

HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES

WINTER 2005



WASHED IN OIL: BAKUCEYHAN

A GLANCE AT THE WORLD'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL OIL PIPELINE

THEAPEXTHEORY: SPOTLIGHT

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE LA ROCK POWER TRIO



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Haytoug Council Members

Caroon Gharakhanian

Tamar Yardemian

Siamanto Maronian

Raffi Semerdjian *Layout Design*

Contributors

Vicken Sosikian

Razmig Haroun

Ardashes Kassakhian

Haytoug is distributed free of charge within the community for all Armenian youth residing in the Western United States who strive for the national, social and economic liberation of the Armenian people. Financial contributions may be made to the address below.

The opinions expressed in Haytoug are not solely and necessarily opinions of the Armenian Youth Federation. Haytoug encourages all Armenian youth to express their thoughts and opinions in this publication.

Submissions for publication in Haytoug may be sent to the following address:

104 N. Belmont St. Suite 206
Glendale, CA 91206

AYF@AYFwest.org 818.507.1933

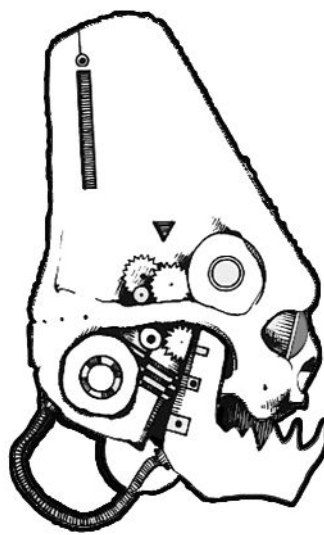
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NOT ALLOWING THE DEFEAT TO SLOW US DOWN

Sometimes it is necessary to take a few steps back in order to move a few steps forward. In spite of the outcome of the 2004 presidential elections, we as Armenian-Americans need to reevaluate our approach and strengthen our efforts in order to successfully move the Armenian cause forward in the American political system. At the beginning of a new presidency in the White House, each of us should reflect on the ways we have worked thus far, and create a plan of action in order to move forward more effectively. What is our new and improved plan?

It is important to continuously keep in mind all the different challenges that we as Armenian-Americans face on a day-to-day basis. Alongside our political cause, we struggle with the fear of assimilation. This threat is a reality, which exists in the Diaspora. Many of us constantly separate our American lifestyle from our Armenian culture. Rather than separating the two, we can work towards creating a solid hybridization. The simplest example of this hybrid identity is evident through our involvement in American politics for the good of Armenia. We all need to make an added effort to embrace our Armenian identity within our American lifestyle. There are successful means of Armenian expression through an American context, or even vice versa. So let us put ourselves out there, campaign for Armenian politicians, support Armenian bands, attend art shows of Armenian artists, and collectively work towards establishing a constructive hybrid identity.

It is our time to pioneer a new movement in Armenian-American politics, literature, music, and art. By bringing together all aspects of a hybrid culture, we can create a comfortable medium, from which we can work to achieve all common goals. The more we immerse within the existing American society, the better equipped we become in future projects. So let us continue expanding intellectually and actively, and remember to always strive for progress not perfection.



UNITED HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Moses Keshishian

The United Human Rights Council was established in 2001 by a group of dedicated and inspired young people, who wanted to fight for human rights worldwide, but initially in Turkey. Since its creation, the UHRC has been on the front lines of dismantling what it calls the Turkish Denial Machine.

What is the Turkish Denial Machine? It is the Ottoman Empire that massacred 1.5 million Armenians in 1915; it is the present-day Turkish government, which after 90 years of political terrorism, denies that the Genocide ever took place. The Turkish Denial Machine is the monster that has scarred the lives of millions and continues to violate the human rights of many more until today.

To fuel its machine the Turkish government is consistently increasing its exports to the world, including \$3 billion to the United States. Without realizing the damage it causes, the Armenian people have been supporting the Turkish Denial Machine by purchasing products made in Turkey. The sale of these products generates tax revenue for the Turkish government, which it uses to further fuel its denial campaigns.

Made up of youth from different university campuses and community organizations, the UHRC has actively encouraged both Armenian and non-Armenian businesses to stop selling Turkish goods.

Letter writing campaigns, online efforts, rallies, flyer distributions, and other forms of information dissemination have been used to educate the public at large about Turkey's human rights record and the adverse effects of buying Turkish products.

A recent example of such efforts took place on October 24, 2004 in Santa Monica, Calif. when UHRC members handed the managers of the 3rd Street Promenade Gap, Old Navy, and Banana Republic stores letters requesting that they stop selling clothing made in Turkey. The group also distributed several thousand flyers to local consumers informing them of Turkey's human rights violations and that the purchase of Turkish goods can fuel the denial and distortion attempts made by Turkey.

Through its Web site, the UHRC has recruited volunteers world wide to help in the execution of its projects and programs. With help from the general public the UHRC will further expand its operations.

Please visit www.unitedhumanrights.org to learn more about the UHRC and how you can help.

UNITEDHUMANRIGHTS.ORG

LITTLE ARMENIA CLEANUP

Staffwriter

On Saturday, September 25, hundreds of Armenian youth gathered in Little Armenia providing their volunteer services to the AYF's 2nd Annual Little Armenia Cleanup. Volunteers from all over Southern California and even Fresno helped remove thousands of pounds of trash from major streets in Little Armenia.

Organized by the Armenian Youth Federation and cosponsored by Los Angeles City Councilmember Eric Garcetti's Office, the cleanup attracted volunteers from the public at large and community organizations such as the AYF, Homenetmen Los Angeles Chapter, and the ARF Badanegan Organization.

Before the cleanup began Reverend Father Vicken Vassilian representing his Grace Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy Armenian Church, blessed both the effort of the AYF and the volunteers' willingness to serve the community.

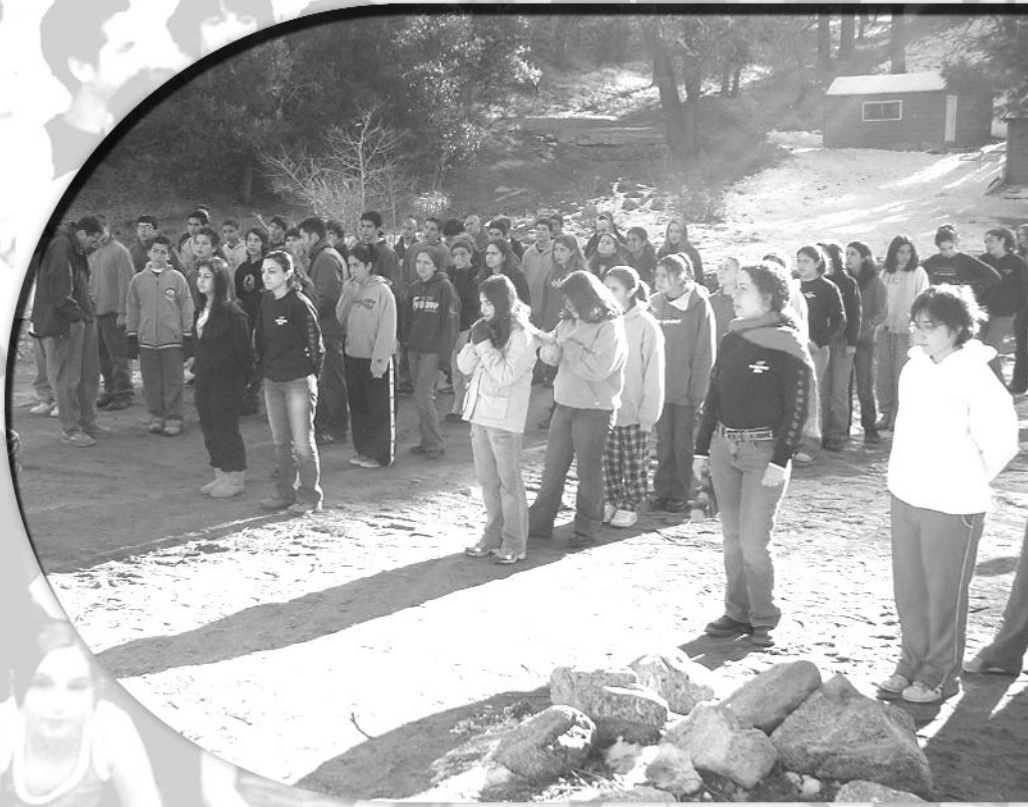
Los Angeles City 13th District Councilmember Eric Garcetti thanked the volunteers for their efforts and welcomed the initiative of both the volunteers and the AYF. Relaying the AYF Central Executive's message, Razmig Haroun encouraged the youth to display their ownership of Little Armenia by increasing their involvement in the improvement of the community.

