

**WE REMEMBER:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE  
HOLOCAUST AND ANTI-  
SEMITISM: RESISTANCE,  
POLITICS, AND MEMORY**

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## Opening Speech

First of all, I would like to thank all the SEHAK members since they left the honour of welcoming you to me as the Chairperson of SEHAK. We are grateful to you for not leaving us alone in this series of conferences which will last two days. The project of “Basic rights and democratic values education through the life story of Anne Frank” which we have been conducting for two years is ending soon. Thus, we, as the SEHAK family, are experiencing both the sadness of ending and the honour of completing the project with success. We both consider this conference at which we have gathered you as a chance to share the outputs of our detailed three-year work and intend to offer an opportunity for generating new knowledge in the field, get to know each other and to increase our number. Therefore, our intention for the following two days is to bring you together with speakers both from Turkey and from the world who are experts in their fields in order to discuss the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in details. Before introducing the speakers and the program of the following two days during which we will be together, I would like to summarize the past three-years of the project conducted by SEHAK.

Three years ago, when the project started in January 2017, we gathered at a crowded table as a group of people interested in the subject in Turkey, and discussed how the planned activities within the project would be conducted, and even more importantly, if it was possible to do so. Would it be possible to produce Holocaust lesson modules and to implement these lesson modules, which would be the first in Turkey? Identifying hate speech against the Jews, memory walks, youth trainings, teacher trainings, exhibitions... There were a lot to do indeed. Retrospectively speaking, we are proud of being successful in everything about which we had doubts. In addition to the published books, various educational modules with a well-designed methodology, completed trainings, visited towns, established relations; it is so meaningful and dignifying for us to have done something under the title of the Holocaust in Turkey.

In the last three years, we have been exhausted and we have strived a lot as SEHAK, but we have never been alone in this formidable effort. Our partner and companion Anne Frank House and most dear Cihan Tekeli were as excited as we were; they worked with us with determination and supported us. They wanted to be with us so much today, but unfortunately they couldn't. While giving you the greetings of our friends from Anne Frank House, we, as SEHAK, thank them for their nice friendship and partnership. There were many others who we should mention in addition to Anne Frank House in this journey. Most precious and qualified people who accepted to be a part of our advisory board

haven't left us alone even for a moment. They were sometimes with us, sometimes behind us and sometimes in front of us, and they have supported us as guides and leaders. Therefore, we owe a heartfelt thanks to all members of the advisory board, particularly Metin Delevi.

It was definitely impossible for only three people to do all this work. Lessons were created and trainings were given by a big team consisting of expert trainers in their fields, most of who are among us today. We gave trainings in five cities of Turkey: İstanbul, İzmir, Çanakkale, Mersin, and Edirne; and we opened the exhibition of "Anne Frank: A History for Today". We were also a big and crowded team during the Teacher Trainings, Youth Trainings, and Memory Walk Trainings. We worked with the same enthusiasm from the beginning to the end with our trainers who worked tirelessly and with the same excitement in each province from the beginning of the training to the end. I would like to express my gratitude in the name of all my team to Prof. Dr. Kenan Çayır and Ayşe Alan who visited all the cities with us for the teacher trainings. Your knowledge and experience which included tens of teachers to our network and which strengthened us increased the value of the work done. Thank you. And, of course, I can't go much further without thanking our dear trainers and mentors Ece Palaz, Zilan Kazıcı, Zin Demir, Gül Dönmez, and Alkım Bayraktar who made a great effort in Memory Walks. So glad you are here.

We learned new things in every town we went to, but more importantly we made new friends. Not only the teachers and the youth who joined the trainings, but also the members of the organizations with who we cooperated at local level became our friends and companions. The staff from Şişli and Kadıköy Municipalities who were always with us and who never withheld their contributions during the activities performed in İstanbul, and of course Nevin Zanona who supported us at every stage; The Jewish Museum of Turkey and dear Nisya Allovi İşman; our partner Avlaremos who were with us all the way long and who willingly accepted to be a part of the work done for all our calls and their dear members Serdar Korucu, Betsi Penso, and Ozan Ekin Gökşin who are also with us today; Sami Azar who never left us alone in İzmir, Talat Ulusoy who guided us in our Memory Walk, EGIAD who hosted our exhibition; Mayor of Çanakkale, Ülgür Gökhan, who furnished all the town with exhibition posters in Çanakkale and the staff of the municipality, foremost the Town Museum of Çanakkale and its whole team who readily hosted our exhibition; the KÜLTÜRHANE team who made us feel at home and who strengthened us at local level and Yenişehir Municipality who hosted us in Mersin, and Tülin Selvi Ünlü who guided the Memory Walk; Silvio Ovadya who organized the opening of the exhibition in Edirne, Recep Gürkan, the Mayor of Edirne, who hosted Anne Frank exhibition, Edirne Tourism Association, and of course Neslihan Çakır who didn't reserve her support at local level, Roni Marguiles and İda Benromano, who guided the Memory Walk; and our friends who assisted the transportation of the exhibition from town to town, setting and picking things up, our friends who joined all the trainings from the beginning to the end of the project, our academician friends who mentioned about us to their students, encouraging them to join the trainings, our friends who didn't let us alone in any one of our conferences, panels, and commemorations... I can't finish counting the crowded group of people who supported us. I don't know how to thank, but thank you. Without your support, all this work wouldn't be possible. We are grateful to you for being with us, making things easier, sparing

time, believing us and most importantly accepting us as your friends by opening a space for us.

Easier said than done! Three years. I would indeed like to tell you how much we have experienced and how busy days we have spent, but I think it will be more precious if my companions tell about them. Today, this weekend, our friends who we were together for the trainings in five cities of Turkey will meet you at the workshops as speakers and they will talk about their experiences. From them, we are going to listen to what we can touch and what we can add together. Again, our trainers are with us. They are going to talk about the trainings, the preparation process, the book, and the lesson modules. We have seen this closing activity as an opportunity for both explaining the project and what we were able to do, and of course to face what we weren't and to get feedback from you. In the next two days, while talking about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, we will have put forward what we were able to do in the past three years. In the sessions, there will be many speakers from Turkey who are experts in their fields, as well as our guests from Germany and Poland. Thus, we will have the opportunity to look at and discuss the situation not only in Turkey but also in the world.

Before ending my speech and starting the first session, I would ask you to let me make an assessment of the past three years. I am a social scientist who has been studying the Jews in Turkey since 2007. In the past 12 years, Jewish studies has been a field which I was tired of; I was sometimes close to giving up, and I questioned "if it was worth doing it in this country." However, in this three-year project, I had another experience. I saw that this country was not as blind, deaf, and mute as I thought; I met rightminded, sensitive, shrewd and open hearted people who were eager to change things, prioritising human rights. In the cities we visited, we saw and met sensitive people approaching us saying, "You are doing valuable things. I would like to know you," people supporting us even without participating the training and asking, "What I can do?" This project brought us together with people, and built bridges between us. Although I know there are still a lot to do, many more cities to visit, and a lot of prejudices to break down, this project encouraged me to continue. Adorno said "*To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric*" with an ontological objection to the continuation of life as if nothing has happened, and the German democracy which treated the brutality and concentration/extermination camps as if there had been a technical malfunction. After seeing, recognizing and learning the considerable and lasting effect of the Holocaust, which we have dealt with in all its aspects for three years, I realized once again how right Adorno was in his objection. Our aim in this project, which we consider as a tool to describe the life story of Anne Frank, fascism, nationalism, prejudices and racism, was not only to understand and recount the Holocaust, which is one of the black spots in the history of humanity, but also to create a platform for struggling not to encounter it again. Here, we invite you to be a part of this struggle, political initiative and resistance via this conference called "We REMEMBER - Reflections on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism: Resistance, Politics, and Memory".





**1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**

**JEWS IN TURKEY  
FROM PAST TO PRESENT**



## Fear from parity: Egalophobia

Bülent Bilmez

**T**his has been a busy and long endeavour. I was not a part of it, but we have followed it closely. I would like to note that we, as İstanbul Bilgi University Cultural Research Team for Turkey, appreciate it. At one level, it means trying the impossible to look at the Jews as the loyal nation (millet-i sadıka) in the Ottomanization and Turkification processes from the past to the present, and maybe to the future. As a historian who studies cultural pluralism in the Ottoman and today, I am actually working on the culture policies and majority-minority policies of the state and the construction of various collective identities by various cultural groups and their reactions against those policies. Thus, I can draw the general picture, and explain what we see in this picture. I'm talking about a long period of time, so I'm going to confine myself with some general assertions.

What do we see when we look at today? When we look at today, we see that there's a caste system in Turkey and one of the groups at the bottom in this caste system is the Jews. Here, I use the expression "at the bottom in the caste system" in the sense it is used by Günter Grass for people from Turkey in Germany. Secondly, despite this position, there's a perception of an endless story of indebtedness, gratitude and loyalty as an image. With the 500th year commemoration, this perception peaked: an attempt to express a kind of acceptance or gratitude, or to present it in this way... The persistent declaration of this feeling is important in my work not with regard to the actions of the Jews but with regard to the role of us as the majority. I know, because I am studying Dersim. Just like they expressed the voting of the Dersimers to the CHP with abusive concepts such as Stockholm Syndrome, the non-Jews, despite not using the same term, regard this declaration of the Jews as a kind of flattery, and an effort of subservience. I think this is a shame for the majority. In my opinion, it is controversial whether such a declaration exists or not, but I think it is the business of the majority to discuss it, and the majority should look for their share in it if there is such a thing.

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We see that one of the pillars on which the Young Ottomans built themselves was precisely this opposition to parity, opposition to the equivalence and parity offered by the Reformation (Islahat).

This attitude which I think has been continuing since then and which I believe is a sort of phobia, and therefore I call egalophobia, is still alive today.

If we look at the historical background of these two assertions, I would like to point out to a fundamental mistake we fall into. When we keep saying Ottoman and Republic of Turkey constantly, we take Ottoman Empire as a whole, and the Republic of Turkey as a separate whole, we take them as two different paradigms. However, this is misleading. The pre-modern Ottoman should be regarded as a separate paradigm, and the modern Ottoman and the Turkish Republic as a separate paradigm. These latter two should be considered as two epochs within the same paradigm. It is the same when studying the Jews.

In this respect, there are continuities and ruptures between the pre-modern events and the events during the modern Ottoman and Turkish Republic periods. Asserting these continuities and ruptures is the job of the historian. The first thing that I think of when it comes to continuity is this caste system which is a much more obvious and indeed undefined system taken over from the classical Ottoman. Interestingly, this system was defined in the modern system and it became more implied and implicit. This is a caste system which practically existed in the pre-modern era, and which was named as the “Millet system” later in the 19th century modern era. This is a hundred-year-old internalized imparity, an inequality in which everybody actually knows their place, resembling the caste system in India or which in fact is valid with regard to gender. We see that this is still continuing, and it has just become more implicit and invisible but, on the other hand, it has been identified and structured.

Now, it is time to come to the rupture. One aspect of the rupture is perhaps the identification but also a multi-layered and very complex subversion was created by modernization on the other hand. When we look at the pre-modern period, we easily make the generalizations as the Muslims and the Jews; And we put some part of gender which we actually don't take into consideration aside. Besides, the class is also neglected and the Jews are put into a pot while the Muslims or the Orthodox and the Gregorian in another pot. If you include these two things in your analysis, you are deemed to have achieved the truth, because the existing structure is, to a large extent, a considerably complete structure as a collective identity and a religious group. One of the most important ruptures created by modernization is something that the historians of the majority and the general public do not usually take into account, that it causes great disintegration within these groups. Modernization means not only the equality of different groups which started with Tanzimat (the Reorganization) and Islahat (the Reform), but also more secular groups and intellectuals who fight against power elites, which destroys the inherent hierarchies of these groups and take their power from spirituality; in short, the intellectuals' becoming more prominent. This contradiction can often be sharper among the Jews than the contradictions among the non-Jews, that is, when Jewish intellectuals tried to change themselves, their environment, and the world with an enlightened, modernist approach in the 1840s, 50s, 60s, the actual reluctance arouse from the traditional, pre-modern power relations within their own group.

Perhaps, it should be added regarding the classical period that this “Ottoman peace”, “Ottoman tolerance”, which was put forward in the 1990s perhaps as an invention of the tradition, brought to the forefront during the AKP period, started to be very popular even in the academia, and led by Davutoğlu, is an understanding that ignores the caste system for which it may serve as a model for the present day due to its tendency to multiculturalism. That peace was built on inequality, and a sharp hierarchy, and one group at the bottom of that hierarchy was the Jews. We see that this understanding still prevails.

It is possible to explain the Ottoman modernization from various perspectives, one of which is based on the acceptance and equality of different collective identities which also stands out in popular historiography: the famous “transformation from subjects to citizens” during Tanzimat; that everyone has equal rights as citizens regardless of their religion. Tanzimat is repeated with Islahat which reinforced it, and both were actually initiatives, nothing more. They were opening programs which we know from recent times. When we look at the implementation of these opening programs, interestingly, the Jews were not included.

This implementation reminds us of the classical period. In this regard, Julia Philips Cohen has an award winning study, *Ottomanization*, which was translated into Turkish as well. This book addresses Ottomanization with regard to the Jews. Referring to the publications of the period in Ladino language, it sees Ottomanization as a struggle of the Jews who were actually invisible and ignored by the intellectuals in the 19th century. For instance, Cohen does not use the term “non-Muslims”; he uses “Muslims and Christians”. The Jews will begin to appear more in the texts after 1850.

Here, it is again necessary to look at the majority. The general reaction of Jewish intellectuals in this period was that being visible was actually a chance for equality. No matter how frequently they talk about Ottoman peace and tolerance, or hide themselves, we are talking about a community who know they are the victims of this system, and that the nonsense of peace and comfort is not true.

As a historian, I have been teaching the history of the 19th century for years, I worked on the Young Ottomans – they are the first civilian intellectual opposition of these lands, and it is also a movement led by the Namık Kemal who the Young Turks, Kemalists consider their founding father. We see that one of the pillars on which the Young Ottomans built themselves was precisely this opposition to parity, opposition to the equivalence and parity offered by Islahat. This attitude which I think has been continuing since then and which I believe is a sort of phobia, and therefore I call egalophobia, is still alive today.

This works in two ways. Only the ones at the top are not afraid of this equivalence to the ones at the bottom. Fear may be rational, but I call it phobia because it is an irrational fear as the majority is afraid while parity is not disadvantageous for itself. This parity goes from top to bottom. For example, when the Muslims, as the majority, make a generalization as non-Muslims, the fact that they do not see the hierarchy among them is because of this insensitivity.

It does not end there; this hierarchy manifests itself in the form of fear from parity within each community - including the Jews. In this sense, what we see is that Jewish intellectuals were the most eager group to Ottomanize during this transformation process. Actually, there were different reasons for this, because it was a nation, the Ottoman nation that was intended to be built; it was not ethnocentric. However, even though it was not ethnocentric, a common language issue would emerge in the final analysis, and there was not a single daily language spoken by the Jews which they could call their national language. As a language of the faith, Hebrew was valid only in rituals and religious settings. They spoke different languages such as Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Roman, Judeo-Spanish, and Yiddish. 19. In this sense, the 19th century Jews did not feel obliged to make ethnic-national concessions if making

Ottoman Turkish the primary language was required by Ottomanization. At least, the intertwining of language and belief with the Gregorian was not true for them.

We see this at three climaxes. I have already mentioned one of them: the enthusiasm for the edicts of Tanzimat and Islahat. However, there is still a multi-layered, contradictory situation there. Although they saw the negative results of this and resisted those results, they still welcomed with enthusiasm. What I'm studying presently is the Assembly in the First Constitutional Era (1. Meşrutiyet dönemi), the Assembly in 1877-78. This Assembly coincides with the Ottoman-Russian War, and while it is valid for all the non-Muslims, it is noteworthy that Jewish members of the Assembly were more royalist than the king and they backed the Ottoman Empire and the dynasty. This would actually be seen marginally later in the Young Turk movement, but it would appear again in the Second Constitutional Assembly.

Three things in this process draw my attention. One is the perception of Russia as a common enemy by American and European Jewish intellectuals and the Porte due to its expansion policies. This means loyalty or *mutilik*, meaning devotees in its use in Dersim. The third one is the acceptance of modernization as a state policy and even over-willingness in this regard. We can say that the result of this effort was a great success at the beginning of the 20th century. Although the French language was still widespread through Alyans Schools and speaking Turkish was not common, it seems that not the Ottoman State but the Jewish intellectuals themselves made significant progress in terms of belonging. As a matter of fact, the Jews were considered to be the last problem even after the policies of the Union and Progress left Ottomanism and Islamism behind and started investing in an exclusionary, ethnocentric nation project, Turkism against the Armenians and the Greeks, and gradually against the Kurds and the Arabs.

Let me finish by saying that the Republic must be handled in two different periods with regard to the Jews. With the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the Ottomanization policy turned into Turkification and among Jewish intellectuals, the ones working seriously on Turkification but not Turkeyfication, became prominent in their own community. With the developments from the 1990s to the present, both among the young Jewish intellectuals and among the majority, an idea whether Turkeyfication but not Turkification can be a solution with regard to the Jews this time. The concept of Turkish Jews is a very striking concept. There is a debate whether it is true to say Turkish Jews or the Jews of Turkey.

I want to end my speech by recalling three points. One, the continuation of this fear of parity is frightening not only in terms of durability but also in term of prevalence. In the 20th century, we already know the anti-Semitic ideas of the whole right which is sometimes racist; however, the left has a definition called the comprador bourgeoisie, and this definition is quite racist. The Jew, who appeared in cartoons from the Wealth Tax to many events, is actually a comprador. He is mean, stingy, exploiter, and also the agent of imperialism. I do not find it ethical to discuss the share of the Jews in this perception, but I look at what my share in this is as a part of the majority. I will continue my activities both personally and in the context of my profession in order to eliminate this fear of parity, superiority as a socio-psychological factor and the fear from the elimination of that superiority.

## Individual (!) Anti-Semitic Events of the Republican Period

Ayşe Hür

**T**he general belief among us is that anti-Semitism which we can roughly define as “fanatical hatred and racial hostility against the Jewish” didn’t exist in the Ottoman State and has never existed in Turkey. Those who accept that something happened underrate those happening by calling them “isolated incidents”. On the other hand, historians accept that the Jews in the Ottoman period were not equal to the Muslims but more comfortable than their European counterparts. They believe that the Jews, who supported the Young Turk movement, Constitutionalism, Kemalism, and the Republic did not suffer greatly from the “Turkification” policies of Kemalism as they did not come forward with demands of national independence or land like the Armenians or the Greeks.

Added the heroic stories of some of our diplomats regarding their activities to save the Jews from the Nazi atrocities during the Second World War, boasting by saying “there is no anti-Semitism in Turkey!” has become easy for many of us. Besides, this view has been shared by both international Jewish organizations and Jewish organizations and leaders of Turkey. It may sound weird to say “There is anti-Semitism in Turkey” while even the Jews are saying “There’s no anti-Semitism in Turkey”; however, when we put together the history of the Republic in general and miscellaneous things that happened particularly in the recent years, I wouldn’t agree with the statement “There’s no anti-Semitism among us”.

### One-party period

January 1923: The *Türk Sesi* and the *Yanık Yurt* newspapers published in İzmir asked Turkish merchants to come together to fight against the “thread of the immoral and selfish Jew”. In the articles, it was speculated that the Jews were the “medium of viruses” in Turkey and specifically in İzmir. Afterwards, humour magazine *Akbaba* joined in the chorus and published a series of articles with titles such as “Haven’t you heard that the Jews aren’t proper business partners?” “Shall

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Desperate passengers hung cloths inscribed with “Immigrants Juifs” (Jewish refugees) on both sides of the ship, and they raised a white flag on the top with the text “Sauvez-nous” (save us). Thereupon, 200 police officers boarded on and kicked the passengers under the deck.

we let these viruses live with us?” The residents of Edirne who were agitated with a series of articles published in the *Paşaeli* newspaper in Edirne gathered in the town square and shouted “Your turn will come to get out of this country! Jews, go away!” The police hardly prevented an attack on the shops of the Jews. The Jews living in small towns such as Babaeski migrated to big cities like İstanbul. In Thrace, the Alyans schools were closed down. The reason of this rage was obvious. The Armenians and the Greeks were discharged but the Jews who were much wealthier compared to the Muslims were still in Turkey...

March 2, 1923: The first person to officially confess this feeling was Rıza Nur. While explaining the policy of Turkey followed at Lausanne Peace Conference at a confidential sitting at the Parliament, he said: “There won’t be any minorities left. The only exception will be İstanbul... (shouts such as “What about the Armenians”) But, dear friends, How many Armenians are there? (Voices such as “the Jews?”) There are thirty thousand Jews in İstanbul. There are people who have never caused a problem. (Noises) The Jews, you know, go wherever they are driven to. Of course, I would say it would be better if they weren’t here...”

June 1923: In the presence of such feelings, the implementation was not difficult. Jewish, Greek and Armenian public servants were dismissed and replaced by Muslims. Free movement of the Jews and the other minorities in Anatolia was restricted. The resolution was so sudden that many people were not able to return to their hometowns and were stuck in where they were. To make things worse, the Jews were restricted from migrating to Palestine. The Chief Rabbinate did not take any steps for the removal of the restrictions. This was in accordance with the perception that the “Jews were not troublemakers”.

December 1923: Turkey was not able to force a resolution to deport the Jews in Lausanne but a community of a few hundred Jews living in Çorlu were ordered to leave the town in 48 hours. The resolution was postponed upon the application of the Chief Rabbinate; however, a similar resolution was taken for Çatalca and implemented immediately.

May 4, 1924: Mustafa Kemal said the following in an interview to the *New York Herald* newspaper: “It is necessary to abolish the present Orthodox and Armenian Patriarchates and the Jewish Rabbinate in Turkey along with the Caliphate...” Subsequently, in a speech he gave to the representatives of *Türk Ocağı*, İsmet Paşa said, “Our duty is to Turkify the ones in the Turkish homeland immediately. We are going to cut out the elements who will oppose Turks and Turkishness.”

February 1925: A ferocious anti-Semitic campaign began after rumours of 300 Jews from Turkey had sent a telegram to the celebrations of the 435th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christoph Colomb had appeared in the newspapers of *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *İkdam*, *Son Saat* and *Vakit*. In the articles, the Jews were referred to as “ingrators”, “leeches adhering to the back of the country.” The *Cumhuriyet* newspaper showed the way to liberation as follows: “On this occasion, we would like to say that the best punishment for such people is to hold them by their arms and throw them out of the nation. If all the Jews living happily and prosperously in Turkey... feel (an endless) attachment to Spain, Palestine or any other countries, then we would say: The gates are open. There, you can go to



Spain or anywhere you would like to!” Some people provoked by these articles killed a Jewish youth, and attacked the Kuzguncuk Synagogue. It could never be discovered if there was such a telegram.

October 13, 1925: In the *L’Akcham* newspaper, a prominent intellectual from the Jewish community warned the community after stating that the Turkish language was accepted as the mother language between the Jews: “Due to these laws governing the society, these minorities have to be eliminated or homogenised. All the minorities are quite aware that assimilation into Turkishness is in behalf of them and they comprehend very well the meaning of the saying “One who strays will be lost”.

August 1, 1926: The community leaders, who were overwhelmed by accusations such as “infidelity” and “ungratefulness” against the Jews, sent a petition to the Prime Ministry declaring that they had waived Article 42 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty. The decision was reflected to the public in a way that they had waived not only Article 42 but all the minority rights. Outraged by the “cowardice” accusations of the world Jewish organizations against the Jews of Turkey, the Chief Rabbi Becerano had to say, “I don’t want to hear anything about this issue anymore... We, the Turkish Jews, refuse external interventions about issues that concern us. The Turkish Government is trustable about the protection of the rights of the Turkish Jewish community. We do not need any foreign help!”

August 17, 1927: A 22-years-old Jewish girl, Elza Niyego, was killed by Osman Ratıp Bey, married with grandchildren, who was in love with her and who had been abusing her for a long time. As if it was not enough to keep the dead body of the young girl uncovered on the street for hours, sending Osman Ratıp to a mental hospital instead of the court caused a great reaction in the Jewish community. Fearing from the possibility that the incident would be covered up because the killer was the son of the former Hejaz Governor and the commanding officer of Abdul Hamid II and the victim was an ordinary Jewish girl, the Jewish community took their traditional shyness aside for the first time and participated in the funeral ceremony in crowds on August 18 and shouted, “We want justice.” The crowd, estimated to be around 15 thousand, turned the funeral into a show of strength, causing the press to fuel Jewish hostility. The titles of “the Ungrateful” and “the Insolent” appeared in newspapers. Government authorities also decided to align the Jewish community. After a while, nine community members accused of shouting Turcophobic slogans, blocking the traffic and clashing with the police; and a Russian who witnessed the murder were sued. After a long series of trials, four of the accused were sentenced to one-year-imprisonment for “defaming and deriding Turkishness”.

January 13, 1928: A campaign was started which took its place in history with the motto “Citizen, speak Turkish!” in the annual congress of the Student Community of the Law Faculty of Darülfünun, and which obliged the minorities to speak Turkish. The whole country was decorated with posters, youngsters started warning the minorities who weren’t speaking Turkish, and the ones who didn’t conform to the warnings were threatened, beaten and sued. In the same year, an important part of Jewish schools were closed along with other foreign schools in the country.

September 1929: By accepting Jewish schools, the Or Ahayim Hospital, the Ortaköy Orphanage and synagogues as commercial institutions, the revenue office decided to tax donations and fund transfers to

them. The decision was implemented retrospectively as of 1925. The Chief Rabbinate, who could not pay these high taxes, was levied an attachment order. The government pressures continued and donations were inspected closely. Thus, the Jewish community was gradually taken under economic control.

October 1930: During the local elections, the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Anadolu* newspapers claimed that there were six Greeks, four Armenians and three Jews in the list of the newly-established Free Republican Party (SCF), and hopes were attached to the ancient non-Muslim hostility by explaining the list of CHF consisted of only Turks. İhsan Paşa, CHF Istanbul Deputy, reprimanded the voters saying, “How do you unashamedly vote for this party that Hampars, Mysons, and Yorgoes vote for?” Apparently, minorities were not considered “citizens” yet. Leaders of the Jewish community visited the Chief of the Parliament, Kazım Paşa, at the Dolmabahçe Palace and reaffirmed the patriotic feelings and loyalty of the Jews towards the Republic.

November 1932: Every Jewish resident of Izmir was forced to sign a covenant promising to adopt the Turkish culture and to speak the Turkish language. The Jews of Izmir were followed by the Jews of Bursa, Kırklareli, Edirne, Adana, Diyarbakır, and Ankara. In the newspapers, news articles of Jewish (and Armenian) girls converting in groups were published.

June 21 - July 4, 1934: Provoked by the anti-Semitic and racist articles in the *Milli İnkılap* magazine owned by racist Cevat Rifat Atilhan and the *Orhun* magazine owned by Nihal Atsız, masses attacked the Jews in Çanakkale, Gallipoli, Edirne, Kırklareli, Lüleburgaz, Babaeski. In the events, houses and shops belonging to the Jews were looted, women were raped, and a rabbi was killed. As a result of the events that were understood to be organized by the Thrace branch of CHF, 15 thousand Jews had to flee to other cities and finally the country leaving their properties and assets back. That is, the first “pogrom” practice of the Republic was very successful.

