

Reckoning with Refugeedom – Artist Commission



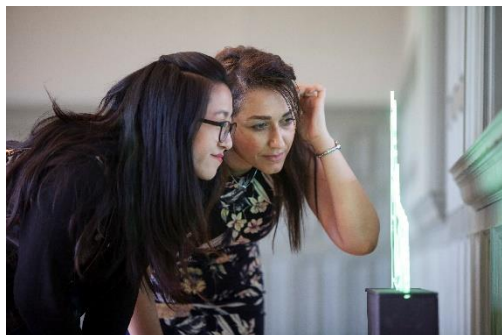
Overview

ArtReach, producers of *Journeys Festival International*, are seeking applications from artists from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds, working in any creative medium, to produce new work in response to the 'hidden voices' of refugees and displaced people in history. The artwork will respond to and be inspired by research and historical documentation gathered from global archives.

The successful artist or artists group will get the opportunity to work closely with researchers from the University of Manchester and have access to a wealth of research material to draw from. They will be paired with a professional creative mentor to support their development of the artistic response. The final work will be presented nationally at each edition of *Journeys Festival International* 2019 (Leicester in August, Manchester in October and Portsmouth also in October).

Reckoning with Refugeedom, 1919-75: Refugee Voices in Modern History is an AHRC-funded research project based at the University of Manchester, led by Prof. Peter Gatrell. Conceived as a refugee-centred perspective on the modern era, this project proposes a bold, timely and original approach, drawing on unexplored personal testimonies of women and men, and on interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives to lay stronger foundations for refugee history. <https://reckoningwithrefugeedom.wordpress.com>

Journeys Festival International aims to celebrate and highlight the extraordinary and powerful artwork, music, creativity, culture and experiences that refugee artists bring to the UK. It works across a wide range of creative media and disciplines to showcase the exceptional talent of local, national and international refugee artists into the public eye. See www.journeysfestival.com for more information.



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Commission Details and How to Apply

The Successful Applicant will receive:

- An Artist fee of £3000 will be paid to the successful applicant
- Support from a creative mentor in a relevant field
- Travel and accommodation
- Documentation and marketing support for the project
- Project Management support from ArtReach production team
- Performances or presentations of the work in Manchester, Leicester and Portsmouth with festival partners

Applications must be from artists from refugee backgrounds or refugee led artists groups or companies currently based in the UK.

Proposals can be for the creation of a new artwork in any artistic form such as but not limited to; visual art, moving image, digital, performance, theatre, music, installation or multi art form projects.

Proposals will be assessed by members of the ArtReach and University of Manchester teams on following criteria:

- Originality and innovation
- Response and relevance to the brief
- Artist's track record and quality of previous work.

To apply please submit an application in PDF format, no longer than 5 pages and include the following:

- Detailed project proposal highlighting how your proposed piece of work responds to the wider themes and research of the Reckoning with Refugeeedom project. (Examples of research material below - these are provided to show the types of research that may be discovered during these project)
- Brief development timeline
- Budget breakdown

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- Details of other relevant projects including images
- Artists CV / Track Record with links to websites or videos hosted on line
- You may also include concept sketches or diagrams where necessary

Please email your submission to dan@artreach.biz no later than **12:00 noon on Monday 15th April 2019**

If you would like any further information please contact Dan Williamson (ArtReach Producer for JFI Manchester) at dan@artreach.biz or on 01612734090

Further information about the approach of 'Reckoning with Refugeedom':

The project aims to address the following challenges and questions about refugees in modern history:

- How did they express themselves? And where and how did they do this?
- What knowledge did refugees use to make claims on institutions, on one another and on non-refugees?
- Did they present themselves as victims, as marginalised, as invisible, or did they take a more active role in debating their position?
- Have these refugees become historians of their own displacement through making their voice heard and recorded?

These questions have not been addressed before by historians and so refugee crises continue to be poorly recorded in history, leaving refugees poorly represented. This project aims to put the stories of refugees from this period of history at the centre of the project by using unexplored personal accounts of women and men that will make the narrative of refugee history stronger.

The project will do this through bringing these historical personal accounts, 'refugee voices', from the archives to scholars and the general public for the first time. It will connect these smaller personal stories to wider historical events and these accounts alongside the policies and interventions of governments and non- governmental organisations (NGO's).

The source material for the research will include the voices of refugees from different backgrounds through petitions, letters and personal correspondence that considers, how refugees spoke out, how they engaged with history and issues around how they came to be displaced, their understanding of the personal and political consequences of 'being refugee'.

