



Armenian Heritage and Memory Beyond the Borders



Mari Beylerian
1877, Constantinople

It is the first time I have ever been in Armenia. When i came to Yerevan from Turkey, my aim was to be able to conduct feminist and LGBTI+ projects but i wasn't sure what kind of those could be like. When i wandered around the streets, the billboards caught my attention. They reminded me of some kind of memory works. These billboards introduce remarkable Armenian figures who aren't requested to be forgotten. However, they're generally certain men. Women are very scarce and LGBTI+ people seem not to have existed. Therefore, i wanted to highlight the feminists and indicate Armenian Feminists who lived in Turkey in Pre and Post-Genocide Turkey in order to make a bridge between Armenian and Turkey. As far as I've observed that just **Zabel Yesayan** among Western Armenian feminists is known. I can't say that she is widely known. On the contrary, as a documentary about Yesayan called "*Finding Zabel Yesayan*" uncovers, people in Armenia don't recognize her and regard her as a leader, an important figure as much as other men. However, feminism(s) makes us inquire the power and struggle of ordinary lives and whether there is really discrepancy between the privacy and public, what lives are regarded as important and remarkable. Through this point of view and principle, i find the work on the struggle of women to survive very significant. With Yesayan, other less known Western Armenian feminists have to be uncovered and mentioned with their contributions and struggles in order to prevent them from being anonymous and non-existence.

This work to a great extent utilizes from and depends upon the works that **Lerna Ekmekçioğlu** and **Melissa Bilal** have conducted with the aim of revealing Western Armenian women's struggle for gender equality during the Ottoman Empire and beginning of Republic of Turkey.

As each one of their works has underlined, Western Armenian feminists not only wrote on gender inequality and women's rights and power, but also advocated for the existence and betterment of their nation and nationality. Furthermore, the struggle for future of their nation for the most of the feminists, especially **Hayganush Mark**, took precedence over that of gender equality and women's rights. In the mainstream memory of Armenia, women are generally stereotyped as a mother figure and victim as a weak creature. Although the feminists strived for destructing the gender stereotypes having been created by hetero-patriarchal society, especially Hayganush Mark and other some feminists also advocated for acceptable womanhood that represents

an hopeful Armenia as a mother, correct and moral woman being for the nation. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu describes this situation as conservative progressive Armenian Feminism with the effect of the successive mandatory Pro-Turkish advocacy after the republic was established in Turkey and she states that these feminists couldn't completely detach themselves from the patriarchal framework. The national motivations stimulated them. They tried to reform the system rather than to transform it and idealization was more adopted in their feminist politics, which prevented radical Armenian feminism in Turkey from appearing.

However, their contributions and efforts by writing, giving education, running women's organization mustn't be forgotten and ignored. As both Armenian and women, they tried to defy ascribed and imposed status that the state and society determined on women. And the genocide not only made them escape or killed them but also annihilated them as if they didn't live and carry out such significant things.

While a lot of certain male figures are widely known and tried to be known in Armenia, as far as i've observed, people don't know Western Armenian women who made feminist activism during Ottoman Period and Republic of Turkey, which indicates the gendered collective memory. Certain resources also state that they aren't mentioned in the anthologies and history textbooks. Keeping the question about whether it is just coincidental, i would like to present the feminists and women's rights advocates that have been excavated and shed light on.

In order to build a bridge between Armenia and Turkey, i also would like to present what Armenians who are living in Turkey have done so far in related to the events regarding the confrontation with the past intersecting gender.

My work on Western Armenian Feminists except for Zabel Yesayan mostly depends upon the research and output of Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal and English translations of **Jennifer Manoukian** but while i talk about other issues about the connection between Armenian and Turkey, i comfortably use my own style of narrative and language.

Umut Erdem

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Where are the Western Armenian feminists?