August 1935: Let’s learn the reaction of the “docile” and “harmonious” Jewish community from a Jewish Doctor, Samuel Abravaya (from Marmara), who was elected an MP in February 1935. Dr. Abravaya said to the reporter of the *Word Jewry* magazine who interviewed him that “Neither religious nor economic anti-Semitism has ever existed in Turkey... Nor there’s a specific Jewish issue in our country... Our lives are secure, and our bliss protected. Turks are hospitable and generous”. However, a storm broke out after the interview was translated into Turkish. A journalist referring to the expression of “hospitable” used by Abravaya resembled the Jewish nation to “the guest who dyes his yarn under the roof with no interest in the work, with the suffering, restraint, labour, and fatigue of the host.” Similar articles appeared in other newspapers as well.

## **The period of World War II**

January 1937: It was not difficult for the fascist and national socialist wave in Europe to arrive in Turkey. A German Information Office was opened in Cağaloğlu, Istanbul; the *Türkische Post* published in German language and the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper owned by Yunus Nadi started to make Nazi propaganda.

August 1938: The Government issued the Decree Nr. 2/9498 saying “the Jews living on the lands of states whose subjects they are and who are restricted to travel are forbidden to enter and reside in Turkey regardless of their current religion”. 26 Jewish staff working for the only official news agency of the state, Anadolu Agency, were dismissed. There was a substantial increase in the number of articles and cartoons in magazines and newspapers that depicted minorities in general and the Jews in particular responsible for the troubles faced by the country.

August 8, 1939: Less than a year later, something hurt the feelings of the Jews of Turkey. While carrying 860 Jewish refugees gathered from various parts of Europe to Palestine, the *Parita* ship, which had to take refuge in Izmir due to some problems en-route, was expelled from the port on August 14 accompanied by two police engines despite the shouting of the passengers, “Kill us but do not send back.” While the ship was being expelled, the *Ulus* newspaper came out with a caption “Stray Jews went away from Izmir.”

December 28, 1939: There was a major earthquake in Erzincan and tens of thousands died. Hearing this, Jewish communities in Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Buenos Aires, New York, Geneva, Cairo and Alexandria sent the money and the garments they collected among themselves to Turkey. However, articles and caricatures appeared in newspapers mocking this attitude of the Jews and seeking malicious intent under it.

December 12, 1940: Turkish authorities forced the *Salvador* (it was a boat for 40 passengers indeed), renowned as “the floating coffin”, which arrived in İstanbul with 342 Jewish refugees it collected from the Constanza Port of Romania, continue on its journey even though it was clear that it wouldn’t be able to survive even for a mile. The result was tragic: On December 13, 219 dead bodies were gathered from the wreck of the *Salvador*, which was caught in a violent storm in the offshores of Silivri. Of the 123 people who managed to survive the ice-cold sea, 63 were sent back to Bulgaria, and the rest set foot on Palestine on March 19 in a ship called the *Darien II*.

April 22, 1941: By the gendarmerie that appeared suddenly at their door one morning, 12.000 non-Muslim men were sent to camps without infrastructures filled with mosquitos, suffering from the swamp emitting malaria, dampness, mud and excessive heat, and shortage of water. The voice of the sergeants and the officers shouting ““Forget Istanbul!” is settled in the memory of all minorities who witnessed the period. These “soldiers”, called “Provisions of Term 20” [20 Kur’a İhtiyatlar], were employed in tunnel constructions in Zonguldak, in the construction of the *Youth Park* [Gençlik Parkı] in Ankara, in heavy work such as stone breaking and road building in the provinces of Afyon, Karabük, Konya and Kütahya. Provisions of Term 20 were disbanded on July 27, 1942.

December 15, 1941: As the war developed in favour of the Germans, hearts became more rigid. Because Turkey did not allow the *Struma* ship, who wanted to save 769 Romanian Jews they collected from the Port of Constanza from the Nazi persecution and take them to Palestine, was sent to the Black Sea after struggling with disease and death in the offshores of Sarayburnu. The desperate passengers, who heard the decision, hung cloths on both sides of the ship inscribed with “*Immigrants Juifs*” (Jewish refugees) in capital

letters, and they drew a white flag with the text “*Sauvez-nous*” (Save us) to the top. Thereupon, 200 police officers boarded on and kicked passengers under the deck. Then the anchor of the ship was cut off, and the ship was pulled to the Black Sea tied to a giant guide ship. The *Struma* was left to its destiny 23 miles off in the sea without an engine, fuel, food, water, or medication. It was sunk by unknown submarines at 24:00 on February 24, 1942. Only one person survived the tragedy. After the incident, the Prime Minister Refik Saydam said: “Turkey cannot be a refuge to the people who are not fancied by others!”

November 11, 1942: With a contemplation to overcome the financial problems experienced during the war, *Varlık Vergisi* [The Wealth Tax] was introduced. Among those who voted for the law were Afyonkarahisar deputy Berç Türker of Armenian origin (whose surname was given by Atatürk) and İstamat Özdamar, Eskisehir deputy of Greek origin. 87 percent of taxpayers were non-Muslims. Armenian merchants were taxed at 232 percent of their capital power, Jewish merchants at 179 percent, Greek merchants at 156 percent, and Muslim-Turkish merchants at 4.94 percent. Those who were not able to pay their taxes were sent to the camps of Aşkale, Sivrihisar, Koyudere. Some of them lost their properties; some others lost their lives, their dignity, or their faith in Turkey.

### **Multi-party period**

January 30/31, 1947: All members of a Jewish family of seven living in the Kendirli district Urfa were found murdered. The Jewish community of Urfa was blamed for the murder and all the Jewish men in the city were arrested. The residents of Urfa boycotted the Jews throughout the trial. Three years later, all the arrested Jews were released but the Jews of Urfa had to leave the city.

May 1948: The foundation of the State of Israel created a pride and excitement among the Jews of Turkey. Now, there was a country where they could take refuge against the attacks of the racists in Turkey. They started migrating to Israel in masses. Those who had been doing their best to evade the Jews from the country for years used this to insult the Jews again. The cliché of “the Ungrateful Jew” was once again and widely put into circulation.

1952: Hüseyin Üzmez, who made an armed assault on Ahmet Emin Yalman who was carrying out an ideological discussion through the *Vatan* newspaper he owned against Islamist circles who resurged in the multi-party period, said “Yalman was the chief representative of the governing forces of Turkey behind the scenes... In order to know Yalman, it is necessary to know that he is a “Convert””. But, what was a “Convert”? Mystic rabbi Sabetay Sevi Kabbalah from Izmir declared that he was the Messiah in 1666 by calculating the coming of the “doomsday” but he repented and converted to Islam later. Although his disciples who accepted him as the Messiah had sworn with him, they continued to pray secretly according to the Jewish religion. These people were called “Converts”. Thessaloniki was the place where the Converts lived most. It was also the centre of the Western culture, developed economic relations, the Mason chambers, and the Committee of Union and Progress. The Islamist section believed that the “Almighty Hakan” Abdul Hamid was accepted as an enemy by the Zionists for he refused to sell lands to Theodor Herzl in Palestine. Based on the premises such as the presence of Mason Emanuel Karasu of Jewish origin, and that Mustafa Kemal, who abolished the Sultanate and Caliphate, was also a

Unionist and a Thessaloniki, they believed that these historical events were a “Convert/Mason/Crusader” conspiracy. This was the “historical” disguise of the murder attempt of Üzmez.

News from the *Hurriyet* on August 5, 1952: A 50-55-year-old Jew, Ilya, living in Izmir for a long time, approached a group of Greek, Italian, and French tourists getting off a ship while waiting at the *First Cordon* [Birinci Kordon] at 11 o'clock on August 5, and started to speak ill of Turkey. The Jew addressed specifically to the Greeks saying, “This country is yours. Do not leave this place to the Turks. The Turks are rather bad people. Save us from them by recapturing these places. Look at me, despite I have worked for them for such a long time...” Ilya insulted the Turks, Turkey and Atatürk afterwards... According to the news on the newspaper, a youngster who was irritated by this disgusting imputations and abuses of the “ungrateful Jew” started beating Ilya, and there was a lynch attempt against the man among the cries of “Hit him, kill him, don't leave the ungrateful alive!” with the participation of people who hardly contained themselves. We were to learn the problem of Ilya from the *Shalom* newspaper on August 14, 1952: It was written in the newspaper article titled “It was discovered that the Hebrew who Insulted Turkishness in Izmir was Lunatic” that all the residents of Izmir knew Ilya was a lunatic with a medical report, and he was released by the police.

In a news article drafted by Sadun Tanju in the *Vatan* newspaper on 15-22 February 1955, it was reported that the owner of the Linguafon Company, Vitali Bilen, who fell to the network of gamblers and borrowed 60 thousand liras, was both harassed by the gamblers and arrested for “insulting Turkishness” to press on him. The fate of the case was not mentioned in the article.

January 26, 1970: Necmettin Erbakan founded the *National Order Party* [Milli Nizam Partisi] in the anti-Semitic atmosphere escalated by the Six-Day War in 1967, which resulted in the defeat of the Arabs and the sabotage against the Masjid al-Aqsa, sacred for the Muslims, in 1969 by a fanatical Jew. Erbakan and his friends, who proclaimed that masons and Zionists wouldn't be accepted to the party, contributed to our history of anti-Semitism as the inventors of ideas such as “international Judaism”, “international Zionism”, “Greater Israel from Nile to the Euphrates”, “the Common Market is a plot of Zionism”, “entering the Common Market may end up with the Turkey's becoming a town of Israel” “Israel must be transported to South America”.

### **Recent period**

September 6, 1986: 22 people were killed in a bomb and machine gun attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Galata, Istanbul by terrorists affiliated with the Palestinian Abu Nidal Organization, but the incident did not cause great reaction due to the great sympathy for the Palestinian cause in the public.

December 1991: We saw that neither the Kurds nor the leftists were exempt from anti-Semitism in Kurdish intellectual Musa Anter's criticism of Oktay Ekşi in the *Yeni Ülke* newspaper. Anter, who started by saying, “You see this president of whatever, of Jewish origin, in the Turkish press twined around his column in the *Hurriyet* newspaper like a viper,” was reciting the familiar cliché by saying “He has reclined upon Israel, and his duty, actually, is to make mischief among the Anatolian peoples...”

After accusing Ahmet Emin Yalman, Sami Kohen, Sedat Simavi, and Coşkun Kırca for similar things, he continued saying, “When I say the Jews, I don’t mean the state of Israel today. My word is about the characterless who converted from Judaism. They are dominant in every field in Turkey.” Being unable to calm down, he did not forget to say that he regretted that the Jews were saved from the Spanish massacre and brought to the Ottoman country.

March 4, 1996: Kurdish nationalist Abdülmelik Fırat, who was recently released from the prison, responded the question of Nuriye Akman, a journalist for the *Sabah*, “Did Yaşar Kemal visit you?” by saying “He didn’t. He might call, but Yaşar Kemal’s wife is the sister of Virgin Mary, who belongs to the Israelis. She doesn’t let him to. Otherwise, he loved me.” To Akman’s question “What does his wife have to do with it?” Fırat responded saying, “The Israelis have a lobby against the Kurds throughout the world. Yaşar Kemal is our Kurdish intellectual, and he was captured by an Israeli; she doesn’t let him call us.” Apparently, the conspiracy theories that the lands which the Jews called “the Promised Land” included the geography of Kurdistan affected Kurdish intellectuals as well.

1999: The *Aydınlık* newspaper, using the title “Salomon in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” for İsmail Cem, claimed that Revivo was orchestrated by “the Foreign Minister İsmail Cem of Jewish origin” to contribute to the detente between Turkey and Israel. In his articles in the *Aydınlık* magazine and his books, “eccentric intellectual” Yalçın Küçük was able to find a Sabataist behind almost every incident by using a method he called onomastic in order to prove the assertion that “the dominant elite in Turkey was of Sabataist origin”.

September 2000: After the provocative visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, criticism of Israel and criticism of Judaism began to intermingle among both the left and the right circles.

November 15, 2003: Nobody found it odd when the family of Nurullah Kuncak, one of the attackers on two synagogues in Istanbul, told the *Milliyet* newspaper, “There was no big reaction at home, because it was against the Jews. Even in Kuran-ı Kerim, it is said, ‘Don’t make the Jews friends.’ We didn’t like [the Jews] much, indeed at all.” Speaking to the *ATV* cameraman after the attacks, citizens said they were upset that “innocent people who were passing by and who had nothing to do with Judaism died”, that is, they criticized the attackers for “being careless” and “threatening the lives of the non-Jews.”

February 18, 2004: A news article titled “It was exposed that the Barzani Family is Jewish” was published in the *Hurriyet* newspaper. A historian named Ahmet Uçar found a document in the Ottoman archives that a rabbi who was named Sallum Barzani was exiled from Mosul to Thessaloniki and from there to Jerusalem in 1856 on a special request of the Chief Rabbinate, and understood that the Barzanis were Jewish. He discovered that the state in Southern Kurdistan would be the “Little Israel” combining the fact (!) that “Bedirhanis are Jews”, as claimed by someone else before, that “Independent Kurdistan” is a Jewish plan with the claim that the Barzani family were Jewish converts. Thus, in the public opinion, the historical demands of the Kurds were transformed into a Jewish conspiracy.

August 17, 2004: In the *Vakit* newspaper, Abdurrahim Karakoç said: “It is impossible not to admire

the foresight of Adolf Hitler, who is presented as “racist, sadist, monster ” in the world public opinion. Hitler saw these days then. Because he knew that they would cause trouble to the world, he cleaned the juggler Jews, who perceived racism as a religion, and enjoyed shedding blood. The second foresightful man is Osama bin Laden.”

December 31, 2004: In an article, Mahmut Toptaş, a journalist for *Milli Gazete*, said “I present here a list of some verses with the hope that our Foreign Minister Mr. Abdullah Gül reads the information about the Jews in the Quran on his way to the occupant, blood shedder, murderer Israeli Prime Minister, and he listed the verses from the Quran.”

January 23, 2005: In a match between Kayseri Spor and Mardin Spor, the audience cheered against Pini Balili, the Israeli footballer of Kayseri Spor. Some of the slogans were in the form of cursing Judaism. This incident recalled what happened to Haim Revivo in April 2002. Balili faced similar attacks each time when the Palestinian issue flared up.

February 2005: Adolf Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf* was published by 13 publishing houses in more than a hundred thousand copies. The book, which had been published nearly 50 times since 1934, became a kind of “handbook” for the followers of MHP and Genç Party. According to some claims, it was also very popular among the students at police academies. Another “best-seller” of the year was a fictive anti-Semitic book titled *Siyon Protokolleri [the Zionist Protocols]*. This book also made more than 100 prints during the Republican period.

June 2005: Following the path of Yalçın Küçük, Soner Yalçın handled the theme of Sabataism/Thessaloniki/Freemasonry/Committee of Union and Progress/Conspiracy in a very impressive way in his novel *Efendi: The White Secret of the Turks*. Thanks to the book that sold more than one hundred thousand in a short time, the motto “the World is governed by the Jews, and Turkey by Converts!” was engraved in the minds of people very well.

September 2008: According to the Global Attitudes Survey announced by the US-based PEW Research Center in September 2008, 49 percent of Turks in 2004 and 65 percent in 2006 had negative views against the Jews, but today almost three out of every four people (76 percent) state that they have negative feelings. The same rates apply to all age and education groups. It is estimated that these rates increased following the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

February 5, 2009: On the website of AKP Ankara Provincial Presidency was written “... That Hitler burned the Jews in ovens and killed them masses do not comply with historical facts... Those who were killed were killed in order to ensure that others migrated to Palestinian territories.”

October 2019: Posters with a verse from the Qur’an (Maide / 51) saying, “Do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is one of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people,” were posted at bus stops in Konya.

What do you say, don’t we have anti-Semitism? Are these individual incidents?

## Being a Jew in Turkey and the experience

Raşel Meseri, Aylin Kuryel

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*Towns are places which both include experiences and shape them. That one of the towns mentioned most in the book is not a coincidence both with regard to the Jewish population of the city and that it is our hometown. I don't know whether it is too assertive if I say Karataş and Asansör in İzmir are the last districts shared by different sections of the community with regard to classes within the Jewish community.*

Raşel Meseri

**T**his book has multiple authors; there are 71 authors and more than 300 articles in it. The articles are organized in a form of dictionary entries in alphabetical order and they comprise the experiences of the writers. The themes include a very broad spectrum: Personal stories regarding being a Jew and a minority in Turkey, daily stories of being a minority or the moments of confrontation with minorities from child-adult perspectives, occasions of being a minority within the minority, their own rules, codes and mechanisms of minority communities, food and ingredients that refresh their memories of everyday habits, political and historical events, stories of discrimination, etc. We are going to broaden some of these themes later. But first of all, I would like to talk about the form of the book and what kind of mentality this form suggests regarding the issue of being a minority.

Focusing on experiences is a method of trying to understand the flow of collective consciousness. That the book has multiple authors is the precondition of being able to capture many different points of a broad subject such as being a minority and touching a minority. Therefore, a considerable part of the writers are non-Jewish. The dictionary format provided a free and wide platform for this purpose.

On the other hand, the dictionary format is a platform that is frequently used in the social media era and is constantly expanding. There are different platforms from *Ekşi Ekşi* to *Urban Dictionary* that extend with user contribution unlike official dictionaries. This book can be considered as a follow up of these trends. Meanwhile, the number of texts based mainly on experiences, such as Roni Margulies' book



*Bugün Pazar Yahudiler Azar* [Today is Sunday, the Jews Run Riot] (2006) or Rita Ender's book *İsmiyle Yaşamak* [Living with One's Name] (2016), in which she interviewed people about their experiences of living with non-Muslim names, is increasing.

Of course, experience sheds light on both the commonalities and the differences within a community. Therefore, the book contains items that are both very similar and contrasting with regard to the same subject. Thus, it appears that we are actually expanding the dictionary form. Although there is valuable research on this subject, there are few written materials, and personal memories and stories are not archived much, except for a few examples. We also found this idea important in terms of filling such a gap and contributing to the field.

The idea of collecting experiences actually stemmed from a very personal experience. About one and a half years ago, my mother's health deteriorated. When she got closer to death, she began to tell several stories that she had not told before such as how she voluntarily went to Israel on a ship during the establishment of Israel, how she met the person who would later become her husband, and what she ate at breakfast that morning... All of them were stories shedding light on personal turning points on one side and on social ones on the other. We felt obliged to write down and record them. We were deeply concerned about the disappearance of these stories where the individual and the social were so intertwined.

These were moments that made a person say "You see, life cycle is nothing more than this" as an outcome of seeing the struggle, efforts and vigour to keep going, and the confusing feelings of a person. The stubborn effort of a person you love, who does not know where to go and where her struggle will end, to tell her dear memories with incredible details in spite of everything. When we decided to take notes, these memories started to mean different things and activate different thoughts for us. At this point, I think we met at a common point with Aylin.

The theme of migration is an integral part of being a minority though in different forms in different periods - considering the dwindling Jewish population in Turkey, we see how actual this theme is. Therefore, it was not a coincidence that the theme of migration was dominant in the stories told by my mother.

My mother saw exactly four major migrations. In 1947, when she was still a young girl, she left her country, city and family behind and went to the state of Israel, which was being established, and this was her first migration. The anti-Semitic environment in Turkey and the excitement created by the idea of the establishment of Israel during and after the Second World War were effective in her decision. It was during this period she met and married my father and gave birth to two children. However, a few years later, my mother's yearning for her hometown called her back to Izmir, where she was born, and this was her second migration. She extended her family by giving birth to two more

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*The book *Türkiye'de Yahudi Olmak: Bir Deneyim Sözlüğü* [Being a Jew in Turkey: A Dictionary of Experiences] was published by İletişim Publications in 2017. First, I would like to give some information about the book, and then to talk broadly on two issues, namely "Being a Jew in Turkey" and "Experience" mentioned in the title of the book.*

children. There was another tide of migration in 1970s. On the one hand, the effects of the political climate of the country after the coup, and the economic misfortunes that collapsed on the family on the other, made them set off for Israel again. Although she spent two months every year on the lands where she was born and raised, this period was a long absence from home for my mother. My father's last will before he died was to be buried in Izmir. And, it happened. My mother continued to live in Israel for a long time after my father's death. But it is both interesting and pitiful that she made her last migration by coming back to Izmir to spend her old age. Her life ended up in the town she was born in.

Towns are places which both include experiences and which shape them. It is not a coincidence that one of the towns mentioned most in the book is İzmir both with regard to the big Jewish population of the city and that it is our hometown. I do not know whether it is too assertive if I say Karataş and Asansör in İzmir were the last districts shared by different sections of the community with regard to classes within the Jewish community until the 1950s when many things in the country underwent a drastic change... Many years ago, we made a documentary called "Izmir Sea Children" arising from our concern about these districts. My aim in this documentary was to chase those years in urban scale. While travelling in the history of the region, there was not a single scene in which the Jews did not enter the frame. After the 1950s, different life styles of different classes started to become more visible. The prosperous ones started to change their neighbourhoods in a quest for comfort. The middle class and the poor stayed in these neighbourhoods for some more time. Then, there were big waves of migration to Israel. The poor were the first to go with the desire to have a new and more comfortable life. The Jews gradually left the neighbourhoods we have already mentioned. Today, I still think that the hottest stories, memories, and perhaps the myths about the neighbourhood relations between the Jews and the non-Jews in Izmir will be told by the elders of those neighbourhoods, and we were able to capture the traces of these experiences and memories in this book.

As for Istanbul, let me proceed with a personal experience again. A second-degree cousin of my mother lived in Istanbul with her family. We were quite close. We used to pay counter visits. If I am not mistaken, my first departure from İzmir was for such an occasion. They lived in Bakırköy. They used to go the beach. But we didn't need to do so, because we were living near the sea and we would be swimming in the sea ten minutes after we got up. But, going to the beach was such a cool thing then. We saw that they experienced a lot of such different things. They were more urbanised than we were; at least we always had such an impression from the eyes of a child. In the world of adults, there was a contest between the cities. This contest was mostly about meals and Ladino. It was an unreasonable and unnecessary contest about which side was more authentic. I witnessed that Jews from different places continued these disputes even in Israel.

Actually, there is an opinion among the Jews of Izmir that the ones from Istanbul are higher in class and cultural terms. We should look at how class differences manifest in different cities. One example is about how the city imposes its course on traditions: In Istanbul, Jewish pastry burikitas are now sold in shopping malls! On the other hand, in an article about Kuledibi in the book, it is told that in the late 50s, just in spite of September 6-7, the community coming out of Neve Shalom on Jewish holidays in the neighbourhood marched in Büyük Hendek Street together with the Rabbi. They would walk to the Galata Tower and return to the synagogue: an image which is very difficult to imagine these days. In addition, it is told that stalls were set up on the streets to sell donuts and candies. I do not know if there was such visibility in İzmir...

Aylin Kuryel

**A**s Raschel have stated and as we have written in the beginning of the book, we are talking about numerous situations shaped by very different experiences but not a single situation when we say “being a Jew”: numerous situations depending on the cultural and political codes, memory formats, associations or disconnections of a place. We wanted to look at these situations through experiences that are not usually discussed in the official historiography, in the form of a dictionary that diversifies meanings, but not in the form of an official dictionary that fixes meanings. Experience is a form for both accessing and transmitting information, and it has the power to capture what is not included in historiography which follows wide paths in everyday life. Of course, this includes the distortions of the memory and the games it plays while carrying experiences to the present day. The strict, defined, framed, built-in, and fixed form of a dictionary contrary to the fluidity, permeability and openness of the term of experience... This looks like an oxymoron at first glance. But, there are actually things which this contradiction tells us.

For us, as people both inside and outside, it was important to collect these stories, gather the traces of social issues through personal experiences and bring them together from a more sociological and sometimes literary perspective rather than a nostalgic one.

In very general terms, there are Sephardic people who came to these lands during the Ottoman Empire more than 500 years ago, and -if we are to say as recited by the official history of both sides- who the Ottomans “embraced”, and these constitute the vast majority. There are Eastern European Jews, Ashkenazis, whose number is much less, with a different culture and language. Their cuisine and even the cemeteries are different. The Sephardians speak Spanish based Ladino, which was spoken in Spain 500 years ago, while Ashkenazis speak Yiddish of German origin. There are strong rumours that they do not like each other. And, of course, there are half Sephardic-half Ashkenazis in Turkey although their number is very small. An article in the book tells the story of a couple who could hardly get married due to the opposition of the families from both sides because they were Sephardic and Ashkenazi and who could not be buried in the same cemetery for the same reason when they died.

On the other hand, there are, for instance, Romaniotians who had been living on these lands, living on the Byzantine lands, long before the Jews were expelled from Spain... They were living here before the migration of the Sephardians and the Ashkenazis to the

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There are a Jewish girl and her mother who were rebuked for not knowing the name of the holiday at a festive dinner. While it is normal for young men, who are expected to bring a Jewish bride eventually, to date with non-Jewish girls until they get married, there are Jewish girls who are locked down at home for dating a non-Jewish man. The problem of how the repressed community forms pressure mechanisms is directly related to the answer of the question.

Ottoman and Eastern Europe, and their language was Greek. They speak Greek within the family when they want to share a secret in the presence of their children. After the Sephardic migration that started after 1492, they were largely assimilated. There are anecdotes that the Romaniotians who dined with a fork still despised the Sephardic who ate with a spoon. Meanwhile, the word *pironi* (fork) used by the Romaniotians was later started to be used by the Sephardians as well. There is a mutual interaction, in fact. However, in another article in the book it is explained that Romaniotians had difficulty in merging with the Sephardians who came from Spain because of their loyalty to the Byzantine Empire.

Of course, looking through these categories draws a very rough map. For example, a few articles about the Jews of Iskenderun in the book reveal a unique community organization on its own. In addition, in order to refine and diversify these lines, one should look at how these identities were shaped by social junctures such as “Citizen Speak Turkish”, the Thracian events, September 6-7, the Wealth Tax, the establishment of Israel, and waves of migration. Meanwhile, stereotypes, mechanisms of discrimination, and everyday fascism, which show tremendous consistency even though there are transformations should be taken into account. In this respect, we can understand why a young woman from a Jewish family rehearsed in front of the mirror for days to get rid of her Jewish accent, and why, like many others, she Turkified her name.

And of course there is the issue of being a minority within the minority; the codes that are adopted or imposed inside as well as outside the community... There is a Jewish girl and her mother who were rebuked for not knowing the name of the holiday at a festive dinner. While it is normal for young men, who are expected to bring a Jewish bride eventually, to date with non-Jewish girls until they get married, there are Jewish girls who are locked down at home for dating a non-Jewish man. The problem of how the repressed community forms pressure mechanisms is directly related to the answer of the question. That’s why we say it is not a constant identity, but a situation that is shaped in accordance with all these variables when the words “being a Jew” come together. Rather, we think it points to certain forms of memory, cultural codes, and states of association or disconnection.

There is also the issue of diaspora, a matter that further complicates the relationship between a minority and belonging. There’s the famous statement we are accustomed to hear from all minorities who had to leave Turkey: “X in Turkey, and we are Turks here.” The “Turkanoz” entry in the book, for instance, explains this: In the 50s, and 60s, even the foreign workers from Turkey hadn’t been to Europe, immigration and bi-locality hadn’t been so widely experienced yet, and the memories of September 6-7 were still fresh...There were Turkish Jews, “Turkanozis” who jumped onto ships with the money they hid into Isparta carpets and their shoes. Traveling by ferry was expensive. People ordered dried figs, blue beads, raw shredded wheat, Zeki Müren albums, and Ajda videos to people coming from Turkey. There were even people who wanted amulets from teachers. This article, written from the mouth of someone who stayed in Izmir after their relatives left, ends by saying “We never knew who is at home, who is in his country, and who is in in foreign lands”.