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Four linked case studies will reflect different moments in this period:

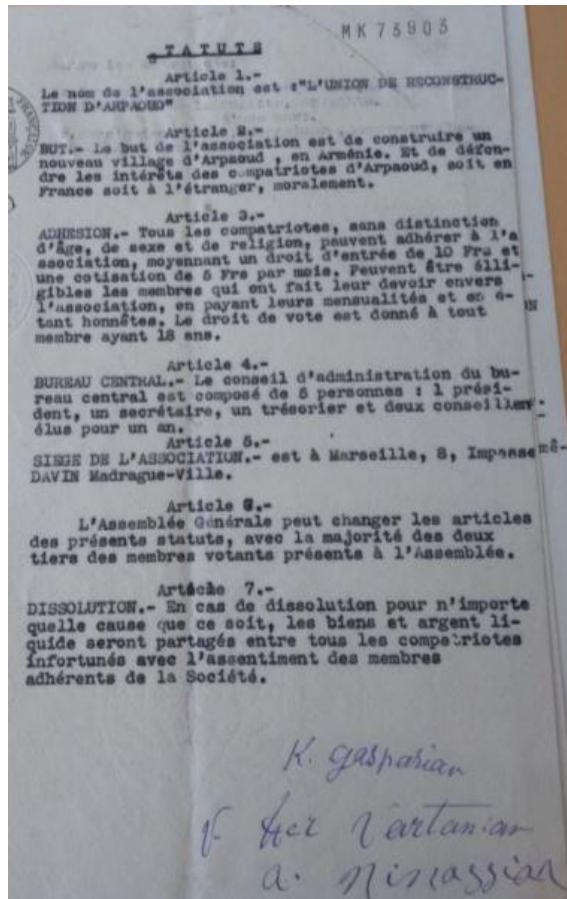
- Refugees reaching France between the two world wars ('the League of Nations refugee regime');
- Displaced Persons in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (the 'pre-UNHCR era'),
- The enlarged internationalised refugee regime during the 1950s and 1960s ('early UNHCR'),
- India in the aftermath of Partition ('non-UNHCR').

See below for examples of related research gathered so far.



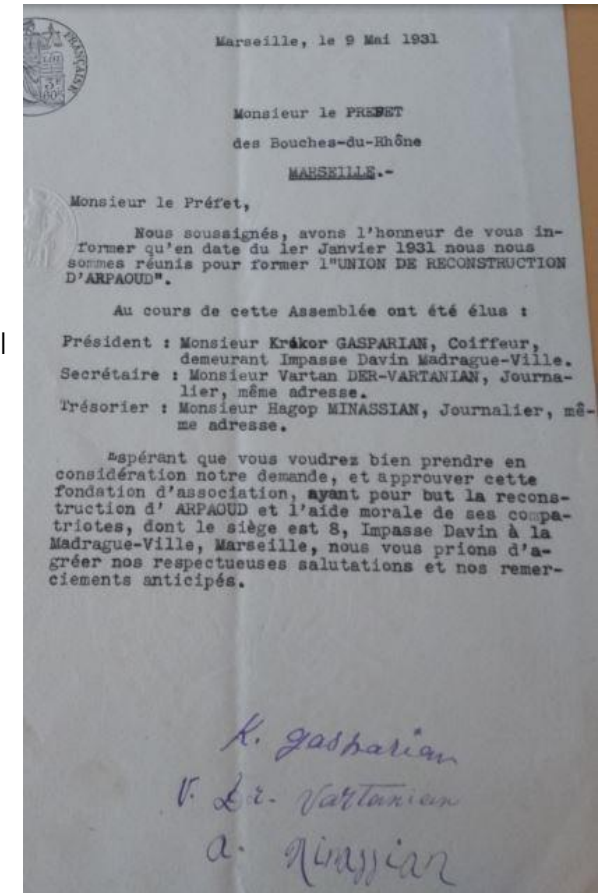
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1. Communities in Exile



Founding constitution and minutes of the
'Union de Reconstruction d'Arpaoud'.
Archives Départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône,
4 M 836

