

*We don't have sources to search and present to you Tadem's interesting faces. Fortunately, there are survivors who remember the many public figures, their actions and characters.*

*Usually life in a village is simple. Simple people with simple actions. Seldom can you have an occasion to talk about big events and exceptional field workers (Kordzich).*

*In order to complete the population of Tadem's general picture, here we give you a condensed resume, which is an eyewitness account of Tadem's remarkable simple men, written by **Kapriel Kaprielian**.*

If you enter the village from Mezreh, meaning from the west, first you will see **Hovsepien's** house, where you'll see a lot of traffic. Everybody is busy getting to work, old and young, they get ready for the field work, by caressing the bulls, talking to them. Women are busy milking the cows, the youngsters are taking the sheep and the calves out. **Aunt Zerif** is in a haste. She is running here and there.

On the left side is **Minas Emirian's** house. Who does not know **Minas**? It is not easy to talk to him, perhaps the night before he has seen in his dream that his cart has stopped at the front of your house. Has it stopped? Woe onto you, because it is said that if **Minas** dreams about his cart stopping at someone's doorstep, definitely it is a sign of death in that family.

Next to **Minas's** house is **Navoyan's** house. You could almost hear **Andon's** voice, "**Giro**, you go to school today in my place." If you enter the village from NW then you will see the "Saint Toros Fountain," where the students go and get washed in its cold water. They play around it, then run, yell. Under the trees you could see carpenters making ploughs, while **Uncle Ovan** is praising (mixed with swear words) the partridges that he has caught, as well as his gun to the students gathered around him. Proudly he tells them how he shot a black buzzard down from a treetop that had dared to plunder a young chick.

I grabbed the gun and "Tang!" the buzzard was laying on the floor near my feet. It is this strange man that during 1915 massacres, when the whole village was emptied—the men were killed, the women and children were deported—they say that one night when it was a full moon he got up to the roof, aimed the gun at the moon and yelled swear words to God.

"What kind of God are you? Lord, don't you see all these awful crimes? If you can't govern, come down from your throne. Let others sit there. Are you brave? Show your head from the window and see what will happen then."

On the left side, between the fountain and the school road suddenly **Uncle Ayro Andonian** shows up smiling. He is carrying branches on his back and yells, "Bedros, Bedros." Exactly at that time, slowly **Gero** stops next to him. He also has branches on his back. They talk, make jokes and wrap a cigarette and there you see **Der Aharon**, the priest passing by, who hits his cane to the stones and mumbles, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on us!" The two neighbors seeing the priest frown and whisper to each other. "He has lost his mind again, for sure **Der Kourken** did not read the proper hymn."

If you enter the village from the SW you come across the **Toumassian** family. Young and adults are busy: some are at home, others are in the field. Further up **Uncle Mergianos Norsoyan** washes his face, mumbling the morning prayer and leads the animals to the field. He is a saint, he does not touch the oxen a little hard, thinking he will commit a sin.

On the East side are the threshing floors. In the summertime the piles of wheat sheave greet you. The villagers are in bloody sweat. They harvest, mow, they separate the wheat from

the straw, thresh and load on the carts. These are hardworking people, dedicated to the land and produce, and are people who don't know to despair.

Pass the threshing floor and you will arrive to Khaya's Fountain. The Turkish homes are around it. From the left pass the bulls and workers of "**Medmedan**" mix with **Chakhoumian**'s and **Elloyan**'s oxen. Add to that **Krzent**'s and **Bellekoyan**'s oxen—they all push each other and the general noise and duet go up in the air.

On the right side appears **Uncle Garabed Bedrosian**, who is going to the fields with his sons and servants. At that moment you could hear the voice of **Medhdes Boghos**, which fills the air. He is in a hurry. You think he is in the middle of saving Armenia, but he stops and lets his neighbor **Der Bedrosian**'s workers go first. Now you could see **Tato Dsovetsons**, who all by himself makes as much noise as the others all together. He wants passage for his oxen, which at that time were very famous.

