

EDİTÖRE MEKTUP

Tıp Dergileri, Tarih ve Sanat Hakkında: JAMA 2001 Kapakları İle İlgili İki Görüş

Is Prejudice a Curable Attitude of Mind or a Hopeless Case? The Cover, JAMA 2001; 24: 31

One expects 'human' approach to topics, especially in 'medical' scientific publications. Is it not surprising to see in the 21st century, a 'Medical' Doctor still with a European Medieval attitude of mind? What is the point in putting a 'war' picture on the cover of JAMA (The Journal of the American Medical Association, January 24/31, 2001) and a piece of writing about it by M. Therese Southgate, MD?

That sort of a picture would be 'much more realistic' and in conformity with the facts: "Most of the peoples of Europe have, at one time or another, been exterminators.

On the other hand, the Osmanlı Turks did NOT exterminate any people. Osmanlı Turks applied millet system; every religious community was free to live according to its belief, having a religious chief and having its organization: "...Taking a long view, the Ottomans must be praised for maintaining such politically crippling but morally praiseworthy Islamic practices as the millet system, low tariffs..." Not only the Muslim peoples, but non-Muslim peoples who lived under Osmanlı rule for centuries preserved their identities, their beliefs, their languages, their traditions. If the Osmanlıs had been 'a little' European in terms of cultural imperialism, there would not have been a Serb (They stayed in Serbia more than three centuries), a Bulgarian, an Armenian or a Greek today. They gave shelter to Jews who escaped from Inquisition in 1492. Jews in Istanbul are still familiar with Spanish language and music of the 15th century. The Greek-origin citizens of Turkey (they are called Rum because of the fact that they were subjects of the Eastern Roman Empire when Anatolia and Istanbul were opened to Islam) have full religious and

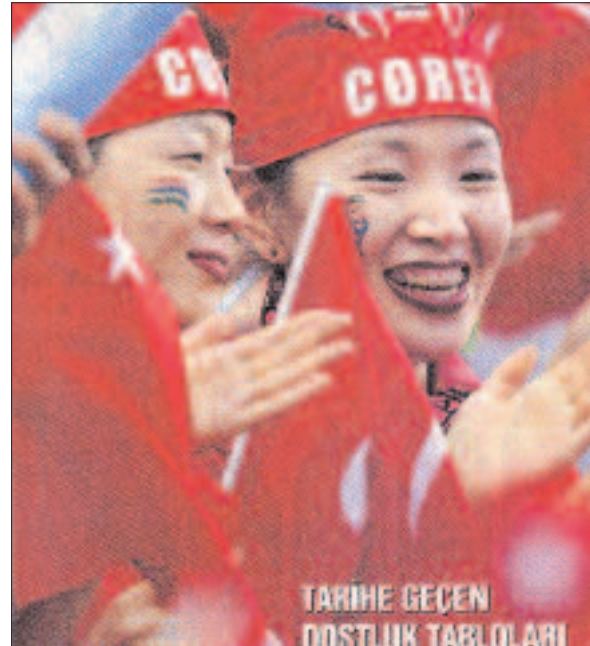
cultural freedom; they are well-off, they have their own schools, churches etc.

By the way, those who are called 'Greek' by the westerners and 'Rum' by Osmanlı Turks, have nothing to do with ancient Greeks; 'Rum' meant 'Orthodox' and included Bulgarians, Rumanians even Serbs in the beginning; it meant Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Orthodox subjects of old. And let it be known that the massacres actually took place and were committed by the rebellious ones.

We do not know if the prejudice is a curable attitude of mind or not; but we sincerely advise M. Therese Southgate to learn the real history from serious books, not to yield to be brainwashed by mass-media (printed or visual).

These serve to awaken honorable M. Therese Southgate. Does it mean anything to the writer whose vocation and profession is medicine?

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JAMA'ya ithaf olunur.