



## Publisher Zarakolu Supported by Writer Jerjian

*Writer George Jerjian has written a letter of support for publisher Ragip Zarakolu, who is on trial for publishing his book. Ferhat Tunc's case continues in December.*

**Ragip Zarakolu**, owner of Belge Publications, has been on trial for two years for publishing the Turkish translations of Prof. Dr. **Dora Sakayan's** "Accounts of an Armenian Doctor: Garabet Haceryan's Izmir Diary" and **George Jerjian's** "The Truth Will Set Us Free".

Zarakolu has been charged with "insulting and ridiculing the state and the Republic" and "insulting the memory of Atatürk", with 7.5 years imprisonment being demanded. While Zarakolu has been acquitted in the trial concerning Sakayan's book, the translator **Atilla Tuynan** is still being tried.

### Jerjian: Developing a new understanding of history

At yesterday's (5 December) hearing at the Istanbul 2nd Penal Court, where Zarakolu has been tried for two years without detention, a letter of support by Jerjian was presented to the court.

In the letter, which Jerjian sent from London on 1 June 2007, it said: "I grew up in a family which was protected by a Turk, and it was thus unthinkable for our family to have any bad intentions or thoughts towards Turks. I spent three years at university in England and made friends with around 40 Turkish students; I ate their wonderful home-made food."

Jerjian wrote that he wrote the book himself using information from Dr. **Vahakn Dadrian**, Dr. **Taner Akcam** and journalist **Stephen Kinzer**. "I used their data to develop a new understanding of history between Turks and Armenians."

### "How can Zarakolu insult the memory of Atatürk?"

Jerjian wrote that these writers were not "liars who create stories to destroy the balance of Turkish society and weaken its base". He called for Zarakolu's acquittal: "I am asking you how Zarakolu can insult the memory of a brave leader like Atatürk, who himself accepted that what happened to the Armenians was a crime?"

Interpreter **Tuynan**, who has himself been charged with "denigrating Turkishness" and "insulting and ridiculing the army" and who faces a possible 6-year prison sentence, was present at Zarakolu's trial to support him.

Furthermore, **Sanar Yurdatapan**, spokesperson of the Initiative against Crimes of Thought, and journalist **Erol Özkoray** attended the trial in support.

Zarakolu's lawyer **Özcan Kilic** was not able to attend the hearing, and thus the trial was adjourned until 31 January 2008 in order for the defense to prepare.

### Tunc case continuing

Meanwhile, the trial of singer **Ferhat Tunc**, who stands accused of "insulting and ridiculing the court", will continue on 13 December.

Tunc wrote an article about Kurdish politician **Leyla Zana** entitled "A Revolutionary Leyla and a Song". It was published in the "**Yeniden Özgür Gündem**" on 19 January 2004. Tunc's trial has been going on for around three years.

The responsible editor **Mehmet Colak**, who lives abroad, is also on trial together with Tunc. The case is being heard at the Beyoglu 2nd Penal Court in Istanbul.

### Sahin: Draft for 301 ready

Meanwhile, Minister of Justice **Mehmet Ali Sahin** has announced that a draft making changes to the controversial Article 301 is ready. The article, which punishes "insulting Turkishness", which also includes the organs of the state, has been used against many journalists, writers and academics.

Sahin said that there were six suggestions for changes, and that the General Directorate for Laws of the Ministry of Justice would collect all the suggestions and prepare one amendment draft.

Sahin also said that the draft had been presented to Prime Minister **Recep Tayyip Erdogan**: "The changes will be brought to cabinet very soon, and I think that we can then send them to parliament." (EÖ/AG)

### Bia news centre - İstanbul

06 December 2007, Thursday

**Erol ÖNDEROĞLU**

Yazdır