



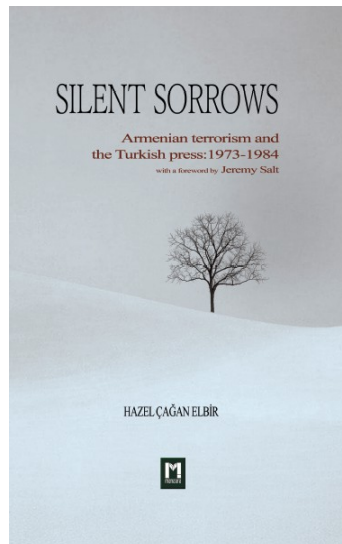
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Reading of:

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Silent Sorrows

Armenian terrorism and the Turkish press: 1973-1984



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Table of content

Acknowledgements	9
Foreword	11
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION	15
1.1. Turkish Press (1973-1984)	19
1.2. Armenian Terrorism and the Turkish Press	22
1.3. Sources.....	29
CHAPTER II	
TERRORISM AND DIVISION (1973-1980)	31
2.1. Assassinations in Santa Barbara,.....	32
2.2. Killing of an Ambassador.....	54
2.3. Another Assassination	56
2.4. Murder in Lebanon	68
2.5. Murder in Rome.....	75
2.6. Double Murder in Madrid.....	83
2.7. Another Murder in Paris	87
2.8. Assassinations in Athens	90
CHAPTER III	
UNDERSTANDING ARMENIAN	
TERRORISM (1980-1984)	107

3.1. Assassinations from Sydney to Paris	109
3.2. Back to Los Angeles	117
3.3. The Bloody Year: 1982	121
3.4. An Assassination in the Eastern Bloc and more	125
3.5 Cessation of Armenian Terrorism	128

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION	131
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Bibliography.....	137
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CHAPTER II

TERRORISM AND DIVISION (1973-1980)

Armenian terrorism was exacerbated when Consul General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir were murdered by an Armenian in Santa Barbara, California, 1973.⁴² The first two assassinations could not have been identified as a part of an organized attack by Armenian organizations, but it evolved in the years to follow and by the mid-70s that Turkey had started to grasp the seriousness of a well-organized and efficient world-wide international terrorist network.

⁴² Bilal Şimşir, *Ermeni Terörü ve Tehdit: Türk Diplomatları Üzerine Bazı Tespitler*, Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri, Cilt II, Ankara:2007, p. 399.

2.1. Assassinations in Santa Barbara,



Consul General Mehmet Baydar⁴³ and Consul Bahadır Demir⁴⁴

A 77-year-old American citizen professing to be of Iranian origin made an application to Turkey's Consulate General in Los Angeles to donate a painting which had been stolen from the Ottoman palace and a souvenir banknote to the Turkish Republic.⁴⁵ The Consul General Mehmet Baydar in Los Angeles arranged an appointment to meet the old man. Two Turkish diplomats, Consul General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir went to the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara to be closer to Mıgırđıç Yanıkyan as they had decided. Nevertheless,

⁴³ *Mehmet Baydar, 27 Ocak 1973 Los Angeles / ABD*
Available:

http://www.ermenisorumu.gen.tr/turkce/diplomatlar/mehmet_baydar.html [01.12.2011].

⁴⁴ *Bahadır Demir, 27 Ocak 1973 Los Angeles / ABD* Available:
http://www.ermenisorumu.gen.tr/turkce/diplomatlar/bahadir_demir.html [01.12.2011].

⁴⁵ *Şimşir, Şehit Diplomatlarımız, p. 83.*

they did not foresee the exact purpose of the old American man. The old "Iranian-American" prepared two guns for his victims in order to shoot them. The two Turkish diplomats were shot dead by Yanıkyan on January 27, 1973 in Santa Barbara.



Hürriyet, January 29, 1973.

The real identity of the murderer was revealed after the incident. He was an Armenian-American called Mıgırdıç

Yanıkyan. This attack was definitely a shock both for the US and Turkey. As a result of this unprecedented event, Turkish newspapers could not conceal their denunciation of the negligence of the United States and Diaspora Armenians. The assassinations were covered widely by the Turkish press publishing all details about the incident.

Two days after the attack, newspaper *Akşam* published a front-page item with the huge title "Our Two Consuls Were Killed in the USA"⁴⁶ and the subheading of the news continued, "Armenian Grudge Arose Again".⁴⁷ Although this title and content of the article accused the "Armenians" of murdering the Turkish diplomats, no Armenian group accepted this accusation. However, in the following days, a group appeared under the name of "soldiers of Gourgen Yanıkyan"⁴⁸ giving the impression that the assassinations were not simple isolated events.

The titles of the related news encapsulated the reaction towards the attack. On the one hand, Yanıkyan was described as "Despicable Assassin"⁴⁹, on the other hand, the newspaper questioned the power behind him: "Who enraged the insidious Armenian?".⁵⁰ However, *Akşam* also published the statements of the Armenian Patriarch

⁴⁶ "Amerika'daki İki Konsolosumuz Öldürüldü -Ermeni Kini Yine Hortladı" *Akşam*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

⁴⁷ *Akşam*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Francis P. Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism The Past, The Present, The Prospects*, San Francisco: Oxford, Westview Press, 1991. p. 19.

⁴⁹ "Alçak Kaatil! [sic]" *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

⁵⁰ "Hain Ermeni'yi Kimler Kudurttu?" *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

in Turkey in its front page under the title of "The Attack Created Hatred".⁵¹

A few days after the incident, the American police found the letters written by the murderer Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan. In the letters, Yanıkyan explained how he nurtured hatred against Turkey and by the assassination had taken revenge of his ancestors who had been killed in 1915. Mıgırdıç Yanıkyan claimed in court that he was not guilty and repeated that he had only taken revenge for his slain ancestors who had been murdered by the Ottomans/Turks. *Akşam*, who covered those letters and Yanıkyan's defense in court, suggested that in fact, Yanıkyan had definitely planned those murders during all those years he spent in the USA, and strove to commit atrocities.⁵²

Son Havadis was the most nationalistic newspaper among the newspapers analyzed in this study. *Son Havadis* gave the news about the first incident in the US with the title of "An Armenian Murdered Our Two Diplomats in Los Angeles"⁵³ on 29 January. The next day, *Son Havadis's* caption read as follows: "Attempts of the US government for the security of our representatives."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, that attempt for the security of our diplomats would

⁵¹ "Ermeni Patriği: Olay Nefret Yarattı" *Akşam*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.

⁵² "Yanıkyan Masum Rolüne Büründü" ["Yanıkyan pretends as if he was innocent."] *Akşam*, 1 February 1973, p. 1.

⁵³ "Bir Ermeni, Los Angeles'ta İki Diplomatımızı Öldürdü" *Son Havadis*, 29 January 1973, p. 1.

⁵⁴ "Temsilcilerimizin Emniyeti İçin Teşebbüse Geçildi" *Son Havadis*, 30 January 1973, p. 1.