

THE FEMALE FIGURES AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE ARMENIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE MEMOIRS OF VARDAN OF KHANASOR

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Abstract

Since the 80s of the 19th century, Armenian women and girls played an active role in the Armenian liberation movement against the Ottoman despotism. Based on the memoirs of one of the most prominent figures of the liberation movement, Vardan of Khanasor (Sargis Mehrabyan, 1867-1943), the article presents the women and girls, who fought against the Ottoman despotism almost equally with men. In his memoirs, he presents the women and girls of the Province of Salmast in Northern Iran, and the Van Province, who helped the Hajduks with all their might. Vardan recalls teachers Mariam Makaryan and Satenik Ohanjanyan, who also held cultural events by organizing various circles for women and girls. Among the feminine persons from the Province of Van, Vardan of Khanasor focuses on Zaruhi Teroyan, who was sentenced by the Turkish authorities to seven years in prison for her active liberation activities.

Keywords: *Vardan of Khanasor, Artsakh, Salmast, Mariam Makaryan, Satenik Ohanjanyan, Khanasor Expedition, Aristakes Zoryan, Van, Zaruhi Teroyan*

Introduction

The Armenian liberation movement is known not only for its male but also for its female figures. In the memoirs¹ of Sargis Mehrabyan (Vardan, Vardan of Khanasor), one of the figures of the Fedayi movement, there is interesting information about the young women involved in the anti-Sultan struggle. There are separate studies on some of them; they are mentioned in the memoirs of different figures of liberation struggle.²

¹ Memoirs of famous Hajduk are kept in the National Archives of Armenia: fund 402, inv., 2, file 1-12. For more details – Sahakyan 2022: 3-29. Mehrabyan 2022.

² Gyulkhandanyan 1939; Minasyan 2016; Arakelyan 2016.



Sargis Mehrabyan (Vardan of Khanasor)

S. Mehrabyan was born on August 10,³ 1867 in the village of Ghshlagh (Tsaghkashat) of the Askeran region of Artsakh.⁴ In 1885 he graduated from Shushi diocesan school, after which he got a job at one of the Baku oil refineries. In 1888 he was drafted into the Russian army. On September 23, 1890 he participated in the expedition of Sargis Kukunyan, after the failure of which he came to Yerevan, then to Ghalasar village in Salmast, where affiliated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and received the party nickname Vardan.



The participants of the Khanasor Expedition. Vardan is in the center.

³ In the memoirs, Shushi is mentioned as the place of birth, NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 80.

⁴ The author of this information is the granddaughter, Irina Postina, see Alik, October 5, 2017, N 206. It should be noted that Nikol Duman (Nikogayos Ter-Hovhannisyan, 1867-1914), a prominent figure of the liberation movement, was from the same village.

In Persia, he performed various party assignments: he transported weapons and ammunition to Vaspurakan⁵ as part of an armed group, participated in the 1896 Van and Shatakh self-defense battles. In 1897 he led the famous Expedition of Khanasor, after which he worked on memoirs. In 1904, along with Simon Zavaryan, one of the prominent figures of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, on the instructions of the party, went to Cilicia to study the situation and take possible measures for the liberation struggle. Vardan was disappointed with the Armenians of Cilicia, who were not very willing to participate in the liberation struggle. He recorded the following in his memoirs: "Seeing them, I started to respect Vaspurakan people more, I really missed people of Van.... there was no revolutionary vein among them (Cilician Armenians- R. S.)."⁶ However, Vardan believes that it is possible to carry out activities in Cilicia, taking into consideration its geographical location. In his opinion: "Here (in Cilicia- R.S.) the shot of a single rifle is more audible and worthy of attention than the many heroic battles of (Western- R. S.) Armenia, which are being lost in obscurity."⁷



Ghazanchetsots Church in Shushi (modern photo)

In February 1905, the Armenian-Tatar clashes provoked by the Russian authorities forced him to return urgently and lead the self-defense fights of the Armenians of Artsakh and Syunik. Later, he performed various tasks of the party.

⁵ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 3.

⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 29.

⁷ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 33.