Thus, one by one they all go to work and the village empties. The work for them was as dear as a prayer.

Near the thresh floors you will meet **Kapo Meghdesi** and **Bedros Nordig**, a smile on their faces and always late from work, but nevertheless they are interested in the national life and inquire first about the state of the Armenian affairs.

"**Hamazasb**, what is going on in Armenian life, where do we stand?"

**Krikor Missakian**, who all winter long entertains his neighbors with his tales, addresses Bedros yelling, "What do you care about the national affairs? Which one should I present?"

Here is **Asadour Mooradian**, who is getting ready with his sons to go to the fields. **Minas** hesitates, choosing between going to work and staying behind to play Dama (a game). Before you reach the Upper Fountain, a limping **Donig** will stop you and tell you about his being a teacher, about his making false seals, especially about his arguments with village Khjobashi (leader). The fountain is never deserted. Young girls and women are always there to carry water, while men gather in a corner to talk about the world's happening. **Kelesh Mardiros**, as always, meddles and says, "I knew that already last night, my son told..."

Here come **Bedros Chelgoon** and **Boghos Heboyan**, who already is drunk early in the day, although he is good-natured and harmless, as well as **Aved Bodshoyan**, who without swear words doesn't talk. **Gergop Hagop Smeligian** always has his pipe in his mouth day and night. He had brought that pipe years ago from America.

When you pass the homes of the Turks, then you will reach shoemaker **Moorad**'s house with a large garden. **Moorad** is a knowledgeable man, but he is not interested in the village's affairs. His older son **Boghos** has just returned from America. He is dressed partially European style. He is tall and kind, a well-respected man. He was known as a Henchag.

North of "Upper Fountain" you will see **Venant**'s home (**Wolohojian**), which was half destroyed in 1895 and whatever was standing was enough for the family. It is in this house that **Rev. Father Serabion Wolohojian**, the Archbishop of the Venice Monastery was born. **Mr. Minas** is there also, who too has returned from America in 1911. He always speaks about the Armenian revolution and freedom, but he stays distant "Independent."

After passing **Kharadono**'s and **Hayta Aharon**'s houses, you come across **Adour Ghookas** and **Ozan Zakar**, who is known for his bragging. Next is **Tirko**'s house, where student **Assadour** and his mute brother **Stepan** live. **Assadour** is a kind person and expert in national life. He is always arguing with the Turks. He is not a party member, but considers himself a member of AYP. In the same street live two **Keusseyan** brothers, who were good singers and are still alive.

**Rev. Kourken**'s house is on a corner. This is that priest who followed his flock in 1915 on the road of deportation, always praying. The Turkish "porenee" pulled his beard hair by hair, tortured and killed this wonderful clergyman. Next to the priest's house is **Vartan Matoyan**'s house. **Vartan** was famous, because he was the grandchild of a wrestler. Every Paregentan (The day of the good living) he used to be in the village square to wrestle. In the same building lived **Ghougas Baghdoyan**, who had a gifted son. **Ghougas Baghdoyan** was killed in 1915.

The last two houses of the same street belonged to **Haytayan**. From that family we can't ignore **Assadour Haytayan**, who had returned from the States. He was a dedicated ARF member. **Giro Haytayan** was a strange man, but audacious. He exaggerated about things a bit, but harmless. He used to praise his bulls and pigeons. They were unique, according to him in the whole world. During both massacres of 1895 and 1915, he was able to save his family. He left in 1920 and died in a foreign country in his old age.

Here is also **Pouig Khayo**, who is all kindness, a good Armenian joker. Even the Turks respected him, looking for his friendship. **Harout** of Khojabash is completely his opposite character. He had been in the States and had joined the ARF. He is one of the founders of the Tadem Educational Society of Lowell Chapter and it seems that he feels sorry that after being in America, he is living in this poor village.

**Bedros Boyajian** is another figure, who has been an influential figure. We used to call him Saint Sahag. He was known as the most pious and religious man. During the deportation on the riverbanks of Euphrates he prayed for a long time and when he saw that God didn't come for help to the Armenians, he threw himself in the river.

