

MARINA ARUSTAMYAN



**THE TOPIC OF THE ARMENIAN
GENOCIDE IN GERMAN AND
AUSTRIAN LITERATURE**

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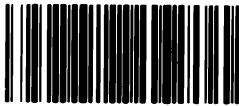
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ԵՊՀ Գրադարան



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The monograph is devoted to the topic of the Armenian genocide in German and Austrian literature. The articles, letters, stories and poems of Armin Wegner, the novel of Franz Werfel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” and the novel of Edgar Hilsenrath “The Story of the Last Thought” are analysed in this book.

The monograph sets a task to show the problem of genocide in fiction.

The features of the authors’ understanding of the same topic are explored. After all, the crimes of Young Turks became an example for other fanatics who destroy lives. So was the case in Sumgayit, Shusha and Baku decades later.

I express sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Gregory Hayrapetyan for providing financial support for the publication of the book.

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Dedicated to the loving memory of
MARINA ARUSTAMYAN

Marina's Living Memorial

Years ago, two sisters, Marina and Rita Arustamyan, came from Artsakh as PhD applicants to the Yerevan State University, Marina applied for foreign literature and Rita applied for law studies. The university accepted them warmly and with full responsibility, not only to support Artsakh State University, but also thanks to the sincere and positive impression they left on the university staff. I suggested to Marina that she explore works in German and Austrian literature dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, bearing in mind the timeliness of the topic, Marina's knowledge of German and also her personal interests and biases (remember it was the time of the valiant Artsakh war). Marina started to work on her topic zealously and soon presented her completely finished and interesting work, the defence of which passed in the warmest atmosphere and at a high scientific level. I personally, as Marina's scientific tutor, experienced great emotional satisfaction working with this gifted, intelligent and patriotic young scientist, who after her defence, as well deserved, started to work as a lecturer of foreign literature in Artsakh State University (until her unexpected and untimely death).

In her scientific work, Marina scrupulously analysed the works of the German and Austrian writers, which are dedicated to the greatest tragedy of our nation. She correctly chose the books of three prominent authors: Franz Werfel's famous novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh", Armin Wegner's journalistic writings, letters, pamphlets, monographs and stories, which reflect the heartbeat of this great friend of our nation and a dedicated to Christian spirit humanist,

and lastly the outstanding contemporary German writer's, Edgar Hilsenrath's, famous novel "The Story of the Last Thought", which has been translated into numerous European languages, making it an invaluable contribution to the case of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. If the names of Franz Werfel and Armin Wegner were known in our literature for a long time and separate studies were written about them, then Edgar Hilsenrath's name was unknown to our reality and the study of Marina Arustamyan was the first serious approach to this talented and sincere writer's admirable novel, which condemned Evil, Violence and meaningless and senseless cruelty towards human beings.

A German philosopher writes: "The history of the world is not a stage of happiness" and the golgotha experienced by Armenian people is the most tragic "performance" of this "history". It is with great joy that I say that Marina justified my expectations. She wrote a book that will be read by the reader with great interest because it is written with deep knowledge of the subject, analytical skilfulness, with literate composition and most importantly with an honest heart, love and dedication, becoming the living memorial to the young scientist".

**Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Professor Henrik EDOYAN**

Protecting the Past, Present and Future of Our Nation

It is impossible to heal the wounds of the past without restoring historical truth. For all Armenians it is recognition of Genocide, our wish to honour the memory of those million and a half innocent victims who were deported from their homes, and slaughtered, and whose ancestral land, including Holy Ararat, was occupied by Turks.

Marina's book exemplifies the importance of the literary genre to recognising those tragic events of the Armenian Genocide because it shows how there is a sad truth that has not been completely revealed. Most literature about this great Genocide is still important as it raises awareness about the unknown or the forgotten.

Her book shows that there is no watershed between the ages, but transient and eternal, natural, human.

Maybe we need more such brilliant, honest, sincere, talented individuals like Marina, who accepting and respecting all realities and differences of the mindset of Armenians, will make us feel "stuck with Armenian – ness", protecting the past, present and future of our nation.

**Ph. D, Associate Professor
Eleonora HAIRAPETYAN**

*To destroy life you need very little. And to preserve it?
Probably only this human memory.*
Marina Arustamyan

INTRODUCTION

The Originality and Congeniality of the Creative Thought (Armin Wegner, Franz Werfel, Edgar Hilsenrath).