In 1907 he married in Vienna. Father of his wife Francesca was of a Hungarian origin, mother - German. Later, two sons and a daughter were born in their family. In order to take care of the needs of the family, he took the position of the manager of the Weaving factory in Manisa (Magnesia). After the start of the World War I, he returned to the Caucasus in October 1914, where he participated in the Armenian volunteer movement. Vardan headed the 5th Armenian and then the Ararat regiment. The latter, together with the Russian contingent, participated in the liberation of Van in May of 1915.

After the dissolution of the Armenian volunteer units by the Russian authorities, he settled in Baku, where in 1918 he participated in the battles against the Turks. After the city was captured by Turkish troops in September, Vardan took refuge with his family in Astrakhan, where he tried to find out the whereabouts of 26 commissars of Baku on the instructions of the Emergency Commission.

At the end of 1918, he returned to Baku, then to Yerevan. After the untimely death of his wife, he devoted himself entirely to the cares of his family. On January 2, 1943, he died in Moscow.

Female figures in the Province of Salmast in Northern Persia

From time to time, whenever there was an opportunity, Vardan returned to his birthplace, Artsakh. Hajduk's mother and brothers were in Shushi. The residents of Shushi, having learned about the arrival of a prominent compatriot, invited him to meetings and gatherings, where Vardan told about the Hajduk struggle, described the battles in Western Armenia. The wives of the rich people of Shushi considered it their duty to visit Vardan's mother and express their admiration for her son. In response to such honors, the mother would reply: "Are you serious? Do any of you go? My beloved son goes. I can't talk so easily about this all."⁸

Perhaps inspired by the stories of their wives and daughters, the rich residents decided to have their contribution and give Vardan a rifle and a pistol. He hands over the rifle to Hajduk Shero, and the pistol to teacher Mariam Makaryan.⁹ Those were fateful gifts. In 1896 Shero was killed during one of the battles against the Kurds, in the same year M. Makaryan commits suicide.

When leaving Shushi, the wives and young ladies of the wealthy people give Vardan a gold watch, which had a bell and signaled the specified time with a special melody. At first, Vardan refuses, but after a long persuasion and requests, he accepts the gift. Vardan notes: "That clock showed the time of the attack in the dark during the Khanasor Expedition."¹⁰

⁸ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 10.

⁹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 79.

¹⁰ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 10.

The first mention of the activities of women figures in S. Mehrabyan's memoirs refers to the Salmast Province of Northern Persia in the 1890s.



Satenik Ohanjanyants

In his memoirs, Vardan mentions with the greatest respect and reverence about the Eastern Armenian teaching group that taught in Tabriz and then in the Armenian villages of the province. They taught at Liava school and there were about 10 of them.¹¹ The teachers, among whom were Miss Satenik Ohanjanyants¹² and Mariam Makaryan,¹³ have been focused on. They "brought the women and girls of Tabriz to the square and let them participate in performances. They also owned a sewing and patterning workshop. These teachers had left the high salary of the Caucasus and received a rather modest salary there."¹⁴



The Armenian Quarter of Tabriz

¹¹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 80.

¹² Satenik Ohanjanyants (1885?-1915), one of the first female figures of the liberation movement, educator, sister of Hamazasp and Ruben Ohanjanyants, member of the ARF. See Tumanyan 1915, N 224.

¹³ Mariam Makaryan (Maro, 1872-1896), one of the first female figures of the liberation movement, educator, member of the ARF.

¹⁴ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 82.

The teachers were busy and did not have time to take care of their food problems, so they hired a cook. Appreciating the self-sacrificing work of the pedagogues and noticing that the cook does not perform his duties very conscientiously, Vardan assumes the position of the cook and according to his testimony, the pedagogues "began to live well, eat well and of course spend less money".¹⁵

A friendly relationship was established between Mariam Makaryan¹⁶ from the teaching group and the Hajduk and gunsmith Aristakes (Aris, Caro) Zoryan, which eventually turned into love. A. Zoryan was the younger brother of Rostom (Stepan Zoryan)¹⁷, one of the founders of the ARF. According to the description of a contemporary: "He was a middle-aged, stocky, attractive young man with a gentle and sweet character."¹⁸



Modern Tabriz

According to Vardan's memoirs: "I had never seen such crazy love."¹⁹ Maro couldn't bear Caro's absence even for a short time. Vardan testifies: "Maro's anxiety knew no bounds."²⁰

Aristakes Zoryan

Vardan was a Hajduk who had enlisted for the liberation of his homeland, he was used to hardships, sufferings, deprivations, he had lost many brothers in arms during

¹⁵ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 82.

