

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH AND THE SOCIETY FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

PRESENTS A WEBINAR



The Political Mademoiselle of the Women's Ward: Vartouhie Calantar-Nalbandian at Istanbul's Central Prison (1915-18)

By Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu

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7:30 p.m. (Eastern) / 4:30 p.m. (Pacific)

LIVE ON ZOOM (REGISTRATION REQUIRED) AND YOUTUBE

In her mid-20s, during World War I, Vartouhie Calantar was jailed in the Women's Section of the Istanbul's Central Prison for two years. The Ottoman authorities accused her and her parents of working for "independent Armenia." After her release, Vartouhie serialized her prison memoirs in the Armenian feminist journal *Hay Gin*. It is the only known first person narrative of an Ottoman prisoner and it is the earliest women's prison memoir in the Middle East. Nevertheless, Vartouhie remains completely unknown.

This talk will first provide a biography of Vartouhie Calantar-Nalbandian and analyze her prison memoirs. It will also briefly discuss her partnership with husband Zaven Nalbandian in taking up the "Zarevand" penname in the mid-1920s in the U.S. for the writing of the book *United and Independent Turania* (Միացեալ, Անկախ Թուրանիա).

Lerna Ekmekcioglu is the McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History at MIT. She is the author of *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* and co-author of the Turkish volume *A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862-1933)*. Currently she is collaborating with Melissa Bilal for a book and digital humanities project tentatively titled *Feminism in Armenian: A History in Documents* which focuses on the life and works of twelve pioneering women intellectuals in Ottoman and post-Ottoman lands from 1860s to 1960s.

Zoom Registration Link:

<https://bit.ly/Calantar>

NAASR YouTube Channel Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies>

