

հայտոյս Haytoug

official publication of the armenian youth federation

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Ապրիլ 2000

these eyes . . .



this faith. . .

these hands . . .

have survived. . .

Khatoun Pournazian

Born 1899 in Yenije, Bursa

Table of Contents

Action: The Tradition of the AYF experience <i>Raffi Hamparian</i>	3
Open letter to the Armenian People <i>Baroness Caroline Cox</i>	4-5
Youth Corps information	6
Remember the First Holocaust <i>Robert Fisk</i>	7
The State of the Armenian Diaspora: Notes on hip-hop, .com and revolution <i>Alex Sardar</i>	8
This Is It - Continues <i>Christopher Guldjian</i>	9
Genocide Project	10-12
The White Genocide is a Reality <i>M.R. Karayapourjian</i>	14
Great Initiative by Turkish Students	14
System of a Down Demands Recognition <i>Maria Hovsepien</i>	15
AYF Summer Camp information	16
Genocide Related Webpages	17
Letter to the Turkish Counsel in Los Angeles <i>Tanya Gulesserian</i>	18
In Memory of Antranig Atymejian	19
Poet's Corner	20

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The Official Publication of the
ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION
ARF Youth Organization of Western America

For all Armenian Youth residing in Western America who
strive for the national, social and economic liberation of
the Armenian people.

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EDITORIAL

When the Armenian Genocide took place 85 years ago, the future of the Armenian nation looked bleak. Although the plan of the Ottoman government to annihilate Armenians had not come true, Armenians had become disbursed all over the world. This made it much more difficult to maintain national identity, culture and heritage. Our generation of survivors considered it imperative for them to find means in order to maintain our identity. The Diaspora's apathetic approach to things came to an end in 1965 when the 50th anniversary of the Genocide reminded our communities that memorial services achieve nothing in terms of world politics and genocide recognition. Thus, the communities were mobilized and since then Genocide commemorations have turned into political events, heading towards achieving a clear political goal: Genocide recognition. As we enter the 21st century, our challenge has become tougher. Our survivors are slowly becoming extinct and the first full generation of great grandchildren of survivors is developing into teenagers and young adults. They are not growing up hearing the eyewitness reports of our grandparents. They do not hear of genocide atrocities from the survivors themselves. To them, the Genocide is simply a historical event that occurred in our history. This is a serious problem, which warrants discussion and action.

Now, what is our role in this? What is the role of the youth? How can we modernize our ways to go about things without compromising our political goals and aspirations? These are the tough questions that we must answer. Many opinion articles that appear in Haytoug address some of these questions. Some offer outlooks that we do not wholly share, while others may contradict another writer's opinion. This is where we believe our power lies. The power of our youth and community lie within our diversity. Our different propositions and solutions to issues are what give us strength. All this is true, so long as we remain focused on our long term goals and aspirations. We have no choice but to take on these challenges.

A great threat hovers above us. This threat challenges the poet, the blue collar worker, the executive, the student and just about everybody else in our community. The threat of losing our identity is in front of us. Are you going to respond? Do you have an answer to it? Or will you lie down and lose? I think you must respond since we must choose nothing but to win. If you have the commitment and conviction to do well in school and career since you are not a loser, then you should not lose here as well. If you have the commitment and drive in you to love somebody since you do not want to lose them, then you should not lose here as well. Bottom line is that you are not a loser. Furthermore, you are a winner in school, career, in your family, with interpersonal relationships and just about anything else you try. Now, give one good reason as to why you are not ready to be a winner here.

While some of us contribute to this community effort through our involvement in politics, others contribute through arts, literature, athletics and other interests. The common denominator is the fact that all of us are geared towards the same ideal. That is what makes the youth of this nation so powerful and unique. Some of you may write off these thoughts as too idealistic and others may consider it too mellow. Truth is that just like our forefathers did not choose to be victims of the genocide, we did not choose to be born and raised in a land away from Armenia. So long as that remains true, we are consistently threatened to lose our identity.

Having set the premise of the match, do you have the will to win? More importantly, do you have the will to survive?

Action: The Trademark of the AYF Experience

By: Raffi Hamparian

The AYF is magical. With over 100,000 alumni in America alone, its special blend of camaraderie, cooperation, and civic duty has made the AYF the major force that instills patriotic feeling among Armenian-American youth and motivates generation upon generation to perpetuate the Armenian spirit and pursue the Armenian Cause.

No organization in the Armenian Diaspora, no matter how well-funded, has been able to match the awareness, fresh energy, innovation, and togetherness that Armenian Youth Federation members have brought to the collective Armenian community. These facts illustrate what makes the AYF magical.

What's behind the magical success of the AYF anyway? Well, it's a story about dedicated people, an outstanding organization, and an admirable cause. It is a story that deserves to be told and retold, because it reflects upon why dedicated AYF members are so special. And it is a story about a bunch of dreamers, dreamers from California, from New Jersey, from all across America.

Let's run through just some of the unique people who have made the AYF so special. These people represent a host of heroes who have motivated AYF members of yesterday and today. Along-with each name listed, there is also a principle they have abided by, along with a quote that explains the principle, uttered by an even more well known person. At the end of this article, after reading about the three cited, put your own name down. After all, you and your fellow AYFers are our heroes too, committed young people who believe in the greatness of the AYF and the mission of the Armenian Cause.

Leo Ohanian & Vision-

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible."
(Quote by Jonathan Swift)

Leo Ohanian lives in upstate New York. His area had no AYF chapter in it, so Leo did what few people do, and helped create one. Joined by his friends, Leo helped found the Albany "Shoushi" chapter in 1993. Since its founding, this chapter has become one of the most active branches on the East Coast.

(continues on page 9)

OPEN LETTER TO THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

By: Baroness Caroline Cox

I WRITE THIS LETTER AS SOMEONE WHO HAS A GREAT LOVE AND ADMIRATION FOR THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE. IT IS THIS LOVE WHICH COMPELS ME TO RAISE THE ALARM.

A decade after regaining its independence, Armenia might be in such great danger that its independence and very existence may be threatened. The hope created by negotiations with Azerbaijan currently being pursued by the Armenian government is deceptive. The Islamist forces in the Caucasus are determined decisively to 'resolve' the 'problems' of Armenia and Karabakh by force. Nobody, least of all Azerbaijan and Turkey, will stand in their way. Given the enormity of this threat and the complexities of the international political and economic interests, it is imperative that the Armenian Diaspora rally urgently to the help of the homeland before it is too late. It is far more important, and a far greater challenge, to act now to prevent another genocide from being unleashed than later to mourn yet another holocaust. I therefore write this letter with a heavy heart and in a spirit of profound humility.

I have visited your homelands of Armenia and Artsakh 46 times. Many of those visits were during the bitter war with Azerbaijan, when I witnessed at first hand the phenomenal courage and dignity of your people. You were fighting against odds which seemed impossible, to save your families, your lands, your freedom and your unique cultural heritage. You won that war and the brave Armenians of Artsakh have since been valiantly rebuilding their shattered lives and land.