¹⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 7.

¹⁷ Zoryan Aristakes (Caro, Aris, 1871-1897), figure of the liberation movement, Hajduk, weapon maker, ARF member.

¹⁸ Memoirs of the ARF 1950: 1890–1950: 375-376.

¹⁹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 7.

²⁰ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 7.

the battles, so it was initially incomprehensible to him such anxiety and concern by woman. The Hajduk, being a witness of many disasters, did not understand why Maro covered Caro with a coat when he returned from hunting, showed signs of care, etc. Probably, when in Vienna in 1907 he also fell in love and got married, he understood the essence of Maro's care and found it necessary to refer to the tragic love story of Caro and Maro in his memoirs.

In the 1890s, Sultan Abdul Hamid II carried out mass massacres of Armenians, and around 300,000 people became victims. In a number of places, Armenians faced the Turkish and Kurdish murderers. Among such places was Van-Vaspurakan. From June 3 to 8, 1896, the Armenians of Van resorted to self-defense. The enemy was unable to break the resistance of the Armenians using significant forces and artillery. Fearing that prolonging the fighting would give the Russians an opportunity to intervene, the Ottoman authorities, through European consuls, offered the Armenians to stop the resistance and "safely" leave for Persia. Finally, deceived by the promises of the authorities and especially the consuls, about 1000 people,²¹ armed and unarmed, leaved the Varaga monastery to cross to Persia. However, on the way, they were attacked by the Ottoman army and especially by the Kurdish Mazrik tribe in the Khanasor field, Chukh-Ketuk and on the slope of Garahisar Mountain. Despite heroic resistance, the enemy managed to slaughter most of them.²² Only about 30 people remained alive.²³

²¹ According to Vardan, about 1,500 people, see NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 72.

²² See Barkhudaryan V. *et al.* 2010 (eds.). According to Vardan, 800 people died in Chukh-Ketuk and near St. Bartholomeos Monastery, see NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 72.

²³ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 5.



Varaga Monastery

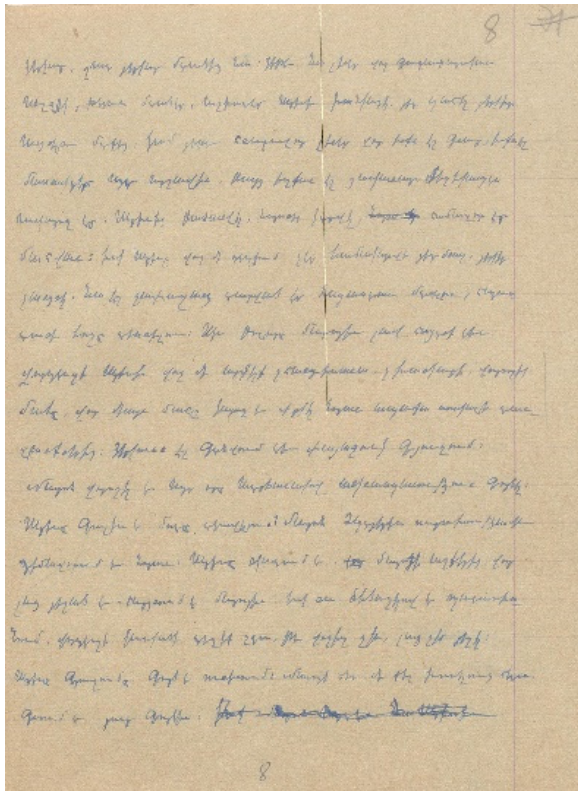
As Vardan notes: "All those who went to Persia were massacred by the hands of the Kurds all along the way, of course by the order of the government."²⁴

The ARF decided to take revenge on the Mazrik tribe and its chieftain Sharaf, so they launched a punitive expedition known as the Khanasor Expedition. Starting from the spring of 1897, Payajuk, Havtva and other Armenian villages of Salmast Province became the center of the Hajduks. According to Vardan, they were all "selfless soldiers".²⁵ A large number of Hajduks gathered in Salmast Province, whose livelihood was completely taken care of by the local Armenians. Vardan testifies: "Hajduks' clothes were washed and patched by local women. When the Hajduks left the villages for Van, it was as if the villages became orphans, they had so much merged with the Hajduks."²⁶

²⁴ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 72.