"The AYF strives to serve the Armenian nation and Armenian people by every possible means at its disposal," said Shant Baboujian, Chairman of the AYF Western Region. "The Little Armenia Cleanup is one of many such projects to make this home away from home more reflective both of the Armenian people and our homeland."

In the coming weeks 24 "Welcome to Little Armenia" light-post banners will be added to the existing 39 erected last year. With the depiction of the Tri-color, Sardarabad Monument, and Mount Ararat, the banners have added a touch of Armenia to the community.

The Armenian Youth Federation would like to thank the volunteers and the official sponsors of the Little Armenia Clean Up, without whom the event would not have been the success that it was. Adin of California, Asbarez Daily Armenian Newspaper, Arbat Grocery & Deli, Horizon Armenian Television, Nor Hayastan Daily Newspaper, USA Armenian Life Magazine, Closet World, Color Depot, Donoyan Insurance Agency, St. Vincent Jewelry Center, Carpet Show, Jons Market, Eric Garcetti's Office and staff, and the A.R.F. Hollywood Karekin Njtech Gomideh, played a fundamental role in the success of this public service effort.





ՀԱՅ ՊԱՏԱՆԻՆ՝ ԱՐԹՈՒՄ ԱՆՇԱԿԸ ՀԱՅ ԱԶԳԻՆ

Մարք Կէտիբեան

Իբրեւ Վարիչ Սիմոն Վրացեան եւ Արաքո պատանեկան մասնաճիւղերու, ինքզինքս բախտաւոր եւ հպարտ կ'զգամ գործակցելու եւ ընկերակցելու այսպիսի տաղանդաւոր, գործունիայ եւ խանդավար պատանիներու հետ: Մեր յաջողութիւնները տարիներու ընթացքին արդիւնքն է իրենց յարատեւ գործին եւ անխոնջ հաւատքին, հաւատք մը որ պէտք է վարակէ շատ շատերուն որովհետեւ կը հաւատանք թէ գործի մը յաջողութիւնը արդիւնքն է զօրաւոր կամքի ու հաւատքի:

Այսօրուայ մեր պատանիները, վաղուայ մեր առաջնորդներն են որոնք պիտի ներշնչեն ու ղեկավարեն մեր ազգը, ուստի անոնք պէտք է զինորագրուին բարոյական բարձր արժէքներով, ֆիզիգական հզօր ուժով եւ մտային արթուն գիտելիքներով, հետեւաբար, մենք բոլորս միասնաբար պէտք է օժանդակենք որ ապագայ սերունդները պատիւ բերեն հայ ժողովուրդին ու հայրենիքին:

Լսենք անոնց կանչը քաջալերենք ու գնահատենք անոնց նուազագույն ձեռքբերումները եւ միշտ նեցուկ կանգնինք իրենց անձնական թէ ազգային գործունէութեան:

21-րդ դարու սեմին, մեր պատանեկան միութեան շարքերը կուգան հզօրացնելու Հ. Յ. Դ.-ի մեծ ընտանիքը, ուխտելով շարունակել հայ ժողովուրդի ազգային ազատագրական պայքարը, միշտ պահանջատէր մնալով մինչեւ իրագործուի մեր դարաւոր երազը, ԱԶԱՏ ԱՆԿԱԽ ԵՒ ՄԻԱՅԵԱԼ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ:



Hope & Strength

At age 14, most would think that life could not be any simpler. For those of us that are past that age, we know that times could not have been more relaxed and enjoyable then. Not a care in the world. All that was required from us was to attend school during the day and then go home... Not too much went on in between. There was no need to go to work and there were no real responsibilities to worry about. For most 14 year old badanees, some of the most exciting things included wondering when the next badanee kebob night would be or just looking forward to going to winter seminar. Life is meant to be fun and carefree at that age. But for Nataline Sarkisian, being 14 has been anything but fun or care-free. To date, she is a member of the San Fernando badanee chapter and prior to about 5 months ago, was a member of their executive body.

A time came when Nataline's family began to notice some distinctive changes in her behavior. Her eating habits changed dramatically, she seemed to be tired more often than usual and of all things wasn't able to attend her badanegan meetings on Friday nights because of exhaustion. Something was definitely wrong. After consulting a physician, Nataline and her family were devastated when she was diagnosed with Leukemia: cancer of the blood. Her family knew that this would not be an easy process, but no one was ever willing to lose hope in the incredible strength that Nataline possessed. Actions were taken immediately to make sure that she received the absolute best care.

After being admitted into the Children's Hospital of

Los Angeles, Nataline began the long and painful process of fighting this horrible disease. On a daily basis, it was necessary for Nataline to undergo one test after the other to pinpoint exactly what was going on and how to take care of it best. She began the chemotherapy, which causes great aches and pains throughout the entire body, but not for a second did she lose her will to keep fighting.

I am very happy to say that Nataline Sarkisian is currently in remission and finally home. She now visits the hospital less frequently for chemotherapy, which is still necessary to ensure that the leukemia is treated.

Throughout this difficult process, the support of the community and well-wishers was amazing. Nataline and her family received a great deal of support from all around the world. However, our help is still greatly needed. With each chemotherapy treatment, Nataline's blood count decreases, resulting in her need for blood transfusions. Her blood type is B+ but her body will accept any of the following blood types: B+, B-, O+ or O-. Please visit the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and make a donation to her blood bank. The entire process of donating blood, including the paperwork, takes less than an hour. With nearly 3,000 children being diagnosed with leukemia annually, that one hour could very possibly help save the life of an innocent child. Please take the time to help Nataline through these difficult times.

Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

4650 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA. 90027
(323) 660-2450

Please call and make an appointment in advance to donate to Nataline Sarkisian's blood-bank. The entire process of donating blood takes no more than one hour of your day.

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

-Leo Buscaglia

JERMAK CHART

Berj Parseghian and Caspar Jivalegian

This year was topped off by a greatly successful executive workshop, which ensures a promising year for the AYF. Yet, no matter how great things look, there still remains an issue of concern raised during the workshop itself: the increasing effects of the White Massacre ('Jermak Chart'). The very fact that this article is in English indicates one of the main reasons for our concern. Most AYF members have a very hard time expressing their views in Armenian, with very few exceptions. No matter how you look at it, this will inevitably become a significant problem for our ethnic group over time.

For argument's sake, let us fast-forward to the year 2034 and assume that the Armenian Genocide has been accepted throughout the world. We fought hard for this accomplishment, giving it all we had. We received reparations, and now it is decision-making time. Either we stay here in America and continue to live our fairly comfortable lives, or move back to our homeland and endure hard times, all to rebuild what we once had. Almost everyone we talk to says that they, most likely, would not be able to fulfill their responsibility of moving back to Armenia. That is the first part of the problem.

Therefore, after recognition and reparations we remain here in America. What will bind us together? What dreams and goals will the next generation have to strive toward? Language and our culture would indeed be a huge unifying factor. Yet, we don't know our language. That is the second part of the problem, 'jermak chart,' the white massacre, assimilation. Call it what you want. Either way, it can very easily bring the end to what we have here as Armenians.

Many who read this article will initially feel it is too extreme. Yet, there is a reason for this, and that is the simple fact that we need an awakening amongst the Armenian youth here in America. By being so extreme, we plan to promote the study of our language and heritage by the youth so that we will not lose it in the years to come, so that we will be able to keep our Armenian identity. We hope that those who read this article will take what is said seriously, and will weigh the consequences it holds for our future. We believe the AYF must take immediate action to put an end to or counteract this process of assimilation for the sake of the beliefs and goals so clearly outlined in its manifesto.

The power rests in our hands, the hands of the youth. Let us use it wisely!

ANCA INTERN JOURNAL



Serouj Aprahamian

In the midst of what many are calling the most important election of modern American history, what better place to be than in Washington, D.C.? Better yet, what better place to be than the ANCA office in Washington, D.C.? That is precisely where I find myself as a part of the ANCA Extended Internship program.

Of course, given the negative policies of the Bush administration towards Armenians (see Haytoug, Summer 2004), the primary focus of the ANCA has been to help John Kerry in the elections. Yet, the scope of the ANCA's work is much broader than this. Some of the other major projects during this election cycle include ensuring that Congress provides Armenia permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status, gaining additional support for the Genocide Resolution, providing young Armenians with positions in Washington through the Capital Gateway Program, and sending out a questionnaire to various congressional candidates across the country asking for their positions on issues important to Armenian-Americans.

The work I have been doing consists of everything from stuffing envelopes and running errands to doing research and preparing press releases. The Candidate Questionnaire mentioned above has also been a major project I've had the privilege of working on. However, aside from the satisfaction I've felt from being able to help the ANCA in its ongoing work, my experience so far has been mostly educational. The individuals I've had the opportunity to work with in the office are truly intelligent, dedicated, and overall amazing people. They continuously take time out to explain and discuss with me issues important to Hai Tad. I've gained a new understanding of the intricacies of political work in the United States and our role as Armenian-Americans within the system. I've also learned more about the tremendous impact our activism can have on the future of Armenia and Artsakh. We really do have the most power to help Armenia's progress in comparison to any other community in the world.

