

HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES
SPRING 2008

*** ONE NATION
ONE HOMELAND**

**“DASHNAKTSUTYUN
IS OUR
OLD FRIEND”**

LOOKING BACK

AT THE 2008 RACE
FOR ARMENIA'S
PRESIDENCY

**WHO ARE TURKEY'S
CORPORATE
ALLIES?**

**FILM REVIEW:
THE PEOPLE'S
ADVOCATE**

**WHAT'S
IT ALL
ABOUT**

**ARE
YOU
READY
TO
MOVE
TO
ARMENIA?
FIND
OUT
FROM
THOSE
WHO
HAVE...**

**ADL - FRIEND
OR FOE?
YOU BE THE JUDGE**

**INTERVIEW
SPOTLIGHT
VAHAN
HOVHANNESIAN**





HAYTOUG STAFF

Contributors:

Alex Der Alexanian
Maral Der Sarkissian
Hovig Kandilian
Noushig Karpanian
Knar Kitabjian
Vatche Soghomonian
Sosé Thomassian
Hrag Yedalian
Allen Yekikan

Editors:

Serouj Aprahamian
Vaché Thomassian

Layout design:

Krikor Mugerian

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

The opinions expressed in the Haytoug publication 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.*

Armenian Youth Federation

104 North Belmont Street, Suite 206
Glendale, California 91206

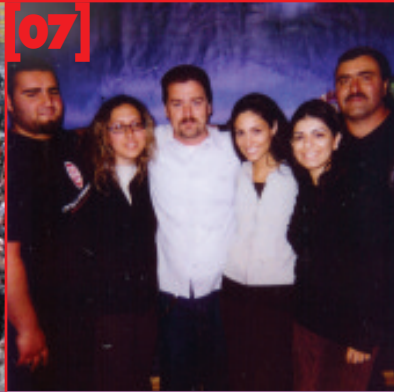
[03]



[12]



[07]



[17]



[27]



02 MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

03 VAHAN HOVHANNESIAN

04 BOOK REVIEW: DAS KAPITAL

07 MEETING THE MAN BEHIND THE IDEA

10 ADL: NO PLACE FOR DENIAL!

12 DASHNAKTSUTYUN IS OUR OLD FRIEND

14 ՆՈՐ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ. ՆՈՐ ՍՓԻՐՔԱՀԱՅԵՐ

16 CONFRONTING TURKEY'S CORPORATE ALLIES

19 AYF SUMMER CAMP

20 FILM REVIEW: THE PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE

21 A MOMENT FROM YOUTH CORPS

22 ԱՌԺԱՍԵԱՅ ՏԵՂԱՅԻ

24 SOURJ FOR THE ARMENIAN SOUL

27 ԴԷՊԻ ԵՐԿԻՐԻ ԳԱՂԱԹԱՐԸ

28 OUR NATALINE

TEBI YERGIR

A LUCID DREAM

When our organization established itself in the Diaspora and set itself out to struggle against apathy and assimilation among Armenian youth, it did so with the expectation that we would eventually gain the opportunity to return to a free, independent, and united Armenia. Maintaining the Diaspora and Armenian identity outside of the homeland has always been carried out with an eye toward one-day returning to the lands we were ripped away from.

Our struggle for Hai Tad also comes directly from this condition of being deprived of our historic homeland and being exiled to foreign countries. Those who have sacrificed themselves and given their lives for this struggle have always spoken of the need for our lands and freedom for Armenia to prosper. When Hampig Sassounian recently gave an interview to the *Voice of Van* radio station in Beirut, he openly called on the Lebanese-Armenian community to repatriate to Armenia. In his words, "Our time in the Middle East has passed by now. The time has come for repatriation to Armenia. From now on, we must think about gathering our families and children and going to Armenia, where future generations will be much more fortunate than of those who are living in foreign countries."

Today, we live in a historic era where Armenia is once again an independent state. We must realize that the torch has been passed to us to strengthen and enhance the Armenian Republic. Just as the fedayees of yesteryear flocked to Armenia and sacrificed themselves for the *yergir*, one of the main tasks of this generation is to commit itself to the development, democratization, and defense of Armenia. Ideally, this would entail going directly there and fully joining our compatriots in the struggle for Armenia's betterment.

There are hopeful signs that this process of repatriation to Armenia is slowly picking up steam. According to Armenia's migration agency, the country has steadily registered a positive migration balance since 2004, with the number of people coming to Armenia exceeding the number leaving by 21,500 in 2006.