Elbis Gesaratsyan (1830 in Ortaköy, İstanbul-1911,Cairo) was the first female Armenian journalist and editor of *Guitar*, the first Armenian Women’s Journal in Turkey and second Women’s Journal in the entire Ottoman Empire. The Guitar was published in İstanbul in 1862. In Guitar, Elbis wrote under the pseudonym "**Yelbis Garabedian**" about the role of women in the community and the education of women. She was probably the first modern woman who expressed her political ideas by using the medium of writing for the public. She

collected her all kind of writings in a book called “*Namagani ar İntertsaser Hayuhis*” (Letters to Armenian Educated Women’s Foundation)

“You may have often experienced women who more thoughtful, more foresighted and more hard-working than their husbands; but they knowingly and blindly succumb to men who do not know the right way to do something; because the woman should be a bird without a tongue and the man, even if he is a crow, he must sing and rule with pride. Yes, my sister, these are my thoughts. Our opinions should blossom. Capable persons should take this as a duty, should activate the sluggish brains in lawful ways, should be awake in holding on to her the freedoms and should be eager to educate ourselves and encourage other women to educate themselves. We should create reading rooms and societies and possess such knowledge addressing hearts and brains so that we take steps on the way of development and be counted as human beings.”

Elbis Gesaratsian, “*Namagani ar İntertsaser Hayuhis*” (Letters to Armenian Educated Women’s Foundation), 1879.





Srpouhi Dussap (1840-1901, İstanbul) was the first Armenian novelist. She wrote 3 novels which were about the emancipation of women from the societal norms and moral double standards. She took a very vital position for Tibrotsaser Hayuhyats İngerutyun (Union of Friends for Education of Armenian Women)

working for educating the girls and training them to become teachers in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Dussap is also a very important figure for **Zabel Yesayan**. Dussap entirely inspires Yesayan. Yesayan narrates how she regards Dussap in her piece as an Armenian women intellectual and writer fighting against patriarchy and gender inequality. Dussap explains the dimension of gender inequality and male-dominance in writing by saying "A man can be a mediocre writer but a woman can't be!"

"Prejudice and laws have already put significant burdens on the position of women in society. We also add to these burdens by increasing poverty and the number of benefactors. Poverty pushes people from hardship to hardship and weakens the moral force of the poor by turning them into amorphous beings; benefactors hinder this moral force and offer slaves to society. Rational beings reach their true selves through the use of their moral and intellectual capacities. For example, when a woman works, provides for herself, and does not owe anything to others, she is perfectly free to think freely, work freely, and speak freely without succumbing to self-serving, outside influences. This woman, of course, feels that she is conforming to the purpose of nature, enjoying the freedom she created for herself, and elevating her social position. Only then can she prove to society that a woman is not a morally and intellectually weak creature; only then can she prove that this presumption is wrong, and that it is in fact the sad result of the hindered existence of women, their idleness and incomplete education as well as laws, customs, and prejudices. Today, prominent figures are protesting against this offensive notion on behalf of women.

Even nature is protesting by entrusting women with the finest and most noble role of all: the creation of humanity.

Armenian women, do not fall victim to prejudices that will drag you into an abyss. Do not scorn poverty, and do not try to hide it. Glorify your hardship, as the rich glorify their possessions. Doesn't the brave, wounded soldier who returns from the battlefield display his glorious wounds with pride? The poor are also brave soldiers of life. Once you are not ashamed of your poverty, you will relieve the bitterness of life with work, improve your position in society, and enter the workforce of vast freedoms where the human condition is ennobled and elevated without social distinction." Women's Inactivity translated by **Jennifer Manoukian**.



Զեպր Զեպիլ-Ասադուր (1863-1934)

Zabel (Sybil) Asadour (1863-1934 Istanbul) was one of the unique and influential figures for Armenian literature, prolific writer on ranging from fictional narratives including story, novel, playwriting, poem to political essays. She wrote under the pseudonym for her some books. She advocated for the education of girls. She was involved in opening the schools for the girls in the Armenian Provinces during the Ottoman Empire. She was also an educator and educated about Armenian language and literature. She especially made translations between French and Armenian. Her contribution was so huge

and substantial that a school on translation was established after her. She wrote an Armenian Language and Literature textbook with her husband, **Hrant Asadour** and they created a foundation for Modern Literary Western Armenian Language, which made Zabel Asadour be known in the current school textbooks and anthologies. **Aras Yayincılık** published a book called *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* (*The Examples from Armenian Literature*) in which there are Zabel Asadour's pieces called **Serena and Boa** in Turkish.



Zabel Yesayan

(1878 Üsküdar,
İstanbul-1942/1943 (?))