If we look at this issue from a more general perspective, what Stuart Hall says about racist representations comes is recalled. Hall mentions that stereotypes are never completely negative. Black

people, on the one hand, are “primitive, barbarian, animalistic, and low-minded,” while on the other hand “agile, athletic and enviable because of their sexual strength”. They are imprisoned in this contrasting duality with stereotypes. A similar discursive mechanism can be observed regarding immigrants today. While immigrants are lazy parasites as much as they can get, they are also those who come to “steal” our jobs. How can they steal things so tyrantly if they are so lazy? Clichés about the Jews also seem to have received their share from this stereotyping mechanism. They are never considered to be citizens; however, for instance, they are accused of not being loyal enough when they migrate.

As a result, we cannot think of anti-Semitism separately from other discrimination mechanisms, and racist discourses whose function is similar, although the content is different. The issue is reawakened whenever it is necessary to create the required dose of nationalism and national anxiety, to divert eyes from the government’s inconsistent policies, and to direct the anger of some of the people arising from other reasons. At increasing doses each time... The “strong Jewish lobby” provides the required discourse of victimization as well as strengthening the desired corrective role of “one minutism”. As such, anti-Semitism is no longer a discourse which sometimes appears and which is tried to be prevented with political correctness, but became a normal part of the political and everyday jargon.



**2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION**

**FIGHTING METHODS AGAINST  
ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE  
WORLD AND IN TURKEY**





## What does the Kreuzberg Initiative against Anti-Semitism (KIGA) do?

Aycan Demirel (KIGA)

I moved to Germany 30 years ago and I've been living in Berlin. I had studied engineering before I moved to Germany, and I studied history, political sciences and media studies in Germany. I've been working professionally in the field of education since 2000. First of all, I'd like to give information about what kind of a project KIGA ((Kreuzberger Initiative Gegen Antisemitismus- Kreuzberg Initiative Against Anti-Semitism) is. A public benefit, non-profit civil society organization with expertise in the field of education. It has such a story: After the September 11 attacks, anti-Semitism started to be discussed all over the world, terrorist attacks, suicide bombing attacks intensified in Israel, and the world started discussing anti-Semitism. This manifested itself in Berlin, in the neighborhood we lived in, and the anti-Semitic rhetoric started to be heard more frequently. In 2003, there were attacks on synagogues in Istanbul and people were killed. We started an initiative called the Migrant Initiative Against Anti-Semitism in Berlin with a group of immigrants following these discussions, a circle of friends, actually my homemates, and organized a solidarity activity with the Jews, specifically the Jews in Turkey, who were exposed to anti-Semitism in the world. This was the starting point of the story of KIGA and then we turned to the pedagogical field and started training activities. These activities have been continuing since 2004. We started from Berlin, we are working in other states of Germany and we have been working in the international arena in recent years. We have been continuing these activities in seven projects with 30 professional employees, at 5 different centers, with a team of multiple-identities from different academic disciplines. The current contexts of antisemitism constitutes the focus of the studies: projects intended for refugees, racism towards Muslims, Islamist radicalization, National Socialism and Holocaust education, and current Jewish life in Germany. These issues are the subjects we are focusing on and 95 percent of the financing of our work comes from public funds. People are curious about the answer of this question, so it is useful to answer it. Anti-Semitism starts here in many of them. There is such a prejudice that we face judgments as if our work is financed by the Jews or financed by the state of Israel.

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Although the propagandist aspect of this nationalist ideology is essentially racism against Muslims, it is important for Muslims and Jews to approach each other and to fight against anti-Semitism through this totally anti-Semitic ideology.

When we talk about anti-Semitism in Germany, we are primarily talking about secondary anti-Semitism, which is the part we see as the primary area among the areas that antisemitism expresses itself. What we call secondary anti-Semitism is indirect anti-Semitism. After the Nazis were overthrown, anti-Semitism ceased from being directly expressed in Germany in the post-1945 period, and it is still the case. Therefore, hatred towards the Jews manifests itself through indirect expression. An Israeli sociologist states as follows: “The Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz.” The ironic, sharp expression here is that as long as German nationalism and German identity exists, there will be a phenomenon like Auschwitz in front of establishing a positive connection with that identity. Therefore, secondary anti-Semitism can be expressed as anti-Semitism that resists the confrontation with the Holocaust, and it manifests itself in images such as the denial of the Holocaust, the banalization of the Holocaust, and that the Jews use the Holocaust for their own ambitions. In public opinion polls, such ideas can be encountered in the German society at a very serious level, sometimes up to 40-50 percent.

The second important area is Israel-connected antisemitism, which is a highly controversial issue: keeping the Jews responsible for the policies of Israel, matching the policies of Israel against Palestinians to what the Nazis did to the Jews, measuring the military-political policies according to different standards, and reacting against Israel aggressively while considering them normal when practiced by other countries...

Secondary anti-Semitism and Israel-connected anti-Semitism are two main areas of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism, which is expressed through the criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism, is not unique to Germany alone, but which we also encounter frequently in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and perhaps after 2000s, perhaps it is the field where anti-Semitism mainly manifests itself. What is being discussed in this context?

Is anti-Semitism in rise in Germany or not? Are the carriers of this anti-Semitism the Arabs, the Turks, the Muslims? These disputes are intensive. There are imported antisemitism debates; there are debates over the Syrian refugees that especially in the last few years after Germany had an intense immigration with the effect of the Syrian war, antisemitism was imported to Germany. The debate of where the Israeli criticism begins, where it ends and where it turns into anti-Semitism is still continuing. Also, what should be the place of other group-based hate ideologies in the fight against antisemitism? In other words, while struggling against antisemitism, for example, how should we discuss racism against Muslims?

What does KIGA do with respect to these issues? Firstly, we are carrying out pedagogical activities. If we look at our activities in the field of education, we are developing lesson plans, educational methods, and materials. We use the developed materials in seminars and workshops with students and the youngsters. Besides, youngsters are usually in the foreplan in discussions, and anti-Semitism among youngsters is discussed more. In fact, all sociological research shows that antisemitism is more intensely encountered during the middle age and afterwards as the age group progresses. Therefore, it is very important to work with teachers, it is important to work with other education specialists, education practitioners. We intensively started peer education, we educate the youth at university level, we offer them pedagogical

formation, conceptual-theoretical infrastructure and put them into education practices, they can go to schools, youth centers, mosques and perform these activities. We try to participate in books, brochures, articles, etc. academic and pedagogical activities. We organize conferences that combine theory and practice, we bring together sociological research, educational research and educational practice and exchange ideas. An important field of activity is educational trips.

Of course, pedagogy is not everything, the political and the public sphere is also very important. In this respect, we are also making efforts in this area to create sensitivity among the society and the actors. We organize meetings and panels with the actors of politics, media, academy, and civil society. We are doing an intense and proactive media work because the discourses in the public do not always develop at a level that will express the sensitivity they deserve, unfortunately, it is more common in the media that biases and templates are renewed. In this regard, proactive media activities are important. To give an example, we organized a media day with a media institution about anti-Semitism among Muslims. Approximately twenty journalists participated in this media day. There, we both presented academic background information, expressed the findings on anti-Semitism, and then we went to the places where the issue was discussed. For example, we went to schools together with the journalists, we sought answers to questions such as to what extent this problem was encountered at schools, and what experience teachers had at school. Then we took the journalists to our workshops with our own employees, then we went to a mosque which was sensitive and which engaged in this issue, and we went to another non-governmental organization and observed their work. Thus, we have provided a perspective that would provide a closer approach to the discourse in the media.

It is especially important for us to activate religious, conservative and Muslim circles. In recent years, it has been a very important field of work, because the debates on anti-Semitism in Germany are based on Islam, Muslims and anti-Semitism. This, in particular, leads to not seeing the extreme right and anti-Semitism that is at the center of the society. Although this point of view causes the majority of the German society to delay the problem although anti-Semitism exists in every political, cultural and religious fields. People think as follows: “This problem is not the problem of the Muslims, and the refugees. We actually faced with our own history, and we have good relations with Israel. The problem is actually the Muslims, refugees, the the Turks.”

It is important to work in this field. It is also important that in the studies conducted, we see that discrimination among Muslims is serious. There is not much research, but we have 15 years of experience, we have done thousands of seminars. Since we frequently encounter this phenomenon, we think it is important to make the actors in the Muslim community sensitive and to work with the them. The Muslim-Jewish dialogue is very important to form alliances. There is a terrible far-right danger that is developing in Europe, particularly in Germany. Almost one in four people in East Germany vote for the Nazi party. This is a dimension no one could think of five years ago. Although the propagandist aspect of this nationalist ideology is essentially racism against Muslims, it is important for Muslims and Jews to approach each other and to fight against anti-Semitism through this totally anti-Semitic ideology. We are also making special efforts in this direction.

What else are we doing? We are conducting network activities. We have a network called Kompas. We are conducting work on antisemitism throughout Germany together with Anna Frank Zentrum, KIGA and three other institutions. One of the actors commissioned by the Ministry is also KIGA. Particularly the training activities that is training the actors and the trainers are very important. Another actor who takes part in Kompas is working to strengthen the Jewish community. Anne Frank Zentrum approaches the subject mostly through history education, the Holocaust and the biography of Anne Frank. Another one of our partners ensures that anti-Semitic incidents are recorded throughout Germany. We have conducted a specialist exchange project called Commitment Without Borders between Turkey and Germany. This was a three-years-long project. It was a successful work for us, and it was the first long-term work of this kind. SEHAK, SEÇBİR from Bilgi University, Black Box Association took part in these activities. Our friends from Turkey have tried to understand our country, and we have tried to understand Turkey: How does it happen? Why doesn't it happen? What can happen? What can be done together?

Apart from that, we have created a network between the German-US non-governmental organizations. It is a project that has been going on for three years; we are taking actors from Germany to the USA. Our partner is USHMM (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). This is continuing on the axes of exchanging ideas and experience. It has been an activity which has improved, for instance, the Jewish-Muslim dialogue and alliance. Even today, our work is continuing, and we are bringing together non-governmental organizations from Germany and the USA.

This year we have started a work with European Network Against Antisemitism. This study is based on bringing together the actors working in the field of education and train each other and exchange experiences. SEHAK is also our partner in this work that is we are trying to include our partners in Turkey in the work we are doing in Europe, and Germany as much as we can. One reason for this is that many people like me have special ties with Turkey, or they have their origins in Turkey.

Apart from these, we give consultancy to schools and youth associations. We give consultancy in the political field. We can provide expertise to the Berlin government or at local level when problems arise. Both the federal parliament and the Berlin State Parliament have expert commissions on anti-Semitism, and we are also involved in those commissions.

Unfortunately, the Jewish life is described from a perspective that the Jews have always been abused and victims due to the Holocaust. The Jews are known only as the victims of the Holocaust because of the low number of Jews in the community. However, today there is a Jewish life of about 150 thousand re-emerging in Germany. We also worked in this field and organized an exhibition.

There is anti-Semitism at the center of KIGA, but we are not concerned only about it. The German society is constantly changing with immigration, and today more than 50 percent of the children born in German metropolises are children with immigrant background. The student profile is changing, students now have multiple identities, and instructors cannot keep up with this change. There is a resistance against migration, immigration and multiple identities. In fact, this is at the center of our pedagogical work.

## Sanal Yollarla Antisemitizm ile Mücadele: Avlaremoz

Betsi Penso (Avlaremoz)

**A** *vlaremoz* was founded by people whose views of life and political views were different, and even sometimes opposing deeply, and whose mere commonality was their stance against anti-Semitism in 2015. It defined itself basically as a little Jewish, non-Jewish, slightly Jewish, rather Jewish, and sometimes not-Jewish individuals who came together in their fret about anti-Semitism with a hope to contribute to the visibility of attitudes against anti-Semitism as well as the Jews and their history. It changed and evolved in time just like any other organizations. Today, *Avlaremoz* doesn't limit itself with only anti-Semitism, but defines itself as a multi-vocal news and thought platform which mainly challenges anti-Semitism and all sorts of discrimination, and which gives place to news and articles regarding the minorities in Turkey and Jews all around the world. I think this evolvement is essential and valuable; because, not a single group within the Jewish society collectively has ever spoken for and openly acted in solidarity with another minority. *Avlaremoz* is the first in this sense.

At this point, it is important to say that *Avlaremoz*, on one hand, started publication in order to reduce and abolish the reflex which the Turkish Jewish community has maintained for centuries. This culture, called *Kayadez* which means “not to speak, to keep silent”, makes itself evident among the Turkish Jews frequently. *Avlaremoz* was founded as a completely independent platform which could be followed by the general public and through which young Jews open to any sort of opinions could make themselves heard by a reserved community with problems such as being unable to speak about their misfortune, and call anti-Semitism “anti-Semitism”, as long as those opinions didn't incorporate hate speech. And it was named after a Judeo-Spanish word meaning “Let's speak”, due to the stand it takes against *Kayadez*.

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Let me explain briefly for who doesn't know and follow it. *Avlaremoz* is a website. It has been a media outlet which has been sharing at least one content a day almost every day since January 2016. All of the authors and editors are volunteers. *Avlaremoz* can be followed on Facebook and Twitter. Virtually nobody reaches the news from the website; but people reach us by clicking the links in our posts on social media. In this respect, social media renders us visible. *Avlaremoz* is also as real as any other virtual things; because, we are performing almost the whole life virtually today.

While completing the fourth year of our publication life, I should say that one of our objectives is compiling an archive. It means that we don't abstain from sharing contents from other news portals when we don't have time to make our news or comments or even when we are late to share some developments. Hence, it is possible to find anti-Semitic incidents in many parts of the world, primarily in Turkey, on the website.

Another objective of *Avlaremoz* is to teach anti-Semitism to the people around us and even the Jews among us. That's why we explain why a specific incident is anti-Semitic in our news reports in a didactic way; we document anti-Semitism and we present them as a response to people who claim there's no anti-Semitism in Turkey.

In the "Afedersin Antisemit" [Beg your pardon, Anti-Semite] column, it is possible to review current anti-Semitic incidents and compilations of tweets which you may not probably confront anywhere else. By the way, dear Serdar Korucu, who is presenting in the next panel, is analysing the anti-Semitic reactions of people he collected about current affairs. For instance, the anti-Semitic discourses about Black Friday or about the "Ben de Aleviyim" [I'm also Alevi] hashtag recently were compiled in this corner. What is interesting here is that people can create anti-Semitic content via incidents that have nothing to do with the Jews.

*Avlaremoz* also has an objective of increasing the visibility of the Jews. To this end, we share contents regarding the Jewish culture. We want to contribute to the recognition and the remembrance of historical events such as the Thrace Pogroms, and the Capital Tax as well as folkloric content such as Jewish recipes, and religious holiday stories. We observe that the younger generations don't know their recent history and that the middle-aged read and believe the history dictated by others. Thus, we are trying to give place to contents regarding the recent history frequently and we handle the same subjects repeatedly.

There's no doubt that the Holocaust is one of the first things that comes to mind hearing the word Jew. And we create a great deal of contents regarding the Holocaust. There's still too much news about the Holocaust. For instance, it is possible to see Christmas ornaments with a photo of Auschwitz Birkenau death camp sold on Amazon, or the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry fly an airplane with a swastika for showing off. We can identify the fact that anti-Semitism is frequently shaped through the Holocaust today. For example, swastikas can be drawn in the streets where Jews typically live in Istanbul; inscriptions such as "Forbidden to Jews and swine" are put on the walls with reference to the Holocaust; and praises of Hitler can easily be accessed on Twitter.

It is possible to follow specifically our culture and art activities under the heading *Avlaremoz* Ajanda [*Avlaremoz* Agenda]. Exhibitions, concerts, film previews, and talk shows organized by the Turkish Jewish Community or other organizations and book reviews are shared with our interested followers by this means. Among these activities are panels and conferences commemorating the Holocaust and regarding fight against anti-Semitism. I think this spread of information is quite important. Before *Avlaremoz*, such activities used to take place in the community newspaper after the activity ended with a comment like “took place successfully”; many people used to miss those activities due to the lack of prior announcement; and they would even be ignored most of the time if the activity wasn’t organized by the Turkish Jewish Community. For instance, I attended an anti-Semitism meeting about which I was informed in December, 2014 after I joined an e-mail list of the Hrant Dink Foundation. When I arrived at the meeting conducted at the Şişli Branch of DSIP, I realized that there weren’t any acquaintances except one of the speakers, Attorney Rita Ender, who I knew a little. I remember very well how much I grieved and lonely I felt when I first arrived at the meeting. Was I the only one in this huge Jewish community who was worried about anti-Semitism? While listening to dear Işıl Demirel and Serdar Korucu, who I didn’t know then but who are now close friends of mine, I was both happy because I wasn’t alone and sad because I didn’t come across with such people who fret about anti-Semitism like me. *Avlaremoz* was created by people who met that evening and who didn’t know each other before. When we share such activities today, our aim is to meet new friends who are willing to fight against anti-Semitism. Our door is always open to everybody.

In short, I think *Avlaremoz* is the only organization fighting against anti-Semitism in Turkey. We are mostly giving this fight in the virtual world. We are trying to make anti-Semitism and the Jews visible. We, as the founders of *Avlaremoz*, are scattered throughout the world and we need every one who can assist us for the sustainability of an active struggle.





**3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION**

**HATE CRIMES AND  
HATE SPEECH**



## Why bother with this now?

Serdar Korucu (Avlaremöz)

**T**he expression in the title is the most extensive reaction the “Afedersin Antisemit” [Beg your pardon, Anti-Semite] column drew; and the “source” by which we were inspired for this column, where we compiled hate speech.

It hasn’t changed since our start up, at all.

A friend of us, with the nick name Sinyora Öjeni, who was among the founders of the website, tried to explain the reason as follows:

It is my neighbour with whom I share the same street who wants the Jews in Turkey to be denaturalized and who wants the synagogues here to be closed down after the voting of the draft law regarding the Azan in Israel. It is my friend with whom I ran after lecture notes at university who wants to expel the Jews from here and “chop them into pieces”. It is one with whom I sit side by side on the same bus, and try to reach the bus-stop where I would hardly get off together in the never-ending traffic of the town who says “Wonderful! Blazing like a Jew!” upon the fires in Israel. My child goes to school with the child of the one who says “One of my biggest dreams in life is to kill a Jew” upon seeing the video of the first wedding ceremony in Edirne Synagogue many years after.

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**Anti-Semitism is just what it expresses,  
that is a fatal danger for the Jews.  
Not any less than that.**

I am the one who is known to be responsible for all the evil in this country.

I am the one whose religious and ethnic identity is “infidel”.

I am the one who is excusable, or even reasonable to be insulted.

I am the one to whom evil is attributed with an unconceivable frequency and intensity.

I don’t know who is saying these things but I’m afraid of the things that would happen if they know who and “what” I am.

Thus, the Afedersin Antisemit column is the key to understand how I feel while I'm living in this country. It is the code to my silence.

There is a reality that social media truly shows us. That is, anyone, for certain, may reveal hate speech here. Unfortunately, exemplary figures of the society are also among those. This reminds us the intellectual who lives an exemplary family life according to the norms of the Nazi Germany, listening to German classical music in their free time, reading lyrical poems involving, or being able to involve into crime just like any others, and of course Hannah Arendt's *A Report on the Banality of Evil*.

We know that, according to Arendt, the biggest evil is not radical, doesn't have roots, doesn't have any limits as it doesn't have any roots, can reach unbelievable extremities, and can invade the whole world. We've seen, are still seeing, and not to be pessimistic but will see that it can invade the whole world... In the new era, that there's a risk of social media to accelerate this invasion should also be taken into consideration, because the social media is capable of doing the most dangerous thing: Rapid dissemination of lies and propaganda.

However, the liar succumbs to the truth in normal conditions according to Arendt. Truth has no substitution; it can't reach the extent of actual reality even with the help of computers no matter how extended the lie of an experienced liar is. Although Hannah Arendt is right in the general sense, history has unfortunately shown and is still showing us that the phrase "Repeated lies become truths", which is often attributed to Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Nazi propaganda and known as the basic principle of propaganda is a reality now. Psychologists describe it as "the illusory truth" effect. And when the medium is the social media and the subject is the Jews, this illusion appears so powerful.

At this point, if we are to touch upon anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism mustn't be considered as "a rampant nationalism and agitations arising from xenophobia which bursts out of this". Anti-Semitism is just what it expresses, that is a fatal danger for the Jews. Not any less than that.

When we say anti-Semitism in the social media, the topic that we will confront is or will be Israel. When dealing with anti-Semitism, the claim that Israel agitates anti-Semitism in the world is frequently stressed. There is a need for bracketing here. What is true is that each operation, each misbehaviour, each crime of Israel makes anti-Semitism among societies more visible. What we don't have to forget here is that Israel is also a state and it commits, is able to commit crime like every state. However, the argument that Israel causes or strengthens anti-Semitism is discredited when we look back to the past; because, a very simple historical fact will remind us that Israel was founded in 1948. Yet, the roots of anti-Semitism go too deep.

It is more reasonable to think that there is a direct relation between each declination and instability of states and the strikes on the social positions of the Jews, and anti-Semitic escalations. For instance, the banks during the beginning of Hitler's era were not controlled by Jews (yet, it was the most frequent allegation). Moreover, the beginnings of the 20th century in the history of German Jews didn't point a bright period at all. On the other hand, Jews in France during the period of the Second Empire had wealth and prestige. However, the Dreyfus Affair was during the Third Republic when the French Jews

lost their important positions. That is, anti-Semitism doesn't have anything to do with the powerfulness or the powerlessness of the Jews. It is rather related to the power of states...

Another thing which we will confront frequently in the social media is "the Jewish world conspiracy". It is one of the most fertile fictions of the Nazi propaganda. The inventors of this fiction are not the Nazis. Exaggerated claims of Jewish rule of the world can be dated back to the end of the 18th century. However, the rise of the anti-Semitic propaganda as an epidemic with the crisis that states experienced in the end of the 19th century, specifically the intensification of it in Germany and Austria in the 1920s, made this claim a primary basis for the Nazis.

Anti-Semitism in the social media is not limited with these primary themes which come to mind in the first instance. Kant says, "Examples are the go-carts of judgement"... So, let's pass on to more recent examples:

For instance, messages with anti-Semitic content were posted after writing "Begone Alevi" and putting a cross on the wall of the house of an Alevi family in Gaziemir town of İzmir. Millidava8154 [Nationalcause8154] was saying, "Divide, split, and terminate, a Jewish plot. We are united, energetic, and insurgent. The hell is waiting for you, demons in human shape. #BegoneAlevi". Another account called Alpveeren [Heroandsaint] was using the hashtag and saying, "Which intelligence does that footman who says #BegoneAlevi work for! Alevi is Turkoman, the essential offspring of this country. We are Sunni Turks; that is, full brothers. Begone you footmen of the Jews." From this message, we can obviously see that brotherhood is perceived through blood in Turkey. According to Afşarbeyi1966 [Afhsarmaster1966], who wrote #BegoneAlevi "are the conscripted Sabataists with an Armenian, Roman, Jewish, Greece origin among us whose aim is to play us against each other". The user with the nick name Alisen1414 was expending his aim: "Who says Begone Alevi is either an Armenian or a Jewish Christian". Meanwhile, it is hard to know who he is talking about by saying Jewish Christian.

Another example was seen on Black Friday. As you know, Black Friday is a rare example of dumping days implemented all over the world in order to invigorate economy in all the countries. It is the first Friday after the Thanksgiving Day in the USA, but it has been accepted as the first day of the Christmas shopping season since 1952; that is to say, it doesn't have to do anything with the Jews. However, anti-Semitic contents don't need truths in any case.

In the meantime, a note should be made. Black Friday is already a delicate matter. In fact, the name of this day which started to be referred to as "Black" as a result of the events that occurred because of the shopping frenzy was translated in to Turkish as "Kara Cuma" until there was an unspoken agreement on the use of "Efsane Cuma" [Legendary Friday] due to the allegations of "disrespect for religious beliefs".

If I am to explain why I emphasized that it didn't have a relation with Jewishness, according to the user called Kadirli76: "This is a Jewish plot my bother. Black Friday. This is disgraceful. They are trying to defame our holy day; they are the grandchildren of Abu Jahl". The user called MrKowalskiizmir writes, "Don't give credit to the Jewish inventions called Black Friday. Don't enrich the Jews with this

disgraceful Zionist invention. The prices of the products you buy are the ordinary prices. Friday is blessed. #blessyourfriday Greetings for your Friday #BlackFridayDisgrace”.

All these are small examples. “Small fish” giving themselves out in on the social media. Again, as Hannah Arendt says, “The small fish are caught while the big fish continue their careers”. We was this was true both in Turkey and in the world...

We shouldn't forget that a Jewish historian, Joseph Wulf, who survived the camps and who wrote the first books documenting the Holocaust and the crimes of the Nazis committed suicide after leaving a letter to his son in 1974. Wulf in his letter said: “I have published 18 books about Third Reich and they have had no effect. There is a democratic regime in Bonn. Yet the mass murderers walk around free, live in their small houses, and grow flowers.”

Well, is there hope that this will change? Personally, I recommend leaving the answer to this question to ancient Greece. Wasn't hope among the deceptive evils in Pandora's Box?

## Two Political Traditions in Turkey

Roni Margulies

I'm a socialist; therefore I look at these matters through this perspective. I think it will be incomplete or even wrong to discuss hate speech at a merely humanitarian level by depoliticizing hate crimes. It can cause such results: An election was held in the UK on Thursday and the Labour Party led by the most leftist leader of the social democrat party in the UK up till today lost the election. There are two main reasons for its loosing: one is the debate around exiting or not exiting the European Union, which we aren't dealing with here. The second one is that Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party have been accused of anti-Semitism for two years. This person has been a member of the parliament for 30 years, and was a labour union activist before; he is a person who has stood upright about matters such as racism, anti-militarism, women rights, and etc. for 40 years. And another matter about which he has stood upright is the rights of the Palestinians; and this is why he is called an anti-Semite; that is he criticizes Israel. An anti-Zionist, therefore an anti-Semite! These accusations has come to such a level in the last two years that there was a deliberate campaign, and they lost the elections. Boris Johnson, who won the election, is a trueborn member of the British dominant class and thus an anti-Semite. He is too cautious to utter anti-Semitic words openly, but there is no doubt that he is an anti-Semite. While discussing anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and so on, a seriously anti-racist man lost the election and a racist acceded. This is completely related to politics; it doesn't have to anything with Jewishness; but that was the result. If we approach the matter in an apolitical manner, we get to really interesting points.

The same thing started in the USA. As you know, there's a presidential candidate, called Bernie Sanders, who claims that he is a socialist in a society like the USA. The same campaign has been started against him: "You criticize Israel, you defend the rights of Palestinians; so, you are an anti-Semite." It was successful in the UK, and they started doing the same thing in the USA.

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I talked about two political traditions; people in Turkey feel close to either one of these traditions.

And both of these traditions are racist and nationalist. When any one of these traditions narrates them, when everybody narrate them in school textbooks or faculty journals, in the street or at home, they become incredibly widespread.

When it comes to Turkey... For some time, may be because I can't grow up, my interest in railways-trains which I have since my childhood has been growing. I've been to Ankara recently, and I went past the bookshop of the Institute of Turkish History. When I went in, I saw book titled *Kurtuluş Savaşı Demiryolları* [Railways in the War of Independence], I bought it, and started reading. The first few chapters of the book say this: There are railways, there is the War of Independence, railways are of specific importance at war as you may guess, the railways in Turkey are not sufficient but still so important, however there's a serious problem for the cadres who are leading the War of Independence and are to establish the republic later. Most of the employees, virtually all of them, are non-Muslim. Greeks, Armenians and a small number of Jews. They discuss it in the parliament in Ankara for days and weeks. "What shall we do? These are unreliable elements. They are non-Muslim; they are not Turkish." Almost everybody expresses that "They should be cleaned; they can't be relied upon under war conditions." Some smart members of the parliament say, "The railways won't operate if we dismiss all of them." The discussion persists.

