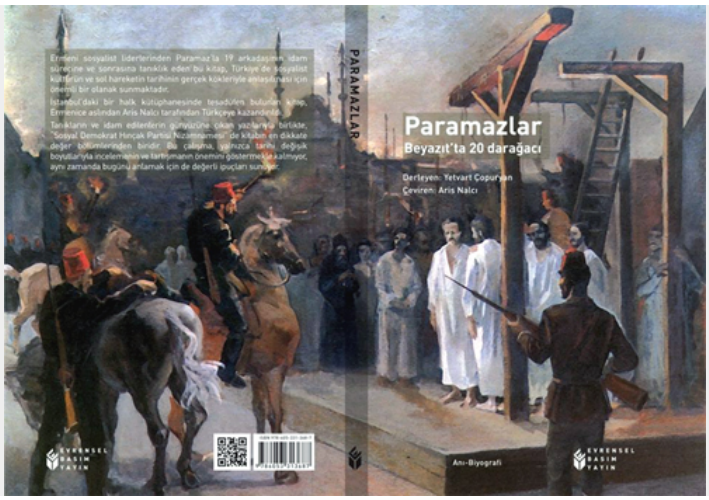
"THE 20 EXECUTIONS" PUBLISHED IN TURKISH

Posted on November 11, 2015 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, MassisPost, 11 November 2015

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On October 29, 2015, I received an email from Istanbul in which a representative of «Evrensel Publishing House» asked my permission to use, as a book cover, my painting "the Twenty Executions", which I painted in 1976.

The letter states that, "As to the book for which we humbly ask your permission … During his research on the "turkification" of Armenian properties, the author Nevzat Onaran found the book accidentally in a public library, and brought it out of mothballs. The book was edited by Yetvart Chopurian, and first published in 1921 in Istanbul, under the title "Քսան Կախաղաններ", (the Twenty Executions) in memory of the 20 executed members of the Social Democratic Hunchakian Party… From our point of view, this book is about a second confrontation, the confrontation of social democrats and socialists in Turkey with their own history, their unknown, unspoken legacy which they either ignored or were unaware of. Therefore, we kindly ask your permission to use your art work as the cover which, we

think, will give an exceptionally great meaning to our ."

Attached to the letter, was a copy of Yetvart Chopurian book published in 1921, a Turkish translation of the book, and the initial cover design, where the painting was partially displayed. After studying the documentation received, I found it appropriate to grant permission to use the image as is, uncut and unedited as book cover art, as well as the name of the artist, Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, the year of creation and the history of the painting to be published on the first page of the book.

In 1976, I graduated from Gegharvest-a-Taterakan Institute, now Yerevan Academy of Fine Arts, and as a theme for my dissertation I chose the Armenian genocide. My painting depicted the Twenty Executions, (Քսան Կախաղաններ). The idea for this gigantic work came to my mind from my early school years, when annually on June 15th, all the pupils would gather in the yard of Giligian Varjaran to evoke the memory of the twenty martyrs, and listen to the powerful patriotic speech of the schoolmaster.

As a graduate from Aleppo's Giligian College, I decided to donate the painting to Aleppo's Hunchakian Center. At my request, the same year and with the support of the "Spyurki Gomideh", the painting was shipped from Yerevan to Aleppo. As of today, I haven't received any official confirmation related to the painting. 40 years later, echoes of the Twenty's came from Istanbul.

On November 7th the book "Paramaz. Twenty executions of Bayazit" published by «Evrensel Publishing House» was at the 34th Istanbul Book Fair, the largest book fair in Turkey , and on November 8th was presented at the publisher's special event, a panel discussion organized by «Evrensel Publishing House» on the topic of "The Armenian Genocide in its 100th Anniversary".

100 years have passed since Paramaz and his 19 comrades lifeless bodies were swaying under the Istanbul's gray sky, but their ghosts still roam the streets of the slumbering city, penetrating into the subconscious of generations, to ensure that the dust of years of denial and ignorance can't bury the past. Sooner or later Turkey will confront its history by recognizing the Armenian Genocide, as an echo of a long delayed justice.