In Turkey, Zabel Yesayan is especially more recognized rather than other Western Armenian feminists but she was firstly mentioned by **Elif Shafak** within the scope of a symposium in İstanbul in 2015. She associated Yesayan with **Halide Edip**

Adivar, a significant Turkish Feminist and writer that nearly lived in the same time with Yesayan but certainly there were many differences between them. **Hazal Halavut**, a feminist academician working on Zabel Yesayan defies Shafak's aim to make these two feminists get closer to one another because of the genocide and Halide Edip Adivar's being Turkish nationalist politician. Halavut highlights Adivar's changing political path through **Sirpuhi Markaryan's** letter to Adivar after the genocide in Cilicia, by stressing that Adivar wrote a piece called "*Ölenle Öldürenler*" (People who are murdered and people who are murderer) and she expressed her shame and suffering for the genocide on behalf of Turkish people. In her writing, she says that she is in a great deal of despair since she is Turkish and being Turkish caused such a catastrophe. For a reply to her piece, Markaryan wrote a letter that expressed the pleasure to read such a piece and her feelings of the solidarity that Adivar tried to build and she had it published in a newspaper in which Adivar wrote her piece. But in contrast to what Yesayan's experiences and indecisive death, Adivar was afterwards involved in the Turkification and Islamization of Armenian children and in one of her novel, she used hate speech against Armenian and Christian people.

Stating "I don't want to hear the reasons and excuses for presenting the war as glorifying and something wanted and i also don't accept that the war is indispensable and necessary", Yesayan expressed her feelings about the genocide in Cilicia as such:

“We were all as pale as corpses, but tried in vain to smile at the passengers. The boat started to sail away. A mother’s face was gradually growing fainter as the boat sailed further into the distance. Next to us, her teenage daughter struggled to smile in an attempt to hide all the suffering in her young soul. The combination of the mother’s face disappearing into the grey mist, the mournful melodies flowing out of the cafes on the pier, the patter of the rain—at once cruel and calming—falling on the city exalted my soul with a feeling that made me lightheaded and caused my knees to go weak.

On our way back, we were all sad and absorbed in thought. In a red nightmare, I saw the city in flames, displaced people in a faraway place, enraged girls in mourning and gallows—gallows everywhere!

What was then only a vague nightmare would become my world in a matter of a few hours.” -*Towards Cilicia* by Zabel Yesayan (an excerpt from *Amid the Ruins* (1911) translated by Jennifer Manoukian

As of 2015, on the one hand people weren’t aware about Yesayan’s literary heritage, on the other hand her some books began to be translated. Her books were firstly translated from English translation into Turkish but then Aras Publishing took the responsibility of translating her books from Armenian. *Amid The Ruins, My Soul in Exile, The Last Cup (Chalice), Meliha Nuri Hanım* were translated under Aras Publishing so far. Some parts of *The Gardens of Silihdar* was translated from English translation. Depending upon this text, Yesayan’s life has been adopted to theatre and played for many years in Turkey. On the other hand, Aras Publishing aims to publish Turkish translation of this whole text from Armenian.

As far as i’ve observed, Yesayan is more known than other Western Armenian Feminists but there also many people that aren’t aware of who Zabel Yesayan is in Armenia. A documentary called *Finding Zabel Yesayan* directed by **Lara Aharonian** and **Talin Suciyan** indicates how Yesayan has been wiped out from Armenian people’s memory although she lived in Yerevan and her name was given for a street in Yerevan.

Vartuhi Calanthar Nalbandian (1895 Bursa- 1978 Washington DC) Since her having been closed to Dashnaksutyun circle (The Armenian Revolutionary Federation), she spent the whole 2 years of her life in the 20s in the women’s section of Istanbul’s famous central prison. Her father was also kept prison in the war times in Istanbul. She was accused of pursuing and spreading Armenian Nationalist propaganda and she was jailed with her father. After the war, she released

her prison memoir on *Hay Gin*. She was also General Secretary of Armenian Women's Association. She was an accomplished teacher who advocated for co-education of girls and boys. In 1921, she left for America. She published essays on Armenian pre-history in Armenian-American periodicals from Washington. Although she collaborated with her husband and published famous historical treaties, this work was just attributed to her husband and her name wasn't remembered.