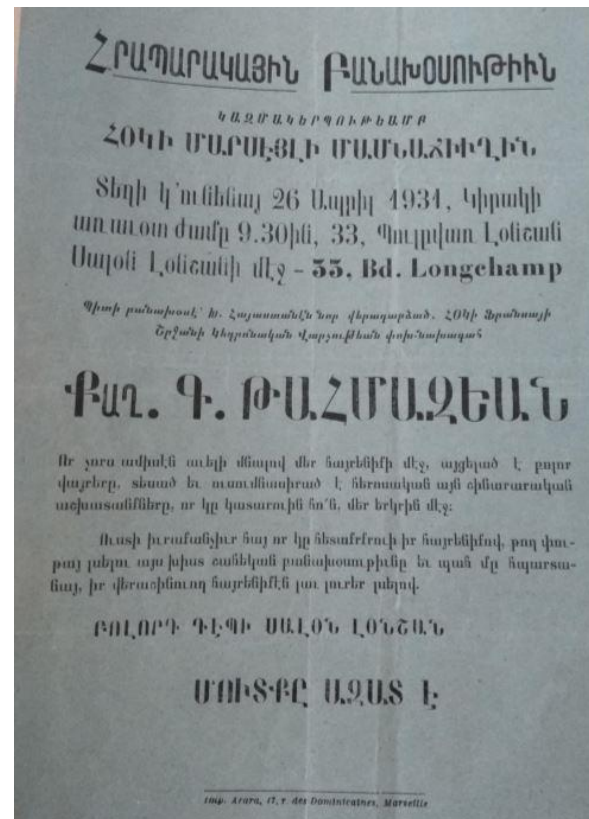
This was the first of 23 associations established
by the Armenian community in Marseille between
1931 and 1936, each of which aimed to reconstruct
a particular Armenian town, village or region. The goal
of this association was to 'build a new village of
Arpaoud, in Armenia. And to defend the interests
of compatriots from Arpaoud, either in France
or abroad, morally'. The founding committee
members were Krikor Gasparian (a hairdresser);
Vartan Der-Vartanian (a manual labourer)
and Hagop Minassian (a manual labourer),
all resident at the Impasse Davin, Madrague-Ville.



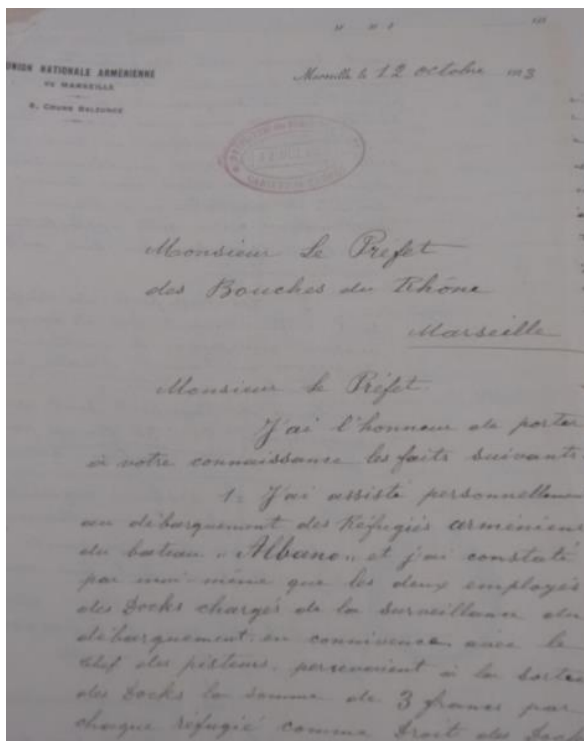
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Flier advertising a speech by M. Tahmazian, Vice-President of the Armenian Communist HOK Committee, to the Armenian community in Marseille, describing his four month trip to Soviet Armenia; Salons Longchamp, 26 April 1931; ADBR 4 M 2354



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2. Petitionary Culture: The Diaspora takes on the Bureaucracy

A letter from the President of the Union Nationale Arménienne de Marseille to the Prefect of the Bouches du Rhône, 12 October 1923, ADBR, 4 M 957

This letter complains about the poor treatment received by Armenian refugees arriving on the 'Albano', including the fact that each refugee was illegally charged 3frs as a landing fee by corrupt dock officials. Appealing to France's self-image as a caring land of refuge, as well as recent wartime experiences, the letter asserts that the French 'paternally welcomed the debris of a nation that was the victim of its fidelity to the allied cause during the war, and this humane behaviour inspires nothing but thankfulness among Armenians towards France's magnanimity'. This, the petition claimed, would surely spur the Prefect to act against the exploitation of Armenians arriving into France.

