

## AKDES NIMET KURAT, 1903–1970

Professor Akdes Nimet Kurat was the first scholar to use Ottoman Turkish archival sources for the study of the history of south Russia, the Ukraine, and the Black Sea region. His work serves to balance the past rather one-sided research from the Russian point of view. Born in a Tatar village near Kazan, Professor Kurat was educated in Russia, Istanbul, and Germany, conducted archival research in London, Paris, Uppsala, Stockholm, Vienna, The Hague, and throughout Turkey, and was appointed professor of medieval history at Istanbul University's Faculty of Literature in 1933. He possessed the cosmopolitan background and training necessary for the sophisticated treatment of the complexities of Russian-Ottoman history evidenced in his seven monographs and more than fifty articles.

Three of his works deserve special attention. In *Prut Seferi ve Barişi, 1123 (1711) (The Pruth Campaign and Settlement)* (2 vols.; Ankara, 1951–53), Professor Kurat took a relatively unimportant event in the history of Eastern Europe and expanded his subject to include the whole nature of Russian-Turkish relations. He examined the way policy was formulated in both states, and showed convincingly that Peter I's southern policy took a completely new direction from that of his predecessors. In 1966 Kurat published *Türkiye ve Idil Boyu (Turkey and the Don-Volga Canal)*—a study of the Ottoman campaign to retake Astrakhan in 1569. Again he used a relatively minor incident as a springboard to a broad study of Russian-Ottoman relations and how the two empires viewed each other officially and unofficially. Based on a wealth of Ottoman archival sources, his work is a necessary one for all historians interested in the reign of Ivan IV. Professor Kurat's last published book, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara, 1970), is perhaps the most important for Western historians. Concerned with the regions, governments, and peoples most intimately involved in the Eastern Question (that is, the Ottomans and their subjects), it gives an Eastern view of this complex problem. Kurat devoted over half of the book to the relations between the government of the Young Turks and Russia during the period of the Dumas, Revolution, and Civil War.

In all of his writing, one senses Kurat's belief that the Ottomans and other Turkic peoples have been "legitimate" members of Eastern Europe since medieval times. He has shown conclusively that their societies participated in East European politics, influenced non-Turkic peoples (and were influenced by them), and enjoyed "normal" diplomatic and economic relations with many of them, including Poland and Muscovy.

Professor Akdes Nimet Kurat made an important beginning in the re-evaluation, based on Turkish archival sources, of the role of the Ottomans in East European politics. One hopes that his works will form the foundation of further research rather than be ignored because they were published in a non-Western language.

ALAN FISHER  
Michigan State University

## MATTHEW SPINKA, 1890–1972

Matthew Spinka came to Chicago with poor parents as a lad of fifteen and died at Claremont, California, as Waldo Professor of Church History Emeritus. His last active post was with the Hartford Seminary Foundation. He devoted sixty-seven