The book also includes the following information. There's a revolt against the Kemalist government in Konya. While the insurgents are approaching the train station, figures like the Greek chief telegraph operator and the head driver send a message to Ankara saying, "Beware! There's a revolt." Their names are known. I remember one was Leon Aslanyadis. Being informed, Ankara takes precautions and the revolt is suppressed. The person by whose virtue the revolt was suppressed is a Greek citizen; and he was dismissed, all of them were dismissed from their jobs soon, because of "being an unreliable element".

Some of you might know that non-Muslims not only from the railways but with a range of professions such as lawyers, pharmacists, doctors were dismissed in the same period. Some adverts appear in newspapers for student who want to enrol in military schools to study in Europe with government scholarship; it is again the same period, the 1920s; the Republic now has been established. The prerequisites in the adverts are "Being of Turkish descent" or "Being of the Turkish race".

There are two main political traditions in Turkey. One is the Kemalist tradition that we call laic; it usually becomes manifest in that, but the defining characteristic is not laicism, it is Turkish nationalism. The other tradition is the Islamist tradition. When we look at the history of the Republic, they are the Kemalist cadres who determine policies of the state regarding the minorities because the Islamist tradition has completely been suppressed by the Kemalist tradition. These examples I gave regarding the railways and the other professions clearly show that these cadres think about the population of this country. Non-Turks, non-Muslims, and non-Sunni are not eligible citizens of this country; it is not possible for them to be appointed to important positions; it is prevented. They state it openly in the early period; and as the awareness of the fact that it is something not necessary to be declared, it is not expressed openly; but it is blurted out at times. You know, non-Muslims are called "native foreigners" in some laws in the 1930s and 40s. That expression was used in the law text. This is the mentality of the Kemalist state.

The very basic mentality of the other tradition is as follows: I've checked it in Koran today, Surah Al-Ma'idah 51: "O you, who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends. They



are friends of one another.” Now, it is possible to and there are people who explain this in various ways; there are people who discuss what the word “friend” here means. It may be true that what is really meant might be “Do not take the Jews as friends, do not take the Christians as friends,” but that is not the point. The point is how this is perceived by the population of Turkey. Some of you might have noticed that there was an advertising campaign of the youth organization of Saadet Partisi [the Felicity Party] in Konya a few months ago. That surah was put on the billboards, bus stops, and such in Konya. People who read it surely don’t think that the Arabic version of it doesn’t actually mean that, but think that the Jews and the Christians are troublesome and they shouldn’t be made friends.

A few years ago, when I was a journalist, I came across an article of Ass. Prof. Dr. Süleyman Sayar in the journal of Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Theology. The title of that article which appeared in the journal of a faculty was: “The Jewish Character (A Historical and Socio-Political Approach)” I’m quoting:

The fact that the Jews have suffered, been despised and humiliated under foreign dominance has also been conditioned by their own rebellious, discordant, disruptive and intriguing character. They have always tried to demolish the states they have lived in by collaborating the enemy in the periods of Egyptian and Babylonian, Greek, Roman and even Islamic dominance, but they have always been unsuccessful. They were exiled from Hedjaz due to their intrigues and hostilities in their previous habits even during the tolerant administration of Islam.

According to our research, with regard to Koranic terminology, the deterministic concepts of the Jewish character can be listed as follows:

1. Denial (“kufr”),
2. Worshipping to anything besides God (“shirk”),
3. Accusing and lying (“tekzib” and “kezib”),
4. Arrogance (“istikbar”),
5. Murder (“katl”),
6. Apostasy (“tawelli” and “irad”),
7. Derogation and cowardice (“zyllet” and “meskenet”),
8. Treachery and hypocrisy (“hiyanet” and “nifak”),
9. Disruptiveness (“fesad”),
10. Unfairness (“zulum”),
11. Sedition and disobedience (“isyan,” “itida,” “tuwyan,” “israf,” “dalalet,” “heva”),

12. Dispute and controversy (“ihtilaf,” and “muhadje”),
13. Envy (“hased”),
14. Hard-heartedness (“kasved”),
15. Greediness (“hyrs”)
16. Ignorance and stupidity (“djahl” and “sefeh”),
17. Manipulation (“tebdil” and “tahrif”),
18. Dissembling (“ketm”),
19. Wrath and curse (“ghezb” and “lanet”),

Isn't it possible to consider the character described with these concepts as the Jewish national character? For us, it is necessary to answer this question positively.

There are some characteristic features that have been emphasized in the description of the Jewish character. These features can be listed as:

The Jews are discreet, they don't confide. They are cunning and fraud. They are sedulous and patient. They are noisy, blatant and flurried. They try to remain anonymous, and behave sneakily. They are prone to their interest, profit and material goods. They like idleness and mobility. Thus, they are called the “Idle Jews.” They are faithful to their religion and their rabbis. Their word is like a law. They are faithful to their national ideals. Even though they don't seem to be, they are vindictive and vengeful. This has been their most important power throughout the history. They are prudent, and mean. They consider hypocrisy and lying to others (non-Jews) natural. Their moral principles are national, and valid among themselves. They have created different principles against others. Jews are Jewish racists...

This is an article that appeared in the journal of a faculty! I don't think anti-Semitism stems from Islam; the anti-Semitism of the state stems from Kemalism. The anti-Semitism of the people stems from unconscious and inconsiderate Islamism.

People in Turkey believe in these so deeply... I talked about two political traditions; people in Turkey feel close to either one of these traditions. And both of these traditions are racist and nationalist. When any one of these traditions narrates them, when everybody narrate them in school textbooks or faculty journals, in the street or at home, they become incredibly widespread. I think the way to fight against it is political. There must be a fight against state policies. For instance, it is important to fight against individual anti-Semites, anti-immigrants, anti-Mexicans, but what is more important is fighting against Trump. I think it is also true for Turkey. I think such efforts should be more political efforts targeting the state directly.

## Monitoring discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and belief

Alara Sert (SEHAK)

**A**lthough the title of this panel is “Hate Crimes and Hate Speech”, the work of the Monitoring Association for Equal Rights, which I represent, intersects with this issue from a different perspective. For this reason, I will particularly talk about our work regarding the monitoring of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion and belief.

Monitoring Association for Equal Rights has been conducting advocacy, assistance and campaigning activities to ensure everyone in Turkey have full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms equally since 2010. Although I’m going to talk about discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, belief today, we have also been working on issues such as the right to vote and to be voted, the accessibility of justice for the disabled, the right to peaceful meetings and demonstrations, and the empowerment of human rights defenders. In all of these fields and activities, we look at whether disadvantaged groups can enjoy their rights equally and fully from an intersectional perspective. In addition, we conduct our work in coordination and cooperation with local NGOs.

First of all, I would like to mention the framework regarding the rights in which we conduct monitoring activities.

### **Race, Ethnicity, Religion and Belief Discrimination**

Whether individuals belonging to different races, ethnicities, religions or belief groups can effectively benefit from their rights guaranteed in accordance with international standards fully and equally and

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First of all, discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion and belief is not independent of the political atmosphere of each monitoring period and the reflection of this atmosphere in the public sphere. The most important example that can be given to this situation is the discriminatory language used in the campaigns during elections. Secondly, the national legislation does not meet the obligations of Turkey arising from international agreements to which it is a party.

whether they can enjoy these rights effectively constitutes the basis of our monitoring activities. Another point is whether an effective investigation obligation is fulfilled after discrimination or violations of rights and that discriminatory motives should be taken into consideration in judicial and administrative investigations.

### **Rights of the Disabled**

It can be argued that our monitoring framework for the rights of the disabled is similar to race, ethnicity, religion or belief groups in terms of securing rights and their effective use. On the other hand, another point we focus on is the barriers confronted by people who are subject to discrimination on this basis or multiple discrimination. Access to justice in terms of international standards is associated with the principles of equality before the law, fair trial and effective dective principles; thus, access to justice should be strengthened and structural barriers should be eliminated for the prevention of discrimination and violations of rights.

### **Right to Holding Meetings and Demonstrations**

We have been monitoring the right to hold meetings and demonstrations in Turkey since 2015. This right holds a special place in democratic societies as it is a tool for both claiming rights and participation. It can be claimed that an increasing decline has been observed in using the right to meetings and demonstrations particularly since 2015. Basically, reasons such as the incompatibility of legal regulations with international standards, broad authority granted to the administration, lack of regulations preventing the arbitrary use of this authority, gradual increase in the use of disproportionate force and the impunity of such as a result of the lack of investigation contribute to this decline. The fact that rights cannot be used in certain places and by certain groups also supports the emergence of discriminatory implementations in practice.

### **Right to Vote**

As the coordinator NGO of the Independent Election Monitoring Platform, we have monitored and reported all elections conducted in Turkey since 2011 with Human Rights Association (IHD) and volunteers. In our election monitoring activities, we base our work on democratic and fair election principles in accordance with international standards and universal, equal and secret voting. In this context, we monitored and reported not only the Election Day but also the formation processes of the voter registers, candidate registers, campaigning processes, voter education and awareness activities, Election Day and post-election appeal processes.

In the pre-election period, there is a discriminatory attitude with regard to the constitution of voter registers. Here, discrimination is basically prominent in terms of prisoners, guardians, homeless persons and women living in shelters; and in terms of intersectional discrimination. Stemming from the address-based system, the right to vote is violated with regard to homeless persons and women in shelters. In addition, prisoners and people with appointed executors, particularly the mentally handicapped, are

deprived of the right to vote. Part of the pre-election arrangements is the analysis of Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) decisions. Two prominent issues here are that the SEC decisions are not consistent or they create a double standard in terms of the electoral law, and more specifically, some of the decisions constitute infringement or discrimination.

As I mentioned on the Election Day, although the Supreme Electoral Council refused to accredit non-governmental organizations for electoral monitoring, the objective was to make independent observations by creating observation committees. Observers collect data about the accessibility of the centres, the equal functioning of the voting process and fairness, transparency and democratic nature of the process by making observations at the voting centres throughout the day. Moreover, the vote counting process is followed at the end of the day. After the election, objections and complaints regarding the elections and their results are evaluated.

While carrying out this work, I would also like to point out that we paid attention to the confirmation of whether the right to vote could be freely used by disadvantaged groups - people with disabilities, illiterate voters, non-Turkish-speaking voters, women in shelters, LGBTI +, seasonal workers, and ethnic groups.

### **Methodology**

We use several tools in our monitoring activities, particularly while collecting data. Prioritizing the intersectionality and gender equality is both an important point in all our work, and something to be remarked and developed with regard to the monitoring activities in general in the world and in Turkey as the place where we are conducting our work.

### **Individual Application**

As an association, we accept applications from individuals who particularly suffer from violations of rights. In general, it is a prominent issue that the awareness or informative activities of the responsible institutions are not sufficient or inclusive. For this reason, it is important for people who encountered violations of rights to access non-governmental organizations.

For example, before the June 7 Elections, two illiterate female applicants who didn't know Turkish applied to ESHID for the voter information spots of the SEC to be translated into Kurdish. Legal support was provided to the applicants, and they were assisted in applying to the SEC. The association made an application to the KDK and TIHEK in the name of the two applicants regarding the violation of their rights within this scope. After the elections, TIHEK announced a decision stating that this implementation was a violation of the right to vote. Following the application, SEC, in its decision no. 1040, dated 27.05.2015, decided that "*the voting process should be explained by an interpreter at the ballot box*" on the demand of non-Turkish-speaking voters for there was not a training. This decision is important not only for illiterate and non-Turkish-speaking people, but also for hearing-impaired voters. Nevertheless, the decision did not take place on the website of SEC or it was not

disseminated. Thus, voters could not benefit from this right in the subsequent elections. During the electoral observation, it was also observed that political parties did not inform the observers about this decision. According to TURKSTAT data, this implementation leads to the inability of women voters to exercise their right to vote effectively, since women constitute the majority of illiterate voters.

### **Right to Information**

We have been using the information applications made to public institutions and organizations for a long time as part of our monitoring studies within the scope of the right to information. Our experience is that although it is an obligation of the authorities to answer in accordance with the law, the applications are left unanswered frequently, and the incoming answers are inconsistent, ambiguous or occasionally unrelated to the question. In addition, we see that the answers given to applications to obtain information have been increasingly ambiguous or the information they contain has decreased. Even in cases of applications for obtaining information that does not require detailed investigation, they are frequently rejected asserting they require “*information or document that can be created as a result of a separate or special study, research, examination or analysis*” according to Article 7 of the Right to Information Act.

### **Media Monitoring**

Another tool is media monitoring; we collect data by monitoring the news on the internet media at local and national level. We pay attention to verifying the data we obtain from the media, later from other sources as much as possible. The collected data is parsed according to fields of rights and analysed accordingly.

Particularly after the transformation in the mainstream and printed press in the recent period, it is more difficult to reach neutral news and there are no news regarding certain violations of rights in this media, so we started using internet journalism for our analysis. It can be said that factors such as the closure of media organizations or their becoming political tools, the increase in the number of access-blocking decisions, censorship and self-censorship also caused a decrease in the number of discrimination cases reflected in the media. Generally, relatively “bigger” cases are reflected in the media. In the presentation of these cases to the public, the use of discriminatory language and even hate speech is frequently encountered.

### **Case Monitoring**

Case monitoring is an important tool to gather information about the place of discrimination in judicial practice. We conduct our litigation activities mainly through a methodology based on the fair trial principles of Solicitors International Human Rights Group. On the other hand, we also apply for involvement in different cases as many CSOs do. The involvement of CSOs is very important both for securing fair trial standards and preventing impunity. However, the demands of CSOs are usually rejected on the grounds of “not suffering direct harm from the crime”.

Like in many other fields, we see that the prohibition of discrimination has not been enforced or it is even ignored in the judicial processes; and the cases of discrimination often result in impunity. It is also difficult to talk about the existence or effective functioning of legal, administrative, political and social mechanisms to prevent discrimination. For instance, attitudes such as disregarding and ignoring throughout the whole process are quite common although discrimination or hate motive is an aggravating circumstance in crimes of intentional injury.

What is important here is that the examination of factors such as the attitude of the investigating authorities in cases involving or alleged for involving discrimination, the subsequent indictments of the prosecutors, the attitudes of the courts in filed cases, punishments imposed, the effects of the identities of the defendants on the processes and how equal they are before the law as a whole can demonstrate the overall picture regarding discrimination.

An example of the lawsuits we have monitored involving discrimination is the murder of Kadir Sakçı in Sakarya. The lawsuit of a murdered father and injured son for speaking Kurdish was held on December 6, 2019, and the accused was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for deliberate murder and 1 year and 6 months for possessing a weapon. An accessory who transferred Hikmet Usta, the accused, to Bursa was sentenced to 5 months imprisonment. There was not a discussion regarding the discrimination or hate motivation by the court during the lawsuit. To the contrary, immediately after the incident took place, the Governor of Sakarya made a statement that “the incident was not ethnically motivated.” The racist motive must be taken into account and be effective in the sentence imposed, otherwise there will be no difference between crimes committed with hate motive and others.

Previously, in 2010, we followed the case against the racist attack and lynching attempt against Romans in Selendi district of Manisa. The investigation was started by the police exactly 22 days after the incident and the trial ended in 2015. 38 of the total 80 indictees were sentenced to imprisonment between 8 months and 45 years for “inciting people to hatred and hostility” and “damaging property” as per Turkish Criminal Code Article 216. Although it is an important decision because of the implementation of Article 216, hate motive was not been taken into account with regard to damaging property. Nevertheless, involvement of CSOs, the presentation of a report prepared by the Roman Rights Association, and the monitoring of the case by many different groups including CSOs from the beginning to the end were important.

### **Data/Statistics**

Some of the data we use come from official statistics which are mostly published annually. Disaggregated data collection and the dissemination of these data to the public is an obligation according to many UN Conventions to which Turkey is a party. However, collecting data alone is not enough, and it is also necessary to collect disaggregated data and to evaluate the implementation of the relevant obligations. It is necessary to have “meaningful consultation” with the relevant stakeholders and non-governmental organizations in the process of designing the data collection method. Besides, this process should be implemented in accordance with the principle of protection of personal data.

However, there is a decrease in the amount of the detailed information provided in the statistics published in recent years. Even though there is statistical information about the general picture, it is observed that the details are not included. An example of this is that the data regarding the asylum seekers in Turkey is provided only according to sexual categorisation. Although keeping data on the number of women and men in total is important, it is not sufficient; it is necessary to keep other meaningful types of data for the use of both public institutions and the civil society, and to conduct target oriented policies or work. This issue is particularly important for identifying people at risk of multiple discriminations and also for taking necessary measures.

In this sense, lack of statistics of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion or belief makes the monitoring of fight against anti-discrimination and monitoring activities in Turkey more difficult. As a result, CSOs have to carry out their activities particularly through studies on individual cases.

### **Field Research**

Field research is also a method we prefer at certain points in order to measure the general perception of the target audience regarding a particular problem. In recent years, we have conducted two field researches: Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities and Discrimination Perception. The target group we chose were the “organized” disabled people and members of disadvantaged groups (i.e. people who are part of any civil society or civil society). We thought that it is important to consult the target group in this way in order to identify the obstacles faced by people with disabilities in accessing justice, to offer a solution in this direction or to work target-oriented. It is not possible to reach the entire target group, but among our objectives were both filling in the lack of studies in this subject and to make a kick off for future studies.

### **National/International Mechanisms**

Recently, as a result of both practical implementations and changes in the law, CSOs are less likely to influence decision-making mechanisms. Thus, the use of international mechanisms becomes more important, especially in terms of advocacy activities. The methods we use within the scope of our monitoring activities mentioned above and the subsequent reporting activities are very important especially for international mechanisms to get first-hand information from the local.

We try to be involved in the processes of contract-based mechanisms, such as the United Nations Committees in a broader framework beyond shadow report management. Conducting advocacy activities in Geneva brings financial problems which is important for all NGOs. However, it is also possible to participate in the reporting cycle, which takes place every 4 years, by preparing a list of questions and shadow reports, and following up on the final observation reports. Recently, the Association for Monitoring Equal Rights has taken an active role in the reporting cycles of both the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). We saw that some of the points on the list of questions we submitted to the Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities were included in the Committee’s question



list in March 2019, and the important points we included in our shadow report were included both during the dialogue with the State Party and in the Final Observation Report.

Apart from participating in the processes of contract-based mechanisms before the UN, it is very important to use the opportunity to provide opinions to the media with higher impact such as calls by relevant departments or commissions to request comments or information notes from relevant stakeholders for reports to be prepared by themselves from time to time, or state reports by non-UN agencies, for example, the one on discrimination by European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance or Progress Reports prepared by the European Commission or non-governmental organizations or stakeholders working in this field.

Although we actively use national mechanisms as well, it is difficult to say that they work effectively in protecting human rights and preventing violations of rights especially with regard to discrimination. TIHEK and KDK are two institutions that both stand out as part of our monitoring activities and we applied to. The fact that they are not compatible with the Paris Principles, and that they are not structurally or functionally independent, is one of the main reasons why these two institutions are not effective tools to combat discrimination. Although TIHEK is able to officially investigate discrimination and accept individual applications, it is an important factor that both its powers and scope are very limited, and the decisions they make are not binding.

We also apply to the SEC within the scope of our electoral work. For example, the SEC decision nr. 1040, which I have just mentioned, arising from the fact that voter training is only in Turkish, did not take place in circulars 138 and 138 / II published for the March 31, 2019 local elections. Therefore, ESHID applied to the SEC once more requesting that this acquisition be added to the circulars on January 22, 2019. However, in the reply received 2 days later, it was conveyed to us that voting would be performed in accordance with the law and circulars, and therefore the request for providing an interpreter was rejected. Aside from the absence of a justification in this decision, the decision is against both the right to vote under the Constitution and the laws governing the powers of the SEC, and finally the international human rights conventions.

### **Difficulties**

It is possible to say that the biggest difficulty about the work of CSOs which are engaged in monitoring activities and the whole civil society in general is that the government does not work transparently. Apart from this, we can handle the other difficulties we encounter within the scope of our work under two headings:

In terms of people facing violations of rights, the first difficulty is that people behave timidly due to secondary victimization and low levels of awareness regarding rights-seeking mechanisms. The other one is that CSOs do not have the knowledge of the way to follow regarding the applicants who reach them. Another subject that should be discussed is how the work conducted by CSOs in this field can be transformed into a meaningful whole.

### **In lieu of conclusion**

To sum up, our monitoring activities regarding race, ethnicity, religion and belief discrimination aim to systematically monitor and report the discrimination faced by the members of such groups together with non-governmental organizations working in this field. Here, we are working to make discrimination visible, more importantly, to develop an intersectional perspective against discrimination, to raise awareness at the social level, for all the relevant institutions to fulfil their obligations and to prevent impunity.

Primarily the lack of the collection of systematic data by the related institutions leads monitoring activities to be limited with prominent cases and accessible data. In spite of this, it is possible to arrive at three main conclusions as a result of our monitoring activities:

First of all, discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion and belief is not independent of the political atmosphere of each monitoring period and the reflection of this atmosphere in the public sphere. The most important example that can be given to this situation is the discriminatory language used in the campaigns during electoral processes. Secondly, the national legislation does not meet the obligations of Turkey arising from international agreements to which it is a party. Here, some outstanding practices are specifically the reservations put on the articles about ethnic and religious minorities in the UN Conventions, the non-execution of the judgements of the ECHR, and ignoring the recommended changes for the elimination of violations.

Finally, those who are subject to discrimination cannot get satisfactory results in the compensation of violations of rights. Even if there are positive steps taken by relevant institutions, it is possible to see that most of them cannot reach their goals at the implementation stage, and the lack of intersectional perspective appears to be an important factor here.

**1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**

**THE HOLOCAUST STUDIES AND  
EDUCATION IN THE WORLD  
AND IN TURKEY**



## Rethinking the Holocaust education in Turkey: Sample lesson practices for educators

Belin Benezra Yensarfati

**T**he title of my presentation today is rethinking the Holocaust education in Turkey. I had two main aims when I said rethinking here. One is to review the previous work that been conducted before the sample lesson materials for educators which we have created as a team and which I will talk in the following sections of my presentations and to touch upon the intensification of Turkey's political, academic agenda on the Holocaust. My second aims is to make new assessment of the sample lesson materials which are now available for educators who determine individuals living in Turkey, who have grown up in this culture and at our time as the target group.

First of all, it would be a good idea to mention where this curiosity about the Holocaust in Turkey comes from or what the factors prepares this environment. It is possible to talk about the existence of a new environment in the academia and the civil society in Turkey with the start of questioning particularly the official historiography in Turkey with the second millennium, the increase in the work for facing the history, and besides the arising interest in subjects such as oral history, memory, and recollections. Accordingly, we have seen the questioning of former experiences in Turkey, the introduction of research on evident or obscure subjects and the reflection of these on pages of newspapers, projects of non-governmental organizations, and theses and papers in the academy. These years, during which I think the political environment was also important, was a period of harmonization during which many adaptations were made specifically in accordance with the opening processes and Turkey's desire to European Union full membership.

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Making an assessment on the reflections of what happened in the heart of Europe on Turkey between the years 1933 and 1945 is a unique opportunity for Turkey to face with its own history, and to embrace all the positive and negative events.

After this introduction, it is necessary to touch upon the existence of an organization which we cannot pass without mentioning in the international community. IHRA, the International Holocaust

Remembrance Alliance. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which was founded in 2000 by bringing many governments and many international elements together with the Holocaust Declaration of the International Stockholm Forum, is an international organization dedicated entirely to the memory of the Holocaust. Among the aims of the organization, which currently has 34 member countries, is work done regarding issues such as commemorating the Holocaust and telling it to the future generations, expanding Holocaust education, combating anti-Semitism, coping with denial policies, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. In the observer status since 2008, Turkey is expected to fulfil certain responsibilities to finalize the process with full membership. I can list them roughly as follows: before the State, organization of the Holocaust (Shoa) Memorial Day, opening of the archives of the period and the inclusion of the Holocaust in the official educational curriculum. As a matter of fact, memorial days are organized with the participation of the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recent years. While the first one was organized by the Chief Rabbinate Holocaust Commission in 2000, the commemoration in 2015 was held at Bilkent University for the first time in Ankara with the participation of outstanding names.

These two situations I have listed here, the first one being the confrontation with the history and the other one being the accession process in IHRA, increased the interest in the Holocaust in Turkey. So, let's take a look at what has been done up to now, in what sort of platforms the issue has been discussed or how things have been conducted.

First of all, it is useful to start with absence rather than presence. In Turkey, absence of the departments of Holocaust Studies or Jewish Studies, which are present in many countries institutionally, makes it difficult with regard to conducting scientific or ethical studies while working on such issues. In addition, while preparing educational materials, we encounter the lack of such resources especially in university libraries. For this reason, we have included the enrichment of the Library of Istanbul Bilgi University regarding this subject.

Apart from this, especially the lack of materials that can be used as references written in Turkish or translated into Turkish draws attention. After the 80s and the 90s, while an endless bibliography was specifically being created on the Holocaust, studies and books published in Turkey are very few except for the ones regarding Holocaust denial.

And, we have to stop here and make a distinction. The distinction between the geographies where the genocide happened physically and the geographies where it never happened at all or where it was felt is a factor in determining the number of the literature created in the language of that geography.

It is possible to find another story of absence or deficiency in this subject in the content of *Modern Turkish and World History Textbooks* taught in secondary education. When we look at the relevant pages of the book, World War II, Hitler, Nazism, and Party are mentioned. And there is a mention of the Holocaust in about two pages of under the heading "Human rights violations during World War II"<sup>1</sup>. Crystal Night, Nuremberg Laws, Ghetto, concentration camps, genocide, the Holocaust,

1 Alemdar, Emrullah and Keleş, Savaş. Çağdaş Türk ve Dünya Tarihi Ders Kitabı. Devlet Kitapları, 2019.

death camps, Auschwitz, Einsatzgruppen (aynatzgurupen) - death troops, and Nuremberg Courts are mentioned. According to the book, the Holocaust is the name given to the Jewish massacre carried out by Nazi Germany systematically before and during World War II.

Well, when we look at who can take this course; it is taught electively in the twelfth grades, in some cases in the eleventh grades, according to the latest situation renewed in 2018. It is taught as a 2- or 4-hour elective course according to the type of high school (Sports High Schools, Imam and Preacher High Schools, Anatolian High Schools, Science High Schools, Social Science High Schools, etc.), and the teaching staff of the school. When we look at the objectives of the curriculum, in case of a 4-hour elective course, while we see the sentence “*Human rights violations in Asia and Europe are touched.*” without the mentioning the name Holocaust, even this sentence does not exist among the objectives of the course when it is 2-hour elective. In addition to this teaching work left to the initiative of the teacher, another dimension that I would consider beneficial to repeat is that the background texts and Turkish language materials prepared with interactive methods that teachers can use in this regard are almost non-existent.

It will be useful to make a small note here. The Holocaust education is part of the education of the Ulus Private Jewish Schools, whose students are all Jewish. I guess who your target group is while teaching the Holocaust is one of the most important issues. It is important to keep in mind that the target group at this school has heard about this subject somehow in the socialization processes, and that there is an informational fatigue about the Holocaust among this group. Therefore, it is impossible for these mass-produced or transferred trainings to work correctly on other groups.

After mentioning the scarcity of resources, the situation in the academia, and the status of educational books in schools, it is necessary to talk about the projects, conferences, exhibitions and works carried out especially through civil society organizations.