Hayganush Mark (1885-1966 İstanbul) was the editor of *Hay Gin*, Armenian women's journal in İstanbul from 1919 to 1932. *Hay Gin* was the first journal which was interruptedly published from soon after the genocide until the era of the huge effect of Kemalism rule. *Hay Gin* stimulated women to write and express their thoughts and feelings; moreover, Hayganush Mark stipulated men to write under female pseudonym for encouraging women. She advocated and demanded gender equality but didn't

reject domesticated roles assigned to women. On the contrary, she advocated that men should also be domesticated. Her feminism was the representation of mixed modern and traditional woman. She gave priority to construct an ideal of Armenianness that was very much valued among Armenian people and mentality after genocide in order to survive and didn't want to contradict her feminism with Armenianness so she tried to prove their harmony with one another.



In her book called *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post Genocide Turkey*, Lerna Ekmekçioğlu mentioned that a possibility to collaborate Armenian and Turkish feminists occurred but afterward it failed. As the book mentioned, Mark was invited to join the Turkish Women's Association. However, she was upset that she was not invited directly by her fellow Turkish feminists but Ann Stis, a feminist from Geneva and the secretary of the International Feminist Women's Association, who happened to be in town. Despite her feelings, Mark

accepted the invitation. In her autobiography, Mark stated that many Turkish newspapers did not mention Ann Stis's invitation to Mark but reported the news as if Mark herself enrolled. Utterly disappointed once again, she immediately withdrew her membership, stating "this incident had dishonored not only herself but all Armenian women."

Although Hay Gin advocated the liberation of Armenianness, it had to adopt Pro-Turkish after the republic established because of the oppression and dominance of the government. And the Turkish government ordered Hay Gin closed in early 1933.



Arshaguhi Teotig (1875 İstanbul- 1922 Leysin) was educator, journalist and editor. Her activism led her to Cilicia for the massacre in 1909. Concluding from her experiences, observations and her activism, she documented about the survivor orphanages and children and her visit to Armenian political prisoners by providing very prolific and sophisticated discussion about Armenian's right to self-defense with the testimonies about the resistances. She was vice president of Tibrotsaser Hayuhyats İngerutyun (Union of Friends for Education of Armenian

Women) and opened the orphanages in Cilicia. Arshaguhi Teotig also wrote middle school textbooks on modern ethics and home economics as well as contributing to different Armenian periodicals.

Zaruhi Kalemkarian (1874 İstanbul- 1971 New York) was poet, essayist, social activist and community member. She was the first person who initiated a women's section in one of the mainstream newspaper which was daily published in İstanbul in the early 1890s. But afterwards, she moved to New York and continued her political engagement in the Armenian community there. As for 1926, she became the first woman board member of Armenian General Benelovent Union. She gave many speeches on Armenian history, Armenian women, especially Armenian women writers of İstanbul and their roles in the society.



Anais (Yevpime Avedisian)
1872, Constantinople - 1950, Paris

Annais (Yevpime Avedisian) (1872 İstanbul-1950 Paris) was poet and short story writer. Her poems especially concerned about sexual theme, 'women's body and desire. Thinking of the time when she was an active poet, we can say that she was daring.

She wrote articles and literary essays in the most important Armenian periodicals in İstanbul and Paris where she moved after genocide. She was also a social activist. She was the chair of a women's organization for almost 3 decades. She wrote her memoirs in 1949 and it was self published with the encouragement of her daughter, Astra

Mari Beylerian
(1877 İstanbul-1915(?) Unknown) participated Hunchakian Party at the age of 18. She participated in 1895 Babiali demonstration against the rule of Abdulhamit II. After that, she had to escape to Egypt for



Mari Beylerian
1877, Constantinople- 1915?, unknown



fear of arrest and began teaching in the Armenian schools. In 1902, she began publishing Artemis, a publication for the 20th century of Armenian women. For 2 years, she edited the journal. After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, she returned to İstanbul. In 1915, Beylerian was the principal of a girl's school in Tokat. From this girl's school, she was deported with her students and colleagues during the genocide and then she was killed under unknown circumstances.



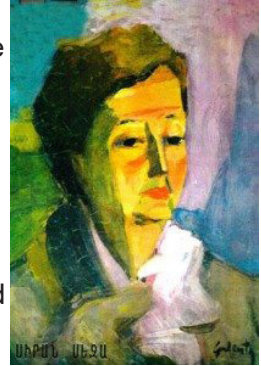
Zaruhi Şahbaz Bahri (1880 İstanbul-1958

Paris) was essayist and also novelist. She was the head of orphanage, nurture houses during the post-genocide Turkey and founded Armenian Red Cross in İstanbul. She became the member of İstanbul Armenian Women's Association.