My stay here has made me much more confident that with increasing amounts of support and grassroots activism, we can achieve all of our goals and ambitions. We not only have to increase our own individual efforts to do this, but each of us must also do our part to get those around us involved as well.

OBSTACLES TO RECOGNITION AND REAFFIRMATION

Ardashes Kassakhian

Anniversaries tend to mark happy occasions in our culture but next year marks the 90th anniversary of arguably one of the darkest chapters in human history - the Armenian Genocide which took place between 1915 - 1923. Over 1.5 million Armenians perished in what was a state sponsored massacre of an innocent civilian population. To this day, the Republic of Turkey refuses to acknowledge that such an event took place.

As Americans who share a common Armenian heritage, the refusal of our own government to pressure Turkey to come to terms with its bloody past has left many Armenian-Americans dissatisfied with our government's policies.

Every year Armenian-Americans and other citizens of good conscience petition their representatives in Congress, the U.S. Senate and the White House to properly acknowledge these crimes as a genocide and thus take a significant step towards official Turkish acknowledgement. In spite of the best efforts of many community organizations and political groups, these efforts fall short of their eventual goal. There is a myriad of reasons why these efforts have failed. By understanding these reasons we can begin to reevaluate our strategies and reallocate our community's resources to address this

TOP TEN REASONS WHY THE UNITED STATES DENIES THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Reason 1 - The Armenian lobby is outmatched and outspent

Although the Armenian lobby in Washington, DC is perceived as one of the most influential ethnic lobbies, it is still evolving and is outspent by pro-Turkish interests. Former Speaker of the House, Bob Livingston's firm, which lobbies on behalf of the Republic of Turkey, earned 1.4 million dollars between the months of February and July 2004 to lobby on Turkish issues.

Reason 2 - The Turkish lobby has powerful allies

If the Turkish lobby were working on its own, then we might be able to match them by pooling all of our resources together. But other lobbying groups that support Turkey include certain Jewish organizations who see a benefit for Israel to maintain close relations with Turkey, defense contractors who sell weapons to Turkey's military, and oil/energy companies who side with Azerbaijan and Turkey on foreign policy issues in hopes of winning valuable Caspian Sea oil contracts.

Reason 3 - "Recognition would hurt U.S. - Turkey relations"

This is a line too often heard from individuals who argue against recognition of the Armenian Genocide. This argument makes the assumption that the Turkish Government would sever all its ties to the United States or shut down U.S. army and air force bases in Turkey if the U.S. were to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Reason 4 - State and Defense Department interests oppose recognition

Certain factions within the Departments of State and Defense argue that official recognition of the Armenian Genocide conflicts with American security interests. In 2000, a number of State Department officials claimed that if the Genocide resolution passed Congress, it would cost American lives. The assumption is that recognition of the genocide would fuel anti-American sentiments in Turkey. This idea is coupled with the opinion of many policy makers: Turkey is still perceived as a valuable NATO ally.

Reason 5 - Current Leadership in Congress opposes recognition

One of the key obstacles to recognition efforts is getting any legislation past the current leadership in Congress. Although the community has many close friends in the Republican Party, no one has been able to exert enough influence over the leadership to ensure the passage of a resolution or bill. The current leadership is comprised of individuals who receive significant campaign contributions from oil lobby interests and other groups working against genocide recognition initiatives.

Reason 6 - The President of the United States must exert influence

Of the last three Presidents, none have described the Armenian Genocide as such. Ronald Reagan was the last President to do so and he was from California. The subsequent Presidents - Bush from Texas, Clinton from Arkansas, and Bush Jr. from Texas - are all from states that have no significant Armenian populations and none have had a meaningful relationship with any Armenians. On the other hand, the three of the four individuals who lost to these three were from either states that have a heavy Armenian population or had a close personal connection with Armenians - Michael Dukakis from Massachusetts, Bob Dole from Kansas, and John Kerry from Massachusetts.

Reason 7 - Public officials are not held accountable for breaking pledges

Many Armenian-Americans only become interested in the issue of the Armenian Genocide during a big election year or around April 24th. Congress is in session the rest of the year and members of Congress need to bear from their constituents on this issue on a regular basis. More Armenian-Americans need to be involved in political life on all levels and maintain pressure on elected officials to keep their promises to the community. There are numerous Members of Congress that actively work against Armenian interests and who are still in office.

Reason 8 - Lack of understanding of the issue by the general public

Most Americans are not familiar with the issues related to recognizing the Armenian Genocide, let alone the actual history of the events that transpired. The Republic of Turkey spends millions of dollars in buying influence in academic institutions within the United States to improve its image. Conversely, Armenian-Americans do not support the few academic positions they do have in major American colleges and universities. Finally, although many public schools are required to teach about the Genocide, few actually do because there are no ways to hold these schools accountable.

Reason 9 - Lack of media attention to the issue

The popular media in the United States does not see the Armenian Genocide as an issue that interests the public which they serve. Although the issues did gain headlines in 2000 during a critical Congressional battle over a House Resolution, the issue for the most part has not hit the airwaves of major media outlets.

Reason 10 - Failure to contextualize the Armenian Genocide

As the years pass and the Armenian Genocide becomes history, our community needs to find ways to keep the issue fresh and at the forefront. One key way of doing this is by putting the event in the proper context of crimes against humanity. Samantha Power, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning non-fiction book A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide was able to do this. She gave a summary of all the Genocides of the 20th century and began with the Armenian Genocide. Lobbying efforts need to replicate this model to ensure a broad coalition of supporters and to help people understand why the issue is still important today.

ARMENIAN AMERICAN ISSUES SUPPORTERS WIN BIG IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS



100% of ANCA Endorsed Candidates for Senate and 98.5% of House Endorsees Win Reelection 138 of 142 Armenian Caucus Members to Return to the House

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Armenian American community scored bipartisan Congressional victories across the political landscape yesterday, with 199 of 202 Senate and House candidates endorsed by the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) winning their elections.

"We are extremely pleased that such an overwhelming majority of our supporters won yesterday, including over 98% of those we endorsed in the House of Representatives and 97% of the Congressional Armenian Caucus," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "We look forward to working with these friends and the many new members of the 109th Congress on issues ranging from affirming the Armenian Genocide to strengthening Armenia and defending Nagorno Karabagh's right to self-determination within secure borders."

"More than ever, we were gratified by the dramatically increased involvement of Armenian-Americans in the electoral process, in particular, by the positive response to our voter education campaign on the ground in local communities and on our website - www.anca.org. In the weeks prior to the election, we registered over 50,000 unique visits from Armenian-American activists interested in learning more about where their candidates for office stood on the issues of importance to our community," added Hamparian.

In a separate statement issued earlier today, ANCA Chairman Ken Hachikian congratulated President Bush on his election victory, thanked Senator Kerry for a hard fought election campaign, and praised the Armenian American community for an unprecedented level of activism in this season's electoral contests.

U.S. SENATE

All ten ANCA endorsed Senate incumbent candidates were re-elected, including Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Evan Bayh (D-IN), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Harry Reid (D-NV), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Russell Feingold (D-WI).

In a stunning upset, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) lost his seat yesterday to former South Dakota Congressman John Thune. Daschle, who had received a "C" grade on the ANCA report card, had been largely unresponsive to Armenian-American concerns, withholding his support for the Genocide resolution (S.Res.164) in the 108th Congress.

Of the eight members of the Senate retiring, two Illinois Republican Peter Fitzgerald and Oklahoma Republican Don Nickles had received an "F" grade from the ANCA. The others, including Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Bob Graham (D-FL), Zell Miller (D-GA), John Breaux (D-LA), and Fritz Hollings (D-SC) generally failed to take a stand on Armenian American concerns. Of the incoming Senators, the ANCA had endorsed Barack Obama (D-IL), who had reached out to the Armenian-American community in the months leading up to the elections and Rep. Johnny Isakson (R-GA), who, as a House Member, had supported Armenian Genocide recognition initiatives. Rep. David Vitter (R-LA), who will be replacing Sen. Breaux (D-LA), had received an "F" rating in the House from the ANCA for his opposition to Armenian-American concerns.

A consistent supporter of Armenian-American issues, Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate John Edwards, will be replaced by Rep.

Richard Burr (R-NC), who has received a "C" rating from the

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairmen Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) both will return to the 109th Congress, along with 138 of the 142 Caucus members from the 108th Congress. Also returning are Armenian-American Representatives Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and John Sweeney (R-NY) each winning re-election by large margins.

