

opportunity in Constantinople or Istanbul, surviving Armenian intellectuals began to try to comprehend what had occurred both on a personal and on a collective level. Their writing constituted the first step in an attempt to reconnect the disrupted Armenian cultural continuum. This movement was cut short in 1922, however, when many of the intellectuals, along with the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, were forced to emigrate hurriedly to foreign lands in the face of the impending occupation of the city by the triumphant Turkish Nationalist forces of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

The Armenian community left behind the forbidding walls of Republican Turkey had only limited contact with the diasporan communities. There was, indeed, even a certain suspicion among the disinherited survivors scattered abroad regarding the Armenians remaining in Istanbul, in part because of their silence, their obligatory self-censorship, and sometimes it seemed their willingness to defend or rationalize the actions and policies of the Turkish authorities. They did, after all, continue to live with Turks on a day-to-day basis and considered this to be natural, in contrast with the dispossessed diasporans who were confronted with an iron curtain that ruled out any possibility of maintaining a physical connection with erstwhile homes, villages, towns, and cities.

The overt discrimination and violence of the 1940s and 1950s prompted much of the established and still-Armenian-speaking community of Istanbul to emigrate, its place being filled with Kurdish-speaking and Turkish-speaking hidden Armenians from the interior provinces who clustered around the Armenian Patriarchate in search of their lost identity and often of material assistance. On my first trip to Turkey in September 1955, shortly