

AGBU Hye Geen Launching Two Books

The Armenian women's movement started around the 1860ies in Istanbul when educated women in Europe demanded equality and freedom through their novels. The first such novel was Serpouhi Dusapp's "Maida". Zabel Assadour, Zabel Yessayan as well as other writers encouraged by each other started a trend. Their novels demanded equality.

After the terrible years of the Genocide a group of intellectuals and writers believed that the community had to regroup and revive the Armenian Heritage thus the Women League's "Hye Geen" magazine was established in Istanbul in 1919 and lasted for thirteen years till 1923. It was edited by Haiganoush Mark but many a well known men writers were involved in this important endeavor of rising awareness that the Nation had to survive and women had an important role to play as millions of Armenian men had perished during the Genocide.

The second effort was made in Beirut Lebanon as the survivors of the Genocide had found hospitality in Lebanon. In 1923-1968 on and off, Siran Seza published the "Yeridasart Hayouhi" for 15 years. Basically she was continuing the work of Haiganoush Mark. She states that this was not a feministic Magazine, but an attempt to encourage women to emerge from the dark and become a force for the sake of national empowerment. Her editorials were challenging women to be productive and useful not only in the kitchen but within the community.

Under similar circumstances, that is, regrouping after the Genocide in Istanbul, survivor communities in the Middle East and finally immigration from Iran, the Middle East and Armenia to Southern California established the most populous Armenian State in the USA. There had to be some support and empowerment for the new settlers. After all the new norm of life demanded it, especially for the youth, who were getting educated in the most prestigious Universities and graduating as professionals would not agree to get involved within the community in the role of Auxiliary committees.

In 1993 AGBU Hye Geen professional women started a movement not only literary but with a multi- faceted educational program in mind for the community. AGBU Hye Geen bears the name of the initial publication in Istanbul and for the past 21 years AGBU Hye Geen has been a catalyst of change in the Los Angeles Armenian Community.

Thus the "AGBU Hye Geen 20th Anniversary Book" was published in August 10, 2014 where social events, yearly conferences for the youth, the Heritage Center activities, the important Magazine articles, The TV educational program, the role of the Pregnant Women Centers in Armenian (where pregnant mothers are tutored prenatal care, receive medical supervision, psychological support and nutrition, to date 2050 healthy mothers and newborns have been sponsored.) have been compiled to give an overview of the work achieved by AGBU Hye Geen, for the benefit of the future Generation in mind.

The only book ever written about Armenian Women was in 1934, by Mekhitarist father Vartan Hatsouni, which is about women of ancient Armenia. The book was written in the old Armenian Language and very difficult to read and understand.

Mrs. Sona Zeitlian a renowned writer in Diaspora, and an active member of AGBU Hye Geen took upon herself the task of compiling the History of the achievements of Armenian Women for the past 150 years. "Following the Life of the Armenian Women" A work of tremendous research and endeavor.

AGBU Literary and Arts committee took on the important task of launching the two books. The event will take place on November 20th 2014, at 7:30 at the Western Diocesan Zorayan Hall in Burbank CA.

The day's MC will be Ms. Cecile Keshishian who had been on the board of "Yeridasart Hayouhi" in Lebanon and ardent supporter of AGBU Hye Geen's mission.

"The AGBU Hye Geen 20th Anniversary Book" will be presented by Ms. Lora Kouyumjian, who teaches Armenian language and literature at the Vatche & Tamar Manoukian High school in Pasadena CA.

Ms. Sona Zeitlian will highlight her book "Following the life of the Armenian Women"

Ms. Teresa Hayrapetian, longtime editor of "Aragast" literary Magazine and member of the AGBU Young Circle Committee will lay out a trail for the youth of tomorrow.

The Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church will evaluate the role of AGBU Hye Geen and Young Circle.