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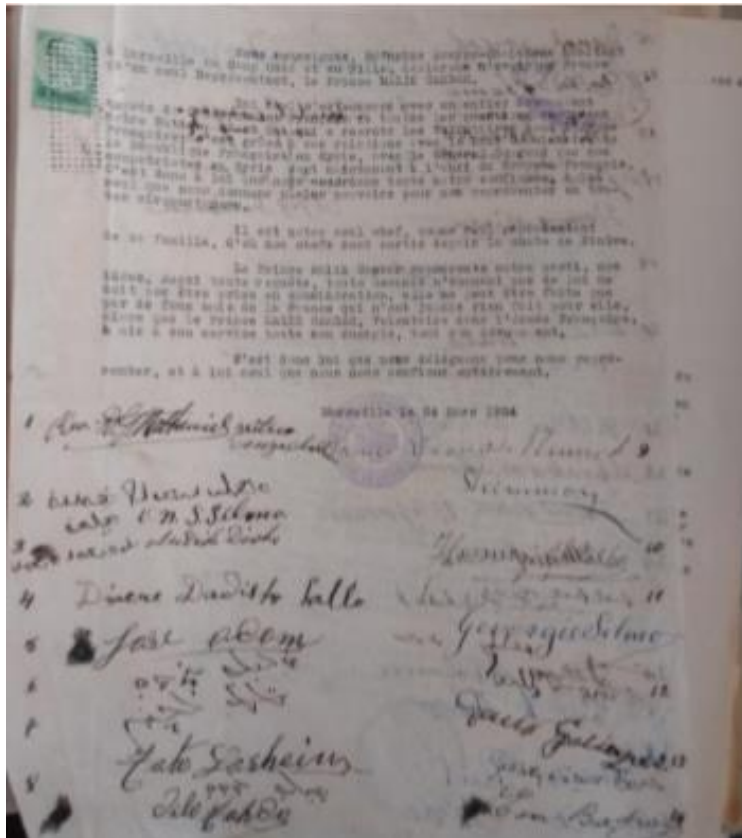


3. Unruly Refugees

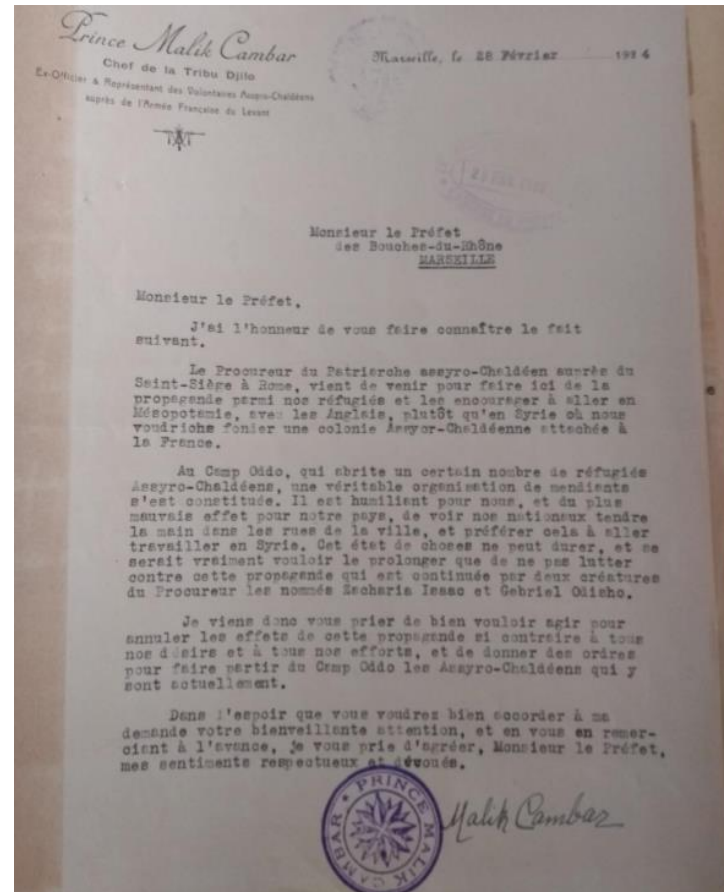
On 5 January 1923, a group of 131 Syrian Christian refugees arrived into Marseille, en route to Argentina. They were the first of several thousand and, when their onward passage was blocked by the Argentinian authorities, they were stranded in the southern French port city. Most would remain in Camp Oddo, a refugee camp in the centre of Marseille, for years. Quickly, two rival groups emerged, each claiming to represent these refugees – one, led by a priest named Petros, and the other led by the self-styled 'Prince' Malik Cambar. Throughout the 1920s, supporters of both Petros and Cambar consistently petitioned the French authorities demanding that their man be recognised as official leader of the Syrian Christians in France and denouncing their rivals as frauds, imposters and criminals. These letters deliberately and creatively played on the ignorance of French authorities concerning Syrian Christian society – Malik Cambar, for instance, described himself as a 'Prince' and as 'Head of the Djilo Tribe'. This appears to have worked for a time, until someone in the French Ministry of the Interior finally worked out that there were no 'tribes' in Syrian Christian society, and that 'Malik' is actually better translated as 'mayor' than 'prince'. This did not prevent Cambar from launching a propaganda campaign presenting himself as the leader of the Syrian Christian nation in exile, which included issuing his own passports to refugees (which were, needless to say, not recognised by the French). Eventually, the French authorities decided he was fraudster, and that he had sent false priests around the city collecting money on behalf of Syrian Christian refugees, which he had pocketed rather than distributing among his compatriots in Camp Oddo. He was expelled in October 1925.