“Ladies and Gentlemen. I am one of those writers of Europe, who were the first to raise their voice for the protection of Armenia, trying to draw public attention to the most terrible, to the most intolerable national tragedy...”

Georg Brandes

During the reign of the former Ottoman Empire, in World War I, one of the greatest atrocities in the history of mankind was committed – mass annihilation and deportation of the Armenian population in Western Armenia, Cilicia and in other provinces of Turkey. It was the first crime in the history of mankind committed for political reasons as a result of which the whole Armenian population was purposely annihilated in the territory of its historical homeland.

These events have left an indelible trace on the consciousness and psychology of all people in the world and on literature. Literature could not isolate itself from the human tragedy. Literature always sensitively reacted to any violations of human dignity.

Writers of multiple countries have addressed the topic of genocide – the tragedy of the Armenian nation, in their works they wrote about the horrific accounts in the history of Armenia, about countless

murders, unrest and looting undertaken by Turks in Western Armenia. German and Austrian literature illuminated this topic. In history, the first to express his anguish was Armin Wegner – an eyewitness of these tragic events. Franz Werfel’s heroic novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” was also dedicated to this topic, and at the end of the XX century appeared Edgar Hilsenrath’s novel “The Story of the Last Thought” condemning genocide. All the above mentioned works are imbued with true sense of history. “On the train to Baghdad I witnessed the destruction of the Armenian nation”, – writes Wegner in the autobiographical sketch “At the Crossroads of Worlds”, as an accuser¹.

Wegner described how people met their death: “Killed, shot, hanged, poisoned, stabbed, strangled, mowed down by epidemics, drowned, driven to death by hunger and thirst, left to rot and mauled by jackals. Men jumped to their death on the rocks below, the weak



Turkish hangmen and their victims (Aleppo, 1915)

somehow supported themselves, holding hands, singing songs, threw themselves into the Euphrates".²

An involuntary witness of the Armenians' tragedy, Armin Wegner devoted articles and stories to their fate: "Open Letter to President Woodrow Wilson", "The Scream from Ararat", "The Intrusion into Women's Bath", "The Boy Atam" and others.

In 1933 Austrian writer Franz Werfel wrote a novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" reminding the world of the Armenian massacre in Western Armenia. Unlike A. Wegner, F. Werfel learned about the tragedy of the Armenian people from newspapers during World War I. This is when the idea of writing his fictional novel arose.

While working on his novel, F. Werfel explored numerous sources: recollection of witnesses, original documents about the atrocities of 1915, where facts about heroic exploits of rebels of Musa Dagh were available. He also studied Armenian history and religion. "From the diary of the writer's wife, Alma Mahler Werfel, we learn that documents held by the French Ministry of Defence were used in the novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh". "Our friend ambassador earl Glaucel, at the request of Werfel, had sent from Paris, from the Ministry of Defence, all the information regarding the Turkish massacre, and afterwards Werfel wrote his novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh"(1932-1933)".³

To reveal in his novel the psychological, social and moral truth of the history, for Werfel, as an artist, remains principal to depict the collision of a nation which is morally just, strong in spirit, which is protecting his land and national dignity, with a culpable and therefore powerless enemy.

Edgar Hilsenrath's novel "The Story of the Last Thought", that appeared in German literature at the end of the XX century, once again reiterated the Armenian genocide of 1915. After many

decades, E. Hilsenrath's book proved that even centuries would not erase from human memory the painful events of the start of the XX century.

To tell the truth about the atrocities of the Young Turks, about the sad fate of the Armenian nation was not easy. These works (novels) testify the thorough studies of the documentary materials of the portrayed era and luxuriant creative imagination that is always based on factual truth. The stories and journalistic writings of A. Wegner, an eyewitness of the tragic events, are also connected with factual truth.

For these writers, the historic truth became artistic truth. Their skill manifested not only in the fact that they showed a man in conditions of peace and war, but also in the disclosure of psychology of the people, both Armenian and Turkish. They did not substitute history for fiction, they investigated the fact of history itself, but investigated it artistically and showed the interrelation of history and human beings. The artistic images of these writers do not contradict the historical reality, but, on the contrary, uncover and confirm it.

One of the artistic objectives for the writers was to achieve ideological and aesthetic unity between the fictional and historical-documentary material introduced into the works. Furthermore, the artistic truth is largely determined by how deep a writer's insight is into human characters.

