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Front Cover Photo:
Janice Okoomian and her daughter Hannah

place onto the shelves of every public and private school library throughout North America; in this capacity, it would serve as a resource book awaiting use in a young student's research project. The utility of this work will rely on teachers encouraging and leading students to explore cultures and countries that are not traditionally researched in mainstream school projects. It is not immediately obvious how broadly the book will be able to serve its intended purpose. Symbolically and substantively *Armenia* is a book that Armenians can be proud to know is part of the network of resources in United States and Canadian schools. Practically, though, it will probably not reach masses of students in these institutions in the same way, for example, as sections of this material would if placed in survey textbooks dealing with world history, global cultures, or human rights. This does not represent a problem, *per se*, but does warrant a distinction—based on the degree of usage that can realistically be expected—and a call (as always) for better representation of Armenia and Armenians in mainstream textbooks.

Ultimately, the citations contained within *Armenia's* Selected Bibliography are testimony to the dearth of developmentally appropriate materials available for young learners on the topic of Armenia and Armenians. For intermediate or high school students interested in further study in this area, the options for age-appropriate materials are slim, to be generous. They must either search through tomes written in elusively elevated language or be content with simplistic encyclopedia information on the subject. The publication of *An Armenian Family* and *Armenia* represents a landmark—and, one hopes, a turning point—in the availability of materials written for school-age students on the subject of Armenia and the Armenian people.

Nicole E. Vartanian

Hilmar Kaiser

Imperialism, Racism, and Development Theories: The Construction of a Dominant Paradigm on Ottoman Armenians

Ann Arbor, Mich.: Gomidas Institute, 1998, x + 59 pages, ISBN 1-884630-02-2 \$9.00

In this contentious monograph, Hilmar Kaiser traces what he terms the dominant paradigm on Ottoman Armenians—that Armenians' economic success provoked their demise—to the German journalist Alphons Sussnitzki's conception of an ethnic division of labor in the Ottoman Empire. This conception, Kaiser argues, led to the German development of negative Armenian racial stereotypes, a process further fostered by the expanding German political and economic interests in the region. Kaiser contends that even after the German defeat, Sussnitzki's conception was revived in modern scholarship: introduced into the literature by the modernization theory of Charles Issawi and Walt Rostow, the conception penetrated the dependency theory of Doğu Ergil, Stephen Ted Rosenthal, and Feroz Ahmad, to then reproduce itself in the world-system theory of Reşat Kasaba and Çağlar Keyder. Kaiser concludes by stating that the pervasiveness of "such nationalist and ultimately racist" (p. 57) conceptions impedes the development of a critical approach in Ottoman historiography. The first three chapters trace the development of the German construction of the Armenian racial stereotype and the last two focus on its revival in modern scholarship.

The question Kaiser asks, namely how and why the Ottoman Armenian community came to be perceived as hindering Ottoman development which in turn

made it more vulnerable to aggression, is a very significant one. Indeed, the construction and reproduction of prejudice needs to be studied at all times and in all instances to engender its eventual demise. Kaiser's proposition for a more critical, multivalent approach in Ottoman historiography—one that would probe existing historical constructions for possible elements of prejudice—is most commendable. Yet what Kaiser undertakes in this monograph does not measure up to the standards he wants to set in the field: his partial and simplistic argument fails to capture the complexity of the question he sets out to study.

Kaiser identifies the escalating German imperialist agenda as the main causal factor in the emergence of the negative Armenian stereotype; he then introduces various German observers and analysts who concur with his assessment. Little attention is paid to the larger historical framework within which such a conception was negotiated and, at times, resisted. A case in point is the tension created by the sectarian divide within Christianity; Kaiser indirectly mentions how especially German Protestants take issue with such a conception at different times (pp. 11, 12, 14, 24). Yet he does not delve into the tensions that existed within the Armenian community itself, between the newly emerging Protestants and the others, urbanites and the provincials, or the upper-class *amira* and the artisans. A careful analysis of these tensions among the Germans and the Armenians might have revealed the pattern behind the stereotyping as to why certain stereotypes emerged at certain locations at the expense of others. Another factor concerns the dynamics of international politics: even though Kaiser voices the anti-Armenian German imperialist designs, he provides little or no discussion of the opposing pro-Armenian

British, French, and Russian policies (pp. 9, 26, 31) that played down such Armenian stereotypes and erected instead similar ones for the Turks. Failure to discuss this complex historical background leads the reader to the erroneous conclusion that German imperialist designs had a free reign and were passively and readily accepted. Such was not the case; again, a precise analysis of the political environment and its various narratives would reveal which conceptions appeared at the cost of others.