The Aladdin Project, which I will talk about first, is a civil society organization founded in 2009 under the auspices of UNESCO in France. As expressed on their website their “*goal is to promote greater mutual knowledge among peoples of different cultures and religions, particularly Jews and Muslims, in order to bring about changes in attitudes and perceptions and develop a culture of peace and tolerance.*”<sup>2</sup> The website contains some very limited information in Turkish, specific to the Holocaust. In the scope of this project, the Auschwitz Concentration Camp was visited in 2011. Again The Shoah Documentary by Claude Lanzmann was screened at the Beyoğlu Cinema at the Istanbul Film Festival in 2011, and Lanzmann gave a speech at the festival. In 2012, the rights of the 9-hour documentary were taken and it was broadcasted with Turkish subtitles in TRT for a few days. In 2012, a conference on the “*Contribution of Jewish Scientists to Turkish Universities*” was held at Boğaziçi University. In 2013, a conference was held at Galatasaray University under the title of Holocaust Education and it was aimed to establish some educational groups. Finally, in 2014, a group of 15 academics visited the Yad Vashem Museum in Israel and an online lecture was prepared. It hasn’t been that possible to follow the Turkey leg of the project since 2014.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.projetaladin.org/tr/aladdin-projesi.html>

British citizen James McMillan in this team, working in Enka Adapazarı Schools<sup>3</sup>, took an individual initiative and conducted a project that lasted for about a year in 2014 in which a group of 12 people consisting of ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students participated. In the project they attended after school hours, students learned the Jewish life in Europe before World War II, the events on the road to the Holocaust and the genocide. Organizing a visit to Krakow and Auschwitz in June, the group presented what they learned for a year to other students both at their own schools and at Enka Schools in Istanbul. This was probably the only example apart from Jewish schools that embodied the Holocaust education and even appeared in newspapers.

Apart from this, the exhibition titled “Never Again, Confronting with the Past and Apologies”<sup>4</sup>, which was a joint project of Open Society Foundation and Anadolu Kültür in 2013 and which filled the lack of resources in another way, was held in Depo. The exhibition comprised a section called “Germany.” It remained as a valuable study available online, and we even referenced it in one of our lessons.

Other important works were activities and conferences organized in cooperation with the American Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and Amsterdam Anne Frank House, who are among the developers of the course, between 2012 and 2016 by people including the ones who developed the lessons and Pinar Dost, who worked on the subject for a long time. Institutions such as Istanbul Bilgi University Jewish Communities Studies Unit (YATOÇ), Bilkent University, USA Ankara Embassy, UNESCO, and Anadolu Kültür supported these projects. In these projects, the first drafts of the lessons Pinar Dost prepared for the book were formed.<sup>5 6 7</sup>

Apart from these, there are a few lessons on the Holocaust in the “*Guide for Preventing Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust Education*” which is an output of the work *Commitment without Borders*<sup>8</sup> in which Karakutu, Community Volunteers Foundation and Kiga worked together in 2017, which we references in the introduction part of the book with Kenan Çayır. It is a work with precious activities and lessons whose target group consists of non-students in Turkey.

When we look at all these outputs and projects, we see that we still do not have a concrete production such as a book or a whole set of resources that teachers can easily access. Therefore, while carrying out this work as a team, we tried to show our utmost due diligence and thoroughness knowing our

3 [http://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/haber-92498-adapazarinda\\_holokost\\_\\_projesi\\_.html](http://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/haber-92498-adapazarinda_holokost__projesi_.html)

4 <http://www.birdahaasla.org/>

5 2016 Ankara and İstanbul, “Learning from the Holocaust and Other Genocides” – UNESCO, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, US Embassy Ankara, Anadolu Kültür, YATOÇ.

6 2013 Ankara, 2014 İzmir, 2014 Diyarbakır, “Educator at the Teacher Training Seminar on Human Rights & the Holocaust” Anne Frank House, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Sosyal Değişim Derneği.

7 2012 İstanbul, “Teacher Training Seminar on Human Rights and the Holocaust” İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, Anne Frank House, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

8 “Antisemitizmi Önleme ve Holokost Eğitimi Kılavuzu” Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı, Karakutu ve KIGA (Politische Bildung Fur Die Migrationsgesellschaft) [http://www.kiga-berlin.org/uploads/170622\\_KlGA\\_Publikation\\_CwB\\_tr\\_Screen.pdf](http://www.kiga-berlin.org/uploads/170622_KlGA_Publikation_CwB_tr_Screen.pdf)



responsibility of filling a gap in Turkey. Being aware of the fact that it was not possible to adapt the lessons created in other countries to the Turkish setting or transferring them as they were, we acted accordingly knowing that there was a need for authentic lessons. For this purpose, as a team of educators, teachers, historians and academics, we worked for two years and made various readings and watched documentaries. We met with Anne Frank House trainers in Amsterdam and shared experiences with experts. At the end of all these, we created 9 lessons. We tried the lessons in sessions with teachers from different branches and civil society professionals and received their feedback. Apart from that, as you will listen at the experience sharing workshop in the afternoon, we shared these lessons with trainers from different branches in five different cities.

A widely controversial issue discussed by Barry van Driel, who is also a member of the advising committee of this project, in one of his articles<sup>9</sup> over his field, social psychology, is whether the trainings should be designed about the Holocaust or through the Holocaust. While different institutions working in this field are in different positions, we took care to keep these two approaches together.

We primarily started creating the lesson modules by agreeing as a team on what benefits learning through the Holocaust would provide, what our objective was, and what we considered important. To share some of these with you, they are: to realize discriminatory language, to recognize racist policies, to see what fragile democracies can lead to, to empathize with different groups, to accept that human rights issue is valid for every group and every period, the importance of critical thinking, the results of prejudice and essentialism, the awareness of protecting democratic values and basic rights and freedoms under any conditions, to realize that we have responsibility and ability to act at all levels of such situations as individuals, to face the history and to take responsibility, to witness events in different geographies and to empathize with them, to be aware of the importance of the rule of law and justice.

Keeping all these values in mind and based on some mechanisms; we have prepared multi-layered, versatile lessons where micro and macro views are combined. In addition, we have made additions from the political, economic and social history of the period in the subjects we study. We carefully considered not to victimize individuals or groups and to maintain their subject status, accepting that there are different positions in the genocide process. We have tried to give the message that the Holocaust was not an inevitable end, and in this process, each individual, group, and state could have a different intervention situation.

I talked about learning the Holocaust, and learning about the Holocaust as the second focus. I want to add a few sentences and come to the end of my speech. As Pinar, one of our trainers, also mentioned in her speeches, learning the Holocaust becomes “a reference and a paradigm for people to face their own past.” In this regard, we believe that it is an important training to consider reflections of the Holocaust on Turkey. By taking the difference between the geographies where the genocide happened physically and the geographies where the genocide didn’t happen or where the effects were felt, as I

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9 van Driel, Barry, “Teaching about and Teaching through the Holocaust: Insights from (Social) Psychology”, *As the Witnesses Fall Silent: 21st Century Holocaust Education in Curriculum, Policy and Practice*, 2015.

mentioned in the beginning of my speech, making an assessment on the reflections of what happened in the heart of Europe on Turkey between the years 1933 and 1945 is a unique opportunity for Turkey to face with its own history, and to embrace all the positive and negative events. 1934 Thrace Events, 1942-1944 Wealth Tax, and 1942 Struma Disaster can be listed as a few of them. In Turkey, still pointed as one of the regions of intense anti-Semitism, it needs to be underlined that the Holocaust is not the only but one of the important tools in the fight against anti-Semitism.

With reference to the title of my speech, if we are to think the Holocaust education in Turkey for a second time, it is important to know that these training modules we have created are only a beginning, it is essential that they reach the necessary channels to disseminate, and of course these modules need to be improved gradually, although we now have a whole set of modules comprising references in itself. It is important to ensure that the subjects we mentioned, historical backgrounds, concepts and values that we prioritize, and the points which we were unable to handle and we still consider incomplete are included in new lessons. Especially with reference to the Syrian issue, which is one of the hottest topics in the world at the moment; migration, insecure and precarious travel/escape, displaced persons, statelessness and the refugee status are among the most important issues related to the Holocaust. Another important point that I consider important is to recognize and introduce the existence of individual resistance and sometimes organized resistance attempts and movements during all this genocide and war, often putting their lives at risk for this cause.

I want to end my speech with a sentence on the back cover of the book. With the hope that the lessons we have developed will contribute to our understanding of the Holocaust and other genocide mechanisms, offer ways to empower individuals in their coping practices and reinforce the belief that a better world is possible...

## We Remember: Reflections on the Holocaust and Antisemitism: Resistance, Politics, and Memory

Patrick Siegele (Anne Frank Zentrum)

I am the director of the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin. The Anne Frank Zentrum is the German partner organisation of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. The Centre reminds visitors of Anne Frank and her diary with exhibitions and an array of educational programs. It facilitates learning opportunities in which children and young people can examine history and link it to the world in which they live today. They learn how to take on social responsibility, and how to engage with freedom, equal rights and democracy.

In the following I will go into a few theoretical thoughts about Holocaust Studies and Education in Germany (and only there). Coming from the practical field I will combine these thoughts with concrete examples of educational programs and projects run by the Anne Frank Zentrum in Germany.

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There is a wide consent in German society that dealing with the past – and especially dealing with the Holocaust and National Socialism – has a big impact on democracy, that it is very important that we teach about it at school (which 90% of German population agree with) and that it is even part of German identity.

Let me start with a survey that is known as the so called “Mitte-Studie”. It’s a survey that focuses on attitudes of the »centre« or - if you want to say so - the average German citizen. It is conducted since 2006 by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation every year measuring right-wing-extremist and inhuman attitudes amongst Germans. The survey is based on roughly 2.000 telephone interviews.

Let me point out two items that are interesting for this conference.

In the survey people are asked what they think of following sentence: “National Socialism also had its good sides” or “Without the genocide of the Jews Hitler could be recognized as a great leader (Staatsmann)”. With items like this the scientists measure what to summarize with the term “belittlement or down-playing National Socialism”. 10% of the people asked agreed completely or

overall that National Socialism also had its good sides, 14% say that this is partly right. More than 7% say that Hitler could be recognized as a great leader – if there wouldn't have been the Holocaust.<sup>10</sup>

Compared to the years before there are no significant changes overall. But there are clear changes when it comes to the age-group that agrees with statements of this kind: It's not the elderly people that agree with these items, but mainly young people. Only 1.7% of the plus 60-years old agree with it, whereas 7% of those between 16 and 30 years old. In relation to other inhuman attitudes like racism, homophobia etc. the younger have not only made up to the elderly people, they even have overtaken them when it comes to down-playing National Socialism and the Holocaust.

Being Director of an organization dealing with Holocaust Education (which we prefer to call historic citizenship education) these are of course worrying figures. There seems to be a development, which has to be taken very serious. With an increasing time span between the end of World War II and today (next year it will be 75 years) the atrocities of the Holocaust seem to lose their fear and terror. This is even made worse by the fact that less and less survivors of the Holocaust can talk about their personal experiences - which for many students is the emotional approach and opener to the history of the Holocaust.

Same as with anti-Semitic attitudes, surveys show that education has a positive influence on anti-Semitic attitudes or attitudes relativizing the Holocaust. The higher the educational level the lesser is the agreement with anti-Semitic attitudes.

This gives us hope. But how much knowledge is there really about the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in German society. Different surveys have shown that the knowledge about the Holocaust isn't as high as often claimed. A recent study by CNN found out that 40% of Europeans between 18 and 34 years old say that they know nothing or only little about the Holocaust.<sup>11</sup>

Looking at Germany, in many federal states (education and school curricula are part of the federal system in Germany and therefore ruled individually by the 16 federal states) history or politics lessons at schools have been diminished in favour to so called MINT-subjects (mathematics, informatics, natural and technical sciences).

History students tell me that these days you can study history at German Universities without ever dealing with World War II and the Holocaust. A study conducted by the Free University of Berlin in 2017/2018 looked at the amount of lectures about the Holocaust at universities in Germany and found out that especially for history teachers not enough offers are made to make sure that each history and social science teacher was taught about the Holocaust at university. At the same time there are especially high expectations when it comes to teaching about the Holocaust at school.<sup>12</sup>

10 Andreas Zick / Beate Küpper / Wilhelm Berghan: Verlorene Mitte - Feindselige Zustände. Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2018/19. Hg. für die Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung v. Franziska Schröter

11 Zitiert nach: <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2018-11/cnn-studie-holocaust-antisemitismus-deutsche-geschichte-wissen-bildung> [11.12.2019]

12 Verena Nägel und Lena Kahle, 2018: Die universitäre Lehre über den Holocaust in Deutschland. Freie Universität Berlin

And, we are only talking about the fact if there are lessons about National Socialism and Holocaust and not how these lessons are done.

Knowledge about the Holocaust is no guarantee that people do not have anti-Semitic or racist thoughts and attitudes. Already the first report of the independent expert counsel on antisemitism came to the conclusion, that Holocaust Education can even be contra productive when it comes to fighting against Antisemitism. But more on this later.

From the lack of knowledge and the belittlement of the Holocaust (as mentioned at the beginning) to anti-Semitic attitudes there is only a little step. That is not only known from surveys on attitudes but also from the perspective of those affected by Antisemitism. In 2018 the Fundamental Rights Agency asked more than 16.000 Jews in Europe what kind of statements they judge as especially anti-Semitic and hurtful. More than 90% said that these are statements like “The Holocaust is a myth and people are exaggerating” or “Jews use the Holocaust and their status as victims for their own advantages”. In regard to the second statement on »taking advantages« 35% of the Jewish people asked, said, that they have been confronted with statements like this regularly, in Germany even 45% of the people asked.<sup>13</sup>

On the other side there are also figures that give us hope. There is a wide consent in German society that dealing with the past – and especially dealing with the Holocaust and National Socialism – has a big impact on democracy, that it is very important that we teach about it at school (which 90% of German population agree with) and that it is even part of German identity. In a survey organized by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future 64% of the people asked agreed on this.

And also the general interest in the history of NS and Holocaust is still very big: 43% of the German population has a big interest or interest, and another 33% are partly interested in the history of the Holocaust.

But one thing is interesting when it comes to this finding: People think of themselves that they are interested in history, but they do not believe that others are so. To give you an example: In a survey conducted by the Körber Foundation 60% of high school students said that they are very interested in history, but at the same time 75% of the same pupils think that other students are not interested in history at all. Even worse when it comes to adults: only 20% of them believe that students are interested in history. There is obviously a big gap in self-perception and the perception of others.

For us as educators this means that we should have more trust in young peoples’ interest in history and in their willingness to deal with the history of the Holocaust.

What does this mean concretely (6 points)

1. Educational concepts about the history of the Holocaust should be organized in a participative and life-oriented way – which means that young people should have an active part in the educational

<sup>13</sup> Fundematal Rights Agency, 2018: Experiences and perceptions of anti-Semitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU: S. 25/26.

process and that they can link the learned to their own life. To do so you should create safe learning spaces, in which young people can develop what is called “kritisches Geschichtsbesusstsein” – critical history awareness. This means that I know as a student that there can be different perspectives and different narratives of history depending on what my personal approach and my motivation is. History is made by humans. We need factuality (means: history telling based on facts), but this doesn’t mean that there is something like the objective narrative – it’s always a certain choice historians make. And this very often depends on the sources we have and that are accessible. Different to the story of Anne Frank for most of the victims of the Holocaust there are no personal sources (like pictures, letters, diary entries etc.) at all. There is nothing left, because in many cases everything has been extinguished by the Nazis.

Based on the concept of Peer Education the Anne Frank Zentrum works since more than 20 years successfully with Peer Guides all over Germany. We train them to guide other youngsters through our exhibition. For many of them this is an empowering moment from where on they start getting more involved in their community. Not only when it comes to history and remembrance, but also when it comes to fight prejudice and hatred in their daily life.

2. Dealing with the Holocaust from a sociological point of view is something that – I would say – is state of the art these times. It means that I look at history from the perspective of victims, perpetrators, helpers and bystanders. This means to also deal with scope of action within the historical framework. This is, at the same time, a possibility to transfer discussions about scope of action from the past to the present. As educators we should strengthen the youth’ competences to actually respond, so that they can get active citizens in the core of human rights and anti-discrimination. To support them in developing civic engagement for democracy and an open society.

This is what the Anne Frank Zentrum does in its Anne Frank Ambassador program. 90% of the Peer Guides we train said in an evaluation that they want to continue with their engagement for society. Every year we train about 100 young people to do their own projects in their local communities and advise them in the process. The projects range from remembrance projects, concerts against right-wing extremism, projects for and with refugees or workshops against sexism and homophobia at their schools. Those that succeed in realizing a project are honoured every year in a ceremony at the Dutch Embassy in Berlin. Something that gives them recognition for their commitment for democracy and against racism and antisemitism. Meanwhile this program is part of the international Youth Network of the Anne Frank House. Every second year young people from all over the world gather either in Berlin or Amsterdam to meet, to learn and to inspire each other.

3. Talking about history lessons we should still consider: Dealing with antisemitism is nothing that should stay within history lessons only. To deal with antisemitism in the past very often is a false pretence not to deal with antisemitism as a current problem. Or it is a way to distance yourself from it (something that happened in the past). In educational programs one should deal with the history of antisemitism before Nazi times; its long history before the Holocaust. And one should also deal with the consequences and the continuity of Antisemitism after 1945.

We, at the Anne Frank Zentrum, do this for example in our permanent exhibition in Berlin and in our travelling exhibitions. There are numerous anti-Semitic incidents before 1933 that show that there is a long history of antisemitism before the Nazi regime. And from the story of Otto Frank, the only survivor of the family, we know many stories how anti-Semitic arguments against the legacy of his daughter were or the accusations that his daughter's diary is only a forgery. In our permanent exhibition we display anti-Semitic incidents collected by the monitoring service RIAS (Research and Information about Antisemitism) and we ask visitors and students to report about incidents either from which they have been affected directly or that they have observed in daily life at school, sports club etc. More than 100 cases have been collected in one year.

4. Everything I was talking about so far are programs and projects we should not only organize in Berlin and other big cities. In many rural areas there are as good as no offers of non-formal history or citizenship education. Memorial sites and museums are often far away and not easy to reach. If people can't come to us we need to go to them.

The Anne Frank Zentrum shows its travelling exhibition together with local partners in all parts of Germany. 2020 we will have a special focus on rural areas in Eastern Germany – areas where we had and have a high percentage of voters for right-wing or right populist parties.

And also our yearly Anne Frank Day is a project that reaches more than 200 schools all over Germany.

5. Earlier I spoke about the broad consent in German society and politics when it comes to the necessity to remember the past – even though this is questioned by certain political powers from the right. This broad agreement can be seen as a big chance. It is important to establish and foster broad alliances between Non-Governmental Organizations, Governmental bodies and Politics. It is important that these alliances are diverse and inclusive, which means that different religious groups (e.g. Jewish communities) are part of them as well as migrant organisations or local history groups. Too often we speak about victims of antisemitism or racism and not with them.

In the framework of our exhibitions the Anne Frank Zentrum initiates local working circles of organizations that get involved in the implementation of our travelling exhibitions on a local level. Together they organize a side program consisting of lectures, screenings or educational programs like city walking tours, visits to memorial sites etc. This brings not only more quality to our projects, it also strengthens the local perspective on the Holocaust and it ascertains that all parts of local communities (from old to young, from liberal to conservative) find something they can make a link to. Ideally our travelling exhibitions involve the whole city.

6. On a content level it is important that – when talking about the Holocaust or Jewish history in general – German-Jewish history should not be reduced to a history of persecution and victimhood. Too often students only deal with Jewish history when it comes to the Shoah. In textbooks Jews are too often reduced being victims and objects of history, and not presented as “active citizens and creative founders” (Leo Baeck). Looking at the history of National Socialism and Holocaust it is

necessary to show that there was Jewish resistance against the Nazis, that from the beginning there were Jewish organizations trying to protect Jews in Germany and later in Europe, like the Cultural Council of German Jews (Kulturbund Deutscher Juden) or the Zionist Youth Office. Resistance against the Nazi persecution was organized on an individual level as well as collectively. To emigrate or flee, to go into hiding, to take on false identities, to fight in partisan groups in the Ghettos or in the US Army, as many Jews did when fleeing to the US – all these examples show that Jews were taking action and used their scope of actions, although they got more and more limited.

A good example is Otto Frank, Annes' father. In our exhibitions we show how he tried to save his family's life until the end. By leaving Germany in 1933, by trying to find refuge in the US after the occupation of the Netherlands by the German Wehrmacht, by going into hiding – he always made decisions not willing to follow his and his family's fate.

**To sum it up:** We need a remembrance culture in Germany and elsewhere that is more than just a ritual. Educational programs have to be meaningful to young people. They should provide safe and inclusive spaces that help young people to find an answer by themselves what dealing with the Holocaust means for them today – this is more important than giving them a clear answer from an adult perspective that is often moralizing.

This is especially important in times in which history becomes a battle field again and in which history is instrumentalised by certain politicians for nationalistic or even racist purposes.

Dealing with National Socialism and Holocaust can show us where antisemitism and racism can lead to if state governments and the society fail to protect minorities and fail to defend democracy and human rights.



## A significant tool for Holocaust Education in Turkey: “Turkish Passport”.

Umut Uzer

It is a pleasure to be here to discuss Holocaust education and anti-Semitism. In my classes, I have come to realize that Turkish students have a better grasp of WWI when compared to WWII, due to the fact that Turkey had participated in the former but did not actively fight in the latter except a formal declaration of war on Germany and Japan in the final months of the war.

That is why when teaching the Holocaust in Turkey, a story to which they can relate would be a useful instrumental tool. During World War II, numerous Turkish diplomats including senior ambassadors as well as junior vice consuls located throughout Europe did their best to save Turkish Jews with the argument that Turkey does not discriminate against its citizens based on ethnicity or religion. In other words, those in good standing as far as citizenship laws were concerned were saved thanks to the intervention of Turkish diplomats who pressured German and French officials to release Turkish Jews from Drancy and other transit camps.

There were numerous Turkish Jews in France in the 1940s, estimates of their numbers ranging from a thousand to ten thousand. Turkish diplomats in Paris, Vichy, Marseilles and elsewhere interceded with German and French officials and managed to save the lives of most of the Jews of Turkish origin. These diplomats even attempted to save the furniture and property of their citizens usually without success.

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There were numerous Turkish Jews in France in the 1940s, estimates of their numbers ranging from a thousand to ten thousand. Turkish diplomats in Paris, Vichy, Marseilles and elsewhere interceded with German and French officials and managed to save the lives of most of the Jews of Turkish origin.

They personally went to Drancy, argued with German officers and in the case of Necdet Kent jumped into the train full of Jews destined to go to death camps thus forcing the Germans to release all the Jews- Turkish or not on that particular wagon. Eventually, between 9 February 1944 and 25 May 1944 most of the Turkish Jews were transported to Turkey with special trains specifically organized with this aim in mind. We know some of their names, for instance Jacques Levy was released from the Gurs camp. Other names include Clara Abuaf, Stella Ayache, Dolly Anav Uyanık, Rafael Israel,

Sultana Yeruşalmi, and Sara Çokran. Tragically, some of them were not saved, such as Salomon Kamhi and his daughters as well as Leon Farhi and Isak Saban. Germans sent them to Germany on an ominous journey which resulted in the death camps throughout Eastern Europe.

The correspondence between the diplomatic missions in France as well as their correspondence with the Turkish foreign Ministry can be found in the book *Turkish Jews* by Bilal Şimşir. Furthermore, Stanford Shaw's seminal *Turkey and the Holocaust* remains the authoritative book on the subject.

Turkish diplomats such as Behiç Erkin, Necdet Kent, Fuad Carım, Bedii Arbel, and Namık Yolga should be remembered and their legacy commemorated. However, it was only Selahattin Ülkümen the consul in Rhodes, who was recognized by Yad Vashem as a righteous gentile. He saved the Jews on the island as a result of which Germans bombed the Turkish consulate resulting the death of his pregnant wife. Moreover, he was arrested by German authorities and kept as a prisoner until the end of WWII.

In addition to the intercession of the diplomats in saving Turkish Jewry from annihilation, a number of Jewish academics, lawyers and artists from Germany and Austria were saved thanks to the Turkish government's permission for their employment at Turkish universities.

As regards, academics who came to taught in Turkey we can mention Philipp Schwartz, a medical doctor who taught at Istanbul University Medical School from 1933 until 1953, after having fled Nazi Germany together with mostly Jewish academics. He organized the Emergency Assistance Association for German Scientists in Zürich, Switzerland. He came to Turkey to convince the Education Minister Reşit Galib. Subsequently, a long list of academics taught at Istanbul and Ankara Universities as well as Istanbul Technical University. They include the economists Alfred Isaac from Nürnberg Polytechnic, Alexander Rüstow from Berlin, Roman philologists Leo Spitzer from Köln University, and Erich Auerbach from Marburg, Professor of Roman Law Andreas Schwartz, Professor of Criminal Law Richard Hönig from Göttingen, urban planner Ernst Reuter the future mayor of West Berlin, financial expert Fritz Neumark from Frankfurt University, and the list goes on. Albert Einstein considered coming as well but was offered a job at Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton. There were architects who contributed to urban development in Ankara such as Clemens Holzmeister and Bruno Taut. As a result of this movement of academics to Turkish universities, the German government revoked their citizenship.

Another way Turkey contributed to the saving of the Jews was that it allowed the passage of European Jewry through Turkey which was possible because of the existence of the representative of the Jewish Agency Haim Barlas on Turkish soil. As a result of this operation 100,000 Jews safely reached Palestine. It should also be noted that for a few months in 1943 the future mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek came to Istanbul as the secret representative of the Jewish Agency.

The record in this documentary will clearly show the humanitarian and professional attitude of Turkish public officials.

In conclusion, Turkey has served as a sanctuary for the oppressed, be it the Jews in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century or during the Nazi era, or the Hungarians and Poles who came to Turkey in the nineteenth

century, the latter establishing a Polish village (Polonezköy) in the outskirts of Istanbul which can still be visited today or the Syrians and Iraqis fleeing from civil war. This historical legacy continues in present-day Turkey with its open-door policy for all the oppressed of the world.



**2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION**

**EXPERIENCE SHARING  
WORKSHOP: HOLOCAUST  
TRAININGS**



## Experience Sharing Workshop: Holocaust Trainings

**A**nother important activity within the scope of the Project of Teaching Basic Rights and Democratic Values through Anne Frank's Memories we conducted between the years 2017 and 2020 was the production of authentic lesson materials for the Holocaust education in Turkey. In this respect, 9 authentic lesson modules were created as a result of one-year work. These lesson modules were published as a book at the end of the project activities.

The book *The Holocaust, Anne Frank and Democratic Values* which you download [here](#) comprises these nine modules and lesson materials.

We had a chance to work with tens of teachers and trainers, who worked with us while creating the lesson modules and who contributed in the implementation and development of the lessons.

We conducted 10 training sessions in five different cities in order to introduce, improve and disseminate these created lesson modules.

We wanted to come together again with our teachers, trainers and participants working in the field of civil society who attended the "Holocaust and Human Rights for Teachers, Candidate Teachers, and Trainers" we organized in İstanbul, İzmir, Çanakkale, Mersin, and Edirne and who found the chance to implement and improve the lessons by virtue of the conference "We remember."

**IŞIL DEMIREL:** Welcome to the first one of our experience sharing workshops. The workshops will be a little different from the panels you have attended for two days. Our objective while planning the workshops was to explain and transfer the experiences and the effects of the trainings we conducted for three years. We thought that the best way to do so was that the participants of the trainings convey their own experiences to you. Therefore, we are willing to leave the place to the participants by taking the back seats as the trainers.

