

who penned their autobiographies – such as Mushegh Ishkhan and Andranik Tsarukian – wrote about their orphanhood,

but the life of the [concentration] camps, the tent-cities of Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, is in none of them.... The remnants of those tent-cities still existed when I was a child; they gradually disappeared. They should have served as the reality for the writers before us.

(Parenthetically, it is only natural for the younger generation to reject the preceding generation; theorists of psychology since Freud have explained the phenomenon. Beledian experienced it as a schoolboy when he was writing poetry. He recalled his teacher, Mushegh Ishkhan, criticizing his style and remarked, “At an age when we want to establish ourselves, inevitably we come face to face with the elders. Nevertheless, misunderstanding often leads to re-forming.”)⁷⁷

There were indeed survivors from Mush, Erzurum, and Cilicia, as well as from Giurun (Gürün), Beledian’s father’s hometown, all crammed together in Hayashen, a poorer quarter of Beirut where Krikor spent his childhood. He knew them, and he remembered their lifestyle and traditions, and through them he strove to close that gap in the survivor literature, “to preserve the vestiges of the irreversible loss.”⁷⁸ Even at the start of his career as a poet and literary critic, he was acutely aware of that calling, but it took him many long

⁷⁷ From an autobiographical sketch Beledian submitted for inclusion in the program for the launch of his book, *Harvatsē* (The shot), hosted by the Hamazkayin organization in Los Angeles, June 4, 1999.

⁷⁸ Krikor, interview with Varouzh Sourenian, Yerevan, 2006, published in *Handes grakanut’ian ev arvesti* 16 (Summer 2007): 6–21. Quotation from p. 14.