Kaiser's unwillingness to analyze the social context within which such stereotyping occurred also leaves the reader unaware about the literature on Ottoman society and Ottoman historiography. For instance, numerous studies by İlber Ortaylı articulate the German influence on the Ottoman Empire as well as on the position of the Ottoman minorities, while the historical analyses of scholars such as Mehmet Genç, Şevket Pamuk, Vedat Eldem, Carter Findley, and Şükrü Hanioglu present the complexity of the location of minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Kaiser, however, has only two references on the actual lives of Ottoman Armenians (pp. 1–2, fn. 1; p. 6, fn. 9). By not referring to such works and the information they contain within them, Kaiser assigns no agency to the Ottomans themselves, including the Ottoman Armenians. All of these actors are silent and, by implication, passive and naïve. The only ones who appear active in Kaiser's narrative are the Germans who travel, observe, and produce stereotypes (pp. 10, 13, 17, 19) which are then accepted and adopted without question.

Kaiser places so much emphasis on first critiquing the German imperialist and racist agenda, and then trying to causally connect such an agenda to a nationalist historiography, that he fails to realize that the modern scholarship he criticizes has two unique characteristics. First, this mod-

ern scholarship is not by any means restricted to the scholars and works Kaiser discusses; I have delineated in the preceding paragraph some other whose works Kaiser does not mention. Second, I would contend that the scholarship in the works Kaiser mentions is informed not by German racism and Turkish nationalism, but instead mostly by the *Ottoman* narrative on the *millet* system which determined the location of non-Muslims in Ottoman society. What demarcated non-Muslims in all Islamic societies was of course their protected status as *dhimmis*. Even though what this meant varied immensely at different time periods and in different regions of the Muslim world, and even though what the *millet* system signified in the Ottoman context is widely contested and unclear, the special status of non-Muslim minorities with respect to taxation, military obligations, and jurisprudence did nevertheless demarcate them as a minority group. I would argue that the modern scholarship drew upon this different location, which was replicated and reproduced through the centuries and which became especially polarized with the advent of nationalism in the nineteenth century. It was the parameters set by this preexisting system, rather than Sussnitzki, that led some scholars to emphasize the "inability" of the Armenians or other minorities to "be assimilated" into the transforming Ottoman state. The terminology employed in the quotation marks certainly reveals how modern scholarship does at times accept at face value the Ottoman state narrative without realizing how much it hegemonizes meaning at the expense of Ottoman Armenians and other minority groups; this critique of Kaiser is very apt. Still, I would argue that the cause for this conception lies not, as Kaiser argues, primarily in the German discourse but rather in the Ottoman one, one that

Kaiser misses through his inadequate historical contextualization.

Feminist theory and race theory have demonstrated the importance of analysis from the margins; the similar positions of Ottoman minorities would yield just as significant insights about the construction and transformation of Ottoman society. Kaiser alerts us in this monograph to the significance of the minority location in constructing a new critical approach to Ottoman historiography. Yet such an approach, I would contend, needs to *combine* a critique of existing theoretical frameworks with a mastery of primary source material, which Kaiser does not do. Otherwise, scholars would inadvertently keep privileging, as Kaiser does here, the very conceptions they set out to criticize.

Fatma Müge Göçek

Kotchnak

Chants Populaires Arméniens

(ALCD 228, M7 853), Distribution Média 7, 52, rue Paul Lescop, F-92000 Nanterre, France.

The Kotchnak ensemble has released a CD dedicated to Armenian folk songs. The CD includes one instrumental urban Caucasian dance melody; two dance songs; two *ashough* (troubadour) songs, one from the sixteenth century and the other from the nineteenth; one lament, a portrayal of a historical event, sung to a variant of an urban melody; one love song from the region of Shirak; one song inspired by the legend of Queen Semiramis of Assyria; and a cycle of six wedding songs from Akn (today Eğin, Turkey).

The accompanying booklet includes the song lyrics, sources, and relevant informa-