There is a small square here and around it are lined **Vanants Gogayan**'s and **Der Minassian**'s bold **Moorad** (kel) houses. **Giro Bozoyan** sits in front of his house and sings special love songs to the villagers, who encircle him to listen to him. Across from his house are **Soukoyan**'s and **Menchoyan**'s houses. You can find here the large village square, where the village gatherings, parties, events and all the Paregentan (celebrations, the day of the good living) take place. You see here **Meghdessi Boghos**, who is caught in an argument, screams and wants to force his opinion on others. Around him you can find standing **Rev. Father Garo**, bold **Garo**, whose heroism has no limits. They say that one day while wrestling **Koko**, **Koko** showed off his ability and threw him down. **Kel Garo** compares the weight on him with the weight of the destroyed house, when he was under the ruins a few weeks ago and realizes that this wrestler was heavier than the ruins of the house. If wrestler **Koko** pressed a little longer, he was going to suffocate him. In that condition, even under the heavy weight of **Koko**, **Garo** threatened him and **Koko** let him loose.

Turn back and enter the village from the "Chatal Fountain" side, then you will see **Tomasian**'s house. **Koko Tomasian** is an audacious person and he has scared the Turks, who used to hesitate to pass by that street. If you continue your way you will get to the small square: around it are **Kirzent**'s, **Medmedanent**'s, **Belekoyent**'s and **Koghgougent**'s houses. First thing you will see is **Kevo Kervents**, a person of good character, short and has a "fez" (men's hat) on his head, always wrapped a large scarf around it, which covers all the way to his ears. He is ready to roll a cigarette before finishing the one in his mouth. Suddenly you hear "**Garabed, Garabed**, the boys of **Medmedan** have ploughed a whole area." **Garabed**, who gave very sharp answers, "Don't you worry, we will live longer."

You could hear daoul-zourna from the **Medmedan**'s house (musical instruments). **Dono Medmedan** and **Donad Vanetsian** came out of the house. **Donabed** has wide shoulders and a long white beard spread all over his chest. He was a member of the senate. Because of his

courage, he was respected by everybody, even the Turks, because he had six brave boys who backed him up.

**Yegho Medmedan**, who was a very good talker, was standing in front of his tiny house and was telling people around him fictitious stories about America, from where he had just returned, but when he was in the States he missed the village so much—the fresh air and the cold water. Woe to the person who talked badly about the village or made gossip about it, he would kill that man, but if someone spoke well and praised the village, he would think very highly of that man. He had an exceptionally good memory.

Further down, **Belekoys** are in a hurry, and want to take the oxen out of the stable as soon as possible, because **Kerzenks** and **Koghdougs** are not ready yet. The square is filled with traffic and is noisy.

Towards the East there is a small fountain, which is called “Hebo’s” or “Sahag’s Fountain.” Around the fountain are **Chakham’s**, **Hebo’s** and **Mego’s** houses. Exactly next to the fountain is **Milo’s** house, where **Troubadour Milo** used to live with his uncle’s orphans. He was taking care of them. **Troubadour Milo** has not gone to school, but he was a born poet. During happy and sad occasions he was composing new songs, arranging new music and was singing eagerly to create joy around him and enliven the people’s mood. During the 1895 massacres his uncle was killed and he was wounded. The orphans were left to his care and therefore he never married. This case was so strange in the village, whoever married late was labeled “Uncle Milo” after the **Troubadour**.

Near the fountain you see suddenly **Khayo Hero**, who is riding on his horse and passes proudly to go to see his son. In those days **Haygaz Heroyan** was studying in the French School. He was a very humble and beloved teenager, who was the second graduate of the high school. He was elected secretary of the ARF and for that reason, he was tortured, alleging that he was given to hold on all the books and records of ARF member **Hamzasb M. Kaprielian**, when he was drafted.