But now you are in danger of losing the peace - and your independence. If you do not act quickly you will lose not only the sacred land of Artsakh but Armenia too, and there will be another genocide to commemorate.

Two threats endanger your nation. The first is internal and suicidal. The present leadership of Armenia is under tremendous pressure to strike a deal and seems to be succumbing to the point of betraying all those who shed their blood or who sacrificed their loved ones for Artsakh. Are you going to allow your political leaders to give away the lands of Southern Armenia and cut Armenia off from Iran? Are you going to give away the buffer zone, which has protected your people throughout these years of cease-fire? Are you going to allow Artsakh to be returned to a precarious and vulnerable status, with nothing achieved for all the blood that has been shed? The last state will be worse than the first and the war will have been lost.

The second threat is external, predictable and imminent. Azerbaijan is escalating its preparations for renewed military offensives, in partnership with the Islamist fighters in Chechnya. So now, while you are weakened by leaders who only seem to be interested in holding on to their own power, you face a bigger military threat than ever before. Now you are confronted not just by Azerbaijan aided by Turkey. You are also threatened by militant Islamists who have declared their intention to unite with Azerbaijan to conquer the whole of the Caucasus - and Karabakh is one of their first targets.

In a recent interview given with Elkhan Shahinoglu and Agasi Hun of the Baku Azadlyg newspaper, Ali Ulukhayev, Chechnya's 'ambassador' to Baku, declares: "Chechens will not be satisfied with the liberation of their own territory." Only a regional 'solution' is a viable option for the Chechen Islamist leadership. He highlights in particular the urgent imperative to deal with Karabakh, as "Nagorno Karabakh always was an inalienable part of Azerbaijan."

Dear Armenian friends, you waited so long to regain an independent Armenia. Now you are about to lose it, after so short a time. You suffered one genocide in the 20th century. Are you going to allow another genocide so soon in the 21st century - this time, a self-inflicted genocide? One-and-a-half million Armenians were lost in the terrible year of 1915. But in recent times, many more than one-and-a-half million Armenians have left Armenia. Who will remain to rebuild and to defend your homeland?

While you still have your freedom in Armenia and Artsakh, please use it to restore democracy and justice; and to prepare to defend yourselves against those who even now are talking of conquering you. Those of you who live in freedom in the Diaspora, please redouble your efforts to build international support for your beleaguered homeland. And please do not use all your resources on efforts to achieve recognition of the past, historic genocide (important as that is) but mobilize to prevent a new genocide.

If the present course of events is not stopped, your leadership in Yerevan will have fatally weakened and betrayed your country; you will be unable to defend yourselves against those who proclaim their determination to conquer you and to achieve an Islamist Caucasus; and all those who gave their lives for your historic land, will have died in vain.

My aim is not to sow despair. On the contrary, I firmly believe that an independent Armenia and Artsakh are destined to flourish and to emerge as bulwarks of stability and prosperity in the Caucasus. However, this destiny will not be achieved, and the worst will happen, if the current political dynamics are allowed to continue.

It is imperative that the entire Armenian people, both in your homeland and in the Diaspora, are mobilized to put the resurrection of Armenia and Artsakh back on track. The role of the Diaspora in the West is of crucial significance in this endeavour, for a determined intervention by the governments of the United States and the key European powers might deter the Islamists and their supporters from unleashing their intended onslaught. Moreover, a thorough re-examination of the oil exploration and pipeline prospects by Western governments and companies will deprive the Islamists in the Caucasus of much of their funds and their main source of political influence. These are crucial undertakings which the leadership in Yerevan and Stepanakert cannot possibly accomplish on their own. You and your friends must mobilize and work together before it is too late for the people we all love and admire in Armenia and in Artsakh.

Please forgive me if I have offended you, but I can stay silent no longer. During the war, in January 1992, I could not sleep at night in England, thinking of your people in Artsakh suffering and dying without medicines. I had to act, to do what I could to help to save the lives of your people. Now I am wakeful with dread of another war and another genocide. The only action I can take now is to speak, to warn you and to urge you to act before it is too late.

So, I have spoken. I can do no more.
With all my heart, and with my love, I pray for you,

Caroline Cox,
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**LET US KNOW
WHAT YOU THINK
ABOUT THIS TOPIC**

**EMAIL:
HAYTOUG2000@AOL.COM**

SHAME ON YOU “BARONESS CAROLINE COX”

Referring to your Open Letter to the Armenian People March 30 2000, as Swedes with Azerbaijani root we shame to call you an European, a Christian and, the last but not the least, a human. At a time when the world community declares collaboration and dialogue instead of isolation and war, this letter clearly stands in contrast to all achievements gained by humankind. Shame on you, Cox.

You write “I have visited Artsakh 46 times. I was witnessed your fighting against odds to save your unique cultural heritage”. In order to educate you, just let us give you some facts about Nagorno Karabagh, Caroline Cox. Nagorno Karabagh has NEVER been populated by Armenians since ancient times. The first Armenian immigrated to the Karabagh in according to article 15 of the Russo-Persian Treaty of Turkmenchai. But we doubt that you will bother yourself to take a few minutes of your hate producer time to study unbiased history of the region.

You write “The present leadership of Armenia seems to be succumbing to the point of betraying all those who sacrificed their loved ones for Artsakh”. It seems very incomprehensible for us when the majority of Armenians are preferring security in the region and peace with neighbor people in order to improve their life condition, but you try to mislead them into hostilities. Do you REALLY love and admire Armenian people?

We would like also remind you, Caroline Cox, that despite a wide range of international “sympathy” from Christian countries, yet Armenia has been condemned by most of those west countries as an aggressor which occupies 20% of Azerbaijani territory in violation of the UN resolutions 822 (on 30 April 1993) and 853 (on 29 July 1993).

Finally, we would like ask you two simple questions and hope that you have courage to reply us. Why are you so hateful against Azerbaijanis? Have you ever talked with a psychologist about your abnormal attitude?

So, we pray for your soul,

Manaf Sababi Ph.D.
Chairman
Swedish-Azerbaijani Association ARAZ
Box 3004
200 22 Malmö-Sweden

What is the AYF Youth Corps ?

Young Diaspora Armenians have been wondering what they can do to help Armenia now that the barriers have been lifted. The doors have been opened for Armenians from abroad to become a positive physical presence in the homeland. It is now possible for young Armenians to spend a few weeks during the summer assisting where it is needed most, in border towns and war torn villages in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Motivated individuals in search of a summer experience to enrich their lives should choose to participate in the AYF Youth Corps program.

The program allows young Armenians to spend approximately five weeks in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh supplying the manpower to villages where residents are attempting to rebuild their lives.

Aside from supplying real, positive assistance to our brethren in Armenia, participants will experience the homeland in the most meaningful way. Their hard work will become one more building block in the progress of our nation.

Who is eligible to participate?

If you have the courage to help, you must apply. The AYF Youth Corps is open to all young Armenians over the age of 18 who are motivated and enthusiastic about helping Armenia. This is a unique opportunity for dedicated youth to make a tangible contribution to their ancestral homeland. Participants can expect memories that they will cherish forever and experiences that will increase their understanding of themselves. Take the challenge, come and experience

your homeland the way it should be experienced. All that is needed is the will to help.