For an artist-humanist, those values have the highest beauty, which people have suffered in cruel ordeals of life: kindness and tenderness, love of a woman and trustful affection of a child, human dignity and generosity, and freedom and patriotism. Whatever happens in the world, these values should be protected, and one has to fight for them. Otherwise life will lose its meaning, and a person will become spiritually scanty, deprived of originality and charm.

Exploring in all its depth the authors' thought about the terrible

destructive power of genocide, we appreciate the high civic pathos of the writers, who claim the inevitability of destruction of misanthropy.

The attention of the writers to the historical topic is not accidental. Great historical turning points have always intensified interest in the past – in the years and events, when a nation’s fate was determined. Before the eyes of people, a book of history is revealed that preserves the deepest instructiveness.

In Wegner’s stories, in Werfel’s novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh”, and in “The Story of the Last Thought” of E. Hilsenrath, originality as well as spiritual unity of the authors, unity of their human ideals and moral criteria are expressed.

With pain, humanity remembers the atrocities of Young Turks. Pain is necessary for people not to forget the great tragedy. We clearly see what these works have brought in the depiction of genocide: conviction that a person even in subhuman conditions, even dying, can save the soul in himself.

In order to instil love in people for fellows and for every living thing, it is essential to understand the value of another human life. Why is it that life loses its value? What encourages people of a civilised world to kill? By what philosophy do they justify themselves? These questions cannot be avoided, because the universe is unnecessary to anybody without people. After all, the crimes of Young Turks became an example for other fanatics who destroy lives. So was the case in Sumgayit, Shusha and Baku decades later.

Reading these works, one thinks: to destroy life you need very little. And to preserve it? Probably only this human memory.

In the general conception of these writers, the progressive mankind, the world, denies terror and violence, because the content and requirement of war is disunion of people, destruction, death and grief; they are for labour and happiness, for freedom and peace.

Having realised the responsibility to humanity, they became fighters, tribunes and thinkers.

These works have one common feature – inexhaustibility of their meaning and artistic content.

In the foundations of the works mentioned in this book, lie historical events artistically implemented by the writers, events that shook the world in the early XX century. Gradually raising the particular historical topic of the works to the level of universal significance, the writers regard everything that happened as one of the great dramatic episodes in the historical fate of mankind. “Humanity, that has learned its disgrace and realises the duty of atonement, ought to turn the dishonourable scar of Caucasus into a memorable place for the whole world, because the bloodiest of all murders was committed here. The desire to efface this shame and the disgust of those who damn the war must unite and encourage people to go on a pilgrimage to Kemah.⁴ There, pilgrims should relive in their souls the events of 1915, listen carefully to the deep grave in abyss, and resurrecting in themselves this incomprehensible but still



Enver Pasha

implemented horror, instil, with every fibre of their soul, the determination to combat the poisoned mind that allowed all of this”, – wrote Heinrich Firbucher, a witness of the Armenian Genocide in Western Armenia.⁵

It was the Turkish government that organised this crime, and Pan-Islamism became an instrument of oppression and suppression of all Christian nationals. “Mixing religion and politics is typical to Turkey and customary for its whole history. The Turkish government has always based

itself on religion: Sultan reigns as caliph, and the main law of the state, sharia, repeats primarily the provisions of the Koran. Turks do not comprehend homeland as we do – their concept of homeland is Islamic religious community, Arabs, Turks and Kurds, all together, who are quite different from each other... With the introduction of the constitution, which gave Christians a certain equality and bound them to compulsory military service, relations have changed significantly. These Christians are now also summoned to fight for Islam and for liberation of 300 million Muslims”, – writes Ewald Stier in his work “The Situation of Armenians in Turkey”.⁶

A. Musheghyan in his article “The Curse Will Not Wash Off...” cites words of a well-known expert of European literature and aesthetics Georg Brandes, who spoke in front of Berlin’s public in February 1903 with a lecture “Armenia and Europe” that begins with the following words: “Ladies and Gentlemen. I am one of those writers of Europe, who were the first to raise their voice for the protection of Armenia, trying to draw public attention to the most terrible, to the most intolerable national tragedy... You all probably know that over the last ten years, Western Armenia became a place of such atrocities that were hardly ever observed in historical chronicles since the days of barbarism to the present day.