It is near this fountain the house of **Rev. Father Hagop**. During 1895 events the Turks assaulted his house and fired a few times on him, but the priest was not even wounded. The barbarians, thinking that the prayers are saving him from the gunfire, decided to cut his tongue, then torture him and kill him. **Father Hagop** had had a good education and he had joined the revolutionary movement, which had started in those days. He is the one that conceived the idea to form the Tadem Educational Society, and thanks to his letters in 1891, the Society was formed in Portland, Maine.

Near “Saint Toros Fountain” is **Najarian’s** house. Between the Fountain and the houses there is an alley, where the **Najarrians** work under the shadow of the trees. One of them is carpenter **Ovan**, who is a craftsman of his trade and also is a storyteller. Everybody waits for his stories. One yard further is **Ayron (Aaron) Kinoyan’s** house. **Aaron** was not that famous drummer, but the way he talked and behaved, he used to draw the attention of his circle. Next to their house was store owner **Assadour**, whose son **Haroutune Assadourain** was the best student in the school, but unfortunately became a victim of an accident in the school during a game by the hands of **Markar Markarian**. Both were members of ARF Juniors. If you continue down the road you will stop at “The Forty Genius Door” **Krikor Anjourian**. You would get scared. Deep in those thoughts you will see Blacksmith (**Demoorji**) **Vartan**, who standing in front of the fire hammers the red iron. He is a modest villager who also has been one of the founding members of the Educational Society.

A few yards away live the **Ghazars**, **Hovhanes Ghazarian**, called **Nejo**, who was a famous shoemaker. It is told that one day he repairs a Kurd's shoe, gets paid and turns around and says to his brother, "**Bedros**, follow him. By the time he arrives at the village limit, the piece of leather will fall. Pick it up and come back."

**Koo Ghazarian** has been the only person in Tadem who in the 1895 massacres defended himself with a gun. And in the 1915 Genocide in Kharpert's Red Prison, along with a fellow **Garos**' group he has been burned, leaving the memory of a brave Armenian. Next is shoemaker **Sarkeh**'s house, then **Dedeyan** from the **Dedeyan** family. All the males are in America. **Hovhannes Tommassian**, the only heir of the **Gareg** family is now in America. Across from these houses is **Melko**'s house, the first born of this family **Yessayi Goghgarian** is a famous Ramgavar (Armenian democratic party member). When he returned from America, he tried hard to improve the school curriculum. In spite of the fact that **Yessayi** was not an educated person, he had a talent for public speaking. He died in America.

It was in this area where you'd find **Rev. Father Aharon**'s house. He was an educated man. Across from his house lived **Varjabed** (teacher) **Garabed (Gharib)**. Even though they were neighbors, they were always against each other. The priest did not like the teacher, because he was much more educated than himself. Even if he did not have a reason, the priest used to stand at the door and yell, "**Gharib** should not meddle in my affairs." At that time teacher **Garabed** was our town know-it-all person (a.k.a the village leader). He knew Turkish very well and was well respected in the circle of the government.

On the same street were the **Kino**'s, the **Mousho**'s, and the **Gharib**'s house.

We should mention **Arakel Gharibian**, a bright young man, who had joined **Hovhannes De Hovhanesian**'s battalion and had excelled as a soldier and then fell on the battlefield. He dedicated himself to save the refugees. He gave up his young life on the life of duty, but after killing many Turks.

Past the **Priest Aharon**'s house are **Der Vartanian** and the **Lakhayan**'s houses. **Hayg Lakhayan** was one of the more intelligent students of the village school. He was an orphan because his father **Bedros Elloyan** was a rebel and a patriot. He left the village and joined the "fedayees." On this street is also **Anjourian**'s house. **Bedros Anjourian** had returned from America. He was an ARF member. He had worked diligently for the Educational Society. A little further is **Marsoub Elloyan**'s house. **Uncle Marsoub** was one of the founders of the Educational Society and his son **Sahag**, the first graduate of the Tadem School. His grandson **Haroutune Elloyan Tomassian** was the first student of Beirut Jemaran from Tadem.