"... their freedom is their most valuable possession ..."

The time has once again come for the 2000 AYF Youth Corps Committee to accept applications for the upcoming Armenia Campaign this summer. Once again a selected group from the Armenian Diasporan Youth will participate in the construction of a daycare center in the village of Ashan in the Mardouni region. Any interested participants should send in an application before the May 28 deadline. The summer campaign dates are tentatively set for July 7th to August 11th.

If you need any further information please contact the Youth Corps Committee at 818.507.1933 or by e-mail at AYFYC@aol.com.

REMEMBER THE FIRST HOLOCAUST

The following article is reprinted from the January 28, 2000 issue of "The Independent". Even though Haytoug generally refrains from reprinting articles, we felt that the following article by Fisk addresses the Armenian Genocide in a powerful manner. The article also appeared in the San Francisco Examiner.

Robert Fisk

"Who now remembers the Armenians?" Hitler asked, just before he embarked on the destruction of European Jewry. Precious few, it seems. As the memorial day for the Nazi genocide against the Jews was proclaimed by Mr. Blair this week, there was not a single reference to the slaughter of one and a half million Armenian Christians by the Ottoman Turks in 1915. The world's first holocaust-and Hitler's inspiration for the slaughter of the Jews-was ignored.

Why, I wonder? Mr. Blair did not mention it. President Chirac is frightened of the very subject, refusing even to condemn the slaughter when he last visited Beirut, where the grandchildren of the victims live in their tens of thousands. The United States government prefers to forget the holocaust of Armenians, while the Turks -the inheritors of the empire that committed the worst atrocities of the First World War - are studiously denying the genocide. And we let them get away with it.

Who, I wonder, chooses which holocaust we should remember and which we should not? The six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis must always have a place in our history, our memory, our fears. Never again. But alas, the Armenians who perished in the rivers of Southern Turkey, who were slaughtered in their tens of thousands in the deserts of Northern Syria, whose wives and daughters were gang-raped and knifed to death by the gendarmerie and their Kurdish militiamen - they have no place in our memory or our history.



Turkey is our friend. Turkey might one day join the European Union. Turkey is an ally of Israel.

History, of course, is a hard taskmaster, veined with inconvenient facts and corrupted heroes as well as the massacre of innocents. The Armenian community in Turkey had its Allied sympathizers when the Ottoman army was fighting the British and French in the First World War, and the Armenians also fought in the tsarist Russian army against Turkey. But the proof of genocide is intact. The Young Turk movement - once a liberal organization which the Armenians had supported- had taken control of the dying empire and adopted a "pan-Turkism" which espoused a Turkish speaking Muslim nation from Constantinople to Baku. Within weeks of their victory over the allies at the Dardanelles in 1915, they fell upon the Armenians. Churchill was to refer to the "merciless fury" unleashed upon the Christian minority. The US ambassador in Constantinople -himself a Jew- wrote heart-wrenching reports back to Washington of mass slaughter. Near the Turkish village of Mus, hundreds of men were lined up on the bridges and shot into the river, Serb-style.

Behind the Aushwitz-Birkenea camp in Poland, I was once taken by a camp guide to a series of small lakes in which the Nazis dumped the ash of the crematoria. Beneath the water and ice lay the powdered white bones of whole cities of people. Yet in the North Syrian desert there are still skulls and bones in caves and in the clay of riverbanks. This place of martyrdom is visited once a year by the local Armenian community to commemorate their holocaust. They even have a holocaust memorial day. Yet I wonder if a single non-Armenian reader of The Independent knows what the date is?

Denial of the holocaust is in some countries a crime. I'm talking, of course, about the Jewish Holocaust -because denial of the Armenian

(continued on page 13)

THE STATE OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA(S):

Notes on hip-hop, .com, and revolution

By: Alex Sardar

As the Armenian nation prepares to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Genocide, political and social discourse, too, begins to acquire a tone of urgency, once again addressing the realities of diasporan communities. Assimilation, cultural loss, intermarriage, and other such topics are discussed with broad brush strokes, intending to bring a diverse people into a confined set of characteristics and prescriptions.

While this annual ritual is not surprising, it certainly is stale. To be fair, there is also the other extreme of this scenario, which entails individuals who, for the month of April or the days preceding commemorative activities, bring out that dusty suitcase full of cultural sacrament and little pieces of ethnic self-discovery-not unlike summer clothes-and begin to pay homage to an identity they neither possess, nor care to validate the rest of the year.

Within these extremes lie the hundreds of Armenian communities outside of Armenia, comprising many diasporas, with many realities and many circumstances. In this diversity also lies the key to the survival of Armenians away from a homeland, and the survival of Armenians inside a homeland. Living in a diasporan community, one becomes accustomed to rhetoric touting the sanctity of the Armenian culture, the virtues of remaining Armenian, but very rarely does one hear how a young person growing up in Southern California or a remote community in New Zealand should understand and actualize such utterly abstract ideas. Telling and expecting indulgence from a teenager, who is lost in a labyrinth of raging hormones, material wants, self-doubt and endless commercial attack, that s/he should also add the burden of remembering her or his dead ancestors and the ideal of a land and people far removed from her or his reality, just seems to be unrealistic.

And at the same time, it is just as unrealistic to envision diasporan communities all alike, and all needing the same formula for preservation.

So, what do organizations and individuals in charge of the organized Armenian communities' youngster have to do to reach a segment of their populations so far in the periphery that inclusion seems alien to them.

It seems it would be a good beginning to realize that what worked to keep Armenian kids within their communities in the 1980's and early 1990's, and what works to a certain extent today in more sheltered middle-eastern diasporan communities does not work for a community-like Southern California's-situated in the heart of the world's biggest factory of generic and commercial image production. It just does not!

Evoking sentiments of past struggles, armed conflict, and fallen heroes-as sad as this realization is-does not have a lasting impact on today's Armenian children, who are more interested in what their non-Armenian friends are wearing and listening to, as opposed to what a group of people did for their nation. The awareness that the sacrifice of young Armenian heroes in the past does not inspire a new generation is indeed very difficult, but to reiterate the same line continuously in the hopes of capturing the youth today not only doesn't result in anything, but it further drives youngsters away.

Organizations cannot expect that by stating the "ultimate goals" of a nation, the children-the future-of that nation will adhere.

So, what to do? There is not a simple answer, as there are many complex communities and needs to address.

But a start would be for Armenians to begin realizing that the sanctuary of their culture is not a logical safety blanket anymore.

As such, one must go beyond the reasons of why this is, and begin to approach today's youth in the same language they are accustomed to following.

Hip hop, rock and .com, not to mention English, street slang and short attention spans are the orders of the day.

To excite and invigorate the Armenian spirit in a teenager, perhaps organizations need to pay more attention to first capturing as much attention, before lecturing on what to pay attention to.

