

beings, came to be considered socialists (leftists), and were persecuted and imprisoned by the government.¹⁷

The experience of Istanbul Armenians and their perception of the past have only recently burst into the open, principally through a new but cautious trend in the literature produced by Turkish-Armenian literati. Their venture to write their stories about the Armenian past in Turkish, or to translate original Armenian works into Turkish, is particularly notable. In an article on the question of silence in the Turkish Republican past, Fatma Müge Göçek touches upon this new trend in Turkish-Armenian literature and discusses the hesitance of Turkish-Armenian literati to break the silence and write about their traumatic experience. She attributes this hesitance to

self-censorship because of the precariousness of their societal location, leading them to mention, in the narrative that took them 75 years to present to the Turkish-Muslim national audience, the Armenian massacres that formed an indelible component of the memory of their parents and grandparents....¹⁸

Was it self-censorship or plain fear of persecution? In a situation where even speaking the Armenian language in

¹⁷ Persecutions were heightened especially after the military coups of March 12, 1971, and September 12, 1980, when a widespread hunt for socialists (communists) took place. The military would break into the homes of Turkish and Armenian intellectuals and arrest them if books by Nazim Hikmet, Karl Marx, and others were found.

¹⁸ Göçek, "Silences in the Turkish Republican Past" (n.d.). In this article, Göçek provides a contextualization of the Armenian experience in the Turkish narrative and in particular discusses the works of two Turkish-Armenian writers, Hagop Mintzuri and Migirdic Margosyan.