We also see that young people from around the world have been visiting Armenia in greater numbers over recent years. Some are even deciding to permanently settle there. A growing economy and warmer relations with the Diaspora seem to be the main driving forces behind these developments. By serving as a bridge for youth wanting to travel directly to Armenia and Artsakh, programs such as Youth Corps also play a crucial role in this overall process.

However, the work being done on the Genocide recognition front should also be seen in light of our commitment to strengthening Armenia. A denialist and unrepentant Turkey poses a lethal threat to the security and rights of the Armenian Republic. It is in the mutual interest of both Armenia and the Diaspora to have Turkey face up to its past and own up to its crimes. This mutual interest has been clearly manifested in everything from the mass demonstrations in Yerevan on the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide to the more recent jubilation in Armenia over the US House Foreign Affairs Committee's passage of H.Res.106 (the Armenian Genocide Resolution).

In all of these endeavors, we must utilize opportunities to solidify our bonds with the homeland and promote the concept of *Tebi Yergir*. It is of utmost importance that we understand the value of this powerful concept and do all in our power to strengthen Armenia's vitality.

AYF MEETS WITH ARMENIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE **VAHAN HOVHANNESIAN**

During a recent visit to the United States, the Armenian Youth Federation was able to organize a town hall meeting between Vice Chairman of the Armenian National Assembly and Presidential candidate Vahan Hovhannesian and the Armenian youth of Los Angeles. Portions of the question and answer session have been translated into English and are included below.

1 As the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's candidate how do you plan on dealing with corruption in its governmental and societal manifestations?

I must say that this is the most complex issue facing Armenia; it is also a problem in more developed nations, where unfortunately, it can not be asserted that the problem of corruption has been resolved. However, I believe that the size of Armenia makes the task of controlling corruption more feasible.

There must be an institution in which the public can invest their trust, and that institution must be the judiciary. Having been bereft of an independent country for so long, the people of Armenia had adopted the notion that a just society comes hand in hand with independence. However, we have obtained independence but justice remains elusive. Consequently, the people have lost confidence in their own republic and government. Having lived through centuries of foreign subjugation, distrust of the government has become ingrained in the people of Armenia. For the people, the government is akin to the rain or other uncontrollable weather phenomenon which must simply be evaded; they dodge taxes and enlistment in the military and pay bribes to avoid fulfilling their responsibilities. The people that represent the government, the bureaucracy and the administrative

officials must set an example. It is not possible to bring forth exemplary behavior in these officials by simply asking for it, or by persuasive rhetoric, or by showing motherly affection. There must be one forum that provides exacting and impartial justice, namely the judiciary. The new president of Armenia must make the establishment of justice within the judicial system a priority. If you succeed in doing this, over the course of a few years the conditions in Armenia will improve.



2 What affect will the newly adopted dual citizenship law have on the Republic of Armenia and on the presidential elections? Also, will the new law energize the repatriation movement?

I have to say that this law was adopted 15 years later than it should have been. The barrier to dual citizenship was removed from the constitution in 2006 and the law was adopted in 2007. The truth is that it would have been just for the government to adopt a dual citizenship law immediately after attaining independence in 1991. It would have been just for the government of the time to do that because the existence of a Diaspora at that time, before the emigration process had started, was a consequence not of voluntary actions but of oppression including the Armenian Genocide and subjugation by Soviet authorities. Consequently, ethnic Armenians in the Diaspora have the same right to be deemed citizens of the Republic of Armenia as do Armenians born in Armenia or Karabagh. Unfortunately, the government of those days (Levon Der-Bedrosian's Armenian National Movement), knowing that including the

Diaspora in the political process of the Republic of Armenia would strengthen the ARF's position, constricted the Diaspora's involvement. In 1991, Armenia should have established itself as the legitimate heir of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1921); this would have solved a few issues. Armenia would legally be seeking its rights

to territories occupied by Turkey. I'm not referring to the borders defined by the Treaty of Sévres, rather the territory controlled by the First Republic including Gars, Ardahan, Igdir, Surmaloo, and in general the recognized borders at that time. Consequently, the descendants of the inhabitants of those areas would automatically receive Armenian citizenship. The adoption of this law, at this stage, might only have moral significance, because the government has not yet established the process for attaining citizenship and all the related issues such as the payment of taxes and military service, which must be resolved to consider the matter settled. The opposition camp, due to our pressure, recognized the equivalence of citizens and dual citizens. It does not matter if a citizen of

the Republic of Armenia is also a citizen of Lebanon, France or the United States. That is a personal matter; as a citizen of the Republic of Armenia you have all the rights of a citizen as well as the obligations. Amongst the rights of a citizen is the right to vote in elections, but we find ourselves in a difficult situation because there are Armenian communities in countries where democracy is not highly respected. Consider how a regional governor in Russia might pressure the local Armenian leadership to deliver a particular vote by

threatening the community financially and legally by exploiting their status as illegal immigrant workers. Thus the Armenian government would be shaped from outside Armenia. To avoid this danger a decision was made, with which the ARF agreed, that any citizen would have to place his or her vote from within the territory of the Republic of

Armenia. Therefore, I do not expect dual citizens to play a great role in the upcoming elections. However, I expect that in future elections our compatriots living overseas will play a greater role.