Educational and cultural events and lectures need not necessarily target that which was in the past, but they must feature what is today, like a rock band comprised of Armenians, a web site on how to be active in politics without being overtly Armenian, and a lecturer speaking in non-standard English evoking present-day notions. True, that these topics, as generic as they may sound in this context may not necessarily teach a teenager in one sitting about every single freedom fighter and every significant battle in the history of that nation's liberation struggle, but what it will do is open the way for that teenager's return to a second lecture, or social event. And this is perhaps the most important job of an Armenian diasporan community-that of keeping its new generation interested, even if the interest has to be on non-traditional subjects.

Writers, in this publication and others, have of late spoken about the purpose and goals of the Armenian nation in a new century. They have spoken about modernity and its theoretical application to the case of the Armenian nation. They have written extensively about the overarching goals of "a Diaspora" and "a nation."

(continued on page 13)

This Is It . . . Continues

By: Christopher Guldjian

Disclaimer: The following commentary tries to interpret a 1983 article. The risk of contradicting the author's intent does exist.

In April 1983, the Haytoug publication gave light to an article that umbrellas and insulates the entire Armenian struggle vis-à-vis the youth. This writing is currently unnoticed by the vast majority of activists, but unbeknownst to them, it is a manifesto denouncing hundreds of years of oppression while generally outlining an movement. The subject matter and content is theoretical however seventeen years ago it was taken literally by thousands of Armenians. The objective of this analysis is to develop a modern interpretation of the message noted in the article, This Is It, in order to bridge the gap between armed struggle and modern political / social activism.

The theme of the 1983 article is uttered in the following quote: "they can never stop a whole movement and its momentum, which is the creation of our People's womb itself, its product, its reflection." In other words, no force can hinder the strength of collective power and uniformity. No entity can damage the national identity of a People ready to struggle against the "time factor." A nation enters the brink of total assimilation and insensibility to their heritage when it loses that fight. This Is It was written in an era where the survivors of the Armenian Genocide were dying and the Armenian Diaspora was too comfortable with its surrounding. The youth was preoccupied with self-entertainment and foreign causes, so the article persuades young people to sacrifice a comfortable life for another fueled by hardship-sometimes ultimate losses. The key is to incorporate that idea of "sacrifice" in workable conditions of current organizational methods that appeal to the youth in a modern context.

The article exposes a sham. A so-called government that has not only massacred and raped innocent women and children, but has ultimately created the "time factor" that endangers a People's freedom to exist. The People's right to choose to speak a language and practice their customs has been negated not directly, rather through a series of consequences, it has become unusual to be ourselves-and the youth knows this. The sham continues today. The same government is systemically denying "the prosecution" that has caused the time factor and forced assimilation.

The author simply outlines three steps for a successful struggle against agents of oppression. The factors include (1) leadership through national will; (2) revolutionary conscience for a grassroots movement; (3) an ideology depicting dignity, justice, freedom, equality and peace-all the basic rights of humans. These factors are not as simple as they sound but encompass a vision with the potential that young people can make a difference. The author cries out to the reader to take guard and stand up for the rights bestowed upon him (or her). Today, more than ever, we have to take that offer and stand for the three principles above. Freedom and restitution are our rights.

(continued on page 13)

(continues from page 3)

Stepan Haytayan & Leadership: "A leader is dealer in hope."
(Quote by Napoleon 1)

In the early 1990s, a dream came true. Armenia and Artsakh had become independent republics. Many AYF members wondered what they themselves could do to help their homeland prosper. In 1994, Stepan and a number of other AYF members stepped forward and helped start the AYF Youth Corps, a program that gives AYFers an opportunity to live and work in Artsakh during the summer months. Now in its seventh year, Youth Corps helps give the people of Artsakh the hope they need to survive the Azerbaijani blockade.

Souzi Zerounian & Enthusiasm: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." (Quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Souzi knows how important it is for AYF members to be politically aware and engaged. In 1995, Souzi participated in the Summer Intern Program sponsored by the Armenian National Committee of America in Washington, DC. Souzi's never-ending enthusiasm to get AYF members politically active has proven to be nothing short of amazing.

These are just a few of the thousands of Armenian Youth Federation members who have made a difference in their communities. These three individuals and the action principles they upheld - Vision, Leadership, and Enthusiasm - represent three of the many ways in which the spirit and legacy of the AYF has always lived on in our membership.

Like each of the people listed above, you also have a special role to play in continuing to make the AYF the outstanding organization it is. It is your talent and inspiration that will shape the AYF of the 21st century. In the coming days and months, when you are thinking about what you can do in the AYF, take your encouragement from those listed above-and go for it! The genius among the founders of the AYF was that they built an organization with an important function, not simply on a set of by-laws, but on the idea that each member holds a key to the AYFs success.

The opportunity to preserve and pass on the legacy of the AYF is yours. Take up the challenge! Participate, collaborate, learn, teach, and most of all, enjoy. Take action. Sustain that magic that is the AYF

*Want to learn more about the story of the AYF ? Pick up a copy of "The AYF Legacy: A Portrait of a Movement in Historical Review, 1933-1993." It's available through the Hairenik Bookstore (617) 926-3974, and the Armenian Prelacy Bookstore (212) 689-7810. You will learn even more about your AYF forefathers, understand how the organization got to where it is today, and even get ideas about where you can take the organization from here. And to find out more about how you can get involved in such programs as the ANC Internship in Washington, DC and the AYF Youth Corps in Artsakh, contact your AYF Central Executive.

GENOCIDE *Project*

By: Silva Tovmasian

“We grew up hearing genocide stories while other kids heard fairy tales,” says Ara Oshagan. Hearing such stories since his childhood is what motivated photographer Ara Oshagan to establish the non-profit, Glendale-based, Genocide Project in 1996. His life-long friend, Garen Yegharian and photographer Levon Parian joined the project soon after. The project is an effort to document the Armenian Genocide in an artistic and compelling manner-by using portrait photography of Genocide survivors combined with their oral histories, they hope to reach a wide audience and educate Armenians as well as non-Armenians about the first genocide of the 20th Century, which unfortunately still remains largely ignored.

The photographs of the survivors center on the face and hands of the subjects making the pictures more powerful. “We put them against a black background to signify death...but they’re in the foreground because they survived,” says Oshagan. “And the focus is always on the eyes, which sucked in the horrors they witnessed.”

The Project has photographed and interviewed over 65 survivors to date and has organized Genocide survivor photographic and textual exhibits at many locations including the UCLA Kerkhoff Art Gallery, Henry P. Rio Bridge Art Gallery at the Los Angeles City Hall and the California State Capitol Building. These exhibits have attracted a wide Armenian and non-Armenian audience. Survivors who have taken part in the project have also attended these exhibits as well as public figures such as Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg and State Assembly Member, Scott Wildman.

(continued page 12)

Edward Racoubian

Born in 1906 in Sepastia (Sivas)



The first week of deportation was tolerable. We had enough food to eat. But after that it became very difficult. At one point they took away all our valuables: gold, jewelry, etc. A little later they took all our better clothes and made a heap with them as high as this house. They left us no blankets. Later, they took all our money.

We walked for several more days, occasionally running across small lakes and rivers. We started seeing corpses on the shores of these lakes. Then we began seeing them along the path. We had to walk over many of them. The stench was horrible. Twisted corpses lay all around on the ground, blackened by the sun and bloated. Vultures circled the skies above us, looking for their evening meal...