If we ourselves were not the witnesses of that, it would be difficult to believe the reality of torture and bloody destruction of an entire nation. The blood of hundreds of thousands cry to heaven...”⁷

The policy of Islamisation and Turkisation was consistently pursued throughout Anatolia, i.e. Western Armenia. Thus, Armenians became the main target of the Young Turk chauvinists. Violence, oppression and slaughter – all this became a stage of preparation of the genocide. Heinrich Firkucher wrote in his work “The Red, and Black, White and Red Sultan”: “...his accession to the throne in

1876 was accompanied by real acts of atrocity... It is difficult to give a definition of the moral qualities of this crowned monster (Abdul Hamid) – this man repeatedly, most recently in 1909, gave direct orders for the extermination of the Armenians”.⁸

The massacre was carried out by regular troops, specially established by Kurdish cavalry detachments named “Hamidiye”, gangs of Circassians and fanatical crowds. They killed any man, woman, child and the elderly.

A fierce fight was waged against Armenians. In 1879, Kâmil Pasha declared: “We must smudge out of existence the Armenians so that even the word Armenia is forgotten. We have everything for this, any instrument is ready: Kurds, Circassians, governors, judges, taxmen, policemen, generally everybody to declare sacred war, an easy war against a nation that has no guns, no soldiers, no defenders”.⁹



Mustafa Kemal

Thus, at the start of World War I, the party of the Young Turks had sufficient experience in the implementation of mass slaughter.

During World War I, Turkey was a supporter of Kaiser’s Germany, hoping to eliminate Russia from the Caucasus and unite the Muslim nations of the Middle East, Caucasus, Crimea, Volga Region and Central Asia. In addition to Russia, there were also Armenian people, living in two parts of Armenia – Western and Eastern, who would interrupt with these plans.

From the early days of the war, there was anti-Armenian propaganda in Turkey. Ideologist of the Young Turks, Dr. Nazim Bey, strongly advocates the complete annihilation of the Armenians.

“Armenian people must be extirpated so that not a single Armenian is left on our land and the name itself is forgotten. I have become your comrade, fellow soldier and brother in order for Turks and Turks only to live and reign supreme on this land”¹⁰

To achieve this goal, lawlessness, violence and deception were used. A senior teacher of a German Realschule in Aleppo Martin Nipage wrote about this in a statement to the Reichstag: “The question about the reasons that prompted the Young Turk government to the organisation and conduct of these horrific actions against Armenians can be answered in the following way: Young Turks imagine the European ideal of a unified social state. With reference to the common Mohammedan interests, they hope to Turkise all non-Turkish races (Kurds, Persians, Arabs, etc.) by means of schooling and administrative measures. They are afraid of the cultural and economic superiority of Christian nations – Armenians, Syrians, Greeks, and see their religion as an obstacle to their Turkification in a peaceful way. That is why they must be eradicated or be forcibly converted to Islam”.¹¹

In February 1915, the Turkish authorities disarmed Armenian soldiers. They were used as workforce, and then they were killed. Armenians who held administrative positions in the state were dismissed from their posts, and all the doctors were imprisoned.

This left the Armenian people without leaders, and they lost the battle-worthy part of the population. Responsibilities of heads mainly fell on the shoulders of the clergy. The clergy, as a leader of the masses, was subjected to the most severe persecution and mockery. “The most unsightly scene that I saw was a procession led by a department of gendarmes that escorted an honourable elder. Judging by his black tunic and crimson beret, you knew that this is a Nestorian bishop. From a wound on his forehead, drops of blood

were oozing and sliding down his pale cheeks, it seemed they turned into tears of blood of the martyr. As he passed by us, he fixed his eyes on me, as if he felt that I was also a Christian; then he went further, in the direction of the hill, where he stopped with his hands crossed in the midst of his flock, which surpassed him on the way to death, and fell pierced with the daggers of his killers,” – writes Heinrich Firbucher in his work “How We Were Deceived”, basing his work on reliable information from Rafael de Nogales Méndez, a Venezuelan military figure who served in German headquarters in the Turkish army during 1915.¹²

11 April, 1915 (24 April in the New Style) went down in history as the day of the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government arrested the best part of the Western Armenian intelligentsia in Constantinople and, on the way to exile, killed them. Writers and poets Krikor Zohrab, Daniel Varoujan, Siamanto, Rupen Zartarian, Ruben Sevak, Ardashes Harutunian, Erukhan, Dikran Tcheugurian, Smbat Byurat, Tlgadintsi, publicists and editors Nazareth Tachvoryan, Gagik Ozanyan, and many others became victims of the genocide that had just started.

