türkiye’de basılan 16 ulusal gazeteyi niceliksel ve niteliksel analiz yöntemlerini kullanarak değerlendiren bu çalışma Türk ulusal basınının 1965 olayları sırasında Ermeni azınlığını, anadamar medya kuram ve yaklaşımlarının azınlıkların medyada eksik, yoksun ya da yanlış temsil edildiğini savunan temel çizgisinden farklı bir şekilde temsil ettiği sonucunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Türk Basını, Ermeni Azınlık, 1965 Olayları, Azınlık-Medya İlişkileri, Beşinci Kolon/Sütun

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Турецкая пресса и отражение в ней армянского меньшинства во время событий 1965 года

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Аннотация

Эта статья призвана обсудить представительство армянского меньшинства в турецкой прессе во время событий 1965 года, организованных группами армянской диаспоры против Турции. В этом контексте в рамках теоретических и методологических подходов относительно связей меньшинства со средствами массовой информации аналитически рассматривается вопрос изображения или неизображения армянского меньшинства в Турции «этнической опасностью (угрозой)» или «пятой колонной» во время указанных событий. На основе количественного и качественного анализа 16 национальных газет, в статье выдвигается иной, отличный от основной линии традиционных теорий и подходов прессы о недостаточном, искаженном или ошибочном отражении в СМИ армянского меньшинства, подход к представлению армянского меньшинства в турецкой национальной прессе в ходе событий 1965 года.

Ключевые слова

турецкая пресса, армянское меньшинство, события 1965 года, отношения между меньшинством и прессой, пятая колонна

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