²⁵ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 7.

²⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 43.



Excerpt from memoirs of Vardan of Khanasor

For Maro, it was understandable that her beloved one would definitely take part in the action. As Vardan notes: "If she (M. Makaryan - R.S.) were a non-ideological girl, she might have thought, tried to dissuade Aris from the idea of going to Country (Western Armenia), or, if it was possible for her to go and participate in that expedition, too, but no matter how much she wanted, she was physically incapable."²⁷

Unfortunately, the young lady made a radical decision. Believing that she may be a barrier to Caro not participating in the expedition, she decided to commit suicide: "In order not to become an obstacle, not to hinder, she decided that only death can save him (A. Zoryan- R. S.) from future terrible tortures."²⁸



The city of Khanasor (modern photo)

On the eve of the suicide, both were in Payajuk village of Salmast. Caro notices that she was in tears, but Maro laughs and says that there is no such thing. As Vardan testifies: "She (Maron- R. S.) never showed Aris a sad face no matter how excited she was."²⁹

²⁷ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 8.

²⁸ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 8.

²⁹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 7.

On December 2, 1896 when A. Zoryan leaves the house, shortly after M. Makaryan commits suicide³⁰. She had left the following note on the table in the apartment: "I didn't want to disturb you, burn all the ships after you, just go and do your favorite work. Aris, Aris, Aris..."³¹ There were the following lines in the maiden's diary: "A girl's vocation is modesty, sweetness and simplicity."³²



The Armenian cemetery of Payajuk village

According to Vardan's testimony, the young man was in a half-crazy state, because he was the cause of his woman's suicide. Vardan testifies: "He leaves Salmast, travels on foot to Julfa. From there, he comes to Tpkhis directly to me. ... Since that day, I didn't let Aris leave me. I was constantly consoling and encouraging him... I was afraid to leave him alone to avoid a trouble."³³ Vardan was trying to occupy himself with some important work, so that he could be distracted a little, forget the unfortunate, tragic accident. As Vardan writes: "I try in every possible way to soften and dispel sad thoughts. In such circumstances, the only comfort is a close friend."³⁴

³⁰ The participant of the expedition testifies that upon reaching Mount Araul near Khanasor, the Fedayi were invited to take part in the swearing ceremony, see "Droshak" October 1, 1897, N 12, p. 96

³¹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 8.

³² Memoirs, ARF: 380.

³³ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 8.

³⁴ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 12.



Raffi's house in Payajuk

Vardan was appointed the commander of the punitive operation of Khanasor. The number of fighters was about 275, of which 25 were horsemen and the rest were infantry.³⁵ After the liberation struggle of Syunik and Artsakh in the 18th century, for the first time, Armenians moved such a large number of forces to the battlefield.

Vardan testifies that "all the Armenians of Salmast knew about the expedition (about the preparation of the expedition - R.S.) and showed full support. The women and girls made gata (Armenian pastry or sweet bread) for our soldiers, made signs and notes on the tents. They were happy to be able to participate in something, to help, to send good wishes."³⁶ Hajduk considers it necessary to mention an important fact. "There were no betrayals by the people of Salmast."³⁷

The operation, known as the Khanasor Expedition, which took place from July 24 to 27, 1897, ended in success, with the Kurds suffering about 300 casualties and the Hajduks suffering 19 casualties³⁸. Vardan was honored with the title "Vardan of Khanasor", and the Kurds, especially Mazrik chieftain Sharaf, who was a Hamidean colonel,³⁹ made his best to reach an agreement with the Hajduks and began to assist the Armenians in transporting weapons and ammunition to Western Armenia.