On 14 May, 1915 (27 May in the New Style), the Turkish government issued a decree on the so-called deportations, that is, on the expulsion of the Armenians in the Arabian deserts. When the males had been destroyed, innocent and defenceless women and children were ordered to direct towards Mesopotamia and Syria.

Nobody was an exception. No definite or exact place of exile for Armenian refugees was foreseen. Heinrich Firbucher testified: “The commander of the Turkish forces put a price on the heads of each Christian. Wells are overflowing with Christian blood. 500 women and girls from Gastevan alone were sent to Souchbulak by Kurds... Women, seeing bandits raping their sisters in broad daylight, in the hundreds rushed into the deep river”.¹³

For the implementation of deportation, the Mohammedan population was armed and criminal elements were released from prisons to create gangs. A German archive source from 30th August, 1915 reports: “The events that happened make you feel ashamed for having to be an eyewitness of them. In different provinces, thousands of Armenians are killed – men, women, the elderly and children: some of them killed with an ax, some stabbed to death. Pregnant women were driven from their homes and beaten with clubs until they showed no signs of life, young girls were offered as gifts to rich and powerful, they did not even hesitate to offer them to German officers who, thank God, in all known cases angrily rejected all these proposals.

Thousands of corpses could be seen floating in the Euphrates, innumerable streams of Armenians were brutally driven away to desolate locations; males were always pushed in one direction and



females in the other, without food, towards wild Kurdish tribes”.¹⁴

Armenians were sent inland of the empire, to Mesopotamia and Syria, where special camps were set up for them. Armenians were also annihilated on their way to exile. They were attacked by Turkish rabbles and Kurdish bandit gangs. Therefore, only a small part of the deported Armenians would ever reach their destination. The lack of basic sanitation, starvation and diseases were the cause of hundreds of thousands of people’s deaths.

“... there are almost no Armenians left in Armenia! It is also perfectly obvious that from the mass of deportees, who escaped the first massacre, the attacks by Kurds, and the epidemic of typhus on hunger marches, who were relocated in sultry north-Mesopotamian and north-Syrian deserts and left to their fate, hardly anyone survived”, – writes another eyewitness to the Armenian genocide, H. Sturmer.¹⁵

The ambassador of the United States to Turkey, Henry



Morgenthau, noted: “The true purpose of the deportation was robbery and destruction; it really is a new method of massacre. When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they, as a matter of fact, pronounced a death sentence to an entire nation”.¹⁶ Armenian massacres, which began in April 1915, ended only when a few out of two million Armenians had escaped death. Talaat Pasha after the commission of the crimes boastfully declared: “...from the perspective of the Armenian issue, within three months, I have accomplished more than Abdul Hamid did within thirty years”.¹⁷ Moreover, in 1916, he dared to announce: “The Armenian issue no longer exists, because Armenians do not exist anymore”.¹⁸

Despite the massacres, the Armenian people were resisting, which speaks of the heroic spirit of this nation, its invincible will to live and to be immortal. Heroic and unequal battles of Armenians of Van, Mush, Sasun, Musaler, in Urfa and other places were completely natural. It was a struggle for preservation of existence.

The Turkish policy of massacre and deportation in relation to Armenians was condemned by the progressive community of the world – Anatole France, Romain Rolland, Marcel Cachin, Fridtjof Nansen, James Bryce, Karl Liebknecht, Josef Markwart, Johannes Lepsius, Armin Wegner, Maxim Gorky, Yuri Veselovsky, Valery Bryusov and many others.

A social activist and humanist, doctor of Theology Johannes Lepsius – Armenians’ human rights activist, wrote: “I am not the prosecutor and not the defendant. Facts will speak for themselves. Anyone, whether he is an enemy or a friend, will create his own opinion. Luckily, at the present time, I have the privilege to become a defender of the people who, not being drawn into World War, suffered ten times more than any other nation in the world because of the curse of barbarity”.¹⁹



Johannes Lepsius

Armenian people became the first nation who in the XX century went through incessant attempts by a particular state to be erased from the face of the earth and memory of humankind. As a result of the genocide of 1915, more than one and a half million Armenians died.