We were always looking for shade: somewhere, anywhere. But we were in the middle of the desert, there were no trees or anything around. We walked along a narrow path and we came upon a small hole in the ground which looked very much like our village tonirs. A little deeper than average height, the hole was large and 25-30 people could easily fit in it. The women lowered each other down into it. There was no water in it but the bottom was muddy. We were about 20 people and we began sucking on the mud. Some of the women made teats with their shirts filled with mud and suckled on them like children. We rested there for about a half hour. If we hadn't been forced out a little later, that would have been our best grave.

Many days later we reached the Euphrates river and despite the hundreds of bodies floating in it, we drank from it like there was no tomorrow. We quenched our thirst for the first time since our departure. They put us on small boats and we crossed to the other side. From there we walked all the all the way to Ras-ul-Ain.

Of a caravan of nearly 10,000 people, there were now only some of us 300 left. My aunt, my sisters, my brothers had all died or disappeared. Only my mother and I were left. We decided to hide and take refuge with some Arab beduins. My mother died there under their tents and they branded me as their own with tattoos on my hands.

I stayed with the beduins until I was 18 years old. They let me go hungry and beat me often. I spent most of my days in the desert. When I was 18, I met some Christian Arabs who told me to go to Aleppo where I could find some Armenians. In January 1933, I arrived in Aleppo.

photographs by ara oshagan and Levon Parian
Oral history by Genocide Project



Kristine Hagopian

Born in 1906 in Izmir

We had already been deported once, in 1915-16, sent toward Dier-ez-Zor. But my uncle's friend had connections in the government and he had us ordered back to Izmir.

Orders came again that everyone must gather in front of the Armenian church to be deported. My father refused to go and told us not to worry. He didn't think the Turkish government would do anything to him, since he was a government employee himself.

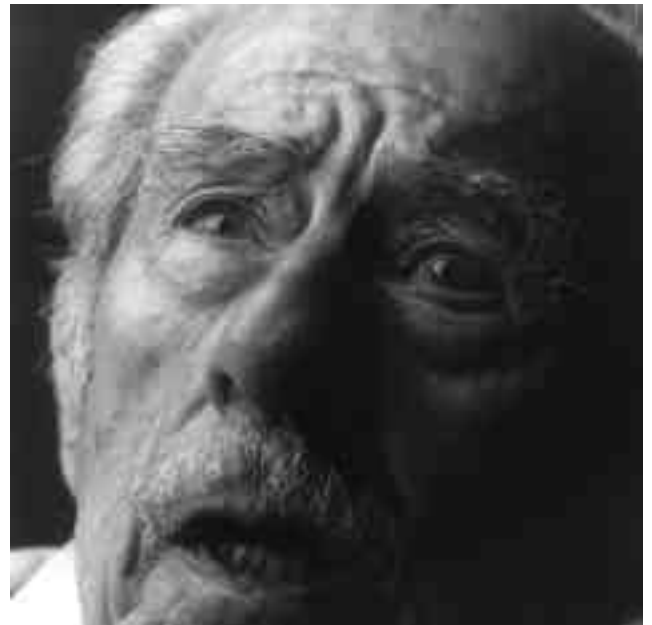
Twelve Turkish soliders and an official came very early the next morning. We were still asleep. They dragged us out in our nightgowns and lined us up against the living room wall. Then the official ordered my father to lie down on the ground. They raped him. Raped! Just like that. Right in front of us. And that official made us watch. He whipped us if we turned away. My mother lost consciousness and fell to the floor. Afterward, we couldn't find our father. My mother looked for him frantically. He was in the attic, trying to hang himself.

Fortunately, my mother found him before it was too late. My father did kill himself later, after we escaped.

Sam Kadorian

Born in 1907 in Kharpert (Harput)

They took us from Husenik to the shores of the Euphrates River. For a while we were left alone. Sometime later, Turkish gendarmes came over and grabbed all the boys from 5 to 10 years old. I was about 7 or 8. They grabbed me too. They threw us all into a pile on the sandy beach and started jabbing us with their swords and bayonets. I must've been in the center because only one sword got me, nipped my cheek. But I couldn't cry. I was covered with blood from the other bodies on top of me, but I couldn't cry. If I had, I would not be here today. When it was getting dark, my grandmother found me. She picked me up and consoled me. It hurt so much. I was crying and she put me on her shoulder and walked around. Then some of the other parents came looking for their children. They mostly found dead bodies. The riverbank there was very sandy. Some of them dug graves with their bare hands and tried to bury their children in them. Others just pushed them into the river. Their little bodies floated away.



(continued from page 10)

During its four-year history, the Project has gained recognition as an important arts and education organization dealing with survivors of the Armenian Genocide. In April 1997, the LA Times published a short article about one of the Project's exhibits, and, in May of 1999, the LA Times Sunday Magazine featured a four-page spread of their work. Introduced by writer Janet Kinonian, that issue is estimated to have reached nearly 1.5 million households in the LA area. Attempts by Turkish lobby groups to derail the publication of that feature were unsuccessful.

The Project is also working toward publishing its work in book form in the American mass-market and is still working toward photographing and interviewing 100 survivors, its initial goal.

The Project unfortunately faces one great challenge-TIME. It is now the Year Two Thousand and 85 years have passed since the Genocide of 1915. The majority of the survivors are at least 90 years old and time is running out for them. In order to be able to overcome the time factor and be able to document as many survivors as possible, the Project is in great need of volunteers to help interview the remaining survivors-before their voices are forever silenced.

Visit www.genocideproject.org for more information about the Genocide Project. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Ara Oshagan. Also, if you know of any genocide survivors, please contact Ara Oshagan through the Project's website.



Arpiar Missakian

Born in 1894 in Kessab

In 1909, during the Adana massacres, Turkish soldiers attacked Kessab. I was merely a boy then. They came early in the morning. They were 20,000 strong with Mausers and other artillery. The men of our town fought back, my father among them. But all they had were these ancient hunting rifles. Shifteh, they called them. Not very effective. They lost 50 to 60 men before we fled. They held off the Turkish army until noon or so, then we fled.

With the help of the French, we fled to Latakia to the north on boats. We returned five to six days later to find all our houses burned to the ground. Only charred stone walls remained; everything else was burned. It took us months to rebuild.

In 1915, we were the last to be deported out of Kessab because we were Protestant. The American ambassador in Bolis had apparently secured guarantees for our safety, but we were deported anyway. They took us toward Dier-ez-Zor--the interior Syrian desert. Our whole family: my father, mother, four brothers, two sisters. I was 20 or 21 at the time. We loaded everything we had on mules and horses and set out under armed guards. They took us to Meskene on the Euphrates River. Meskene was a huge outdoor camp where tens of thousands of Armenians had been deported--bit by bit they were sent to Dier-ez-Zor, to their death. We were there for a while. We lived under tents along with a lot of others from Kessab. Most of the time we had nothing to eat. Sometimes my father would buy bread from the soldiers, but they had mixed sand with the flour--so we ate this hard bread, and sand crunched under our teeth.