3 How would you approach the Karabagh peace process? Does the ARF advocate a step-by-step approach or a package deal? Is peace going to be possible any time soon? How is Armenia responding to the Azeri government's continual increases in defense spending and rhetoric of restarting combat?

Petroleum is what funds the Azeri government and its army and they know that we are aware of that; in case of any aggressive action from

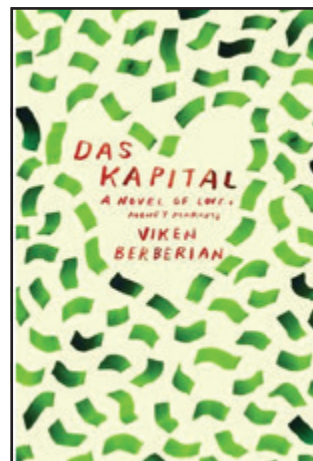
them their oil pipelines will be endangered. Everything is possible, but they do take us seriously. Coming to the Karabagh peace process, there needs to be an understanding that our struggle isn't for fun, our struggle needs to end by solving the Karabagh issue with Turkey and Azerbaijan. This is an issue for Turkey (due to their desire to enter the EU and the blockade of Armenia as a prime concern) and it's an issue for Azerbaijan as well, because its own people aren't benefiting from the petroleum treasures Azeri lands have; as they are diverted

to the military and embezzled. It is an issue for everyone, and all three sides want to solve it as soon as possible. The youth needs to understand, that were not going out there trying to eliminate the Turkish government or the people of Azerbaijan. Armenians are 10 million worldwide compared to their 70 million populations. We need to find a peaceful solution to this issue, were not interested in starting a war against either Turkey nor Azerbaijan, and it is totally wrong when people think that the ARF is advocating a resumption of the war. It is a new era, a different world, and we need to adapt, find the best way to approach these people and peacefully get what is ours.

4 As Armenian youth we are continually seeking means which we can directly connect ourselves with and aid our homeland, without simple charity. How do you foresee better utilizing the huge asset which is the Diaspora to better aid the development of the Republic of Armenia?

In my opinion, the most important way is to be well organized. All the usual methods (building schools in villages, etc.) help Armenia's development, but that doesn't solve the complicated issues that the Homeland is suffering. The Diaspora can have a huge effect on solving those issues, but it has to be an organized Diaspora. An Armenian individual that tries to help Armenia by himself cannot cause as much effect as an "organized Diaspora" such as the Armenian Youth Federation. For example: Armenia is the only nation that denied the United States Ambassador to Armenia appointed by the government. The US government was not able to send that ambassador to Armenia, because of the work done by the "organized" Armenian Diaspora in America. Even though helping Armenia financially isn't expected from the youth as much, but it is a help that Armenia needs. Funds collected in the Diaspora isn't the only thing that Armenia needs right now. Our country needs non-Armenian investors; we want foreigners to be interested in investing and opening up their businesses on our lands. Third, is a responsibility completely left to the youth – to pass on the education and skills learned in the Diaspora to our brothers and sisters in Armenia. Better and stronger communication between the youth in Diaspora and in Armenia is a must, which again ensures and continuously reminds them of their unity as Armenians.

BOOK REVIEW



Das Kapital: A Novel of Love + Money Markets
by Viken Berberian
Simon & Schuster, \$23
ISBN# 0743267230

Review by Alex Der Alexanian

I have never been to France, but Viken Berberian's second novel *Das Kapital: A Novel of Love + Money*

Markets made me feel like I was strolling through the south side of the French coast. From the towering skyscrapers of New York City to the serene beaches of Marseilles and Corsica, Berberian takes the reader on an exciting tale of financial markets and relationships with a uniquely exquisite poetic style.