Referring to the Armenian genocide, Maxim Gorky wrote: “Memory unwillingly recalls the tragic history of Armenia between the XIX and early XX century, the massacre in Constantinople, the Sasun massacre, “the great assassin”, vile indifference of Christians of “civilised” Europe, with which they treated the extermination of their “brothers in Christ”, the disgraceful act of robbery from Armenian churches by autocratic government, the horrors of the Turkish invasion of recent years, – it is hard to remember all the tragedies that this dynamic nation passed through”.²⁰

Yes, Gorky was right, human memory revived the tragic fate of Armenians of the early XX century and found its reflection in works of art, showing that genocide, wherever and whenever it is implemented, must necessarily be condemned and punished as the most grievous crime against humanity. This is because a genocide that escapes punishment gives rise to new genocides.

The lines from Bertolt Brecht’s poem “To the Fighters in the Concentration Camps” can be referred to the Armenian people as well:

Beaten down but
Not confuted,
Vanished but
Not forgotten!²¹

The book sets a task to show the problem of genocide in fiction.

The scope of this book is to explore the features of the authors' understanding of the same topic, to comprehend many occurrences of modern times and the recent past, to imagine scenes of tragic events created by the imagination of the writers and to show that the reflections of the authors on these sorrowful events appear to the reader not as bare formulas and facts, but as depiction of behaviour of living people.

The book is devoted to the topic of the Armenian genocide in German and Austrian literature. The articles, letters, stories and poems of Armin Theophil Wegner, Franz Werfel's novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" and Edgar Hilsenrath's novel "The Story of the Last Thought" are explored in it.

Translators and critics paid great attention to the works of A. Wegner, F. Werfel and E. Hilsenrath. Thanks to their efforts, Armenian readers have been able to get acquainted with the above mentioned works. Literary critics and translators studied the works of the writers, which portrayed the tragic events of 1915, with great interest and love.

In the second half of the XX century, the group of litterateurs studying the works of A. Wegner, F. Werfel and E. Hilsenrath expanded. Socio-political problems of the illustrated events discussed in the works by the writers created a basis for the study of these works. The material from the sad and difficult life of the Armenian people, widely used by A. Wegner, F. Werfel and E. Hilsenrath, enriched their works with new plots and characters.

Among Armenian translators, a special place is held for the literary critic, specialist in German literature, translator of Goethe, Heine and Wegner – Albert Musheghyan.

A. Musheghyan's role as a translator and researcher of Wegner's and Werfel's works is invaluable. Translating Wegner, he created a new document on the tragedy of the Armenian people written in the Armenian language. A. Musheghyan translated letters, poems and pamphlets which excited the literary critic as well as his readers. For all his translations,

A. Musheghyan took full responsibility. Thanks to his translations, Armenian readers became acquainted with the life and work of the writer and humanist A. Wegner, who, together with the brutal historical reality portrayed by him, always remained in the forefront of his translations.

A. Musheghyan's translations appeared in the national newspapers and magazines. Evidence of that are the titles of his translations and articles, published in the 80's and 90's. These are his translations of a letter from the book "The Road of No Return" with the title "To a Sister of Mercy of a Hospital in Gul An, Margo von Bon" from November 26, 1915 (newspaper "Գրական թերթ", 1981, April 17); translation dedicated on the centennial of the birth of A. Wegner, with the headline "Eyewitness Testimony. Letters from Mesopotamia", 1915-1916 (magazine "Սովետական Հայաստան", 1986, N9); translation of the pamphlet "A Scream from Ararat" (magazine "Սովետական Հայաստան", 1987, N5; newspaper "Հայ աշխարհ", 1990, October 8); article "Genocide Witness" (newspaper "Հայրենիքի ձայն", 1987, N16, April 15); article "The Curse Will Not Wash Off" (weekly newspaper "Դարություն", 1990, April 20 and 24), article "Anniversary of the Feat" (newspaper "Հայրենիքի ձայն", 1991, N13, March 27); translation "About Soghomon Tehlirian" ("Հայրենիքի ձայն", 1991, N13, March 27). A. Musheghyan wrote about this translation: "This foreword of my translation should have been printed in 1965, on the 50th anniversary of the Armenian