Because of her political activities which were connected to Armenian patriarchate during the period of 1918 to 1922, she and her whole family had to leave İstanbul in the late 1922 when the Kemalists entered the city. She moved to Paris with her whole kids and husband but she had to

afford in Paris as a tailor so she stopped writing for a while. However, when she resumed writing in the 1940s, she wrote 4 novels. Despite of it, the whole her works except for one haven't been included in Armenian literature anthology. Her memoir was unpublished for nearly half a decade until her grandchildren published it with just 40 copies in 1995 in Beirut. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu says that it took 2 years for her to reach it although it was published.

Siran Seza (1903 İstanbul- 1973 Beirut) was one of the most intellectuals of Armenian Diaspora. She left İstanbul as a young girl and studied journalism and literature in the Columbia University. She didn't return to Kemalist Turkey, on the contrary, she moved to Lebanon, Beirut. Her most important work is women's journal "Yeridasart Hayouhi" (The Young Armenian Woman) that was founded in 1932. This journal was published from 1932-34 and then from 1947-68. She took on editing the journal and published 7 books including short stories and memoirs that occasionally evolved around women characters and their challenges in their daily lives.



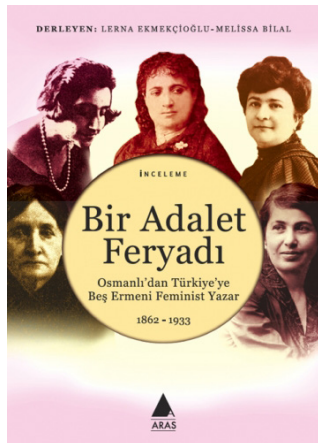
"She stared at the page even after finishing the article. Armenia! As she gazed down at the paper, her entire life passed before her eyes and all of her hopes and suffering flew towards that poor homeland, that Armenia that was just out of reach. She loved it. She yearned for it with untold sorrow and nostalgia. How many times had she, powerless in her wounded pride, lamented the bitter fate of her poor homeland?

Now a completely new image was gliding up from the depths of her

dreams. Here was a nation, subjected to persecution and massacre and sentenced to live with its head bowed for eternity, that had risen from the valley of tears to the summit of its undeniable potential. The adults, content in their noble work, guided the children as they grew. The Armenian children had schools, theaters, special places to play, and all the opportunities to become someone. On their own soil. In their own culture. In great anticipation of better days still to come.” The Child of a Refugee by Siran Seza translated by Jennifer Manoukian

The Voices of Armenia in Turkey

Although the platform for the remembrance of 24th of April annually makes the demonstration in order to demand the confrontation with the past from government and Hrant’s Friends annually calls for people on the 19th of January to gather in front of older building of Agos where Hrant Dink was murdered, Armenian voices aren’t just raised in these events.



Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar (A Cry For Justice: 5 Armenian Feminist Writers from Ottoman Period to the Republic of Turkey) In August, 2006, Aras Publishing released the book in which **Lerna Ekmekçiöğlü** and **Melissa Bilal** compiled and edited the works of 5 Western Armenian feminists who lived in the Ottoman Period and early Republic of Turkey as well as highlighted their lives as a result of over 10 years of their labour and collaboration. It's a unique piece in terms of introducing

Armenian feminists to us since the feminist movement that began in the '80s after the military coup in Turkey wasn't aware of the feminist movement during the Ottoman Period. It took some times for the feminists to encounter and recognize the feminists and women's rights movement during the Ottoman Period. However, this encounter wasn't enough to uncover the struggle of Armenian feminists. Firstly, in 2015 some people heard the name of Zabel Yesayan that was said to resemble Halide Edip Adivar, Turkish nationalist feminist in the late

Ottoman Period and the early Republic of Turkey by Elif Shafak's presentation. However, this book is the most important resource about the detailed and excavated information on Armenian feminists with the awareness of the political background in that time. The collaboration of Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melissa Bilal still continues to work and they give public talks about it. Although this book presents only 5 Armenian feminists as a starting point, they are even excavating other feminists and their works. They have reached 12 feminists that I mentioned above utilizing this collaboration and labour so far and continue to present them in the public talks; moreover, they aim to create a website through which we can reach their information. The book has been also studied in Armenian High Schools and universities in Turkey.