Caucus member Rep. Martin Frost (D-TX) lost, in what emerged as one of the most expensive House races, to Rep. Jeff Sessions, who has received an "F" rating from the ANCA. Rep. Joe Hoeffel (D-PA) lost his bid for the Pennsylvania Senate to Republican Senator Arlen Specter. Other Caucus members retiring are Gerald Kleczka (D-WI) and Jim Greenwood (R-PA).

ANCA endorsed non-incumbents Jim Costa (D-CA-20), Kenny Marchant (R-TX-24), Joe Schwarz (R-MI-7), Dan Lungren (R-CA-3) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA-4), each of whom won their election bids. Central California ANC members worked closely with the Costa campaign in the months leading up to the vote. McKinney, who served in the House of Representatives until 2002, was an outspoken advocate of Armenian Genocide reaffirmation efforts, serving on the House International Relations Subcommittee on Europe. Michigan area Armenian-American activists worked with and fundraised extensively for Joe Schwarz, who is replacing outgoing House member Nick Smith, who has received an "F" rating from the ANCA. Other House Members with "F" ratings leaving Congress include New York Republican Amo Houghton and Florida Republican Porter Goss.

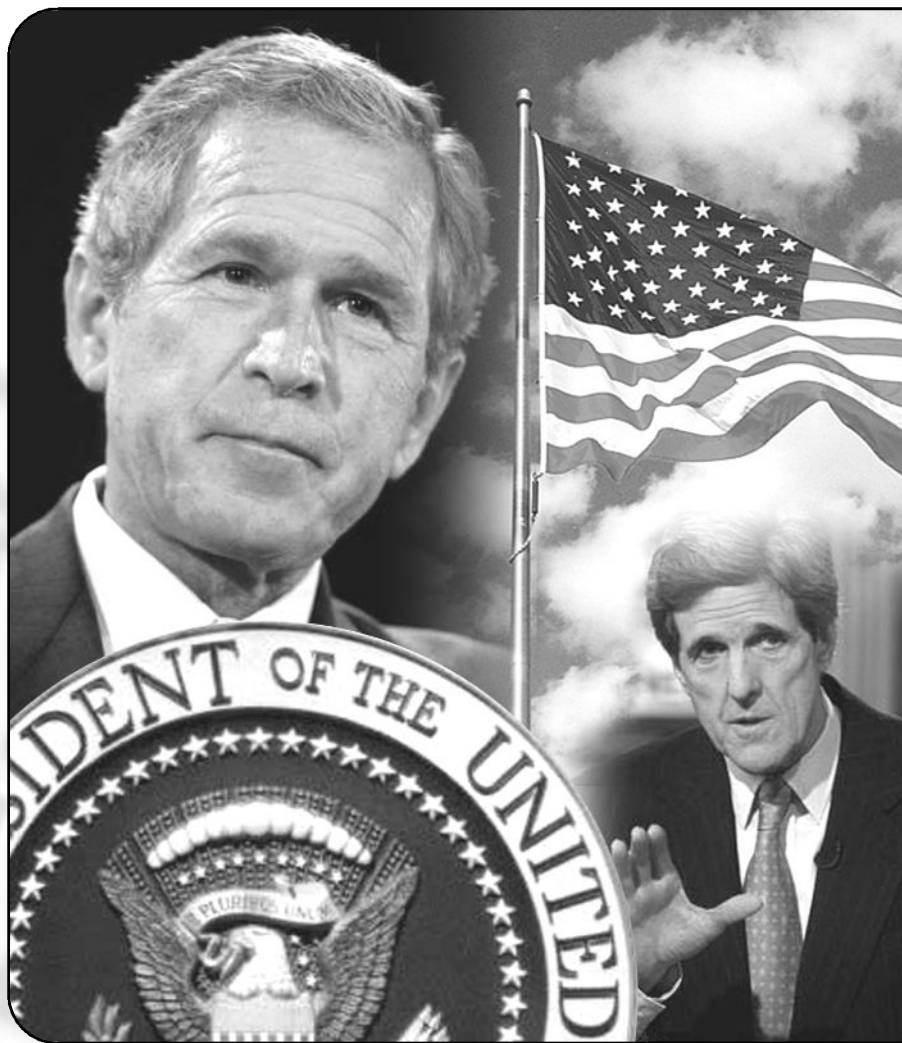
ANCA CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT BUSH

Urges Administration to Pursue a More Constructive Approach to Armenian-American Issues in Second Term

WASHINGTON, DC - The Armenian National Committee Of America (ANCA) [Ho. Hee. Dashnaktsutian Washington-ee Hai Tahd-ee Krasenyag] today congratulated President Bush on his election victory, thanked Senator Kerry for a hard fought election campaign, and praised the Armenian-American community for an unprecedented level of activism in this season's electoral contests.

"Throughout the course of this highly competitive election season, George W. Bush fought to advance his ideals; John Kerry fought for what he believes in, and so did we - out there on the front lines of American politics, fighting hard for the values and interests of the Armenian-American community," said ANCA Chairman Ken Hachikian. "As a result of our unprecedented electoral involvement, we have emerged from this contest having earned the respect of both parties, and of political insiders across the spectrum, as a vibrant, extremely well organized, and highly motivated electoral constituency at the presidential election level."

Commenting on the outcome of the election, Hachikian noted that, "While, of course, having endorsed Senator Kerry, we would have liked to see a different outcome, we understand that for our community the fundamental truth for Armenian-Americans remains that the key to this election - like all elections - is to understand that our future rests in our hands. Sometimes the candidates we support will win, other times they won't. But we - the ANCA - will always be out there - on the front lines, working with all sides to advance our issues across the American political landscape." He closed by noting that, "If Armenian history has taught us anything, it is that - we may not win every battle, but the sure way to lose every one is to sit on the sidelines."



www.anca.org

**TAKE ACTION
NOW!**

WASHED IN OIL



A Glance at the World's Most Controversial Oil Pipeline

Vicken Sosikian

OIL. As if oil has not been the root of enough evil in our world. As if oil has not been the cause of enough bombings, attacks, invasions, wars, human rights violations, deaths, and environmental hazards. In just a few months human rights activists, Armenian issues activists, environmentalists, and all other peace-loving people can expect to see the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline.

The project is a \$3.6 billion investment to unlock a massive amount of energy from the Caspian Sea by providing a new crude oil pipeline from Azerbaijan, through Georgia, to Turkey. From Turkey, the oil will be loaded onto three super-tankers each day, which will carry it to Western Europe and the U.S.

Traversing 1087 miles of terrain, the BTC pipeline will transport up to one million barrels of crude oil per day from discoveries in the Caspian Sea, known collectively as the Azeri, Chirag, Gunashli (ACG) field.

The pipeline is being built by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Company. The major shareholders of BTC Co. are British Petroleum (UK) with 38.21% as its operator and State Oil Company of Azerbaijan with 25%. Other shareholders include Unocal (US), Statoil (Norway), Turkish Petroleum, ENI (Italy), TotalFinaElf (France), Itochu (Japan), ConocoPhillips (US), Inpex (Japan), and Delta Hess (US and

Saudi Arabia).

Designing and planning for the BTC Pipeline began in November of 2000, and the project is planned to become fully operational by early 2005. The first tanker is expected to load oil at the Ceyhan marine terminal in the second half of 2005. The oil will be carried out under the auspices of an inter-governmental agreement between Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey and in accordance with binding legal agreements between BTC Co. and those governments.

The builders of the pipeline claim they have appraised and studied the technical and commercial aspects of the pipeline for five years and have prepared detailed assessments of the potential social and environmental impacts.

Haik Gugarats, Assitant to the Ambassador of Armenia to the United States, explains a different reality.

"A quick look at the map of the Caucasus and the Near East makes it obvious that the route for the pipeline is nei-

ther the shortest, nor logical. The BTC oil pipeline was built based on political expediency, rather than commercial feasibility."

Gugarats continues to say, "Nevertheless, Armenia's economic progress over the previous decade is testimony to the failure of the economic blockade and policy of isolating Armenia. Armenia's foreign trade as a proportion of the GDP is larger than that of either Georgia or Azerbaijan, and is more diversified and sustainable. In 2003, Armenia's exports to the U.S. alone were \$37.6 million vs. \$9.5 million in exports from Azerbaijan to the U.S. Sustainable economic growth and development, and regional cooperation in the South Caucasus are impossible without Armenia, and the removal of the Turkish and Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia will greatly benefit all the countries of the region."

British Petroleum has plans to also build a gas pipeline after it has finished building BTC. The construction of the gas pipeline is planned to be complete by the end of 2005. The gas pipeline will run alongside the BTC pipeline for much of its length. The pipeline called the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP), is also known as the Shah Deniz pipeline, or the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline. This pipeline will carry about 20 million cubic meters of natural gas per day, from the Shah Deniz offshore gas field, to the Turkish gas distribution system at Erzurum, an Armenian territory now within Turkish borders.