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Petition signed by the heads of 31 Syrian Christian families, asking that 'Prince' Malik Cambar be named their representative, 24 March 1924; ADBR 4 M 2368

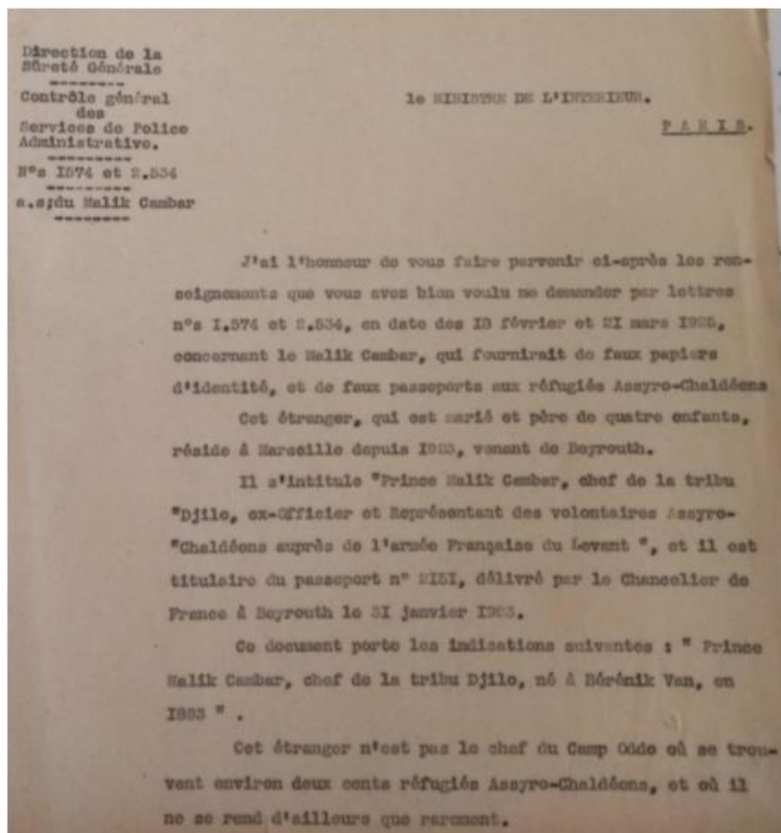


Letter from 'Prince Malik Cambar, head of the Djilo Tribe' to the Prefect, denouncing two of his rivals, 28 Feb 1924, ADBR 4 M 2368

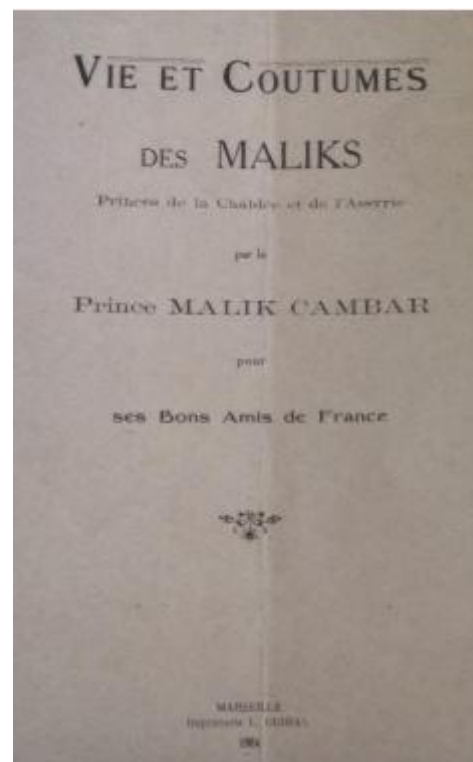


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Report from the French Ministry of the Interior, calling into question Cambar's credentials as a 'prince' and pointing out how difficult it is to ascertain his real background, April 1925, ADBR 4 M 2368



Self-published booklet by Cambar, attempting to justify his credentials as a Prince, ADBR 4 M 2368



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Prefectoral note confirming the Expulsion of Cambar, 12
October 1925