Aras Publishing: The literature not only is universal but also represents the nation(s) and country(ies). Literature indicates the significance of people's knowing their mother tongue, communication via it. Literature has the potential to represent and form people's collective memory and creates a bridge between people in order to talk about the issues. Aras Publishing has embarked on with the aim of introducing Armenian's heritage, language and concern to Turkish people and other various people living in Turkey. For Aras, literature is a means of stating that Armenians lived and are still alive in Turkey. In 1993, it was established in 1993 by **Yetvart Tomasyan, Ardaşes Margosyan, Payline Tomasyan, Mıgırdiç Margosyan**, and also **Hrant Dink** in Beyoğlu, İstanbul. The fact that Aras Publishing was founded in Beyoğlu and still remains to exist there is very substantial because Beyoğlu has the collective memories of a lot of people of diverse nations and ethnicities. There were many Armenian people who made contributions to shape Beyoğlu. In terms of reviving this memory and sustaining the contributions, Aras Publishing is a memory complex on its own as well as with the literary texts that it has translated and published. Aras Publishing has introduced many Armenian figures and culture to Turkey by stressing that Armenian people needs to be heard because they have an issue that all the people in Turkey have to recognize and the government has to deal with. Aras Publishing also organizes the public talks around the country.



Agos Newspaper:

Journalism is said to function on the baseline of free of speech and narrates the lives of people and other creatures that don't constitute ascendant

and ruling class or society. Because of it, Agos Newspaper was founded in 1996 by **Hrant Dink** and his friends to pursue and conduct this aim. Since no other journalist or newspaper didn't take on this responsibility, Agos Newspaper adopted the intention to uncover and announce the concerns of Armenian people living in Turkey. It's the first newspaper that is published in both Armenian and Turkish under the Republic of Turkey. It gives priority to democratization, minority rights, confrontation with the past, preservation and development of the pluralism in Turkey. Agos Newspaper struggles against the censorship, ban imposed by the government in the publishing and threat of elimination of an identity in Turkey.: <http://www.agos.com.tr/en/home>

Hrant Dink was murdered in front of the older building of Agos newspaper in 2007. Agos Newspaper is currently located in Hrant Dink Foundation and the older building is aimed to be converted into a memorial complex.

Hrant Dink Foundation was founded in 2007 in order to revive Hrant Dink's dreams, struggle, language and heart. It aims to develop and maintain dialogue, peace and empathy. It works on memory and history works without nationalism and racism, media watch on hate speech, development of the cultural relations between Turkey and Armenia via Beyond Borders Travel Grant, Western Armenian language courses, support of the democratization of Turkey, creative works for the children and young, collecting and archiving the articles, photographs and documents about Hrant Dink. It has also run Asulis Laboratory that fights against the discrimination in Turkey, works on the speech and aims to create dialogue by organizing public talks.

Hrant Dink Foundation has run its activities in the Anarad Hığutyun Building since 2015 March. Anarad Hığutyun Building was firstly built to enable The Anarad Hığutyun Sisters Union to provide especially the poor families' daughters with both a religious and an educational place.



“Armenian women are not alone!”

Especially as of 2012, Armenian old women were attacked and moreover killed in some provinces which were known for Armenian neighbours in İstanbul, Turkey. Because of the attacks and murders, İstanbul Feminist Collective called for women and organized a demonstration in order to pay the public attention to the incidents and hatred against Armenian women by building a solidarity among women and feminists. The demonstration stated “We’re aware! We’re here! We’re Following!”

In 2012, **Maritsa Küçük**, 84-year old Armenian woman who lived in Kocamustafapaşa in İstanbul, Turkey, was murdered. Nor Zartonk, an Armenian organization followed judicial and legal process and noticed a lot of deficiencies in the works of the police in Turkey and afterwards **Murat Nazaryan**, the suspect of the murder was sentenced to life imprisonment on Feb. 24 in an İstanbul court.

Nor Zartonk (Նոր Չարթոկ) is an Armenian organization in Turkey and fights for the fact that people of Turkey and the world should live evenly, freely and in solidarity.

Kamp Armen: “They took us, 13 children... We walked from Gedikpaşa (Armenian Protestant Church) to Sirkeci... We passed Haydarpaşa by ship and then went to Tuzla by the train. We walked for an hour to a plain land which had side of lake and sea. Tuzla wasn’t used to have crowd of the villas of the riches and bureaucrats. There was an isolated sea side with the thin sand and the neighbourhood was used to be detached from the sea and a part of the lake. There were very few houses, trees of fig and olive and the horny brushes of the blackberry that were strewed in the vast land. And then...