We conducted teacher trainings, youth trainings, and memory walk trainings in 5 cities in three years. Our objective in these trainings was not only to conduct the training but to disseminate the knowledge and more importantly to serve as a tool to dissemination. An important part of our friends from the teacher and youth trainings in five cities are with us in this hall today. Thus, when I look at this hall, I feel the proud of being able to be succesfull and to be able to initiate a whole process of

communication. We have friends from Çanakkale, Izmir, Edirne, Mersin, and İstanbul. I wish they had been able to come here and shared their experiences themselves. However, we had to call our friends you see on this stage as representatives since our time and resources were limited. But, there are also many other participants with us today. I want to thank a few people before giving the floor to the speakers. First of all, Maggie, who we met at the Çanakkale training, is with us today. They joined the training as a group who accomplished splendid achievements at Çabaçam where they gave pre-school education, and then they implemented the lesson modules at Çabaçam with pre-school children. It was an honour to contribute to them. I want to thank Maggie and all the educators at Çabaçam for implementing and sharing what we have created.

It needed an attentive and patient team work to create the training from scratch and to reach a big audience in five cities. I would like to thank each of the authors who created the main frame of the trainings for their efforts and for making the books we have distributed possible. Some of those are also with us today. But there were two people who were with us in the field. Dear Kenan Çayır and Ayşe Alan visited five cities with us, trained the teachers, and built bridges of friendship. They facilitated the teacher training while Özden and I facilitated the youth trainings. We implemented all the lesson modules you will see in the distributed books without losing anything from our amateur spirit while teaching them to people and with excitement each time trying to do better. Thus, I want to thank dear Kenan, Ayşe, and of course Özden in the name of SEHAK. It was an honour to work with you.

Of course, we are going to listen from our participants what we were able to achieve, what we were able to teach, what we were able to contribute or whether we were able to do so, but I would like to explain what we wanted to do during the training if you let me. We tried to convey the knowledge and method without creating a hierarchy, with an equalitarian approach, without violating the borders of individuals, without imposing the knowledge, and by widening instead of narrowing the focus of the knowledge. Of course, our objective was to make subjects like the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, which are not known much in Turkey or known a little and sometimes misknown, visible and known. But, our intention was indeed not making the Holocaust the main occupation or the touchstone in their lives. The Holocaust is of course, one of the biggest and the most inclusive massacres of the history of humanity. However, it is necessary to talk about many other massacres, other pains, unspoken issues which are tried to be made forgotten along with the Holocaust. We considered the Holocaust as a tool, keeping this in mind in our trainings. While discussing and learning about concepts like the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and prejudice with our participants, we had the chance to talk about the other pains experienced on the lands we are living on. We saw the trainings as a platform to talk about many things that the official historiography concealed, didn't teach, didn't talk about, and unfortunately didn't let to be mentioned; in other words, as a platform to unite. Hence, the Holocaust trainings we conducted were platforms of struggle and sharing where it was possible to confront the official historiography, to talk about pains, and to share, and more importantly to unveil fascist and racist ideologies.

After examining the book, I hope you will see that all of the lesson modules are really informative, ground-breaking, and more importantly bewildering. They are of the ground-breaking kind. We saw



the impact of the lessons, and we observed them. In this book, there are some lessons which I think were so impressive and during which the feeling of empathy was developed intensively and during which I observed that we experienced the transformation along with the participants even while we were in the classroom. Thus, it was a great experience for me to be a part of this project and of course these trainings. Now, I want to end my words by saying that I believe I had invaluable experiences with participants from five cities and leave the floor to Kenan. What were your experiences? How were the trainings, and who did you meet during these trainings? Would you share with us?

**KENAN ÇAYIR:** Ok, we conducted these trainings in five cities. I have already been working with teachers for years. We even developed lessons handling different subjects, called *Discrimination: Sample Lessons*, previously with Mrs. Ayşe from the Centre for Sociology and Educational Studies. These lessons have a specific methodology. Perhaps, Mrs. Ayşe will also talk about it. Let me give the word to her. But, we worked with both teachers and civil society activists in different cities. I see that Güneş is here, Mr. Aydın works both for the civil society and as a teacher. Mr. Hasret and Çağlar are doing interesting things in Edirne and Çanakkale. It was enriching to share their experiences and to combine their perspective with our own experiences. The results were unexpected. It hasn't still finished and we are going to disseminate.

**AYŞE ALAN:** Hello to everybody. I don't want to talk too much because I want our participant friends to have more time to talk about and share their experiences. Let me start saying I'm a history teacher. And I can say that I had a touch in the book, in two lessons in the book by chance. Actually, the first step as a teacher starts with a dream. You specifically concern yourself about these things, you feel responsibility and you feel excitement. At the same time, you create a lesson from scratch, no matter what the subject is; and that is a dream. You dream something and, as you know, dreams are bloomy, and there are no problems. But, when you get into the class with that plan, you see something completely different. Hence, we started all together with our friends with this excitement. The project continued with this dream and this responsibility. The result is nine lessons. Then, our meetings started with these lessons. We arrived at the point where the teacher went into the class. Let me speak as a teacher who is aware of the fact that learning is a mutual process, and the teacher also learns from the student a lot. Of course, I didn't think about this as something like the history lesson I taught at high school. We considered this as a sharing workshop with Mr. Kenan, because we are talking about adult education. And we are talking about trainings in which adults from different fields participated. Thus, the process of the implementation of these lessons also taught us and contributed us a lot. If you are creating something about education in such projects, it is particularly important to try them, take feedback from the participants and the turn back to the lessons before the book is published. This is not done in many projects. Having been able to do this was also a big chance, because it is the classroom itself where you implement your actual plan, where you get feedbacks, and see what really works and what doesn't. From that point on, we had the chance to turn back to the lesson. When we look at these nine lessons, we see that they touch very different aspects of the Holocaust. On the one hand, we understood the importance of presenting the historical background and we did a lot through this. But, there are various aspects which the lessons touch, as Belin mentioned in the morning session.

On the other hand, our methodology, in fact, aims at creating lessons that touch the whole education area. The lessons provide education professionals with lessons which let participation and which don't contain heroic stories, providing participants with many different sources, making them work, read, think together, and be active. That is, the lessons are well-planned lessons which make the pedagogical approach required today possible. When you look at these lessons, you can do something only with the resources or you may take a part of the lesson and do something with them. After all, no lesson plan is a finished one. We worked keeping this in mind. We think that they can be used in different fields. This may not be only a history lesson, but a sociology teacher may also use it. Or, we may use these in the field in human rights training. We tried to create lessons suitable for different uses. And our experiences in five different cities taught us a lot as I said before, because new questions arise and new ideas appear in our minds. We had a chance to reconsider all these and review the lesson plans. As a result, I can personally say that it was a very pleasant process. My expectation is that these lessons are disseminated a lot. The more people use them and give us feedback, the happier we will be. Perhaps, this will continue in different fields and in different cities of Turkey through different channels. A few minutes ago, Mr. Kenan talked about critical thinking and being hopeful despite it is something rather difficult in our country and in the world. I think being before students in the lesson brings great responsibility. Although I'm extremely unhopeful in ninety percent of my life, I think it is important to be hopeful when we stand in front of them, because teachers are as important as role models for them. They are important not only academically, but also with regard to your view of life, your attitude, how you perceive and how you reflect life. I think this kind of work is important for reflecting this hope. It also gives hope to them in any field, in any field of discrimination to know that things may be different, that they may think differently, they may have a clear mind when they are aware of the things happening in the world, that there are people who think like them or there are teachers who mind them. Therefore, we have such big responsibilities. Thank you very much.

**ÖZDEN DÖNMEZ:** I want to inform you about some other things. The trainings in five cities were given in groups of 20-25, because crowd makes the lessons so difficult. Think that each training contains 20-25 people. There were nearly 1000 applications to these trainings. There were applications from 35 cities including the surrounding cities apart from the five cities where the trainings were given. We got applications from quite far cities like Mardin and Tokat apart from the surrounding cities. I wish we could go to each city from which there were applications. 116 teachers applied. There were many psychological guidance and counselling teachers apart from those 116 teachers, and, in addition, there was a child development specialist.

Another example of the fact that we can use and benefit from the modules in the book in different ways is that we conducted a hate speech workshop within the scope of this project. As a part of the hate speech workshop, we used the "Propaganda" module which is one of the nine modules. Likewise, we used the "Happyland" section in the lesson module "Eugenics: A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body" in the Memory Walk trainings and we are still using it. This module book is a constantly changing, transforming material which doesn't stay at the website but which is used. I would like to thank all the authors of the books.

**AYDIN YILDIRIM:** Hello to everybody. I cannot quell the feeling of excitement I have although I have participated such activities many times in my professional life. If I have a slip of the tongue, please forgive me.

The training we got at SEHAK was really useful for teachers like me who were sensitive regarding specifically discrimination and who wanted to work in this sensitive field. Previously, I got similar trainings from Kenan Çayır at Bilgi University, Sociology and Education Studies Unit (Seç-Bir) and from Aycan Demirel at Kiga (Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus), which is active in Berlin. These trainings fed me intensely, because you see that there is a huge gap between the practice and the theory when you encounter a group of 40 students at the Vocational High School in Dolapdere or Kuştepe. You face a social group who socialized in economically low profile schools with urban myths, lies, wrong information, manipulations, and lack of knowledge. When you come across such a group, you also face many difficulties of conveying some achievements to the students.

After taking the *Sample Lesson Implementations for Discrimination*, I took the book in my hands. And I said, “Ok, I got the training, the book is a very well prepared great work, so what do I do know?” You may not find the legal ground to implement it at school. If there’s not another organization or an NGO, etc. where you can implement them, you just find yourself alone with the training you got at once, which is something I observed with many teacher friends of mine in my professional life. You take trainings, but when it comes to implementation, to the street, you see that they cannot be implemented, they cannot be realized. Then I witnessed that the information they got from the trainings faded away and were forgotten in a few years.

However, I asked to be appointed in Edirne Keşan. It is my hometown. There, we founded an NGO. We founded a cultural centre called Zerlanis – Keşan Visual Arts and Kultural Research Association. I don’t want to keep talking and go into details but we gave such trainings to 150 young people in Zelanis through the materials we obtained in two and a half years. This work made us experience incredible feedback and incredible processes of awareness.

Believe me, the 9 activities in the book *The Holocaust Anne Frank and Democratic Values Education: Sample Lesson Implementations for Trainers* are a treasure for teachers, activists in the field and people who are sensitive in this field. If there are teachers among us or someone who are planning to participate in social work related to discriminations, I think they should examine this book very well.

Of course, each teacher will have a favourite activity in the book. At the beginning, my favourite activity was Pupugundu (Dehumanisation) activity. Let me explain shortly for the ones who don’t know it. There’s an imaginary country called Pupugundu. The participants are the citizens of this country. We say, “Let’s plan your 24 hours as the citizens of Pupugundu.” In teen groups, enthusiasm and humour usually rises while planning the 24 hours. When the level of enthusiasm and humour rises a bit much, the result is as follows: They plan a schedule of 24 hours saying, I wake up in the morning, I do sport, I stay at work for four hours, then I go to the museum, I draw a picture, I take photos, I make love with my sweetheart, and the I will sleep. However, the Pupugundu government starts making

some laws. For instance, if you are not originally from Pupugundu, you are forbidden from entering libraries, cafes, and social places. Naturally, the participants strap that activity on that day. You keep saying thing like “you cannot get married to a person who is not a cognate of yours, this is forbidden, that you cannot do, and so.” At the end of the activity, you say “all these law were enforced once, and these are some laws enforced in Germany during the reign of the National Socialists.” While there was positive feedback from all groups, I started thinking that the impressiveness or the tragedy of the event was not perceived or comprehended by the participants, unlike the thing what we actually wanted to see, at the end of the activity because of the rising humour and enthusiasm in teen groups.

Frankly speaking, I thought there were some problems about awareness in some exceptional groups, because, I think awareness is not always enough alone. Awareness constructed on identification can bring enlightenment together.

Here’s a caps I encountered recently: It’s written “I’m not racist” on a dam wall. The dam has a big hole on it, and water is leaking. And the word “but” is written on it. These are the sentences of the students: “I’m not racist but the Syrian refugees shouldn’t do this and that,” “I’m not racist but the Jews are like this,” “I’m not racist but the Gypsies are like this,” “I’m not racist but the Armenians are like this,” and the list goes on. Unless there is identification, the word “but” stays there no matter how much awareness increases. This is what I specifically observed with 8th Grade and 9th Grade students. Things like, “I also have Kurdish friends; Ok, I love Ahmet but the Kurds are like this.” I realized that we can overcome this only through identification.

I worked in Keşan for three years, and now I’m a teacher at an Anatolian High School in Muğla. In the classroom, I said “Hey, people, there’s a debate going on in Muğla Municipality Council, and some Council member decided to build pavement with the taxes collected from the residents of Muğla, but the ones who aren’t originally from Muğla won’t be allowed to use those pavements. The ones who aren’t from Muğla, who are from Bodrum, Milas, and Fethiye will walk on the road. You will be forbidden to use the pavements.”

Before a drama rehearsal in Keşan, I made the following announcement: (There were five Roman students in the group at that time) “Hey, teens, have you heard this? Keşan Municipality Council took a decision. Last week another book was stolen from the library. A Roman student has stolen a book. Roman students are forbidden from libraries belonging both to the Ministry of National Education and to the municipality. Romans will not be allowed in libraries from now on.”

First, both the students in Milas and the Roman students in Keşan were shocked, they were confused. After a while, this reaction turns into rage. ...And they started saying: “How can they prevent us from walking on the pavement? This is discrimination. I will never obey this rule.” “Even if ten of the ten Romans had stolen, I didn’t. They cannot prevent my right to use the library.” At this point, we started discussing the civil rights of the individual and the concept of human rights. In other words, the shock that the young people experiences in case of discrimination they may face personally and the subsequent undeserved suffering they do not deserve, and the anger that comes afterwards increase their

identification and awareness against such issues. That is, awareness strengthened with identification and empathy ensures the internalization of the achievements.

The thing that destroys awareness without identification is that “but”. And there are things which reinforce this “but”. And those are some particular events. Some of these events are true while some others are distorted, some are unreal, and some are urban myths. I say, when these particular events come in front of you, the most important way to deal with them is perhaps to remind the student or the youngster the feeling they have when they are exposed to discrimination due to their own race, nation, religion, sect, socioeconomic status, or orientation. We can raise awareness of what discrimination is like and what it can cost only through this, and create a leap of consciousness.

**ÇAĞLAR TURHANLI:** You made your first acquaintance with me at the Anne Frank Exhibition opened by SEHAK at Çanakkale Town Museum. The Town Museum was founded in 2009. We usually organize informative exhibitions about Çanakkale. Different aspects are handled but all these aspects are about the town. And one of these was the *Kentte Museviler* [The Jews in the Town] organized in 2010. This was an exhibition based on oral history and archive work. In the beginning of 2019, the municipality told us that SEHAK wanted to organize the Anne Frank Exhibition at the Town Museum. We were very pleased to hear this. We aren't usually happy about such proposals, because we want to organize our exhibitions ourselves. But, on seeing the content of the Anne Frank exhibition, we were honoured to be a part of such a project. And the exhibition attracted an incredible interest. I also had the chance to join the training along with this exhibition. On January 12, 2019, we joined this training by Mr. Kenan and Mrs. Ayşe at Çanakkale Ece Ayhan House with 20 very nice friends. We are still in contact with our friends who joined the training from Çanakkale. We are still making jokes on Pupugundu. If I am to talk about the contributions of this training to me, I remember that it was very explanative of the process from 1933 when the Nazi came to power in Germany to the Crystal Night in 1938. What had happened during this period that the German people became so hostile against the Jewish minority? And, the setting was not suitable for an event like the Crystal Night. But, in 1938, such a thing happened. And the following events were much more painful and they resulted in the extermination of the Jews in Europe. The training taught me this very well. I think the whole process was explained very professionally and opened up my horizon. In the training, how the majority marginalized the minorities was explained through examples. Labelling, stereotyping and how these were utilised in the extermination of the Jewish society were explained very successfully. How could I use these while explaining history at the Town Museum? I'm still thinking on this. I'm going to tell a memory about this topic. Five years ago, while having a usually evening at the Town Museum, a visitor came. This visitor was a woman in her middle ages. The ones who have visited the museum will know that there are two bicycles exhibited at the beginning of the exhibition hall. One of these bicycles belongs to someone called Cretan Mustafa, and the other one belongs to a Jewish person called Aşar Yohay. I had a chance to meet Aşar Yohay personally. I know that Işıl also knows him. He was a very cute man. He used to sell sports equipment in Çanakkale. And I was keen on football when I was at the ages of 12-13, and I bought by first pair of football boots there. We had a friendly chat with him; he also knew my family. I liked him, and I took a fancy to him only for we had a chat and we shared something with

him. This visitor I mentioned came to the museum, and criticised me for something. The critic was this: She said, “Couldn’t you find anyone else that you put this Cretan and the Jew here?” Frankly speaking, my reaction against the women was fierce. I blamed her for being a racist, and fascist. I would probably do the thing today, but I hadn’t thought on this incident against until the training of SEHAK. After the training I thought like this: What was motivation of that woman while saying this? She probably didn’t know the 1934 Thrace events. The massacre was 4 years before the Crystal Night. This is something interesting; it happened in Turkey, and started in Çanakkale. Then, I started reflecting on this, and I thought that people should be informed about the history correctly, and they shouldn’t be informed insufficiently. Thereupon, I changed the presentation I made at the Town Museum. I transformed the presentation into a more explanative new one including the 1934 Thrace massacre.

**GÜNEŞ KÜKEY:** First of all, I want start my speech with an acknowledgement and then finish with another one. You have overcome a great job awesomely. I want to mention two points about the content of the programme. I have been working with people who are making a living with human trafficking and refugees for four years. I am in the field. I was thinking about this while coming here. I have entered nearly 2000 houses, may be more than that. Some of these were cells of ISIL, some others were the houses of sect organizations, and some houses didn’t have even walls. There were houses where people could not meet the minimum conditions for living. If you go out and ask people, “these people are only Syrians” but each of them have separate story. The most impressive part of this programme form me was this; we did not consider people as mere statistical figures and met their stories. And this was very impressive for me. I remember reading those stories with great interest. That was the first; as for the second one, there was a question by one of our precious teachers in the previous session. The question was why some other topics were not discussed. First of all, we encounter this question many times. While thinking that this training was on the Holocaust, of course I thought that it was a multi-layered and intermingled form. If I say that the situation in the place where we are living is quite clear, you will all have something in your mind, because we have a cultural familiarity due to the fields we are working in and this cultural familiarity lets us create a common language. Unfortunately, it is not us who determines the fields where to use this common language. But, we try to open a space for each other. Here, people talked about not only the Holocaust but also human rights, right-based approaches, discrimination, and prejudices. Thus, this is a positive aspect of this ongoing work and it is something that should be. I have organized my speech in two parts. One was on memory, and the other was on traumas; and I feel a little intense because I had really traumatic experiences regarding both topics in the near past. First of all, I want to talk about trauma. Unfortunately, or may be fortunately, we are all here as a result of traumas. I don’t think we are here on chance. We are willing to cure the pains of people as our characters were shaped by traumas and everybody knows the pain caused by their scars. It is toilsome to work in this field and exhaustive, but very valuable at the same time. Therefore, I prefer to draw attention to this sentimental situation instead of information transfer in trainings both I get and I give; that is, to show people trauma, and to make them think a little. At least, in themselves, without causing another trauma, because they will all be forgotten whatever we tell. But what we feel will stay with us forever. After the training in Edirne, I think that I formalized my feelings well in my own activities and the training forced me to become a better person. I was with LISTAG yesterday. I

was a completely different world for me, and it inspired me in ways I could not think of. While I was coming here, I was thinking how I could manage it with the Holocaust; I was on a long journey from Izmir and although I think events and phenomena are both intermingled and separate, the things they make us feel are the same. This is what connects people to each other although it is painful. Besides, I was thinking about memory. I was thinking about spatial memory. I was thinking how I could impose it here. Before coming here, while drinking my coffee in front of the hotel, I was trying to recover from yesterday's tiredness, and I saw a child's efforts to sell a pack of tissues in his mother language. They are in a completely different country with completely different purposes and motives. Actually, they have something in common. And, I thought about how these people will remember that moment five years later. During the training in Edirne, we are sometimes not aware of the situations we are in. Is it possible? No. Can they do it? Yes. Because everything happens very fast, we are unfortunately apt to forget everything. The developments during the process going to the Holocaust are quite familiar developments. Most of the time, I said, "I feel this, we experienced this". It took me a few days to internalize it. Where will the child I saw in the morning, the child to whose life I could not touch locate Istanbul in his life? Is he going to remember that moment? Or, will the tourist who spoke the same language remember that moment? Or, do those people remember that moment now? This impressed me a lot. I think, we should make people feel this in the activities we will carry out, because we think we are aware of many things both in knowledge and quality, and perhaps we are. We get trainings as teachers, trainers and activists, and we are trying to improve ourselves all time. But I think, how much we are able to internalize and how much we are able to disseminate this is important at this point. Thank you very much for all your efforts.

**HASRET DİNÇ:** We met at the training on human rights and democratic values through Anne Frank in Edirne. I work with Romans. I am also a Roman. Apart from the sociological problems of the Romans, I used to read research reports on women. I used to read reports on children and LGBTIs, but when we hear the word the Holocaust, we directly think of the Romans. The Jews remained behind. During the trainings, we firstly become aware of this. And then, as you said, we quoted the Jews, but later we saw the events that happened in Turkey; there were the Jews, the Greeks, and the Armenians. In our country, everyone experiences discrimination; we became aware of this. When I look at the historical period between 1933 and 1945, I see that we experienced throughout the whole period. We are unfortunately experiencing it today. We are marginalizing each other everywhere. One of us becomes a Roman as another one of us becomes an Armenian while living in a marvellous country. As one of the previous speakers mentioned, there is the issue of Syrians. I think the Syrians are among the first three with regard to hate speech. And this really upsets me. While reading these, I sometimes cry and become nervous. We are not able approach the issue human-centred. We think that the Turks have no friends other than the Turks, the Armenians have no friends other than the Armenians, and the Jews have no friends other than the Jews. There is no such thing. You go into the field, you face people; and when we think that our subject is the Jews, 80 percent of the people hate them. This is the most important thing the training contributed me. It taught me something which I could use to tell about them. If I cannot find anything else to say, I say that people cannot be judged because of their birth. I am a Gypsy, I was born as a Gypsy, and I am going to die as Gypsy. Is this a crime? It is difficult

to explain it to people, explain it in the streets; in addition, there are factors like “but” in places with lower educational levels and sociological problems. Everything promotes this discrimination. The press promotes it, different things and people promote it. While telling these, we actually face a picture of horror. A few days ago, I told a teacher of mine that I would be detained in one and a half year. I said, I would stay under detention for three days, and then released. There won’t be a problem. I am the president of the Keşan Education and Solidarity Federation at the same time. I am also a war veteran. I am a veteran who was wounded in the fight against terrorism. I am a veteran of the Turkish Armed Forces. They tell me that a veteran should be a Turkist, a racist. There is not such a thing.

We have to empathise, and we have to put ourselves into other people’s shoes. As the previous speaker said, there are children selling tissues in a foreign country. We cannot help them. We can do it personally but how can we convince the society to do so. This part is also important. How can we explain that these people are also human beings? The trainings equipped me in this regard. And made me do research about the issue. I joined the youth education. Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust was something different for me from the Jewish perspective because we work in the field of Roman rights and children. I started to work in the field of LGBTIs. We are already interested in women rights. It opened a very different field to me, and this must not be limited with the Jews; the Syrians, the Armenians, anyone being discriminated in this country or the world should be re-handled. Let me finish with a short anecdote regarding the Romans. We founded the NGO. We went to the editing department of the district governorate. We had a draft with us. We said we wanted to do this and that. We did not need any money. We did not need financial support; we said it would be enough for us if the public education youth directorate provided us with courses and training materials. The man answered as follows: “We love the brunette citizens so much.” I said, “Mr. Director, do you love the blond less than us? What kind of a sentence is it? We are trying to explain something here for 20 minutes and you start saying you love the brunette citizens so much.” He said, “No. You misunderstood me.” And I said, “Ok. There is nothing to misunderstand. You reflected what you actually are.”

Thank you for everything.



**3<sup>RD</sup> SESSION**

**MEMORY WALKS AND  
CONFRONTATION**



## Memory Walks And Confrontation

Umut Azak (Karakutu Association)

I met Karakutu in February 2015 at a workshop on “handling ‘sensitive issues’ in higher education” conducted by Bilgi University, Centre of Sociological and Pedagogical Studies. What were meant by “sensitive issues” were subjects such as pogrom, genocide, discrimination, and right infringements in our recent history which could not go into textbooks, concealed or denied. Four years ago, the questions on which we reflected at the workshop are still valid today:

- What kind of alternative models can we develop against the educational system confined to a monistic national identity based on the understanding of the citizen identical to the state?
- What can be the methods that enable “confrontation” and that include the youth?
- How can we change the culture of forgetting and silence against past violence and injustices together with the youth?

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While looking at the history from the view point of ethnic and religious discrimination, gender inequality and the victims of hate speech and the ones who are excluded from the community, the include not only the stories of the victims but also the stories of resistance and strengthening.

One of the initiatives that had experience regarding these questions was the Karakutu Association, which was founded in 2014. Emrah Güral, who attended the workshop as a founder of the association, said, “If we listen to Karakutu before it crashes, we may be able to build a different society.” He was claiming that we would convey the “stories of the weak, the victims, and the excluded” to wider sections of the society through “innovative methods where the youth were active participants.”

The association, which I have too part in its activities since then, invites young people to “face” with the “black box” concealing the numerous secrets of the country. It is trying to open a space to revive critical thinking and the feeling of curiosity which are prerequisites for “confrontation” in a setting where the “mechanisms of historical denial” institutionalised by the state is internalised at communal

level.<sup>1</sup> It is trying to develop a sensitivity of “never again”, and methods regarding the production of solutions based on a peaceful language and human rights in order to include the youth into processes of peace building and confronting the past.<sup>2</sup>

### Memory Journey

The primary activity we are conducting for this purpose is the program called “Memory Journey”. The Memory Journey Program aims at enabling young people to discover and question injustices against groups excluded due to religious, gender, ethnic or political reasons. This is a three-stage program:

1. **Capacity Building of Young People:** This stage comprises activities organized for young people between 16-25 years such as seminars in fields like historiography, memory work and oral history methodology, local history workshops, and meetings with human rights organisations.
2. **Discovering Places of Memory:** At this stage, young people research the facts and testimonies regarding the places of their choice. They collect the struggle of the excluded groups, the narratives of the survivors despite the destroyed cultural diversity, relevant visual materials and statistical data.
3. **Memory Walk:** At this stage, young people convey what they have learned to other people as volunteer “narrators”. Thus, the young people who participate in these walks get to know unspoken historical facts and different approaches against these facts through their peers. And the narrator young people sometimes confront the supporting, sometimes questioning and sometimes challenging views of the participants and benefit from a meaningful process of contribution with regard to both their personal development and the content. Apart from this; while young people convey their narratives to different groups, they develop their presentation skills and narration techniques.

In short, the practice of “confrontation”, opportunities of learning, strengthening and personal development are intermingled at every stage of the Memory Program. Their self-confidence improves in time. Their feelings of responsibility and adaptation improve.

In his work titled “Türklük Sözleşmesi”, Barış Ünlü claims that the “sentimental repertoire/vocabulary of the Muslims has (been) centralised and to some extent (been) limited” with the covenant

1 Talin Suciyan describes the climate in which these mechanisms were created with the concept of the “habitus of denial”. *Modern Türkiye’de Ermeniler: Soykırım sonrası Toplum, Siyaset ve Tarih*, İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2018.