The SCP will remain in place for at least 40 years and will carry \$21 million worth of fuel every day, an estimated \$8 billion a year, or more than \$230 billion in the pipeline's lifetime.

"By purposely avoiding the more economic and commercially viable route through Armenia, the developers of the pipeline are placing politics above economics. Under pressure from Turkey and Azerbaijan, they are setting aside practical commercial considerations and artificially excluding



Armenia from regional development and cooperation," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "Circumventing Armenia hinders the development of sustainable prosperity in the region and contributes to instability in a strategically vital part of the world," he added.

The BTC Co. could have saved over \$600 million by building the pipeline through Armenia, which is the shorter and easier route. Studies from two independent Washington based firms, CATO Institute and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, have even criticized the economic justification for the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

"Construction through Armenia was not necessarily the logical choice," said Oliver Broad, BP Communications Specialist for the BTC project, in an email interview with Haytoug. "For example, a

“... POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ALSO RULED OUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PIPELINE THROUGH ARMENIA.”

pipeline could have been constructed south to Iran but this option was dismissed due to external political considerations. Political considerations also ruled out the construction of a pipeline through Armenia. In the end, Georgia was selected as the optimal transit country for the construction of a pipeline running southwest to Turkey."

In addition to all indirect revenue that will be generated through the pipeline project, Turkey will collect between \$140 and \$200 million in the first 16 years of the project and between \$200 and \$300 million in the 17th to 40th years. As an added bonus, the Turkish government will not carry any financial burden for the construction of the pipeline.



POS

TER



Ռազմիկ Հարուն

Յեղափոխական մշակույթի ցայտուն յատկանիշներէն մին՝ յեղափոխական երգը, տարագիր հայ սերունդներուն համար հայրենասիրութիւնն ներշնչող եւ անցկուն կամք կերտող ուժը եղած է: Ազգային յեղափոխական երգերու միջոցաւ հայ երիտասարդն ու պատանին իրենց նախահայրերուն հերոսութիւնները կ'ապրին եւ սոյն երգերը անցեալի դժուարութիւնները հասկնալու կամուրջը կը հանդիսանան: Միայն մեր ազգին ուժին վստահելու եւ յարատեւ պայքարելու գաղափարներուն կողքին հայկական յեղափոխութեան լաւագոյն ժառանգութիւններէն է յեղափոխական երգը:

Պարահանդէսներէ կամ տօնակատարութիւններէ ետք աւանդութիւն եղած է յեղափոխական երգ երգելը: Երիտասարդութիւնը երգիչին առջեւ շարուած կը նստի եւ աշխուժ մասնակցութեամբ կը հետեւի երգուած տողերուն, երբեմն նոյնիսկ բունցք բարձրացնելով կամ ոտքի կանգնելով երգի զգայացունց պահերուն: Ուստի յեղափոխական երգը կը քաջալերէ երիտասարդութիւնը անվերապահ արտայայտուելու: Հետեւաբար երգը չի զսպեր եւ ընդհակարակը կը յանգեցնէ այն ինչ զգացումներ կամ միտքերը որ ունի ունկնդրողը: Ուրեմն երբ երիտասարդը այդպէս անկեղծ արտայայտութիւն կ'ընէ ըսել է թէ բոլորովին համաձայն եւ համոզուած է երգուածին հետ:

Յեղափոխական երգը ինքնին ոգեւորիչ է քանի որ պայքարի, տեղի չտալու եւ վերջնական յաղթանակի գաղափարները ամեն երգի մէջ խարսխուած են ուրեմն անյաղթահարելի ուժ մը կը ներկայացնեն: Երգը ինչպէ՞ս յափտեան կը լռեցնէ: Երբ յեղափոխական երգին ծնունդ տուող գլխաւոր դրդապատճառը, այսինքն պայքարը, որ ընդհանրապէս մարդկութեան ազատութեան ձգտումներուն արտացոլումն է, ինքնին շարունակաբար յարութիւն առնող եւ վերապրող գոյավիճակ է եւ հետեւաբար երգն ալ պայքարին մնայուն էակիցն է: Օրինակ՝ «Մենք անկեղծ գինուոր ենք» երգը որ հարիւր տարուայ յօրինում է տակաւին այսօր իմաստ ունի, սակայն ոչ պատմական առումով այլ պատրաստակամութեան ազդակ լինելով: Այսինքն

մենք գիտենք երգին պատմական մանրամասնութիւնները բայց այդ գիտակցութիւնէն աւելի մեզի համար թանկագին է երգին այժմէականութիւնը, այս պարագային գերագոյն նպատակներու ծառայող աշխատանքներու իրականացումը եւ յաջողութիւնը:

Բարեբախտաբար շատերս պատանեկանի կամ երիտասարդականի անդամ եղած ենք եւ մեր դաստիարակութեան մէջ անփոխարինելի տեղ ունի յեղափոխական երգը: Եթէ վայրկեան մը մտածենք թերեւս կու գանք յանգելու այն եզրակացութեան որ երգ սորվիլը մեր սիրած աշխատանքն էր: Այս հաւանականութեան նկատմամբ իւրաքանչիւրին պատճառաբանութիւնները կրնան տարբերիլ, սակայն առնուազն մէկ անկասկածելի իրականութեան հանդէպ տարակարծութեան չի կրնար ըլլալ՝ բոլորս ալ բազմաթիւ յեղափոխական երգեր գիտենք: Հետաքրքրականն այն է որ ստիպողական պարապումի արդիւնք չէ այդ այլ պատմութեան եւ մշակույթին մտերմանալու տենչին յագեցումը: Այստեղ համարձակութիւնը ունիմ գրելու թէ ընդհանրապէս երգ սորվելէն եւ երգ երգելէն աւելի սորված եմ քան քարոզ լսելէ: Թերեւս որովհետեւ մէկը միւսէն աւելի անձնական է եւ օրինակի համար երգելը ապրումներ կը յառաջացնէ որոնք տպաւորութիւններ կը թողնեն: Սակայն մէկ բան հաստատ է. մեր յեղափոխական երգերէն սորվելիք շատ կայ՝ բարոյական իմաստով եւ այդ պատճառով է որ երգեր յօրինուած են բարոյական վէճ յատկանիշներու՝ այսինքն քաջութեան եւ հնազանդութեան վրայ:

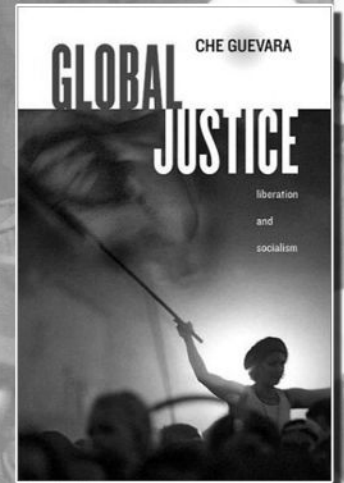
REVOLUTIONARY READINGS

Che Guevara on Global Justice

By Ernesto "Che" Guevara

Is there an alternative to the neoliberal globalization that is ravaging our planet? These classic works by Ernesto Che Guevara present a radical view of a different world in which human solidarity and understanding replace aggressive capitalist competition and exploitation. Included here are Che's essay, "Socialism and Man in Cuba," his controversial speech in Algiers in 1965, and his final message to Tricontinental, in which he calls for the creation of "Two, Three, Many Vietnams." Che Guevara was born in Argentina and traveled throughout Latin America before joining the Cuban revolutionary movement that toppled the Batista dictatorship in 1959. Although best known for his writings on guerrilla warfare, this book shows Che as a profound thinker with a radical world view that still strikes a chord with young rebels in every country today.

"And if someone says we are just romantics, inveterate idealists, thinking the impossible, that the masses of people cannot become almost perfect human beings, we will have to answer a thousand and one times: Yes, it can be done; we are confident that humanity as a whole can advance." -Ernesto "Che" Guevara



A Testament of Hope : The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.

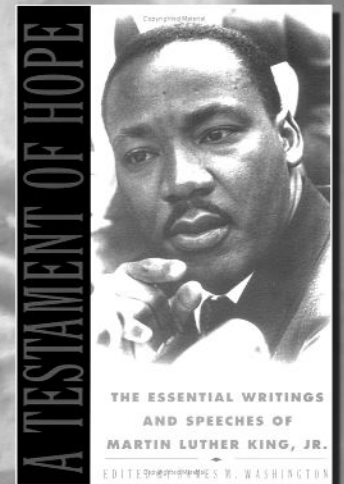
By Martin Luther King, Jr.

"We've got some difficult days ahead," civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr., told a crowd gathered at Memphis's Clayborn Temple on April 3, 1968. "But it really doesn't matter to me now because I've been to the mountaintop. . . And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land."

These prophetic words, uttered the day before his assassination, challenged those he left behind to see that his "promised land" of racial equality became a reality, a reality to which King devoted the last twelve years of his life.