Meskene was a horrible, horrible place. Sixty thousand Armenians had been buried under the sand there. When a sandstorm hit, it would blow away a lot of the sand and uncover those remains. Bones, bones, bones were everywhere then. Wherever you looked, wherever you walked.

* (Editor's note: Missakian is the oldest living veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.)

Edward Bedigian

Born in 1902 in Kesaria

There was a girl who I had befriended on the road. Her name was Satenig. She had a little bit of money and she gave it to me. "Don't let them take me," she said. They would come around every day and take whoever was dead or very weak. She was not in a good shape. I stood her up and leaned on her, held her up. They came. I was holding her up, but they saw her and took her.



This Is It*(continued from page 9)*

Although the article discusses “shockwaves” sent by the enemy, it whispers the reality of politics and how Our People has adapted to them. Our compliance with these “shockwaves” continues each day that we allow any government to continue denying a real Genocide. The article suggests that we absorb the shockwaves while sending them back with a twist-the point is-the “twists” have changed but everything else has stayed the same. The revolutionary spirit is the same, and the struggle against the agents of the same oppression must continue. The goal is the same and slightly accomplished. The atmosphere and communication is the same-facilitated by technology. Liberation has the same meaning. Issues and problems remain the same. The cause is justifiably the same while time is still ticking.

We continue to fight because It will happen and This is how. With the change of methods, we cannot alter the outlooks, ideology, character and enemy-the TIME FACTOR. We need not change our thoughts and passion for existence. Surely the author of This Is It would agree that the fight continues and the road to liberation is a long one.

Onward with the Movement !

DIASPORA*(continued from page 8)*

Well, these writers have ignored one crucial element and that is in a time of a post-modern society, where individualism is the defining notion, and undoing convention is the rule of thumb, it helps very little to speak about one collective and one collective goal. It's time for Armenians, young and old, organization and individual, female and male, to begin deconstructing processes within themselves and within their own communities in order to preserve the next generation as much as possible as intellectually and emotionally Armenian.

It is time for an intellectual and developmental revolution within each Armenian community. The question now remains, who will lead such a movement, so that in 2015, the 100th anniversary of the first genocide of the past century, can properly be commemorated.

GOT COMMENTS?

Send to

Haytoug2000@aol.com**FIRST HOLOCAUST***(continued from page 7)*

Holocaust is not only perfectly legal, it is big business. No American company selling weapons to Turkey will discuss the holocaust of 1915. Chairs of Ottoman studies are being funded by the Turkish government at American universities in which US academics -who have to prove they have used Ottoman archives to get their jobs and must never have condemned the 1915 slaughters- propagate the lie that the Armenians were merely victims of “civil war” and that Turks also died in the chaos of 1915.

Turks did. But not on the Armenian scale. Anyone who was to write that the Jews were victims of a European civil war and that, anyway, “Germans also died” would be regarded as cracked or a Neo-Nazi. Not so if you deny the Armenian Holocaust.

Take the following letter, for example: “The myth of the ‘Armenian Holocaust’ was created immediately after World War I with the hope that the Armenians could be rewarded for their ‘sufferings’ with a piece of the disintegrating Ottoman State. As such, the main aims of the inventors were political and territorial”. Now substitute the word Armenian with the word Jew. Who would ever get away with a letter about the “myth of the Jewish Holocaust” as an invention of Jews who wanted to be rewarded for “sufferings” (the quotation suggesting their falsity)? Who would ever publish such lies?

But that letter was written about the Armenians. And it was written by a Turkish ambassador. In fact -heaven spare us- it was written by Barlas Ozener, the Turkish ambassador to Israel. And it was printed, in full, in the Jerusalem Post.

But we Europeans are just as mendacious, if more discreetly so. Take Mr. Chirac in Beirut. The French Assembly had just condemned the Armenian Holocaust of 1915 -there are men of principle in French politics. But not Chirac. When asked less than two years ago for his views on the resolution, he replied: “I do not comment on matter of domestic [sic] politics when I'm abroad”. Would that have been his response if the Assembly had just denounced the Jewish Holocaust?

Mr. Blair said this week that as the Jewish survivors of the Nazi Holocaust “age become fewer in number, it becomes more and more our duty to take up the mantle and tell each new generation what happened and what could happen again”.

But there are a few very Armenian survivors left. Why weren't they asked this week about their memories? At Musa Dagh and later at Smyrna in 1920, British, French and American warships rescued a few of the pitiful Armenian survivors of that earlier Holocaust. But Mr. Blair was silent this week. And silence gives consent.

I am all for memorial days. Especially one that marks the Jewish Holocaust. And especially memorial days for other holocausts. Armenians too. But Hitler's ghost can have a little laugh this week. After all, who now remembers the Armenians?

The White Genocide

IS A REALITY

By: M. R. Karayapourjian

Being an Armenian, what does that mean to us, to anyone? Well we can say that we have a 3000-year-old history. We can say that we have a rich culture, and a strong heritage. Although we are few, we have spread all around the world. But by far, our ultimate accomplishment is that we have survived genocide; or have we?

When thinking of the Armenian Genocide, many people think of the crimes committed by the Ottoman government before and during World War I. We think of the Young Turk Government, our death marches, and the horrific stories told by our grandparents. But, what was the true plan of our enemy? Did it end with just those gruesome events? Well the answer is NO. Although they might not have used these exact words, the Turks also planned our "White Genocide." They outlawed Armenian Schools, destroyed our churches, and forbade us from speaking our own language and practicing our sacred religion.

As most of us were taught, the Turks were never able to complete their master plan. Our political leaders, thinkers, and fighters did not let the Turk succeed. They knew that in order to preserve our identity, we had to protect our language, history, and religion. They knew that we could not trust the Turks. They made the ultimate sacrifice; they gave their lives as Armenians for Armenians. We learned that, by their success we live as Armenians today.

Now I will tell you the truth that none of us want to hear. They, we, have failed. The Turks are completing their master plan right now. They are winning by using their most powerful and dangerous weapon against us: ourselves. They are using the future of our people to destroy us. We have no one to blame but ourselves. Just look around: we are starting to look at Turks as fellow human beings, our youth hardly knows their language, on April 24th the most sacred of our days,

Armenian people go about with their daily routines. I would not be surprised if our forefathers are disgusted with shame in their nameless graves. We have become the forgetful nation; we have become unworthy of calling ourselves Armenians.

Some may say that this is not proof, it is merely the circumstances that we have to live under in a country such as the United States. That is just an ignorant fools answer. Our churches are empty on Sundays, and what were once our treasured sacred religious holidays, they are now ridiculous fashion shows. Losing our religion is just another way that we are losing our identity. Most of our youth is lost. They are selfish, and do not respect anything. Their parents are in denial, these kids lives revolve around alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and for some, even felonies. This is where some would say that we have become Americanized. This is beyond Americanization; when will our people realize that we are killing ourselves. We are satisfying the old pan-Turkic dream.