³⁵ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 8, sheet 2.

³⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet.

³⁷ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 8, sheet 3.

³⁸ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 12. According to other information, 20 people, see the brave men who fell in the last heroic battles of Vaspurakan. Droshak, September 13, 1897, N 11, p. 83.

³⁹ A-Do 2015: 303, 507.

During the Khanasor operation, Vardan learnt that Aris was injured and rushed to check. As Vardan testifies: "Aris approached me laughing...the enemy's bullet had hit the stone and the fragments of the stone had hit his face and made him bleed a little."⁴⁰

While retreating from Khanasor, one of the Hajduks, Saghatel Zohrabyan, a Persian-Armenian, was seriously wounded and it was clear to everyone that it was impossible to move him through the difficult, hilly terrain, even at night, so "Aris killed him. It was very hard, but death was preferable."⁴¹ Unfortunately, after some time, during the night retreat on July 27, A. Zoryan was killed. It can be assumed that the young lady M. Makaryan had some kind of bad premonition; probably an unknown, supernatural sense had hinted her that her beloved one was in mortal danger.



Sako from Sevkar

After the Khanasor operation, Vardan, Sako from Sevkar (Sargis Sevyan) and another Hajduk, whose name was Bek, came to Yerevan, then Etchmiadzin, where they met Catholicos Khrimyan Hayrik, then Vardan and Sako moved to Shush. Vardan became a popular person after Khanasor. He was invited to various gatherings and meetings. Vardan was surprised by the fact that especially the wives and daughters of the wealthy people became interested in the liberation struggle. They were proud that the famous Hajduk was their compatriot.⁴² They were "especially impressed by the contribution of Van women's groups in the struggle".⁴³

⁴⁰ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 8, sheet 9.

⁴¹ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 8, sheet 9.

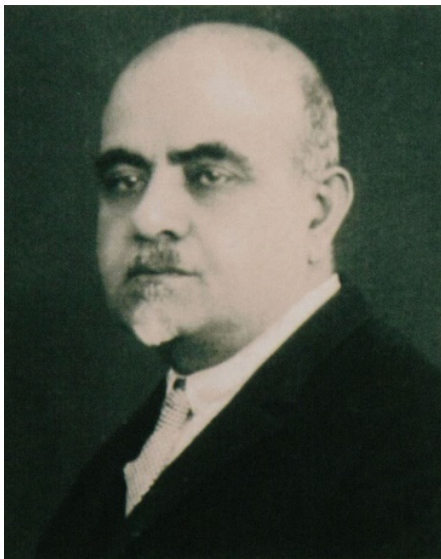
⁴² NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 7, sheet 9.

⁴³ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 79.

In 1898 Vardan came from Shushi to Baku, where his mother and brothers lived. Here, too, he was invited to various meetings, where he called on everyone to support the liberation movement, to find weapons and ammunition and send them to the Country (Western Armenia). Vardan was so excited by the above-mentioned issue that he even offered his mother to sell the gold necklace, made of coins, and buy a weapon with the money. Vardan testifies: "My mother smiled and answered, son, you didn't buy these gold coins, your father bought them, when you buy them, then do whatever you want."⁴⁴



**Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtych Khrimyan
(Khrimyan Hayrik)**



Abraham Gyulxhandanyan

A contemporary, Abraham Gyulxhandanyan highlighted the role of Armenian women in the liberation struggle as follows: "The Armenian woman not only took care of the Armenian fighters and encouraged them, but also covered many kilometres for days and weeks and delivered weapons to them using secret paths to provide the continuous resistance of our brave men."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 79.

⁴⁵ Gyulxhandanyan 1939: 5.