These words and others are commemorated here in the only major one-volume collection of this seminal twentieth-century American prophet's writings, speeches, interviews, and autobiographical reflections. *A Testament of Hope* contains Martin Luther King, Jr.'s essential thoughts on nonviolence, social policy, integration, black nationalism, the ethics of love and hope, and more.

"Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood." -Martin Luther King, Jr.

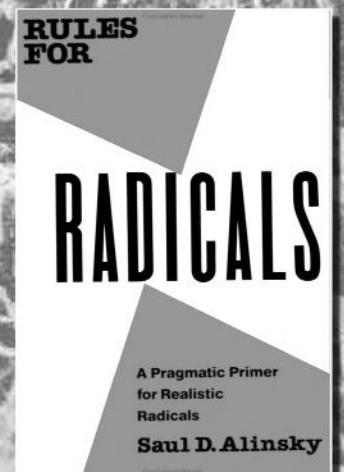


Rules for Radicals

By Saul Alinsky

First published in 1971, *Rules for Radicals* is Saul Alinsky's impassioned counsel to young radicals on how to effect constructive social change and know "the difference between being a realistic radical and being a rhetorical one." Written in the midst of radical political developments whose direction Alinsky was one of the first to question, this volume exhibits his style at its best. Like Thomas Paine before him, Alinsky was able to combine, both in his person and his writing, the intensity of political engagement with an absolute insistence on rational political discourse and adherence to the American democratic tradition.

"What follows is for those who want to change the world from what it is to what they believe it should be. The Prince was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power. Rules for Radicals is written for the Have-Nots on how to take it away." -Saul Alinsky



Pyunic

Union for the Disabled

September 17 - 28, 2004 four Armenian athletes participated in the XI Summer Paralympics games in Athens, Greece. The games included archery, swimming, table tennis, and weightlifting. Among the participants, the Armenian athletes included:

Marine Hakobyan - *Archery* - She became disabled as a result of the 1988 December earthquake.

Mariam Sahakyan - *Swimming, backstroke 50m class* - She has neurofibromatosis, sclerosis of the wrist part of the spinal cord.

Onik Hovakimyan - *Wheelchair marathon* - He was disabled during the 1988 December earthquake. His right leg below the knee has been amputated.

Gevorg Karakashyan - *Power lifter* - He is a dwarf.



Pyunic is a non-profit organization serving disabled children and individuals in Armenia. The organization was established in Armenia after the devastating 1988 earthquake. The Los Angeles Pyunic chapter/board members bring awareness to the States about Pyunic, and help with monthly financial assistance. Some of the different programs Pyunic offers are computer lessons, summer and winter camps for the children, a sports program and an early intervention program, which provides newborn babies and children who are mentally and/or physically challenged with therapy to enhance their levels of development. The sports program enabled four Armenians to participate in the summer Paralympic games in Athens, representing Armenia. With our help, Pyunic can continue its much needed assistance for the disabled in Armenia.

PYUNIC.ORG

CULTURAL EXISTENCE

Tamar Yardemian

How often do you go to church? The last time I found myself in church was during a wedding, and before that, maybe for Easter two years ago. We continuously fight to keep our Armenian identity, but often ignore the fact that Christianity has defined Armenians for centuries. In many ancient history books, Armenians are merely mentioned due to their religious beliefs. If it weren't for Christianity, I believe that Armenians could have easily disappeared into neighboring nationalities, without a trace of existence. Today, we have a history, culture, and language. In 2005, we as Armenians are celebrating the 1600th anniversary of the Armenian alphabet.

In 301AD, Armenians adopted Christianity, without yet having a written language. The first preachers read the Bible in Greek or Syriac and orally translated it to the Armenians. This left people feeling discouraged, not being able to fully understand and absorb the faith of Christianity. For this reason Mesrob Mashdots decided to create an alphabet from the spoken language. In 405AD, it was believed that the creation of the alphabet was going to divinely serve to spread the word of God. The first Armenian writing was Mesrob Mashdots' translation of the Bible. Armenians now had a written language to record their history, culture, and religion.

Now, we have survived 1600 years since Saint Mesrob Mashdots paved the path to our culture's existence. Our alphabet, language, religion, culture, and cause are all tied together to create the Armenian identity, which exists within every one of us. Let us stay close to all aspects of our heritage, and continue to fight for the survival our ancestors never took for granted.



Art by Raffi Art Haroutioun



Knight of Cilicia

The secondary and primary motives of the ones accused cause me to sit and compare religion and politics in a new way. For every attainment of a long waited desire, there is a longing desire to take that which was attained by those who have what you do not. The material riches, land, and women can be taken of course, further, one can simply integrate beauty into his own gene pool with a simple rape, but the art, music and faith cannot be taken so easily, and if one has and another does not, the other shall like to be the only, so that if he cannot have, the other does not have either, however, consider that the other will have as long as he is alive, his death would ensure the end of those haves, and a general not having will take over.

Having and not having has been the reason for all the wars fought. Having and not having is what we have been taught. I thought once to myself that if I were to have while another does not, the plot would thicken and things would erupt.

Many ideas are corrupt, but art cannot be raped. Music cannot be pillaged. And faith cannot be castrated. Culture can only grow, and indeed from the smallest seed its growth would be the most profound. Understanding this reality we can come to the conclusion that it is never impossible to advance a culture no matter how defiled.

Culture cultivates nationalism. And as culture cultivates, nationalism grows also. For this development to occur, all we must do is sow into every single man a fertile and lush plane of soil that will be receptive and longing for the seeds of culture to clench him with its burly roots

A man must see the already blossomed rose of another man to want a rose himself. He must see the beauty of that rose, and understand the value of its petals, the depth of its leaves, and the vigor of its thorns. If he does not see all this, then his heart is not pure, and it can never serve as a harvest for the most beautiful things the world has to offer for a People.

Duty and LEADERSHIP

Raffi Art Haroutioun

Organized movements and popular revolts often share the belief that individuals within the struggle should not be placed on a pedestal. Almost paradoxically, it is equally important for the cadres to have a certain reverence for their leaders as an acknowledgement of their ability to interpret the ideals and ethics of the cause - and that shall be exactly the reason why they are chosen as the torch bearers.

They lead the army not because they are strong, but because they make strength contagious. They cannot uproot the Oak tree alone, but they are able to make the masses believe that the Oak tree must be uprooted.

They who create the impulse for the cause carry the banners which different groups follow. Observe how those who initiate the first impulse - the architects of the cause - begin to walk on a certain path and groups of other enlightened beings follow them. The inevitable end of this process is a continuous birth of new leaders. These new principals walk in the same direction - the vertebrae of their path is that very road that gave homage to the marching feet of the first inclination; however, it is no shame for the new leaders to walk on different sides of the road, utilize the back streets, side streets, or alleyways.

Fundamentally, these leaders of the cause realize the map of the times. On this map they faintly see the dotted lines denoting the way. When they are able to show their groups this map and the group identifies with that map - seeing the dotted lines that are unapparent to the unwilling eye - only then may they lead. Only then may the group follow. The result of this, aside from the ends of the cause, is a widespread reverence for the leaders - fundamental for the infusion of duty to take place.

What is duty? In taking a Kantian approach (the most suitable approach for any sacred cause that requires a certain level of moral and ethical absolutism) duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law. Law implies some form of command - Immanuel Kant presents this command as a "Divine Command" that comes from a higher being - God. There must be some form of command to bring forth a sense of duty. As Christian duty is realized through the Bible and other Holy scriptures which interpret that which God commands, the soldier must recognize his duty through the leaders that interpret the "Divine Command" that is bespoken for the cause of war, insurrection, or peace-making - tailored based on the ideological grounds of the cause. This agent of the Gods steadfastly becomes the "Divine Command" on its own individual level by upholding and morphing into the ideas of the Architect of Life; likewise, the General of the army - the agent of the cause - becomes a form of "Divine Command" for a select mass by upholding the ideologies of the architects of the cause.

No belief can exist under a false God; similarly, no belief can exist under the guidance of an incapable interpreter - one that attempts to materialize the ideals and distribute them to the masses, consequently forming a collective of primates honored and rewarded for their good deeds. Furthermore, only belief can exist when an agent, representative, or leader invokes the spirit of the cause and not the utility to the individual. This supreme inclination - inclination for duty versus being inclined to be dutiful - can only be summoned by a leader who creates reverence for himself and his interpretations by revering the ideologies and laws of the "Divine Command" on a personal level that is pure. Show me the man who realizes the act of duty in itself and not that which will materialize as an effect of an inclination to fulfill that duty and I will realize him as he who is one with the "Divine Command": he uproots the Oak because he must pass through, not because it is in the way.

IS HE A TURK?