2 Before Karakutu, it is possible to mention other inspiring projects working in the field of youth and memory work: Leyla Neyzi and Haydar Darıcı oral history studies (*Özgürüm Ama Mecburiyet Var: Diyarbakırlı ve Muğlalı Gençler Anlatıyor*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2013); collective memory studies conducted by the Association of Sociological Research on Memory and Culture on Armenian youth (Öndercan Muti, “ ‘Gençler birçok şeyi yazıyorlar. Kendilerine roller, bir slogan belirliyorlar’: 19 Ocak kuşağı ve bellek talepleri”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 132: 150-161, 2015); Oral history research aimed at creating channels of dialogue between young people from Armenia and Turkey (Leyla Neyzi ve Hranış Kharatyan-Araçelyan, *Birbirimizle Konuşmak: Türkiye ve Ermenistan’da Kişisel Bellek Anlatıları*, DVV International, 2010) and the “dialogue schools” of the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation in which I also participated; Sabancı University Odd Steps: Gender and Memory Walks; “Basic rights and democratic values education through Anne Frank’s life story” project of Civil and Ecological Rights Association (SEHAK) and Memory Walks...

of Turkishness “imposed from the above” during the Republican Period. Accordingly, “the non-Muslims and non-Turkish Muslims excluded from the covenant will not be sympathised, no moral obligations and moral affections will be born against them, or there will be no concern about the injustice, unlawfulness, repression, and massacres against them. ... The ones within the borders are treated with affection and they are thought to be right; the ones outside the border are wrong and people who pretend to be rights while they are wrong are reacted with anger.”<sup>3</sup> Narrator young people volunteering for Karakutu do what the majority cannot, and encourage leaving behind our “moods blindness, deafness, ignorance, neglect and indifference” which Ünlü describes as “the contract of indifference”. They invite their listeners to do the same. They convey their curiosity and eagerness to learn regarding the recent history and the present of Turkey to their peers and adults.

In this way, they circulate the new and transforming knowledge created by the oral history studies, feminist historiography and the researches of the silenced. Focusing on the places in the town passed by every day and the stories of the people related to those places, they discover the traces of the people who leaved there before themselves.

While looking at the history from the view point of ethnic and religious discrimination, gender inequality and the victims of hate speech and the ones who are excluded from the community, the include not only the stories of the victims but also the stories of resistance and strengthening. Thereby, instead of hushing with feelings like disgrace or guilt brought by confrontation or merely contenting themselves with a critical perspective towards the past, they can determine points of reference from the past to build the future and develop constructive and solution-oriented approaches towards the future.

Our volunteers’ comments reveal how the Memory Journey transforms young people and that they gain accomplishments with regard to both research and oral/written narration skills and rights-based social awareness:

“I understood what we actually knew was not enough and we had to research and we had to listen to different parties.” (Gamze)

“Now, while researching historical facts, I try to understand their effects on people.” (İrem)

“... I learned that we must be patient and calm towards counter opinions and who do not listen.” (Erhan)

“I saw how exciting and pleasing it was to convey what I learned to other people.” (Busem)

### **The Process of the Memory Walk:**

Memory Walks were performed in the districts of Kadıköy-Yeldeğirmeni, Cağaloğlu, Beyoğlu, Şişli and Beşiktaş in turns. The five-hour program includes indoor workshops and the discovery of the places of memory outdoors. The places can be related to the Capital Tax, 6-7 September, free of press

3 Barış Ünlü, *Türklük Sözleşmesi: Oluşumu, İşleyişi ve Krizi*, Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2018: 219.

and thought, the struggle of the rights of the disabled people, Mother of Saturday, women in arts and the displacement of trans individuals. Participants who are divided into groups try to find the places where they have to go after decoding the codes given to them before the walk. If the place they found is correct, the narrator meets them and shares the stories related to the places. These stories can focus on lay people or people such as Gomidas, Yaşar Kemal, Nezihe Muhittin or Aligül.

The walking program planned for groups of 15-20 people are performed as follows:

**Opening Session** – Meeting, formation of the teams and the distribution of the codes (30 min.)

**Discovery of the Places of Memory** – Discovery of the place outdoors and listening to the stories of the narrators (2.5-3 hours)

**Closing Session** – Returning to the starting point and chatting the participants (1-1.5 hour)

### **Comments of the Participants about Memory Walks**

We ask the participants to fill in an assessment form at the end of memory walks. We receive mostly positive criticism in addition to positive and exciting feedback. It is possible to summarize the views of the participants regarding “what they enjoyed most” after the Memory Walks under six headings:

#### **1) Access to free thought and unlimited knowledge and handling events from the recent past**

Really, the Memory Walks opens a space of freedom with regard to the narration of the taboo subjects of the recent history which cannot find place in textbooks.

#### **2) Learning by listening from peers**

Unlike guided tours or familiar history lessons, Karakutu Memory Walks based on peer education provides an alternative and effective learning model outside the existing hierarchical patterns. A horizontal narrator-active listener relation is built instead of the guide-tourist or teacher-student relation. It comprises a learning experience encouraging approaching historical and political issues from different perspectives.

#### **3) Finding places by decoding codes**

Another young person who participated in a Karakutu Memory Walk says: *“First of all I felt curious throughout the day. Then, I was really excited while trying to decode the codes.”*

Perhaps, the most important aspect of the Memory walk is the game-puzzle aspect which includes and activates the participants. By means of the decoding method and dramatization, the learning practice becomes more enjoyable. As many participant point out, finding the places to be visited in a game increases the interest in it.

#### **4) The relation between the memory and the place**

A participant says, *“From now on, I will look at the places in the city and the buildings I pass by differently”*.

Other participants express what they like most as follows:

*“Leaning the history of a place I pass by every day”*

*“Meeting the forgotten and the unknown”*

*“Identification of the place”*

These feedbacks verify the importance of performing confrontation with the “invisible, deleted history” by establishing the relation between the memory and place. Many participants state that a “desire to research” and curiosity arouse in themselves. Focusing on the stories of the people related to the investigated, discovered places facilitates developing empathy and approaching from outside the dominant narratives.

#### 5) Interactivity and being a part of the activity

Its being a program which the young people design, execute and actively participate makes the interaction of the participants possible. Being able to share their experiences with people they met for the first time both surprises and pleases them. The practice of mutual discussion and learning from each other mostly happens in the closing session. Many participants write very positive comments about the closing session when this active participation and sharing takes place.

#### 6) Closing session

We try to find answers to the following questions in the closing sessions which we perform with an equalitarian understanding of moderation:

- How can we contribute to the social peace?
- What can we do prevent the recurrence of the injustice learned during the walk?
- What other methods and tools can be used to remind the visited places and the stories of the related people?

In these sessions, we briefly try to establish a positive, non-hierarchical and dynamic setting of dialogue towards finding creative solutions. We discuss how we can extend a peaceful dialogue including confrontation with the past. This discussion and sharing platform is an astonishing experience for many participants in a positive sense. For instance, while a participant says, *“It was nice to produce and share with people I met recently”*, the sentences of another participant summarises the objective of Karakutu:

*“We must listen more and narrate more. We must come together more and we must extend the circle. The worries are the same.”*

## Hope is endowed to us because of the hopeless

Murat Çelikkan (Memory Centre)

**T**hank you for your invitation. I am one of the board members of the Memory Centre or the Association of the Truth Justice Memory Work with its full name, and today I am going to talk about what kind of activities we do, what we do as best I could do. The Memory Centre is actually a centre whose main focus is confronting the past. We started the preparations in 2009 and it was founded to reveal the truth regarding the gross human rights violations that happened in 2011 or earlier, to support the victims and to contribute to peace and democracy by strengthening the social memory regarding these violations. When you start with such a determination, you think that you have covered half the way but it is not much possible in Turkey because Turkey has a big agenda when you talk about confronting the past. First, it starts with the 1915 Armenian Genocide, there are the pogroms against the Jews in Thrace, there is Capital Tax, the exchange, 6-7 September, there is Dersim a bit earlier in 1938, there is Maraş in 78, Çorum in 80, and Sivas in 93 and there is the destruction caused by the military coups every 10 years in Turkey. That is, I must count 71, 80, 90s, and 60 among these. There is a wall of lies and injustice created by adding each event we haven't confronted in Turkey. This is rightly called as the habitus of denial by Talin Suciyan, because the founding components the Turkish state are mostly among the cadres who played a role in the Armenian Genocide and the foundation of the Turkish Republic is based on the denial of the Armenian Genocide. This denial creates an outcome of denial and indifference against any kind of violence and crime by the state. Thus, it is difficult to conduct confrontation work about the past in Turkey. Actually, it is necessary to go back to the zero point and the origin of the issue. Perhaps, one of the people who did this in the best way was Hrant Dink. As you know, April 24 is accepted as the starting day of the Armenian Genocide and we celebrate April 23 as the establishment date of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). It is very weird that May 19 Youth and Sport Holiday is a day which coincides with the beginning of the Pontus massacre and the Greek massacres in Trabzon. As you know, Hrant proposed the 23.5 for such selected dates; that is,

Now, it is our responsibility to ask: So, who is the perpetrator? So many people are killed, so many people are lost. If all these people acquitted, then who is the perpetrator?

his approach was to combine the genocide and the establishment of the TGNA and to form a historical narrative and a memory that may confront both of them. Hrant was murdered and the murderers could not be revealed properly, the trials are still going on. The 23.5 Museum has been opened in remembrance



of Hrant as a museum of conscience. One of the first things we encounter during our work within this frame was the fact that the state servants in Turkey are under a shield of protection and protected with impunity within this habitus of denial. When you work on this issue, you see that one of the factors in the impunity of the state servant is that there must be permission from their superiors for them to be investigated and prosecuted. This is called the “Law on Prosecution of Public Servants”. This law is still in force but do you know when this law was first enforced? In 1913, that is for the protection of the state servants who would take place in the Armenian Massacre to come; and it has been in force since then in Turkey. Although there were various mollifications, amendments and reforms in the European Accession process, it is still in force. Besides, this impunity has been intensified with enactments regarding the non-prosecution of state servants after the coup attempt and the process of blockade and ditches. Thus, the punishment of the state servants about any roles they have in any crime is a process that takes years and which is usually inconclusive. Within this frame, we selected the Kurdish issue and we wanted to focus on this issue as one of the issues to be confronted because it was a more current issue. Our primary intention was to look at all the violations during the conflicts. In order to figure out how we could do it, we made a field visit in Argentina - you know that Argentina has an important experience of confronting the past with regard to the lost people and the murdered people—and there we saw that it was possible to determine only 11 thousand of the lost people in a period of 20-25 years among the 20 to 45 thousand lost people although the state embraces a process of confrontation with the past with the passage from dictatorship to democracy. Thus, we came from Argentina realizing that the thing we set off was a big job and that we couldn’t cope with and that we had to narrow our focus; and we decided to work on the lost people in Turkey. The number of the lost people has reached high figures in the Kurdish populate towns due to the special warfare strategy implemented mainly in the 1990s. This struggle had been continuing in Turkey for many years; we know the struggle of the People of Saturday but we didn’t have any data regarding what the exact number was, who were in the list or what the legal status of these people were. By conducting mainly a field research, I think we were able to verify 550-600 names in 8 years. We were able to document the judicial processes and stories of these people and whether their bodies have been found or not. This was shared in a database open to the public until recently. It was possible for us to follow the asserted perpetrators, lost people, the year they were lost, their stories and the narrations of their relatives in the database. It has been closed for some time and we have been re-studying the issue because some of the narrations of the relatives of the lost people which were quite lawful and legitimate in that period can now be considered as a criminal act. We closed the database as the first principle of such a work is to protect the victims and the relatives of the victims. Now, we are trying to make an arrangement and I hope we will be able to re-open it.

At the end of this work, we determined a transformation period justice mechanism which worked in countries which transformed into democracy from dictatorship or which passed into the state of peace from the state of war in the world as a general attitude. Five components of this are truth, that is truth based on documentation; proceedings, that is criminal proceedings or the employment of remedial justice mechanisms that will satisfy the traumas in the conscience of the society; memorialisation, that is if we are talking about a country or a nation, no matter where the place is, this is not possible only with a common language, it possible only with an ideal for a common future and a common social memory, social memories are usually memories which are formed formally, that is formed according

to the requirements of the state in the process of nation building, however a memorialisation initiative prioritising the victims and revealing the truth that is satisfying their unjust treatment is essential with regard to a permanent peace and democracy; and the last component the reforms and transformations in order for all these not to be repeated any more. We have conducted all our work on this ground but I want to finish by summarising the final stage we have arrived at the moment.

In Turkey, some lawsuits were filed mainly with regard to the lost people and the gross human rights violations starting from the beginning of the second millennium. One of these, for instance, was the lawsuit against Cemal Temizöz who served as a commander in Cizre between 1991 and 1996 and his friends. In this period, nearly 96 civilian people were lost in Cizre. This lawsuit included only 21 people, and it was not only about the lost people but also the unidentified murder... In 2003, as a result of the applications to the European Court of Human Rights, Turkey was convicted for not convicting the responsible people. Almost 20 years after the events, lawsuits were filed in 2009. These lawsuits were filed with gross charges and an aspect of these lawsuits different from others is that: Cemal Temizöz was arrested and imprisoned during the whole process of the lawsuit. All the prosecuted people were acquitted in November 2015 in this lawsuit.

On the other hand, a lawsuit going on about the secret state structure JITEM which was known to be behind all these massacres was about the murder and losing of 19 people. In 2001, this application was resulted with conviction in the European Court of Human Rights. It was possible to open a lawsuit only in 2013 in Turkey, and all the accused including Mehmet Ağar were acquitted in December 2019.

I am going to give one more example, which is the lawsuit of Musa Çitil. Musa Çitil was persecuted for being responsible for the murder of 13 people while he was a commander in Mardin, Derik in 1992-1994. He was brought to action in 2012 and he was acquitted in 2014. He was not only acquitted but he was also promoted as a commander in Diyarbakır where he committed all these crimes. I can give you examples from the Lice lawsuit, Kulp-Yavuz Alptürk lawsuit, Kızıltepe lawsuit and Dargeçit lawsuit. Only two of these are still continuing, and the accused were acquitted in all the others.

“Now, it is our responsibility to ask: So, who is the perpetrator? So many people are killed, so many people are lost. If all these people acquitted, then who is the perpetrator? We know who the perpetrators are; thus, we follow and collect everything regarding these lawsuits and all these developments on a website called “Perpetrator Identified”, because documentation is important. The importance of documentation comes from the following: Today, the responsible people during the period of the coup are persecuted after 25-30 years. These persecutions are possible only for there were human rights organisations who documented these under great difficulties. Therefore, let me finish by emphasising the importance of this documentation in this work and reminding that the recognition of the state violence and official acceptance bring accountability for the violations. It is impossible to talk about peace in a country which lacks in these. I know I drew a Picture of hopelessness, and that’s why I want to finish with a quotation from Walter Benjamin:

“Hope is endowed to us because of the hopeless”

## SEHAK Memory Walks: Looking at the past critically

Işıl Demirel (SEHAK)

One of the steps of SEHAK’s project “Basic Rights and Democratic Values Education through Anne Frank’s Life Story” was the Memory Walks. In order to organise these walks, first of all, it was necessary to become together with Anne Frank House, the partner of the project, and to be informed about methodology. To this end, in February 2018, we set off to come together with the trainers of Anne Frank House in Berlin as a group of 8 candidate trainers brought together by SEHAK. This 5-day training hosted by Amadeu Antonio Foundation did not only teach us the method but also made us think on Turkey and the relevant facts. The methodology of the memory walk of Anne Frank House, which is also possible to call a kind of film workshop, was based on monuments and monumental culture. What would the films made on materials of remembrance, that is, the monuments by targeting mostly the young people in many countries within Europe and the Balkans transform into when the setting was Turkey?

While setting off for the training, of course we knew that there was a culture of confrontation and reminding/remembrance regarding different black spots of the history of Europe, primarily World War II, wars, racism and of course the impacts of these as the candidate trainers brought together by SEHAK. Because of both our personal journeys in Europe and our fields of interest, the culture of remembrance and the material examples of these were not concepts which we were unfamiliar with. However, when it came to uniting this with methodology, it wouldn’t be wrong to confess that we became aware how this culture was prevalent throughout whole Europe. Targeting the young people in Europe and the Balkans, the method developed by Anne Frank House, provided the opportunity to think about the past and the present through monuments and more importantly to make people think. In the first introduction of Anne Frank House, the films where the young participants of the training dealt with and discussed the monuments, what they meant for the people in the street and their meanings were

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After numerous interviews, we saw and understood how these monuments on one hand so were taken for granted by people in Germany where confrontation and the history of World War II were cared for extremely.

really impressive. While talking about what the culture of remembrance and monuments reminded actual people and what they meant to them, the mentality, prejudices and the mind of today's people was reflected in short documentaries in all their clarity. After watching a selection of films produced by young people from all over Europe and handling the training program, our training started. On the first and the second days of the five-day training, we were introduced with the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical approach of the Anne Frank House method. On the third day, while having the chance to go to the field in order to experience the method personally, our team of 8 people divided into two groups and started working in order to do street interviews in February when temperatures below zero were prevailing in the streets of Berlin. While one group was working in an area where the discriminative laws of the Nazi against the Jews during World War II were reminded by street signs, the discussion was about what these signs told the Germans in the street, what these meant for and evoked in the people living in that area and more importantly what the attitude of these people towards this discrimination which is a part of the biggest genocides of the history of humanity.

And the other group discussed the brass signs of 10x10 centimetres big embedded in the floor in streets in front of houses and buildings where the victims lived in memory of those people and concrete blocks called the “Stumbling Stones” on which the names, birth and death dates and the stories of the Jewish victims were inscribed. Stumbling Stones which were present in many countries of Europe as well as Russia were placed in more than 1200 locations. Stumbling Stones which was started by Günter Demnig as a commemoration in 1992 grew bigger in time and the number reached 70,000. After the interview which started with the artist himself, the districts and streets of Berlin which were hosting the biggest number of stumbling stones were visited. And then, the stumbling stone placed in front of the house of the Behar family, victims of the Nazis who are known to have migrated from Turkey, was the main theme of the film to be made. Even the people who lived in the apartment block they once used to live in did not know the story of the Behar family. These names, which were inscribed just in front the gates they went through every day, did not arise interest in them. After numerous interviews, we saw and understood how these monuments on one hand so were taken for granted by people in Germany where confrontation and the history of World War II was cared for extremely. The remaining two days of the training were reserved for editing and montage in order to create a film from the recorded videos. At the end of the fifth day, there was a single question in our minds in the discussion of the training completed with two films by the trainers of SEHAK: What would we do when we return to Turkey, where there was not a culture of remembrance and confrontation or even where it was rejected. What did we have except for the memorials of Atatürk, war heroes and nationalist monuments?

When we returned back from Berlin to Turkey with all these questions, we had limited time and a country whose past was covered with many black spots. Following numerous meetings on how to adapt this method on which we got training in Turkey and workshops we made by coming together with Özden Dönmez, one of the implementers of the SEHAK project, we decided that it would be better to have a critical look at the culture of forgetting present in Turkey instead of the culture of remembrance/reminding. With this decision, we tried to focus on places instead of monuments and shed light on and remind the memory which was deleted/altered/transformed in our trainings which we would give

with the method we developed. We lowered the duration of the Memory Walk training during which we focused on places and districts by considering the economic and social conditions of the people of Turkey to three days and started to make a list of the districts of the towns whose memory were altered and deleted. It was necessary to conduct a comprehensive research in order to reveal the “others”, particularly the “places of others” ignored by the dominant official historiography.” We started the trainings after the completion of this preliminary research regarding the towns to be handled. After the pilot work which started with two separate participant teams in the districts of Kurtuluş and Galata in İstanbul, the work continued in İzmir, Çanakkale, Mersin and Edirne with new participants. In this marathon of one and a half year at the end of which 10 memory films were created in five towns of Turkey, there were 80 participants in total.

One of the most important elements which differs SEHAK’s Memory Walk method from its counterparts is the place it attributed to the perspectives of the participants. It will be appropriate to touch on the approach regarding the method and the critical approach developed by SEHAK in order to open this a little more. The participants who were elected among the applications which were made following the announcement of the trainings according to certain criteria and by taking diversity into account started the work with homework before the training. This homework included the information regarding the outputs of the research conducted by us previously. A brief text about the two places for each town chosen by taking the subject, ease of work and of course security concerns into account were sent to the participants as homework before the training and they are expected to answer a set of questions by reflecting on the places. I think it is important to say that these brief texts were written with a concern for being objective and impartial and that we adopted a rather sensitive and self-critical approach. The texts present a summary of the official discourse of history and the contents of alternative and oral history texts and they convey it with a literature survey. The literature list was prepared in order to ensure the participants reach all different views about the subject and the places and the participants were expected to be informed by having a look at this literature before the training. With the brief text, there are questions allowing the participants develop a critical approach towards the places and the districts in the question set. Contribution is made to the critical thinking skills of the participants with questions where the alteration and transformation of the place is handled before the training.

On the first day of the training which is planned as a three-day training, the participants get a theoretical training on subjects of memory, place and the memory of place through various interactive working methods, and they are introduced with different approaches of social sciences and the theoretical structure. After the theoretical training, they acquire practical skills regarding interrogating and interviewing techniques along with filming techniques including subjects like camera, light and voice. After all the trainings are completed, the participants are divided into two groups, they start group work to focus on two different subjects/districts and prepare the interview questions exhibiting their approach towards the subject they are going to handle by discussing within their own group and thus the first day is completed. On the second day, filming is made by the participants themselves in the district to be handled, and the experienced trainers of SEHAK moderate the participants. The third day

starts with training on film editing and the groups create their films by mounting with a trainer who is an experienced director. At the end of the day, the films which take the form of a watchable film with quick and small corrections of the director are watched together and the day ends with discussion on the relevant topics.

As can be understood from this detailed explanation of the method, SEHAK actually sets the participants free as well as focusing on the “others” ignored by the official historiography with the method it developed and encourages them to create their own critical films. Just for this reason, four major approaches are emphasised in the essence of the memory walk training method of SEHAK and they are presented to the participants.

1. Read
2. Listen
3. Empathise
4. Think critically

These four entries are the approaches emphasised both in all stages of the training and the fictions of the films. Brief texts sent to the participants in advance and the literature list to be referred to for getting information encourage curiosity. Field interviews aim at listening to the street and different opinions and learning and understanding without reacting while listening. Empathising is one of the skills required both by people in the street and the others whose history has been deleted. It is necessary to handle the topic independently from prejudices. The skill of empathising is emphasised in the training as an important step with regard to the contribution to social peace both in our working life and in our daily life. Last of all, critical thinking is an approach which is handled in order to encourage the participants to ask questions and think by asking questions why and how and to make both the people they interview in the field and the audience with their films at the same time. These themes emphasised throughout the three days of the training comprise the most important elements that make the memory walk of SEHAK different from similar methods.

In the trainings made in 5 towns until today, how important the questioning and critical approach against the memorised and recited narrative of the official history was explained to the participants. It aims at dismantle the memory, and to destroy it first and then to reconstruct it with a new, subjective approach and narrative. A critical approach with multiple perspectives based on empathy is the major method of the memory walk. The aim is to exhibit this approach in all the three fields of activity consisting of a conceptual and technical training, street interviews and filming and last of all editing and montage. In the construction of the new narrative, the participants put forward their own perspectives with their films under the light of such approaches. While giving the opportunity to ordinary people to state their opinions and to talk with street interviews, they are given the opportunity to think critically regardless of their opinions with the questions asked. In this regard, it is possible to say that the memory walk method developed by SEHAK encourages a section of the society whose street,

daily lives and people are not a part of the training to think critically. Although the subjects and the places handled are sometimes known as forgotten and sometimes as existing, their open secrets which are not spoken but known by everybody are remembered with an opportunity to discuss and talk in the public space. Memory Walk films, in which many different topics and places such as the Thrace Events, Great Fire of Izmir, Synagogue Explosions, Tatabla's transformation into Kurtuluş, erased places of "minorities"/non-Muslims', prejudices about others and the culture of living with others appear as films that invite everyone watching with different perspectives and information instead of imposing an opinion. Films that include the voices of individuals from different segments of the society with different ideas, knowledge and past experiences do not judge anyone's thoughts, on the contrary, while providing a right to represent their viewpoints, the aim at raising different questions such as what happened, why did they happen, what were the results, who was the actual victim, who was the perpetrator, and why we should remind it.

Since the training started in Berlin, 10 of the films made by the participants of memory walk training organized by SEHAK trainers, including two by SEHAK trainers, are broadcast on SEHAK Youtube channel and in this way, masses are provided with the opportunity to be a part of alternative history narration and critical thinking. Memory Walk takes on a constantly expanding structure with a tool like film, which is permanent, tangible and which can contribute over and over, and offers the opportunity not only to the participants, but also to the audience to be a part of the work. In countries like Turkey where there is an educational system and ideological structure which make forgetting instead of remembering, concealing and blanketing instead of confronting a target precursor, critical thinking skills will be an important tool in developing perspectives on social issues. Our purpose with the methodology and films we have created with this belief is to contribute to the dream that is common with a small segment of the society about a country where critical thinking is widespread, the ability to empathise and confrontation is possible.

## Extending contexts. POLIN Museum programs for openness and anti-discrimination

Katarzyna Kulinska (POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews)

**J**ewish communities have been present in Poland since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Originally, Jews were primarily associated with trade between Eastern and Western Europe, and had been gradually engaged by the rulers in other areas of the economy. However, they were not allowed to own land or participate in political life. From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Jews played an important role in managing the estates of magnates, especially in the east of the country (areas of present-day Ukraine and Belarus), and acted as intermediaries between landowners and their subjects, mainly peasants. The sixteenth and the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is the so-called golden age of Poland, but also the development of Jewish communities, their culture, science and religion. It is estimated that in 1765, the Polish Republic (so-called Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) was inhabited by 750,000 Jews, about 5-6% of the entire population of the country.

In 1772-1795 Poland lost its independence, and its territory was incorporated into the countries that partitioned the Republic: Russia, Austria and Prussia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jews in Poland, as well as other residents, were citizens of those three countries. Modern national movements developing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century also embraced the Jewish community, which began to polarize: from religious Hasidim through secularized socialists and Zionists to assimilated Jews - the mosaic of Jewish identities was extremely diverse.

One of the results of the World War I was Poland's regained independence. The Second Polish Republic was inhabited by numerous national and ethnic minorities. Poles constituted 64% of the country's

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Since 2015, PiS has been setting the mainstream public debate, putting pro-democratic, civic and pro-equality environments on the defensive. Despite numerous social protests, the ruling party led to changes in the functioning of the state, which many observers interpret as constitutional changes, despite the fact that PiS does not have a sufficient majority in Parliament to change the constitution.



population; the largest minority were Ukrainians (16%), followed by Jews (10% of the population, i.e. around 3 million inhabitants). Jews had their political parties and representatives in parliament, they could organize their own schools (although a significant proportion of Jewish children went to Polish elementary schools), Jewish culture and art developed, youth groups and sports clubs operated. At the same time, in virtually every area of life – work, education, politics – Jews had to face increasing anti-Semitism, deepening exclusion (ghetto benches, economic boycott), anti-Semitic propaganda and aggression.