As a final proof, I would like to touch upon a sensitive subject: Turkish Products at Armenian stores. These Armenians are nothing short of being traitors to our cause. They can say nothing to justify themselves. They are a disgrace to the memory of the 1.5 million Armenians that have perished in our first Genocide. This is the greatest crime of all. This is our destruction in the hands of our own people. Also these storeowners are not the only ones to blame, because demand for the product, brings about the supply of the product.

It has been 85 years since our Genocide, and the Turks still refuse to admit their crimes. It seems though we are accepting their denial, and this makes us a nation of hypocrites, cynics, and lost souls. We are now damned by the memory of our ancestors. We have become the one thing we used to truly hate: we have become Turks.

Great Initiative From Turkish Students in the US

Washington, D.C. - Turkish students in the US, who are accepted as "natural envoys" took an "important" step to get organized, it was reported Sunday.

The representatives of 67 different associations, which were established by Turkish students studying in 50 states of the US, convened for the first time during the annual meetings of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations in Washington, D.C.

Turkish students studying in several states in the Eastern part of the US have taken a step for founding an organization and convened under three different associations.

The representatives of all the Turkish students' associations attended the meeting in Washington, D.C.

Baki Ilkin, the Turkish Ambassador to Washington D.C., and three Turkish Consul Generals, also participated in the meeting.

The aim of Turkish students is to strengthen the communication among them and carry out activities to introduce Turkey, Turkish history and culture in the US.

There are 7,700 Turkish students who are registered in the US. However, it is estimated that the total number is 13-14 thousand when the other Turkish students, who are not recorded, are included in this calculation.

Addressing the meeting, Ambassador Ilkin, who played a key role in the gathering of Turkish students, said, "struggling against the Greek, Greek-Cypriot and Armenian lobbies in the US necessitates great effort. I invite you to turn out their efforts to be nothing. Our students constitute an important potential for the introduction of Turkey."

System of a Down demands Recognition!

By: Maria Hovsepian

So I was a little nervous.... O.K. fine I was very nervous. I do not even know why I was so nervous, but I was also excited. It was a mixed flurry of emotions which I can not quite exactly explain. But as soon as I begin to speak to him, it seemed as though he was just another person.

Did you guys out there know that Serge was once an AYF member, I sure did not? I recently found out and in a sense it made Serge seem real. He was no longer just the lead singer of System of a Down. There was one thing I had in common with him and it made me feel so much more comfortable. When I asked Serge what role the AYF had played in his life, he immediately answered that it introduced him to a lot of great friends. But he later went on explaining that the AYF had given him the ability of working with people towards organized political activity. It had made him work for a just causes.

By visiting the System of a Down web page it is apparent that Serge is still working for what he seems to believe in and is continually attempting to provoke the same activism within his fans whether they are Armenian or not. By clicking on the Global Action Initiatives link, visitors come across various political causes; the first one being titled "Virginia Detects Turkish Government Pressure, Adopts Armenian Genocide Resolution." Serge continually educates people about the Armenian Genocide from MTV interviews, to newspaper interviews and even on the System of a Down web site. He faces a year round task even though he commemorates the Genocide on April 24, he feels that the struggle to gain recognition should be a year round challenge and we should continually work for our cause.

"Revolution the only solution the armed response of an entire nation".

(continued on page 17)

P L U C K

Elimination

Why, Die Walk Down

A whole race Genocide,
Taken away all of our pride,
A whole race Genocide,
Taken away, Watch Them all fall down.

Revolution, the only solution,
The armed response of an entire nation,
Revolution, the only solution,
We've taken all your shit, now it's time for restitution.

Recognition, Restoration, Reparation,
Recognition, Restoration, Reparation,
Watch them all fall down.

Revolution, the only solution,
The armed response of an entire nation,
Revolution, the only solution,
We've taken all your shit, now it's time for restitution.

The plan was mastered and called Genocide (Never want to see you around)
Took all the children and then we died, (Never want to see you around)
The few that remained were never found, (Never want to see you around)
All in a system of Down.....Down.....Down.....Down.....Walk
Down.....

Watch them all fall down,
Revolution, the only solution,
The armed response of an entire nation,
Revolution, the only solution,
We've taken all your shit, now it's time for restitution.

The plan was mastered and called Genocide (Never want to see you around)
Took all the children and then we died, (Never want to see you around)
The few that remained were never found, (Never want to see you around)
All in a system , Down~

systemofadown.com

AYF SUMMER CAMP

Located in the Angeles National Forest near the city of Wrightwood, AYF Summer Camp is 11.5 acres of beautiful forestland with facilities to accommodate up to 120 campers each week.

The Armenian Youth Federation Summer Camp, established in 1977, provides a great atmosphere for young Armenians between the ages of eight and sixteen to make new friends, become more acquainted with Armenian history and culture, and participate in a wide array of athletic activities. Each year Armenian youth from all over the United States and Canada make AYF Summer Camp an integral part of their summer agenda. The Armenian Youth Federation would like to make AYF Summer camp a part of every youngster's summer, and invites any interested youth to join our fun.



This year's camp session:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| A) Mardouni week: | July 16 - July 23
(SOLD OUT) |
| B) Kedashen week: | July 23 - July 30 |
| C) Shoushi week: | July 30 - August 6 |
| D) Ashan week: | August 6 - August 13 |
| E) Latchin week: | August 13 - August 20 |

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS JULY 8, 2000

**FREE week at
camp for the
winner of the
T-shirt design
contest.**

Send entries to:

A.Y.F. Camp
104 N. Belmont St. #206
Glendale, Ca. 91204
Include your name & address

For more information call
1-800-773-AYFC
818-507-1933

System of a Down

(continued from page 15)

These are lyrics from the song Pluck, which is track 13 on System of a Down's self titled album. The song, as most people know, is about the Armenian Genocide. Serge told me that there were more verses to the song that were left out. He went on explaining that he does not literally think that revolution is really the only solution. He also said that armed can mean many different things. "I don't believe hurting anyone can achieve anything." With this in mind, it becomes easy to understand that Serge is armed with music and words and he is using his weapons to create his own Revolution against what he feels is unjust.

Serge feels that there is more that not only the youth, but everyone, can do about all just causes. He feels that it is very important for everyone to open up their eyes and acknowledge what is going on around them. It's a well-known fact that Armenian politics is very much part of world politics as a whole, therefore we need not to add to the continuous cycle of ignorance that exists in the world. "If we are not aware of what is happening in the world we are not helping ourselves at all" and through his music and endless efforts Serge is attempting to make the world aware.

One more thing before I end this article I just want to say that I asked Serge how he would feel if he had the opportunity to perform in Armenia and he answered, "I look forward to it, I would have a blast."

I begin this article by saying that I was very nervous at the beginning of the interview I want to end by saying that I was very impressed by Serge's responses and strong beliefs. Despite his fame, he continues to acknowledge and connect to his history, culture and heritage and I think that that is so awesome.

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GENOCIDE RELATED WEBPAGES

[The Official Website of the Armenian National Committee of America](http://www.anca.org)
www.anca.org

Voice your support for Armenian Genocide recognition! This website includes five postcards of the U.S. Presidential Candidates who speak out on Armenian American Concerns.