Suzy Bezikian

What do you feel when you hear the word "Turk"? Do you feel angry? Do you feel upset? Do you feel anything at all? How about when you come into contact with someone of Turkish heritage? This question has been haunting me for quite some time. It was not until recently when I came face to face with a Turk. My first impression of him was not a gruesome one. He did not have a long curling mustache. He did not seem like he was on a hunt to kill and rape. He actually did not possess any of these negative, villain-like images I have had embedded in my mind. To tell you the truth, he actually looked a lot like an Armenian, one of us. At that moment, I was struck with confusion. How could I possibly have hate towards someone that looks like some of my friends? To make matters worse, he was incredibly friendly and kind. He actually went out of his way to approach me and introduce himself. I felt horribly guilty by just introducing myself back to him. Naturally, I acted like any Armenian "should" act. I acted like his great grandparents had killed mine. I was mean, bitter, and incredibly hostile. Of course, he knew that I wanted to keep my distance simply because he was a Turk, and I was an Armenian.

Now that some time has passed since I last saw or spoke to him, I have had some time to reflect on this experience. I wanted to comprehend why I was so awkward and distant with an individual who was so genuinely nice. I wanted to understand why I did not even give him the chance to prove that he was just an average twenty-something year old like me. I wanted to understand why I felt so guilty for even speaking to him. Throughout my adolescent life, I have been told what to feel towards Turks and their culture. I have been told to detest everything about it. I have been told that killing a guilty Turk for revenge is the honest and honorable way to go, for all Turks are thought to bear some sort of responsibility for what happened to the Armenians. Fortunately or unfortunately I have

come to realize that this way of thinking is outdated. That was a justified mentality for Soghomon Tehlirian, who assassinated one of the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. About 90 years have passed since the Armenian Genocide. The way we live and think must be updated and modernized.

I don't want anyone to get the wrong idea, though. What I am trying to express is that I am proud of all those men and women who risked their lives to get our message across. I am honored to learn about them, and sing about their lives and heroic conquests. I think this organization is based on a selfless cause that demands a restitution of what was stolen from our grandparents. But I still think that we have reached a time when we have to revisit these issues. My confusing emotions stem from the fact that I have not had the opportunity to discuss these types of concerns with my peers. I think this is an imperative issue that affects all of us on a daily basis. I think we need to openly and freely express our viewpoints regarding this matter. I am personally struggling with how to feel and act when I once again come into contact with a Turk. My rational side tells me to treat him or her as I would any new individual I meet. Simultaneously, another side of me feels that being friendly would be a betrayal to all those Armenians that were massacred in 1915. My mind tells me that a Turk I meet casually on the street has no direct connection with the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, I am reminded that until the Turkish government formally and officially acknowledges the genocide, I should not give any Turk the same respect I would give any other person. I am certain that I don't stand alone with these contradictory feelings.

So I pose this question to all readers: how do you think an Armenian-American should behave and act around a Turk? Regardless of the type of attitude this question might provoke, a discussion must be opened.

Revolutionize or Assimilate?

Tamar Yardemian

"So", they say, "sounds like you have an accent, what are you?" "I'm Armenian." "Oh, when did you come to America?" "Well, actually, I was born here, but my parents are Armenian." "Oh, I see, when did your parents arrive from Armenia?" "Actually, my parents were born and raised in Lebanon, but their parents were Armenian." "Ahh, okay, so you're Armenian-Lebanese-American?" "No. I am an Armenian!"

News flash ladies and gentlemen, my generation is inherently experiencing a very serious identity crisis. We learn about our culture, heritage, religion, and language, and day after day we hear stories of struggle and survival. Yet, as soon as we step outside of our homes, school and society is incredibly uninterested in who we are. In order to be successful in anything we pursue, there is a need for transformation, a need to become a different persona in the "real world." Are we cursed to lead a double identity in order to please all?

I find myself taking my experience as an Armenian, and redirecting it into different aspects of my life, be it school, work, or social environment, in order to carry uniqueness in my overall being. Somewhere along the way, I understood the need for change and adjustment, and gained flexibility in order to survive. I see all of these characteristics within every single one of my Armenian friends, who share similar immigrant stories. We continuously struggle to stay close to our Armenian persona, but have changed in response to our environment. It seems as though we as young Armenian-Americans have each undertaken a revolution within ourselves.

I truly believe that this revolution, this revolutionized lifestyle, is healthy. It keeps our minds fresh and contemporary, it keeps our society moving in a forward direction, and it forces us to live in a progressive manner. The only way my generation of Armenian-Americans will overcome this identity crisis is by accepting this revolution, and by using it to our advantage. Adopt the American lifestyle, adapt to it in a necessary way, gain the respect of influential Americans around you, and you will succeed in everything you wish to challenge. The skill remains in being true to the new identity that we unwillingly bear, yet willingly defend in order to succeed.



THE APEX THEORY

Staffwriter

On October 1, 2004, amidst the frenzied, alternative setting of Sunset's Key Club, a cluster of Armenians gathered to support a group known as The Apex Theory. The group appeals to a large Armenian following, and to help encourage Armenians to vote and take part in the upcoming elections, the band united with ANC as well as the "Rock the Vote" campaign to help promote the importance of voting. Both campaigns set up a booth at the entrance of the club, and provided informative handouts as well as voter registration applications for those who attended. While enjoying an adrenalin-driven evening of high spirits and great music, the crowd was able to gather vital information regarding the elections, better preparing themselves for the crucial decision-making in November 2004.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

SAMMY J. Watson (Drums) - Rush, Miles Davis, Michael Jordan and Frank Zappa.
ART Karamian (Vocals and Guitar)- My main influences are Dave and Sam. We spend so much time improvising every day, we react to one another, and trigger each other. We do a lot of jamming, and you learn a lot about yourself when in situations like that.

DAVE Hakopyan (Bass) - I listen to anything and everything. We live in a very rhythmic type of world. There are constantly things I'm listening to which sound like music to me. The other day, while I was printing something, it was making a really great rhythm, and that influences me to write something. I am influenced by the world around me.

MUSIC BEING THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE HOLDS LOVE, PEACE AND UNITY WITHIN ITS ESSENCE. DO YOU TRY TO PROMOTE THESE HEALTHY ASPECTS OF LIFE THROUGH YOUR MUSIC?

ART - It happens unintentionally, because that is the type of people we are, and it somehow resonates. I have been told that there is a positive vibe in our music, and I believe it is a collection of who we are.

AS AN ARMENIAN-AMERICAN, DO YOU PLAN ON USING YOUR MUSIC, YOUR WORK AND YOUR EFFORTS TO HELP THE ARMENIAN CAUSE, WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE GENOCIDE RECOGNITION, ARMENIAN ECONOMY, CULTURE, ETC.?

DAVE - Yes, of course, as much as possible. I was born in Yerevan, and therefore the Armenian culture and tradition are close to my heart. Even the non-Armenian band member Sammy, has become part of the family. If our band's music could somehow influence the Armenian youth in a positive way, then we can't ask for more than that, because that would be amazing. And, I'm hoping it has in the past, and it will continue to in the future. A good percentage of the kids who come out to our local shows are Armenian, and I love showing these kids that there are other things you could do with your life, if you are an artistic person then you can take that path and make it a career. As far as the genocide goes, of course, if we could help out in any way, we would. At our last show, we had ANCA come out, trying to campaign for Kerry.

ART - I think it happens when Armenians in different avenues of life do something that people gravitate towards, it's obviously a platform to let the world

know where we are from, our history, and who we are as a people. I think music is a great way to do that, whether it's benefits or just speaking about it, or even just bringing awareness to the fact that there are Armenians doing a lot of different things, and showing that we are very capable of anything.

WE HAVE SEEN ANC BOOTHS AT YOUR SHOWS. ARE THERE ANY OTHER POLITICAL OR SOCIAL GROUPS YOU WORK WITH?

DAVE - We had Rock the Vote come out on tour with us. This effort might help get young people to vote. We want to motivate them to go out there and state their choice on who they want to be the governing power. We would love to involve some other health care organizations, or grassroots type of efforts in the future.

ART - I don't consider myself a political person, but if there is an issue that makes me think, then it should make other people think. So if it's a good cause, I would love to be a part of it.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR THE YOUTH OF TODAY?

SAMMY - Strive. Strive harder. I see a lot of laziness and a lot of youth looking for shortcuts. This mentality slows down evolution. Don't let today's technology soften us; it's still good to get your hands dirty.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?

ART - I can't answer that. I believe that the joy in life is the not knowing. You have to be okay with uncertainty to truly be happy. We live in a time where every minute is accounted for and your entire week is filled up before it has even started. You have to embrace uncertainty to actually enjoy life, moment to moment. If you are just focused on a goal, you will ignore all the steps it took to get there, and forget to enjoy it.

WHAT COUNTRY ARE YOU ITCHING TO ROCK?