Mariam Makaryan and Aristakes Zoryan

Female figures in Van

The second reference to the participation of the Armenian women in the liberation struggle refers to Van-Vaspurakan. Vardan remembers with admiration the secrecy of the people of Van. According to his testimony: "It was impossible to get a word out of the mouth of the youngest child of Van, to become aware of a secret. Young girls even served as a guard at nights at the houses where Hajduks lived."⁴⁶



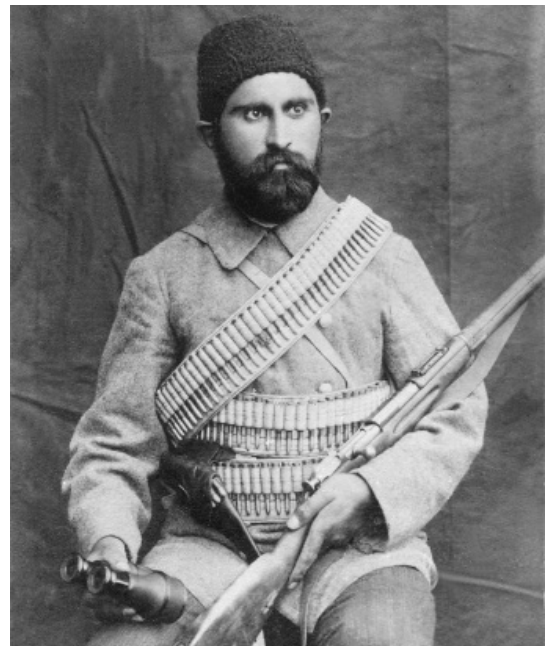
Van

⁴⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 73.

There is an interesting and instructive reference in Vardan's memoirs, which characterizes the children of Van, who never lost their vigilance and, whenever possible, exposed this or that trick or machination. On one of the streets of the city, a young man named Aram notices that a little girl is wearing gold earrings and offers to exchange them for candy, hoping that the child will be tempted and the beneficial exchange will be made. The girl, who knew very well the difference between the prices of candy and gold earrings, "agrees", but on one condition: if Aram brays like a donkey. The young man, looking around and having seen anyone, does it. The girl turns to Aram laughing: "How is it that you, actually being a donkey, know the earrings are golden, and I don't know? Go away, go, go."⁴⁷ According to Vardan, Aram was later ordained a priest in Urmia.⁴⁸



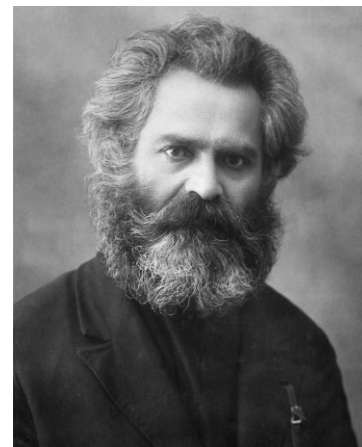
Zaruhi Teroyan (Zhenya, 1870-1944)



Tigran Teroyan (Vazgen)



Zaruhi and Vazgen Teroyans



Varazdat Teroyan

⁴⁷ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 74.

⁴⁸ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 1, sheet 74.



Alexander Petrosyan (Peto)

In the memoirs of Vardan of Khanasor, there is another testimony about Zaruhi Teroyan⁴⁹, one of the female liberation figures. Four members of the Teroyan family, Zaruhi, brothers Tigran⁵⁰, Varazdat⁵¹ and sister Satenik were included in the anti-Ottoman liberation struggle⁵². Initially, Zaruhi and Tigran, who was better known by the party nickname Vazgen, joined the Armenakan Party, however, when Peto (Aleksandr Petrosyan), a representative of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, came to Van, the brother and sister joined the ARF and became active members of the party. Moreover, mutual feelings arise between Peto and

Zaruhi, but in 1896, while retreating from Van to Persia, Peto was killed. True to her vow, Zaruhi never marries again.

Z. Teroyan, who had graduated from the “Sandkhtian” female school in Van, taught at the same educational institution, and at the same time used to form secret patriotic groups of women and girls. Secret from the Ottoman police they used to organize supply of the banned literature as well as weapons and ammunition.

⁴⁹ Zaruhi Teroyan (Zhenya, 1870-1944), one of the first female figures of the liberation movement, ARF member.

⁵⁰ Tigran Teroyan (Vazgen, 1873-1898), figure of the liberation movement, poet, Hajduk, member of the ARF. For more details about him, see Sahakyan 1998: 22-27.