[ANI—Genocide Research](http://www.armenian-genocide.org)
www.armenian-genocide.org

For more information on the political out look of the Armenian genocide, this site examines documents from the U.S. and British archives relating to the genocide. Read contemporary newspaper and magazine articles and review a day-by-day chronology summarizing the key events at that time.

[Cilicia.com - Extensive Armenia Info & Links](http://www.cilicia.com)
www.cilicia.com

" . . . the Armenian massacre was the greatest crime of the war, and the failure to act against Turkey is to condone it . . . the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of guaranteeing the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense. " Theodore Roosevelt
Cilicia.com has some of the best quotes coming from Hitler, Ataturk, US Ambassador, etc.

LETTER TO THE TURKISH COUNSEL OF LOS ANGELES

By: Tanya Gulesserian

The San Fernando Valley "Sardarabad" Chapter took it upon themselves to send a very telling letter to the Turkish Counsel everyday starting January 28, 2000 and leading up to April 24, 2000. Each individual letter was marked with "April 24, 1915 number 1" and so on. For eighty-five days the chapter has diligently sent the letter to prove that they would not give up their work until the 24th of April.

Chapter executive Talar Aslanian felt that it was necessary for this work to be done knowing very well that they would probably not get a response of any sort. Yet, Ungerouhie Aslanian, along with the rest of the chapter, wanted to show their presence in some way to the Counsel. The idea of sending a letter every day for eighty-five days was before and an effective way to let the Turkish Counsel know that this would not be a year were the Genocide issue would be taken silently or without action.

The letters have been returned to the Armenian Youth Federation offices and still are being returned by the Turkish Counsel. Yet, not every single one has been sent back. The first few that were sent have not been returned, implying that the letters have been seen. This point is one that the Sardarabad chapter has the utmost pride about. Ungerouhie Aslanian said it best, "At least we have been a thorn on their side for eighty-five consecutive days."

When asked if this was one method of awareness that was effective, Ungerouhie Talar Aslanian felt that it was a productive means for a group of AYF members to take action among their own chapters to try and get their point across. She is positive that this form of awareness will probably be used in the upcoming years to show a strong presence.

Letter sent by Valley "Sardarabad" chapter

April 24, 1917

To the Representatives of the Turkish Counsel of Los Angeles:

On behalf of the Armenian Youth Federation, we bring to your attention the concern of the Armenian youth.

Cries of terror. Rape. Bloody trails. Starvation. Scattered bones. Burned flesh. Agonizing death marches. Deportations. Executions. Abuse. Loss. Suffering. Anguish. Death. Attempt of annihilation... Armenia 1915.

Eighty-five years ago, your forefathers raped out nation of its intellect, identity, and people. The time has come for your country to acknowledge and take responsibility for the atrocities that took place in 1915. The continuous denial of the Genocide will not be tolerated nor will the unsuccessful attempts by the Turkish government to rewrite history.

Today, we stand before you with an independent Armenia and a population of more than 7 million around the world, who demand recognition. Today, we stand before you as lobbyists, congressmen, educators, lawyers, and doctors. Today, we stand before you as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and students. Today, we stand before you united as one nation, as Armenians with a determined goal ... recognition.

The intention of your government to annihilate our entire race clearly failed and this letter stands as a reminder of that failure. As the youth of this generation, we stand as representatives of a nation whose people will never forget the tragedy of 1915. Our goal does not recognize submission; our intent is the acknowledgment of the Genocide by the Turkish government.

Armenian Youth Federation

Antranig "Anto" Atymezian 1983-2000

Don't Cry
author unknown



I may be gone
But our memories live on.

I don't want you to cry
I don't want to hear a sigh.

I am in a better place
Here I am free I have my own space.

Because you are all sad,
I have no joy, I feel so bad.

I hate crying, I don't want to see one tear
You may not see me, but I am close very near.

Why God picked me, I do not know
The answer's in the winter's snow.

You may still visit me , talk to me too,
I would love to hear from you.

I never knew I meant so much to all of you,
Though I did not say it you all mean the world
to me too.

Leave a space in your heart,
I am there, I am just apart.

Time can't erase the times we had,
Think of these and no longer be sad.

Now wipe the tears off your face,
Our beautiful memories God may not take.

By: Mardig Kasbarian

Antranig "Anto" Atymezian, a dedicated member of the Homenetmen Pasadena chapter, became a victim of a devastating automobile accident. This fatal crash left friends and family in shock. Anto Atymezian was one of a kind. He was loved by everyone and was respected with a great amount.

Anto Atymezian was born on December 22, 1983 in Boston Massachusetts. At a very young age Antranig and his family moved to Pasadena where he began his "Azadamard" life. Anto was a dedicated Homenetmen scout and Athlete playing B division basketball. He had also earned his green belt from karate classes offered at the Pasadena Armenian center. Antranig was also a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Junior Organization's Pasadena Nigol-Touman chapter. Anto started his education at a very early age at Sahag Mesrob. He then graduated from Sahag Mesrob in 8th grade and continued his education at Pasadena High School. At PHS Anto was a member of the track and cross-country teams.

We all said farewell to our dear friend Anto Atymezian, knowing that he was on his way to a much better place. Anto had such a good heart, and had a tremendous impact on all of our lives. Therefore we believe that God sent him to this world to accomplish certain goals. As soon as those goals were accomplished God wanted him back. Anto, although you are no longer next to us you will remain in our hearts forever. We will NEVER forget you.

“1915”

By: Sahak Dulguerian

The child awoken
Frightened by soldiers.
Fears for his life
No words are spoken.

Panic fills
What once was home.
Torn apart now
Left are bones.

Pillaged pride
Nowhere to hide.
Plot of genocide
None to remain alive.

Marching through deserts
The seasons pass.
Gold exchanged for food
By a turk on his ass.

Mother pawns
To keep her child alive.
Dies along the way
Now food for flies.

Where is god now?
To stop these menaces.
Believe and be saved
All empty promises.

What once were citizens
Martyrs of a ruined homeland
Denied justice,
Left unforgiven.

Money talks,
Armenians speechless.
The truth unexposed,
Who's to believe us?

Նայաստան

Մեր հայրենիքն է Նայաստան
Նրա մայրաքաղաքն է Երևան,
Ունենք շատ սիրուն մի լիկ՝ Սեան,
Եւ մի օր պիտի հասնենք մինչեւ Վան:

Այնտեղ զարունը շատ է սիրուն,
Ամեն կողմ կայ գեղեցիկ թռչուն,
Որոնք թռչում են տունից տուն
Յետոյ երամով հասնում են Սասուն:

Մենք ուզում ենք Նայաստան ճամբորդել,
Որպեսզի շատ բաներ կարողանանք տեսնել,
Կարող ենք դեպի Ծիծեռնակաբերդ քայլել
Եւ անմար կրակը նորից վարել:

Մենք ունենք շատ հիմ պատմություն
Որը մեզ պատճառել է մեծ ուրախություն:
Շատ ենք սիրում ընկերություն,
Եւ միշտ պիտի ունենանք Ազատություն:

«Առաջին Բայ» Մանկապարտեզի 2րդ և 3րդ դասարանի աշակերտներ



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