SAMMY - Global, all of them, bring it on. If there is a child in Cambodia or India, they are just as important as any other child anywhere else.

ARTIN - Armenia would be great. I would love to play for anyone who appreciates music.

DAVE - Japan.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE YOUTH CAN HELP FURTHER THE ARMENIAN CAUSE?

DAVE - First of all, Armenian kids need to get along better. Every now and then we still hear about Armenians from different places having hostility with one another. If we all represented ourselves as Armenians, and not part of this or that organization, we would be closer to helping the whole Armenian cause move forward. At the end of the day, we are all for the same thing.

theapextheory.com



THE DEATH OF KIKOS

By Hovhanness Toumanian
A Verse Translation by Sos Bagramyan

There was a poor man and his wife
Who had three daughters. The father
One day is thirsty from work,
So he tells his eldest daughter
To get some water from the stream.
Now, at the bottom of this stream
There stands a tree, and when the girl
Sees this tree she says to herself,
"Let's say I find me a husband
And have myself a son, and name
Him Kikos, and Kikos comes and
Climbs this very tree, he will fall down
And break his poor head on this rock...
Oh my dear Kikos, Oh..." Right then
And there she sits under the tree
And begins to sob while she wails,

I got a husband, then a son
Named Kikos, with a pointy hat.
And he climbed this tree by this stream
Then fell down and broke his head, splat!
Oh dear Kikos, oh my dear son!

"May your grandmother's eyes go blind
My dear Kikos!" The mother cries.
She then sits by her three daughters
And all four of them start to cry.
The father then sees that his wife
Has gone after their three daughters
And has failed to come back herself.
So he decides to go himself
And see what's kept them all away.
As soon as they see the father's
Head pop up down the road, they cry,
"Come, Come pitiful grandfather,
see what has happened to Kikos!"
"What Kikos, what are you saying?"
The father responds, lost in shock.
The eldest girl tells her father,

I got a husband, then a son
Named Kikos, with a pointy hat.
And he climbed this tree by this stream
Then fell down and broke his head, splat!
Oh dear Kikos, oh my dear son!

The mother waits and waits, and sees
That her eldest has not come back.
So she sends her second daughter
Off and says, "Go and see why your
Sister is late." And so she leaves.
Now when the older sister sees
Her younger sister from afar
She starts to cry louder and says,
"Come, oh come here pitiful aunt,
See what's happened to your Kikos."
The eldest girl tells her sister,

I got a husband, then a son
Named Kikos, with a pointy hat.
And he climbed this tree by this stream
Then fell down and broke his head, splat!
Oh dear Kikos, oh my dear son!

"Oh my dear Kikos, Oh!" Bellows
The second sister as she sits
Next to her sibling. And so now
Both girls start crying together.

The mother waits and waits, and sees
That her daughters have not returned.
So she sends her youngest daughter
Off and says, "Listen, go and see
Why your sisters have not come back."
So the youngest daughter sets off
And finds her sisters sitting and
Crying together by the stream.
"Why in the world are you crying?"
The oldest sister then responds,
I got a husband, then a son
Named Kikos, with a pointy hat.
And he climbed this tree by this stream
Then fell down and broke his head, splat!
Oh dear Kikos, oh my dear son!

"Oh your poor aunt, my dear Kikos!"
Cries the youngest, beating her head.
She sits next to the other two
And their three cries ring louder still.
The mother waits and waits, and sees
All three daughters have not come back,
So she goes looks for them herself.
When they see their mother coming
The three daughters begin to shout,
"Come, Come unlucky grandmother,
See what's happened to your grandson!"
"What grandson? What's happened?" She asks.
The eldest then tell her mother,

I got a husband, then a son
Named Kikos, with a pointy hat.
And he climbed this tree by this stream
Then fell down and broke his head, splat!
Oh dear Kikos, oh my dear son!

"Oh dear Kikos!" The mother and
her three daughters wail on their knees.
The father, being the wisest,
Says to his wife and three daughters,
"You silly women, what are you
Crying for? No matter how much you
Wail, no matter how much you
Cry, you will not bring Kikos back!
Get up and let's go to our house,
Invite our friends and hold a wake
And honor our dear, dear Kikos.
What good will all your crying do?
This here is the way the world works,
And so Kikos shall leave the world
The same way that he entered it."
It so happened that one ox
And one small pot full of flour
Is all that they had in the world.
Only when they kill their one ox,
Make bread of their bit of flour,
Invite people and hold a wake
All in the honor of Kikos
Are they able to ease their pains.

HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN'S KIKOS AND THE MODERN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Hovhannes Toumanian's *The Death of Kikos* was written as a social satire in the form of a folk tale, and because of its folk tale structure the short story has ingrained itself in the Armenian popular conscience as well as the Armenian literary culture. As with all great satires, the story and its lessons go beyond the society and the time for which it was initially composed.

In America's political system, society's primary source for information is the news media. The news media, however, is by nature a secondary source; the voting public, by and large, does not get its information from a government spokesman or political candidate, who is the primary source. What we see on television and read in the newspaper is a second-hand account of what a spokesman has said or what the candidate's stances are. The media, then, serves as a filter for political messages. What the news delivers is only a part of a candidate's speech or only a quote or two from a long official document. Also, in an era dominated by the sound bite—a tool which political candidates have learned to utilize—the public is saturated by short, attractive yet ultimately superfluous messages regarding a candidate's stance on complex issues. Even our current presidential debates, which consist of a two-minute argument followed by a 90-second response, do not live up to the multifaceted subjects they address. This is a far cry from the spectacular Lincoln/Douglas senatorial debates of 1858 which stretched for several hours at seven different locations (as opposed to three) on the controversial issues of the day.

The political messages relayed by the media, which are composed of partial truths and filtered data, are reported at a highly repetitive rate. This is not necessarily a criticism of modern media, but rather an observation of the nature of network news. What the public gets in a given election is the same handful of messages repeated by different political talking heads verbatim until their partial truths are taken for substantive facts. It is this lack of mental and social awareness, the mistaking of fiction for fact, Toumanian warns against in his story.

The eldest daughter so firmly believes she will have a son who will die that she refers to his death in the past tense to all her family. She repeats the story of Kikos's death so many times that it just adds to the tragedy of the event as seen in the growing number of mourners in the tale (the mother and two sisters). This eventually escalates to the whole town mourning for the death of a child that never existed. Thus, Kikos is real not only for the primary characters of the family, but implicitly for the whole village that mourns for Kikos. Through repetition of speech, a tragic fiction is taken as a tragic fact. It is when all of society is affected and altered by Kikos's death where Toumanian's comedy takes a serious turn: what starts as a farcical tale about a foolish village family turns into a threat to society's conception of reality. Toumanian's moral can be applied to the contemporary political as well as the social realm: Society must exercise a healthy dose of skepticism to keep the democratic process healthy and itself in touch with reality.



ARA OSHAGAN

TRACES OF IDENTITY

Staffwriter

As an Armenian artist, Ara Oshagan works to project the experience and reality of being an Armenian through the images he captures within his photographs. Oshagan explores the multi-layering within the understanding of the Armenian-American identity through his recent exhibit entitled *Traces of Identity* at Barnsdall Park. He portrays an inclusive array of highly emotional and provocative images plucked from the everyday lives of friends, family and acquaintances alike. Oshagan's works reflect a potent imagery that engages the viewer with the essence of his vision of Armenian-Americans, a vision that cuts across the board for all Armenians, and brings into question the vital concerns that we as diasporans face. According to its press release, "The exhibit brings together the strands of a diverse and vibrant Armenian presence across the breadth of the greater Los Angeles area. It addresses issues of identity and displacement common to many immigrant communities."

Oshagan's style portrays a sense of voyeurism as well as a sense of partaking, which characterize his style of photography; Oshagan is the photographer, yet he is also a fundamental component of the photograph, as his subjects seem to be aware of his presence within his pictures. His photographs define the essence of being Armenian-American from the perspectives of all walks of life. Oshagan captures Armenians on vacations, at parties, weddings, funerals, markets, and even in prison. He strives to portray the experience of being an Armenian living in the Greater Los Angeles area. Ara Oshagan artistically reveals alternative lifestyles that Armenians living in Los Angeles have embraced.

These questions of identity and self-awareness fuel many artists of our day. From such artistic expression we are able to further understand ourselves while bringing into question the contemporary concerns and issues of our day. Art can serve as an abstract means of acknowledging contemporary issues, particularly those we fail to address. It also aids in accepting and even appreciating the diversity that we encounter. Ara Oshagan's images are raw and reflect the truth within our lives. If we are ever to understand ourselves, and attempt to define our "identity" we must first gaze at these images and truly trace our identity from one individual to the other.



Cell, Ironwood Prison, Blythe, 2003



Entrance, St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, Pasadena, 2001



Ararat Convalescent Hospital, Eagle Rock, 2002