

second example is the case of Sabiha Gökçen (1913–2001), one of Mustafa Kemal’s eight adopted daughters. She had been brought up in a Muslim orphanage when at the age of twelve she met Kemal Atatürk. In his household she was educated to become the first female military pilot, gaining many accolades and fame. Her origins had been forgotten or fervently concealed when investigative reports revealed her Armenian identity.<sup>40</sup> She was the role model and the pride of many Turkish women, and altering that reality was a crime. Ironically, she took part in quelling the Kurdish uprising at Dersim in 1938 and bombarded the city where many Armenians (Kurdish-Armenian) lived.<sup>41</sup>

As noted earlier, an extensive campaign was launched after World War I to collect Armenian orphans from Muslim homes, or those still wandering in the desert. Archbishop

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commander of the army at the Eastern front. The attack his army launched on Armenia in October 1920 eventually caused the demise of the newly established free republic in the easternmost territories of historic Armenia.

<sup>40</sup> The article about Sabiha Gökçen by Hrant Dink, editor-in-chief of *Agos* (February 6, 2004), claiming that she was actually an Armenian orphan by the name of Hatun Sebiliciyan, started a controversy and brought strong criticism and antagonism toward the author. In an article in the *Turkish Daily News* (August 4, 2007), titled “Sabiha Gökçen, World’s First Woman Combat Pilot,” co-authors Gül Demir and Niki Gamm reported on the reactions to Dink’s claim:

Other newspapers took up the subject and created a storm as the pros and cons of the argument were debated. Some people have even gone so far as to suggest Dink’s printing the claim of her being Armenian was one of the main causes of his assassination on January 19.

<sup>41</sup> Melkonian, “20-rd dari yenicherinere,” *Hanrapetakan* 9 (2007).