⁵¹ Varazdat Teroyan (Vazrik, 1887-1938), liberation movement, scientific-social figure, translator of philosophy classics. For more details about him, see Teroyan 2006.

⁵² NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 5, sheet 1.



The Mehrabyan family

In Van, Vardan established warm relations with Vazgen and Zaruhi. He highly appreciated them, testifying that "They are (Zaruhi and Vazgen-RS) indomitable."⁵³ Zaruhi's activities did not remain unnoticed by the Ottoman government and in 1896, on June 2, the young lady was arrested. At the same time, the Turkish police was looking for Vazgen.

Vardan testifies: "Every week police⁵⁴ was being sent by the government to their house (Teroyans - R.S.) and they shouted: "Varazdat, Satenik, let's go!" Those little children were taken to the city (City center - R. S.) for an interrogation, to ask where brother Tigran was (Vazgen is a pseudonym), who visited them, and so on. At that time, it was very difficult to get the child to speak. In

the end, the investigators used to say about these children that "All of them are advocates".⁵⁵

While in prison in Van, Varazdat kept in touch with his sister, via whom Vardan sent him money. He writes in a memo: "When I needed to send money to Zaruhi to prison, I called Varazdat and put the money (1 r. 60 coins) in the shoe, that's how he took the money to prison and handed it over."⁵⁶ In the end, the government exiles Zaruhi to Jerusalem and then to Damascus. Catholicos M. Khrimyan is taking measures to save the girl from imprisonment⁵⁷. In 1907 The Ottoman court sentenced Zaruhi to 7 years in prison. She was released only after the Revolution of Young Turks in 1908. Further information is rather poor. It is known that she lived abroad for some time. She attended courses in a number of European universities. After the proclamation of the Republic of Armenia in 1918 she worked as a teacher at the school of the American Committee for Middle East Relief. In 1929, after the dissolution of the American Committee, she conducted private foreign language courses.

At the end of the article, an appendix is presented, which is the letter of the Patriarch of Constantinople M. Ormanyan letter to Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtych Khrimyan related to the problems of the imprisonment of Z. Teroyan. The document is issued in its original form, without significant changes. Our comments are in parentheses.

⁵³ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 5, sheet 1.

⁵⁴ Police in our modern perception.

⁵⁵ Advocate in our modern perception.

⁵⁶ NAA, fund 402, inv. 2, file 5, sheet 1.

⁵⁷ See the last document of the article.

Conclusion

At different stages of the Armenian history, there are many testimonies about Armenian women's participation in national liberation movements. Narrators have left many testimonies of the struggle against foreigners, the struggle of the Armenian women equal to men. Among the most brilliant figures of the Middle Ages were Queen Parandzem fighting with the soldiers in Artagers Castle, Lady Dzvik, Princess Ruzan, Aitsemnik fighting the enemy during the siege of Ani, and Mariam Tumanyan, Zaruhi Teroyan, Satenik and Natalyan Matinyan, Mother Sose, Satenik Ohanjanyan, Mariam Makaryan and many others, who were active participants in the liberation struggle from the middle and especially the end of the 19th century. Armenian writers have glorified the "delicate ladies of the Armenian world" in their works. The Armenian women and young ladies participated in the First and Second World Wars, and especially in the Artsakh Liberation War and in the defense of Armenia's borders from hostile encroachments.

In the article, based on the memoirs of Sargis Mehrabyan (Vardan, Vardan of Khanasor), one of the prominent figures of the Armenian liberation movement, we covered the liberation activities of the Armenian women and girls who developed their activities in Van and the Salmast Province of Northern Persia in the 1890s. They were mainly educators, which provided an opportunity to carry out liberation-patriotic propaganda not only among students, but also among their parents. With their activities, they involved local women and girls in the liberation struggle. They worked to bring them out of the medieval darkness and participate in public life.

This article is a unique tribute to the Armenian women and girls, who in many cases contributed equally to the men for the liberation of the motherland from foreign rule.

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Translated from Armenian by Gevorg Harutyunyan

The article was delivered on 31.05.2023, reviewed on 10.06.2023, accepted for publication on 20.06.2023.