... the tents of Kızılay that we made... We, as 13 thin children aged between 8 and 12, were saved from just spending the summer times in the concrete garden...”-Hrant Dink, Davacıyım Ey İnsanlık!



Hrant Dink narrates the story of Kamp Armen. There was in need of a place for Armenian orphanages and children who forgot Armenian language when they returned to the hometown in

the summer after 1950s. Children built the camp on their own and regarded it as their Atlantis because the camp provided them with enjoyment, solidarity and the roof. But after 1979, the possession of the camp was taken from Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church to a Turkish person as an implementation to dispossess Armenian people living in Turkey. After this date, the graduated children from the camp which had remained as an isolated place afterwards gathered annually when they became adults. But after 25 years, in 2015, the building was decided to be destroyed since a villa was planned to be built, which means the annihilation of Armenian memory. It resulted in a remarkable protest that Nor Zartonk, other organizations, Armenian graduated children from the camp and people around İstanbul were involved in. It lasted for nearly 5 months in order not to allow it to be demolished. The protest resulted in the fact that the possession of the camp returned to the church.: <http://www.kamparmen.org/en/>

Madam Anahit Diziryan

(1926-29 August 2003)

“Everybody remembers me as the woman with accordion. This is Madam Anahit. I have been playing accordion for approximately 40 years in Çiçek Pasajı. I also sometimes work for the hotels and weddings if



they recruit me. I was born in İstanbul. I was born in 1926 in Taksim and am currently living in Tarlabaşı. We used to stay in Heybeliada in the summer. There was a child named Yorgo. Yorgo played the accordion well. I was impressed. I assume the date was 1943. There was a person called Papa Yorgi in Yüksek Kaldırım, Karaköy, İstanbul and Papa Yorgi used to sell the musical instruments. We bought a second-hand white Hohner accordion. It costed us 170 TL. I was very much excited. As soon as we bought, i went to St. Anton Church and took a vow.” she played the accordion until she died at the age of 77. She is remembered in not only Çiçek Pasajı which was about to be demolished when she was alive but also a new venue, Anahit Sahne.

Anahit Sahne (Anahit Stage): A place which has been just opened in Taksim in 2018 is called as Anahit who was an Armenian musician woman having built an eternal bond and memory with Taksim. Anahit Sahne not only gathers especially women and queer people in İstanbul and aims to become an art space beyond a pub or concert hall but also carries a memory of **Madam Anahit Diziryan** in Taksim where there has been gentrification, which causes the city and neighbourhood’s memory and bond with people to fade. Anahit Sahne which is located closed to Çiçek Pasajı that is known for meyhanes (taverns) and Anahit’s playing accordion when she was alive.

Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association (Ermeni Kültürü ve Dayanışma Derneği) is based in İstanbul. It aims to protect and flourishes the cultural, historical and lingual values of the Armenians and struggle against the loss of this heritage. The association plans and carries out social, cultural and economic projects to build the solidarity among Armenians and raises awareness on being an Armenian. Through its social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram, every day it shares a Western Armenian word in accordance with a concept. It has also created video contents about Armenian heritage, lives and culture with Beraberce Association on Youtube.



Aylin Vartanyan: She is an academian and working for Bogazici University. She has been studying her postgraduate on Armenian women living in İstanbul. Utilizing from expressive art, she walks in some provinces with Armenian women that she has selected from 3 diverse age groups. In accordance with the questions that she asks about how to live in a country that denies the genocide, they walk and take photos in the provinces that they have decided. From these photographs, they create and narrate narratives of different genres which are then converted into the digital stories combined with the photographs. This work makes them consider and creates a dialogue about being an Armenian woman in Turkey.

Resources:

(English)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBLYuyG_1J0

<https://armenianweekly.com/2013/12/24/srpouhi-dussap-womens-inactivity/>

<https://armenianweekly.com/2014/07/25/child-refugee/>

<https://armenianweekly.com/2012/10/05/yessayan-towards-cilicia/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uHs_tCbTdE&t=3951s

<http://www.istanbulkadinmuzesi.org/en/>

(Turkish)

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