Genocide, in the fourth issue of the magazine “Սովետական գրականություն” (presently known as “Նորք”) on pages 153-157, but at the last moment censorship removed it from printing, and now I just have excerpts of the translation. 25 years later, I introduce the translation, which was not printed at the time, with some corrections”.²² The next translation is “Letters from Mesopotamia” (newspaper “Ուրբաթ”, 1991, N16, April 26). It should be noted that the translations of A. Wegner’s letters and the articles about his life and work were translated from Armenian into English for readers of Beirut, Los Angeles and New York. These works were issued in the “Kroonk” magazine (1986, N9; 1987, N5). The results of years of research and translation of A. Wegner’s works, related to the topic of genocide, are collected into the book “The Road of No Return” (Yerevan, 2000). This book contains the richest material about the life and work of the writer and also includes photographs (more than 50) taken by A. Wegner himself in the death camps. Translation and notes to the book were made by A. Musheghyan immaculately and revealed the unique features of the work. “For a translator, the ideal situation is to fuse with the author. To achieve fusion, one requires searching, inventions, ingenuity, reflection, empathy, compassion... Revealing the creative individuality of the author, the translator also discloses his own individuality, so that it does not obscure the individuality of the author”.²³ The respect for the writer’s personality, the desire to understand the value of the letters, poems, diary entries and pamphlets created by him are clearly expressed in the book.

The works of the Austrian writer Franz Werfel, in particular his novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh”, were not overlooked by Armenian literary critics. Works of a great Armenologist Gevorg Abgaryan and a literary critic Magee Pirumova were devoted to his writings.

G. Abgaryan wrote a number of important articles in magazines

and newspapers dedicated to F. Werfel and his novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh”. These are articles named “Daniel Varuzhan and Franz Werfel” (newspaper “Գրական թերթ”, 1984, N23, June 1); “The Chime of Buried Bells” (magazine “Սովետական Հայաստան”, 1985, 4); “Alma Mahler-Werfel. My Life” (newspaper “Հայրենիքի ձայն”, 1986, N26, June 18); “The Saved Song of Franz Werfel” (newspaper “Հայրենիքի ձայն”, 1990, N39, September 26).

M. Pirumova also dedicated her thesis “Franz Werfel and his novel ‘The Forty Days of Mount Musa’” to Werfel’s work. Particular parts of this work were published in the magazines: “History and Philology” (1967, N2-3); “The Newsletter of the Yerevan University” (1968, N1); “Soviet Art” (1968, N1, 2); “Soviet Armenia” (1968, N12).

G. Abgaryan and M. Pirumova explore the topic from different perspectives. Their work helps to learn more about F. Werfel as a writer and a person.

The translators Lily Ter-Minassian (translating into Armenian), Karen Aslanian and Alexander Aslanian (translating into Russian) made a great contribution to the popularisation of the novel written by the German writer Edgar Hilsenrath.

In reference to E. Hilsenrath’s novel, it should be noted that numerous translations into different languages is a testimony in the great interest towards his works. The novel “The Story of the Last Thought” has been translated into ten languages: Armenian, Russian, English, Italian, French, Dutch, Greek, Polish, Lithuanian and Turkish. “A courageous Turkish publisher issued the Turkish translation in Turkey, but the whereabouts of the book is not yet known to us, unfortunately” (S. Amirkhanyan. “Edgar Hilsenrath and the Armenian Genocide”).²⁴

All of the above listed articles contain lots of valuable thoughts and information, which provide great help to a researcher in the

analysis of the works. This interesting material requires literary-critical comprehension. Created translations and printed articles about the work of the German writers A. Wegner and E. Hilsenrath, as well as the work of the Austrian writer F. Werfel, contributed to unification and creation of an independent study on the subject: “The Topic of the Armenian Genocide in German and Austrian Literature”. A. Musheghyan wrote: “In progressive German and Austrian literature, deep sympathy to the Armenian people is expressed, who, according to Wegner, appeared to be a connecting bridge between the civilizations of the East and the West”.²⁵

The book consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion.

The first chapter (“Armin Wegner and the Armenian Genocide”) is devoted to the journalistic writings of A. Wegner as a militant chronicle of a particular historical epoch and to artistic interpretation of the genocide in his works.

In the second chapter (“The novel “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” of F. Werfel”) the main interest is focused on revealing of the major artistic tasks of the work. The author also addresses the problems of co-relations of Western and Eastern culture. A lot of attention is paid to satirical depiction of the enemies of the Armenian people.

The third chapter (“The Story of the Last Thought” of E. Hilsenrath) shows the creative history of the novel, the structure of the novel is presented and traced, the features of the genre of the work are addressed.