

Invitation

Thursday, 27 May 2010, 6 pm

Teşvikiye: The Making of an Elite Neighborhood and Narratives of Nostalgia in Istanbul

Keynote Speech by Leyla Neyzi of the Workshop "Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective for Ottoman Urban History"

Relations to space and place as expressed in narratives of memory and nostalgia are a powerful means by which to interpret dislocations and conflicts over identity and belonging--and over the meaning of modernity in Turkey. What makes Teşvikiye unique is that while most historic neighborhoods in the city are associated with non-Muslims, this neighborhood was created by royal decree as a planned residence for families close to the Ottoman palace. From its inception, the neighborhood was identified with the Ottoman elite, and later a Muslim/Turkish bourgeoisie. Teşvikiye's architecture and life-style reflected its modernist aspirations, with Ottoman mansions being replaced by family apartments in the manner of Pera. At the end of the Ottoman era, migrants from the Balkans settled here. Sabbatean families made their mark in the public sphere, establishing schools, hospitals, businesses, and a vibrant social life in which women as much as men played a central role. In time, notable families from Anatolian towns also made Teşvikiye their home. Until the 1980s, Teşvikiye was a residential middle-class neighborhood. In the last decades, the neighborhood experienced a major resurgence as Istanbul became integrated into the circuits of global capital. Yet, despite or because of immense changes in the city in recent decades, Nişantaşı constitutes an attempt at continuity vis-a-vis its representation as the fortress of the modernist secular bourgeoisie in oral histories of local residents as well as in the popular media.

Leyla Neyzi studied Anthropology at Stanford University, (B.A. 1982) and Development Sociology at Cornell University (Ph.D. 1991). She worked as an assistant professor at Boğaziçi University, (1992-1994) and as the Oral History Project Director, Economic and Social History Foundation (1995-1996). Since 1998, she is an associate professor at Sabancı University, teaching courses on anthropology, memory, oral history, and youth studies. Her ongoing research areas include an oral history study of the neighborhood of Teşvikiye in Istanbul; her own family history; and an adult education and oral history project contributing to Armenian-Turkish reconciliation.

Afterwards at 7p.m. a film by Talin Suciyan and Lara Ahronian on a feminist writer, socialist, and armenian activist ("Finding Zabel Yesayan") will be shown.

Venue:
Ballhaus Naunynstraße

Naunynstraße 27
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