World War II began with the Nazi Germany attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. From the very first days of the war, Jews were persecuted by the occupiers, their rights and property were taken away from them, freedom of movement and access to the professional work were restricted, and finally they were isolated in ghettos. In total, around 600 ghettos were created in the Poland's occupied territories. The largest ghetto, inhabited at its peak by 460,000 people, was located in Warsaw. Separation from the rest of society increased its indifference to the fate of Jews, fuelled by Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. Added to this was the fear of punishment for helping Jews. There were Poles who helped Jews, but there were also those who in Jewish misfortune sought profit and gain, or for racist or political reasons (Jews being ascribed as belonging to the communist movement) denounced Jews to authorities or even murdered them themselves. The symbol of the crimes against Jews committed by Poles during the war is the murder in the town of Jedwabne, where several hundred Jews were burned alive in the barn. To this day there is a heated dispute in Poland about the scale and importance of those events. What was prevailing: the acts of help or of aggression? Was the passivity towards the fate of Jews mainly due to fear of one's own safety, or was it rather a manifestation of resentment and hostility? Both civilians and the armed underground had their share in the war crimes against Jews, although the Polish authorities in exile officially refrained from anti-Semitism. Therefore, acts of violence on Jews with the participation of Poles cannot be called systemic actions.

Systemic extermination of Jews by the Nazis largely took place on Polish soil, although without the direct participation of Poles themselves - the crews of the extermination camps consisted mainly of Germans and Austrians (main staff) and Ukrainians (auxiliary staff). Of the 3,300,000 Jews living in Poland just before 1939, about 300,000 survived the war. Most of them survived due to their escape to the east, to the USSR, the rest survived in hiding or survived liberation as prisoners of concentration camps.

In the period of 1945-1989 Poland was in the USSR's sphere of influence. After the war, Jews returning home met with reluctance and aggression. New people already lived in their homes, others - mostly Poles - also worked in their workplaces. Just after the end of World War II Jews were killed in many places, the most tragic murder took place in Kielce on July 4, 1946 – 35 Jews were killed in the Kielce pogrom and 37 were wounded. Many Jews either left Poland shortly after the war or moved to the former German territory incorporated into Poland after the war and abandoned by the exiled Germans. The last big wave of emigration (around 13,000 people) were departures in 1968-70 caused by anti-Semitic campaign and state repression. In 1968, anti-Semitism became a tool used to internal power struggles by the ruling party, but these events also showed that anti-Semitism is still present in Polish society. After 1968, 20,000 Jews officially lived in Poland.

During the existence of the Polish People's Republic, the history of Jews, and especially the history of the Holocaust, was hardly ever discussed. According to the official interpretation, Jewish victims were included in all murdered Polish citizens, ignoring the special nature of repression towards Jews and other minorities arising from Nazi ideology. In the 1970s and 1980s, the theme of the Holocaust in Poland was mainly reminded by intellectuals active in the illegal democratic opposition. After regaining sovereignty in 1989, the topic of Polish-Jewish relations was once again present in the public debate. This discussion was and still is not free of distortions, attempts to whiten and slander the other party, and a kind of 'competition of suffering' of two nations during World War II.

Nowadays we can speak of two narratives about Jews without Jews, both based on simplification and resentment. The first is a sentimental story affirming the 1,000 years of peaceful co-existence of Poles and Jews, for whom Poland was a safe home and Poles the tolerant neighbours. The second is a vision of Poland's dependence on the interests of world Jewry, vision based on conspiracy theories and the story of Jewish ingratitude for 1,000 years of hospitality and the great sacrifices made by Poles during the Nazi occupation.

Each of these narratives excludes a nuanced, fact-based discussion around Polish anti-Semitism, Polish joint responsibility for the fate of Jews during the war, and the real otherness of Polish and Jewish cultures. An example would be attacks on scientists studying anti-Jewish violence, the symbol of which became reactions to Jan Tomasz Gross's book 'Neighbors' about the aforementioned murder in Jedwabne.

### **Anti-Semitism in Poland**

According to the 2011 census, 7,500 people of Jewish origin live presently in Poland; it is estimated, however, that this number is in fact larger: 15-25 thousand people who are aware of their Jewish origin. The population of Poland is currently 38 million people. Despite the small number of Jewish community in Poland, researchers agree that anti-Semitism still remains a significant problem for the Polish society. According to research of the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in 2016, almost 40 percent of the respondents expressed their dislike for Jews.

There are three types of prejudice against Jews:

- a) traditional anti-Semitism based on religious grounds is associated with the conviction that Jews are responsible for the death of Christ, and belief in myths about the anti-Christian nature of Jewish religious ritual practices (e.g. in 2015, 22% of Poles thought Jews had abducted Christian children).
- b) conspiracy anti-Semitism based on the belief in the Jewish plot, perceiving all Jews as a coherent group, guided by common goals hidden from others (about 50% of Poles share the belief that Jews are secretly seeking power over the world).
- c) secondary anti-Semitism, manifested in the denial of the historical significance of the Holocaust,

belief in the complicity and responsibility of Jews for the Holocaust, as well as anti-Israeli narration. In Poland, there is also a motif of ascribing to the Jewish people the ‘participation in the Polish Holocaust’, i.e. responsibility for crimes committed against Poles during and shortly after World War II; accusing the instrumental use of the Holocaust for the purpose of obtaining benefits (compensation for harm and lost property).

### **Contemporary political context and current historical and social narrative in Poland**

After the Second World War, Poland found itself in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, and only after the collapse of the USSR became a democratic and independent country. Poland has been a member of NATO since 1999 and of the European Union since 2004.

The Polish political system is constitutional democracy. Legislative power in Poland is a bicameral parliament elected in free elections every 4 years.

The elections in 2007 and 2011 had been won by the so-called liberal circles – Civic Platform Party (Platforma Obywatelska, PO), which for 8 years set the direction of the country’s development towards building a civic state open to diversity – at least in the sphere of official declarations. This period was characterized by, among others, increased participation in public life and education of non-governmental organizations dealing with equality issues.

From 2015, power is exercised by the right-wing Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), which won the predominant majority in both houses of Parliament in the 2015 elections, and after the October 13, 2019 elections, it has a majority in the Sejm (the lower house of parliament) and 49% of the votes in the Senate (the upper house).

Since 2015, PiS has been setting the mainstream public debate, putting pro-democratic, civic and pro-equality environments on the defensive. Despite numerous social protests, the ruling party led to changes in the functioning of the state, which many observers interpret as constitutional changes, despite the fact that PiS does not have a sufficient majority in Parliament to change the constitution. The main areas of interference are the judiciary (change of personnel, taking control of the Constitutional Tribunal and the Prosecutor’s Office) and social policy (PiS’s strong support is due to, among others, broad direct financial support of citizens, e.g. subsidies for children, additional pensions). PiS also has full control over public media financed by the State (radio and television), although free, private media still exist.

Also in the area of memory policy, PiS has been active since the very beginning of its rule. The main elements of the current historical narrative are:

- a) defending the good name of Poland and Poles. In the context of World War II, the positive and heroic attitude of Poles, both in the fight against the Nazis and in helping Jews, is emphasized. The most striking example of this attitude, which echoed internationally, was the Amendments of January 2018 to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, an act giving legal

instruments to punish for assigning the Polish nation joint responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich;

- b) identifying patriotism with heroism and armed action and showing the history of Poland as a continuous struggle. A striking example is the takeover of the emerging Museum of the Second World War, whose message was to be anti-war. Shortly after taking power in 2015, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage commissioned experts to review the exhibition program plans and scenarios, which were criticized, among others, for devoting too little space to martyrdom of the Polish nation; excessive universality of the presented story, instead of showing the uniqueness of the Polish fate; showing the 'left-liberal' perspective manifested inter alia in underestimating the role of Polish religiosity and Christian heroism (e.g. Polish catholic martyrs); too much emphasis on the fate of the civilian population instead of fighting Nazism – which, in the opinion of the creators of the exhibition itself, was its special asset and an innovative approach reflecting the scale of the victims (200,000 soldiers vs 5 million civilians), while in the opinion of reviewers, 'war is supposed to <<harden a man>>'. The original version of the exhibition ended with a pacifist film by Matt Subieta, showing the brutality and trauma of war; in November 2017 it was changed to the film 'Invincible' showing Polish history during World War II as a continuous fight ended in... 1989.
- c) downplaying or even displacing the dark pages of Polish history and those less glorious deeds of Poles. Quite the opposite – the memory of the soldiers of the Polish underground fighting with the communist authorities after 1945, including those who committed murders of non-Polish population (Jews, Belarusians, and Slovaks) is cherished. For example, the laying of flowers by the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on February 17, 2018, at the monument of the Brygada Świętokrzyska (Holy Cross Mountains Brigade) – a controversial branch of the Polish underground from the nationalist circles, which during the war fought the communist underground, refused to submit to the Polish military authorities and withdrew from Poland with Wehrmacht. On May 5, 1945, the troop liberated the Flossenbürg concentration camp in Holýšov.
- d) using social antagonisms and prejudices for political struggle. Successive groups were stigmatized as threatening national cohesion and national security in two election campaigns: in 2015 these were refugees – anti-immigrant campaign used fear of terrorism and aversion towards refugees, perceived as culturally prone to aggression and seeking to weaken Christian culture. In 2019 – the enemy became LGBT+ people shown as a threat of the natural order of things, traditional Christian values and norms.
- e) emanation of the above assumptions in shaping school curricula: withdrawal of anti-discrimination education from schools in July 2017; education about the Holocaust mainly by introducing the figures of the Polish Righteous;
- f) in the sphere of culture and art: discrediting successes and accusing of the anti-Polonism artists presenting a narrative other than the official one (the film 'Ida' that won Oscars' in 2015, a 2019 Nobel prize for Olga Tokarczuk).

### **POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews**

The POLIN Museum is an institution that operates on the basis of a public-private agreement of three entities: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw municipality and non-governmental organization (Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland). Key decisions regarding the Museum must be made with the consent of all organizers, which means that the institution is less exposed to arbitrary decisions of the government.

The museum has a unique resource: an interactive exhibition, which on 4300 m<sup>2</sup>, through 8 chronological galleries presents the 1000-year history of Polish Jews. However, in its programs, the Museum does not limit itself to presenting Jewish history and culture alone. On the contrary – by presenting the story of Jews, we try to draw the attention of our visitors to the multitude of cultures, religions and narratives, which for most of the history of Polish Republic (until 1945) constituted the essence of its identity and functioning.

In its activities, the POLIN Museum raises uncomfortable topics. We are talking about discrimination, including anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism and homophobia. This theme appears primarily in the Museum's educational programs – for adults (groups of professional – police and teachers) and adolescents. The starting point is an important though not easy conversation about participants' own identity. Anti-discrimination workshops give participants the opportunity to ask themselves 'who am I?'. We believe it is only by opening ourselves that we can become open to others, to a different perspective and learn to react in situations of exclusion.

For many visitors, the Museum is a place of respite where they can talk openly on various topics. The museum is a platform on which the excluded are heard e.g.: meeting with a priest and Fr. Adam Boniecki, whom Catholic church periodically forbade public statements, national and ethnic minorities that present their culture during debates, workshops or specially designed city walks. The museum is a friendly place to people with disabilities and frequently visited by them.

In its programs, the Museum tries to show different perspectives on selected topics: academic, anti-discrimination, female (herstory workshops), non-heteronormative; religious – including various religious currents, e.g. during the 'Jewish ABC' cycle of debates when an orthodox and reform rabbis meet discuss Jewish customs and traditions. An important element of the discussion is cooperation with artists and their interpretation of Jewish heritage (Artistic residences 2014-2017; theatre and music projects).

To fully realize its mission of 'recalling and preserving the memory of the history of Polish Jews, contributing to the mutual understanding and respect amongst Poles and Jews as well as other societies of Europe and the world', the Museum cannot act alone. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of our activity is cooperation with numerous institutional partners operating in similar topics and multipliers. Here are some programs that help us reaching a wide audience outside the Museum:

- a) Museum on wheels – a traveling exhibition that reaches those who have no chance to get to the Museum. The exhibition visits smaller towns (up to 50,000 inhabitants), and the accompanying educational program for the visit is being prepared with local leaders.

- b) Museum Ambassadors – teachers and teacher trainers from all regions of Poland who consult our educational materials, organize trainings throughout the country and promote the educational offer of the Museum.
- c) Daffodil Campaign – a nationwide social campaign aimed at presenting the history of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Every year, on the anniversary of the outbreak of the uprising (April 19th), volunteers hand out paper daffodils on the streets of Warsaw – a symbol of spring and memory and the uprising.
- d) Internet portals and educational materials database – lesson plans, studies and educational videos. The large database of information on Jewish life in Poland is Virtual Shtetl. The Museum runs a separate webpage dedicated to Polish Righteous and stories of rescue and a Judaica database. At the museum building there is Resource Centre open daily, where anyone can conduct archival research on Jewish life in Poland.

To be able to independently operate on such a large scale, financial security is necessary. The POLIN Museum is permanently financed by grants from all three organizers. We are constantly looking for additional support as part of numerous partnerships. Thanks to many institutional donations and private donors, most of our programs are possible

Last but not least: taking care of yourself is crucial to actively fight discrimination. Working with the subject of stereotypes, confrontation with beliefs and values extremely different from ours, which we consider unfair and harmful, is difficult, burns people out. In recent years, we have been putting more and more emphasis on the culture of the organization, the personal development of employees and taking care of ourselves – to act efficiently but not at our own expense.

**4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**EXPERIENCE SHARING  
WORKSHOP: MEMORY WALK  
AND FILM SCREENING**





## Experience Sharing Workshop: Memory Walk and Film Screening

**A**nother important activity within the scope of the Project of Teaching Basic Rights and Democratic Values through Anne Frank's Memories we conducted between the years 2017 and 2020 was the memory walk training.

Our team firstly got training in Berlin from Anne Frank House for the Memory Walk Trainings.

We discussed how we could put the Memory Walk Training we received into practice here and we designed a model.

We wanted to come together with our participants who created 10 short videos with the other participants who joined the "Memory Walk Training" we gave in İstanbul, İzmir, Çanakkale, Mersin, and Edirne on the occasion of the conference "We Remember".

**ECE PALAZ:** We change this training compared to the one we got from the Anne Frank House. One of the most important changes was to reduce the duration of the training from five to three days. First of all, it was more difficult in three days than in five days to encourage and technically support these friends with little experience, without the knowledge of making video recordings, who hadn't interviewed with people much, and who didn't have knowledge of editing. However, all were very successful, and willing. I still get feedback from some of them, they still ask questions; they ask questions about editing regarding the memory walk films or other projects. And this makes me quite happy. At least, I feel that we were able to add something to their lives and teach a separate method to explain their own stories. Perhaps we have facilitated it a little technically. I was not present in the training in Germany, but as far I can understand from the experiences of my friends, they needed to be a little more technically equipped. And this constituted our problem in Turkey. I know I'm talking about the technique too much; I wouldn't like to say 50 percent but actually 80-90 percent of this work needs a little technical knowledge. At least, you need to know framing, and you need to learn how you can convey the story you want to explain. Eventually, we learn how to use a pencil, and how to draw a line. Using a video recorder is not different from it. What is most important to me was that they were so eager. In this training we highlighted the content. That is, the stories they told and what they wanted to tell us, what they wanted to inform us about were more important. We told them not to worry about the technique and that we would overcome problems together. And

they trusted us. Trust is important in this regard, because we are only mediators in their stories. We didn't say "Tell this, we want to hear this."

So, I hope they were able to add something to their lives. Three-day training is difficult. Why did we do it three-day? In short, no body spares time for training in Turkey even though it is free of charge. Everybody has only the weekend free, and most people can't come even on Fridays. A few participants even had to cancel their training on Friday in one or two cities because they had to do something else. But, they will explain it better themselves, and I would like to thank them for they came. Each of them came from different cities.

**ÖZDEN DÖNMEZ:** I was in the team who went to Germany. I want to talk about this shortly, because it was so different from the one here. We worked in two teams in Berlin. One team was in the place with the "Stumbling Stones" and the other in the region where the signs of anti-Semitic law were. There were tens of Stumbling Stones in the Jewish neighbourhood they took us, even in front of every apartment block, and new Stumbling Stones are added constantly in this ongoing project. There were also other monuments apart from the Stumbling Stones. For instance, there was a building destroyed in a bombardment, and there were huge signs indicating that the building was bombed, and showing the families who used to live there. That is, they wanted to remind somehow. We came back, and there were of course no such things. Actually, there are some; for instance, we found one in Mersin. What did we find there? We found a reserved, an undestroyed Greek house. We found Mavromati's house. How did it manage to stay reserved? It was reserved, because it was turned into Atatürk House. Although Mavromati was an important figure in Mersin, the house is not Mavromati's house anymore, it is Atatürk's house. Then, when I reconsidered the issue, I remembered that there was an Atatürk House Museum in Antalya as well, and that was also most probably a Greek house.

So, it was necessary to do something completely different. We decided to build our Memory Walk on regions and places since there were no monuments and the buildings were destroyed. In each city we visited, we built our training on this fact.

**İŞİL DEMIREL:** The model we designed for the Memory Walk Trainings was: Read, listen, empathise with, and think critically. The four major pillars we explained to the participants of the trainings were these and we build all the materials on these. We paid attention to these in every place we went to. First, we read and we prepared very well. We sent reading texts to our participants. In the trainings, the material met them before us. They came to the trainings after reading. Then, they listened from us and from the experts; besides, they listened to the people in the streets on the second day. They self-experienced the truth. And on the third day, they created videos which were able to combine all this effort including reading, listening, and learning with critical thinking and empathy.

**ZILAN KAZICI:** Before, I had a life which included nothing more than the university and I wanted to get into something different. And I persuaded myself not to have only a consumption-oriented life and said, "Zilan, do something." Then, I met SEHAK. At first, I attended one of their panels. There I

made Özden's acquaintance. I joined the Memory Walk activity in Tatavla. I was a participant at the beginning. Then, in time, after Tatavla, I started involving in the project as a group mentor.

**ALKIM BAYRAKTAR:** My relation with the topic and SEHAK is a bit different. The way to Memory Walk swings by Berlin. The think which made me involved in these matters, these subjects was Berlin where I went for my thesis research. I can say that it was a milestone for me, because the Holocaust and anti-Semitism were two concepts which I only saw and heard about in movies and documentaries and about which I had limited information until I went to Berlin. The reason is that World War II is not included in the curriculum of the History lessons I received during my education. If you are not interested in this subject, and if you are not interested in watching movies or documentaries, or if you are not interested in playing video games, your knowledge about World War II is destined to be so limited. When I went to Berlin, I saw the Stumbling Stones in the streets, but what impressed me more was the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. A monument which looks like a pile of Stones from the outside but a lot more meaningful when you come closer. If you have a chance to see it one day, there's an inscription on the floor at the entrance, asking you to visit the place alone. It sounds so meaningless until you enter the place, but when you enter, you can't get out anymore, because you find yourself in an endless labyrinth and in a very gloomy atmosphere. I want to get out for two and a half hours but I couldn't. It was a huge area, and there were reliefs in the place. When you get in, you are not able to see anything but the sky. There are only piles of stones all around. That was a monument which impressed me so much and I felt it necessary to make a research about. When I came back, I had a chance to talk to Işıl. She included me into the project for monitoring anti-Semitism in the media which SEHAK started in 2017 to Show the magnitude of the issue in Turkey. It was a project in which we analysed, collected and reported the about anti-Semitic and hate speech news in Turkey. Later, in 2018, Memory Walks started and I was involved in them as a mentor.

**İREM KARGIOĞLU:** Let me talk about my own experiences shortly. I'm a post-graduate student at İstanbul Bilgi University, Department of Cinema and Television. I would like to start telling my story starting from cinema, as I met SEHAK by means of cinema. İzmir Memory Walk was these days last year and it was the most fruitful part of a chain which I imagined to be involving three parts. I heard about the Memory Walks by virtue of film director Ceylan Özgün Özçelik who has made her first movie, *Kaygı* [Anxiety], recently. Ceylan forwarded a mail to our mail group informing us about the Memory Walk. Her movie, *Kaygı*, was actually about one of the grave events in the history of Turkey taking the urban transformation scenes in İstanbul in the background. After watching this movie too, these subjects started to draw my attention a lot. I studied civil engineering at university, so I was continuing to think about topics such as "turning the city into a construction site" or "Killing the memory through killing the place". Particularly from Gezi onwards... There was another coincidence after I learned about the activity and decided to attend it. At that point, I learned that İnanç Avadit -he lives in İzmir-, who I knew because of his poems, was going to open an exhibition titled "Kazı" (The Excavation) with his photographs focusing how İzmir was turned into a huge construction site. And the exhibition was going to be at İzmir Chamber of Architects. And I added a fourth day to the three-day program of the Memory walk in my own way. I would like to quote the following sentences of İnanç Avadit, who had

the chance to meet personally later, because these were important sentences to me: *“Our ancestors do not have a place. Neither will our children if it continues like this. Nothing here it let to get old here. They do not let a place or a person have a spirit. When we talk about sociology in a place where there are no actual individuals or less refracted individuals, we are in fact talking about non-sociology, because there is a constant excavation in the city.”* Therefore, I was not going back to Istanbul without seeing the exhibition.

Meanwhile, it was my first time in İzmir by virtue of the Memory Walk. After I met the SEHAK team, I realized this: After the first day spent by getting to know the group and the environment, the thing which impressed me most on the second day was the street interviews. Our topic was the Great Fire of Smyrna. The topic of the other group was the Jewish Heritage concentrating in the Kemeraltı region. I started to ask the same questions we asked the people in the street about the places in Adana, where I was raised, and Istanbul, where I was living for a long time now; because, Istanbul has turned into a place like this: We all know that we are now in Istanbul where a building we see today may not be existing the following day or where we can find Narmanlı Han, which is one of our favourites, turned into a wedding cake; and in Turkey, since housing practices and construction sector has already intermingled with a liberal-conservative political practice, we have a weird fetish of town planning and re-construction after demolishing. Naturally, this annoys us all a lot. Annoys people who prefers to think through the memory of the place... The most important thing that the Memory Walk taught me during the street interviews was that it mobilized what Hannah Arendt, who also witnessed the Holocaust, called *“life of the mind”*, because I realized that: the thing in the memory walks was actually to “remember” and to “ask questions”, and *“the life of the mind”* is actually continuing through these two most basic activities. While studying Arendt form y thesis nowadays, I remind the Memory Walk frequently to myself. That is, “The Ash” was both a simple set simulator for me and let me think on the memory of a place which I did not know at all. I can say that I really spent very fruitful three-four days. Thank you very much.

**EVIN CANER:** Hello. I first made an acquaintance with SEHAK through a Holocaust Training. There was Anne Frank exhibition at the Town Museum during the Holocaust Training. When I visited it, I was impressed profoundly. In the following sessions, I did not know how to behave at all, because I read that exhibition very carefully and I can say that I was shocked against the things that had happened as the facts of the war were depicted from the eyes of a child. For me, it is the children who are most affected in wars. And it possessed me a lot. Frankly, I wanted to participate in the following activities, because it was a subject on which I did not have much information and I wanted to learn more about them. The Holocaust was something about which I had read a few things here and there. I collapsed after the training. I brought my friends to the exhibition insistently. I kept telling them to go, see, read and learn. I was trying to explain them each day that Anne Frank was. Then, I joined the Memory Walk training, and of course the Memory Walk would take three days. I did not what to do, because I imagined some like the following when I heard the Memory Walk: We had a forgotten virtue and we needed to remember it, and when I first went there, I thought what that virtue was. Firstly, we were informed technically and theoretically. I learned about the 1934 Thrace Events on the

first day. At that point, I had another collapse. I learned on that day that the Jews in Turkey had such a big population. I even did not know that the Jews in Çanakkale had such a big population. I knew that there was synagogue but I did not know that there was a big population. It was something I had never thought about. Then, it was the people of these lands who caused the Thrace Events and who forced those people from here, who caused them emigrate from here, and I expected them to set forth reasons to justify this, because it was something serious for me. I was planning to find the answer to this when I went to the field. I thought I could get information from people only in this way, but when I went to the field, there were some questions we asked people questions such as “What do you think of when you hear the word ‘Jew?’” “What does the word “Jew” mean to you?” “Why do you think they left here?” They all said that they were their mates, their friends, their neighbours, their bothers, etc. and this was something I did not expect. Why did they leave if they were your neighbours, your bothers, or your mates? I was again in suspicion, because I could not figure it out. I was thinking why someone would do this to their own neighbours. Many were telling their memories. They were telling their childhood memories and their memories of the Passover. They were telling the picnics they went together and the dinners they had together. They were such pleasant memories that I was witnessing the cultural interaction of people. Of course, each of those people who we interviewed were different with regard to their cultural and social status, but their common point was that they all saw the Jews as brothers. To be frank, this impressed me so much. Yaşar Yuhay was someone who lived in the past. We asked “What does Yaşar Yuhay mean to you?” and it was surprising for me to see most of them knew him. I did not know him and we interviewed with people who were a little advanced in age as they were the people who saw those days, but the younger ones also heard about him from their parents. When we asked them, they said, “Yaşar Yuhay was a very good person, and he did lots of good to us.” Now, a street in the Jewish district is called Yaşar Yuhay Street. He such a person still remembered good. Although there were about 200 Jewish households in Çanakkale in those days, now there’s only Sabetay abi (big brother). As far as I know, there are only a few people living there. Now, whenever I go to the Jewish district, I see in what condition the street is. Most of the houses left their places to carparks or the houses are abandoned. They are abandoned and there’s no one living. It’s an empty place. Before the Memory Walk, I thought that place was a pile of buildings whenever I went there, but now, whenever I go there, I see that there are memories, and there are life stories of people there, and that street means a lot to me. Who made me understand this, who shared the Memory Walk with me, and who made me recognize all these were the SEHAK team. I’m so glad you are here; people who let me look at life with hope and people who will conduct such work. I would say, if we are struggling, there’s hope.

**GAMZE ELVAN:** I volunteer for the Human Rights Association (İHD). I applied for this activity of SEHAK through the Human Rights Association. My workmates recommended it to me. They thought that I was a student and the possibility for me to be accepted was higher and that I would be interested in it. Yes, I was really interested in it because I didn’t know anything about the Jews. I applied and I was accepted. And, memory was really important to me; while working at İHD, memory was important as well the concepts of justice and truth, and now place was added. When we went to Edirne, we stayed there for three days, we were taught theoretically on the first day, we made street interviews

on the second day, and on the third day we learned how to edit our videos with the help of Ece. I'm working as a correspondent at the same time. So, editing was one of the topics that I was interested in. That was another reason why I applied and I thought I would improve my editing skills too. The street interviews were a little different for me, because while talking about the Jews, people were saying that their families, that is, the previous generations had good relations with them, and they had good neighbourhood relations, but when we asked them about the events in 1934, we saw that they did not know anything, or as far as I could understand from their mimics, they did not actually want to tell anything, and at this point, we wanted to reflect it in our film, because memory and place are really important, and we called our film "Confrontation". And we wanted to reflect that people were not able to confront the events they experienced indeed. Thank you for the training, it was great, and I had a great experience.

## Memory Walk Videos:

### Berlin:

Bayerischer Platz : (Memorials)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L45IdhjLsck&t=55s>

Stumbling Stones:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7WeeWKRqKQ&t=7s>

### Istanbul:

Tatavla:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyDmcXRAJgk&t=5s>

Galata: "La Kula":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CheIkY2Wauc>

### Izmir:

Jewish Cultural Heritage in Izmir, "Is there anyone?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS9EcDOYVmE>

The Great Fire of Smyrna, “The Ash”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdS-wkcEWSs>

**Çanakkale:**

Jewish district, “The Trace”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VmzLGCFBwo&t=2s>

Çanakkale The Mirror Mall [Aynalı Çarşı], “Where’s the mirror?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSyXQ7wwBGI>

**Mersin:**

Mersin Mavramoti House / Atatürk House, “Stone Building”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seF1F4W-g8k>

Mersin Uray Street, “The Echo”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op31Qbg13yE>

**Edirne:**

Edirne Events of Thrace, “Confrontation”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDyPtcohMJU&t=1s>

Edirne Jewish District: “Of the One Thousand Colours of Edirne”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzhH5DP5f7s>

