

Meliné, Kemal Yalçın's inspiration and the daughter of a survivor, knew nothing about the history of her own family. Her parents sometimes spoke of Sebastia or Kangale, but said nothing about their being uprooted from these places or the fate of the family members on both sides who did not survive the catastrophe. Meliné did not learn about the events of 1915, nor did she learn Armenian history in the Armenian school she attended in Istanbul. What came to her naturally was to hide her Armenian identity in order to get ahead in Istanbul society. But the very fact of being forced to conceal her identity to avoid discrimination opened up an array of questions in her mind. The outcome was an urge to search for her roots. Who was she, and what was hidden in the past that was creating these obstacles on her way to climb the ladder in Turkish society which she had so wholeheartedly adopted? (Yalçın, p. 208). It was after she and her husband Gegham came to the painful realization that they feel alien and are considered alien in their own homeland that the couple decided to move to Germany: "Let's go to another country and be considered aliens there" (p. 214).

Agop Hacikyan knew very little about the Armenian past when he was growing up in Istanbul. His parents, both survivors of the Genocide, did not talk about their painful experience of the past. But the conspicuous silence and the occasional references to *sevkıyat* (*aksor* in Armenian, meaning exile), or *seferberlik* (*zorasharzh* in Armenian, meaning campaign, mobilization), were factors that spurred Agop's curiosity to uncover the hidden story of his family and his people. Decades later, in the free atmosphere of Canada, Hacikyan wrote a series of novels, beginning with *Tomas*