If you go down this street toward the square, you will pass **Bloko**'s, **Kerbent**'s and **Medmedan**'s house. You will meet **Hovhannes Vanetsian**, who just returned from the States. He has always been the Trustee of the church. Next to his house is **Kercheg Ghazar**'s house who was a good Dama player (tabletop game). **Kerche Ghazar** lived alone. His sons were in America. He always had on a new coat with a rip on one side of it.

If you return to the square of **Der Bedros** towards the road to church, you will meet wrestler **Koko**'s house. They tell the story of one day from a faraway region, another wrestler came and found wrestler **Koko**. He said he has been all over Turkey, but had not found one competitor. Koko's mother invited him in until his son came home. The guest wrestler profiting from the housewife's absence takes one of her shoes. She looks around and sees it between the beams of the ceiling and tells him, "My son also was naughty and in order to make me mad he used to do these kinds of games too." Immediately he shakes the beams and the shoe falls. Seeing her strength, the wrestler says, "Mother if you are this strong, then how about your son."

The mother answers, “My son is just like a lion. I feel sorry for you. You are better off leaving now without meeting him.”

In 1915 the Turks tied the wrestler and his son together with a thick rope, hoping they couldn't run. But when the gendarmes went away the wrestler cut the rope and both escaped.

The next house is **Kamalian's** house. **Abdal Kamalian** was a very brave and audacious man. During a fight before 1895, he was wounded, but nevertheless took the sword from the Turkish man and assaulted the Turk.

Let's also remember **Giro Kamalian**, who was the best zurna (musical instrument trumpet style) player. His competitors were only **Arman of Medmedan** and **Bold Markar** from **Moorad's** family. **Garro Kamalian** was a very stubborn man. It was very difficult to make him play. The **Kamalians** were all stubborn and there was a saying in the town, they were asking, “Are you from the **Kamalian** family?” when they met a stubborn family.

Across from these houses was **Dzovetsonts Mardo** of Dzovetso, who was the richest man in the village. They say that during the deportation, **Mardo's** wife gave away their gold coins to the villagers to get by, but unfortunately the Turks saw her action and killed her.

Near these houses are **Kochan's** and **Uncle El's** house. **Uncle El** was a very poor man, but he was also a very proud man. He never accepted charity. When we talk about **Kochans** we cannot forget **Khachadour**, who came back from America to join the “Cilician Volunteer Movement.”

When you continue on the street, you reach **Paron's** house, then **Hassano's** and **Philibossian's** and now you find yourself in front of the Catholic **Krikor Vartabed** with his beard all around his chest. He gives you the impression of an intellectual man, who is going to school to be present for the year-end exams.

Across from that point is **Amanat's** house, next to them is **Mikael's** house. They say that **Mikael Boghosian** was a very brave man. His son **Vartan** was familiar to our generation. He was also a valiant young man, who had joined the Cilician Volunteer Movement. He is now in France.

Next you will see **Doutoumain's** and **Khenghgots** houses, followed by **Khengo's** and **Keki's** houses. Now you are at the Catholic church. To the North vehemently is standing the Armenian Church on a hill and next to it the Armenian School, which was built with the financial assistance of the Educational Society. This is a building that the Armenians could be proud of. In front of the church and the school there is a large square that stretches all the way to the Armenian Catholic Church. The school children play in this square. From this square until the school and the church's gate there are forty steps, which along with the steeple, represent the school and the church's beauty.

These institutions perched on the chest of the Tadem's fortress, presenting an admirable view. These institutions, along with the towers are a source of inspiration and enthusiasm. These are a pair of monuments, which inspire faith and light, turning into symbols of Tadem's lost population's everlasting efforts.

Along with these institutions, the fortress and the towers are very impressive points of interest which encourage you to think and question, “When have they been built and why?”

*—Kapriel M. Kaprielian, a survivor of the 1915 genocide, wrote this memoir of life in the village of Tadem, Armenia after arriving in the United States. He recorded these impressions and recollections in about 1919.*