With his past experience within the finance industry in Paris, Marseille, and Manhattan, Berberian has first hand knowledge of the inner workings of financial markets. It is with this knowledge that Berberian created the main character of the novel, Wayne. Wayne is a successful stock trader on Wall Street, who makes a living by shorting stocks (profiting from shares losing value). In layman's terms, Wayne profits from disaster and chaos. As he himself explains in the book, "Revolution, recession, devaluation, bankruptcy, war, genocide, earthquake, natural and man-made disaster, coup d'état, nuclear meltdown; anything that might send a country into the scrap heap of history. You name it, we'll trade it." As a veteran stock trader, Wayne has a knack for predicting falling markets. To further his stock shorting operation, Wayne even goes as far as hiring a Corsican militant associate—a militant who, interestingly, crosses paths with a love interest of his.

Das Kapital is an interesting novel with a unique view of present day financial markets. Having worked in the three main cities where the novel takes place, Berberian's personal accounts help him paint a vivid picture of the setting. In homage to Marx's original *Das Kapital*, Berberian portrays the worlds of finance, capitalism, and love with a fresh and unusual perspective. I would often think about the state of the world and economy while reading his book. Although, at times, certain parts were a bit wordy, I would recommend this novel for anyone interested in a different view of capitalism than that commonly presented in the American media and textbooks.

TEBI YERGIR



Shooshig overlooking Yerevan, with Mt. Ararat in the background.

Name: Shooshig S. Avakian
Hometown: Sunland, CA
Currently resides in: Central Yerevan
Age: 27

After being an ARF Badanee for over 10 years, Shooshig Avakian joined the AYF La Crescenta "Zartonk" Chapter in 1996 and eventually went on to join the ranks of the ARF. She was not only an active member of her local chapter but also heavily involved in centralized programs such as AYF Youth Corps. It was through this program which she first had the opportunity to travel to Armenia in the summer of 1997. Being in her homeland had a lasting and immeasurable effect on Shooshig. Following her first trip, she returned to Armenia almost every summer and, by 2003, began going every winter as well.

This past April, Shooshig decided to fulfill a lifelong dream of hers by settling

permanently in Yerevan. She is currently looking for work in the field of education and is determined to take her time to find a position that she is excited and passionate about. Despite being away from her family and friends, she feels at peace in Armenia and is overwhelmed by the countless things to do and explore. Although admitting that there are certain difficult adjustments one must make when repatriating, she is fully content with her decision and implores others to "JUST DO IT," adding that, "if you truly do believe that each Armenian should live in their homeland, then you will never regret your decision."

"Armenians here have a different way of looking at things, because they come from different experiences and have led very different lives. It is easy to forget that, and sometimes when my expectations are not met, it is frustrating and disappointing. But all in all, this is our homeland... we are all Armenians...and quite simply, I truly believe in the ideology of **TEBI YERGIR**"

What do you do for fun in Armenia?

There are so many things to do, especially since there are so many places to explore! I'm convinced that a given person can't possibly see "everything" in Armenia. Other than that, I like to catch up with fellow repatriates at cafes in Opera Square, and "people watch".

MEETING THE MAN BEHIND THE IDEA

By
Noushig Karpanian

The reconstruction of any event, regardless of the medium of conveyance, will only partially capture what was actually felt and experienced, and at times one may even interject within this reconstruction what was not yet real then, but what has since become inseparable from that pure memory, as the reflection on what had occurred inevitably intertwines itself with the actual experience. My experience in meeting Hampig Sassounian, with the San Francisco "Rosdom" Chapter, was one such event where the initial memory has been superimposed by feelings and emotions that have arisen through my need to share what some may feel are the most mundane details of the experience, such as Hampig's preference of Almond Joy over Mounds. In describing "what happened," I find myself presenting disjointed scenarios, beginning another story without yet having finished the first; I'm competing with myself for center stage to explain it all, in detail, as I remember it and re-remember it. But happenings, moments, and experiences that shake you out of your core only to return yourself to you, a 'yourself' that has collided with another, wherein the both of you are transformed, can never be fully transcribed. The intensity is too much to be wholly relived. I will try my best, however, in an attempt to compel each reader to wholeheartedly commit to a campaign to release a man whose corporeality may be confined to a jail cell in yard B, but whose soul has already traversed the compounds and has reached his homeland.

As soon as our Chapter announced the possibility of arranging a visit to the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, where Hampig has now been for almost a year, I jumped at the opportunity to fill out my application. Several months later, all of the members who applied received news of their clearance and our mid-April visitation date was set. Incessantly reading and re-reading the proceedings of Hampig's

trial, I tried to envision how this youth-turned-man, documented officially as "Harry" would look, sound, interact. Nothing from even the innermost depths of my imagination could have conjured up anything remotely close to the reality of the person whose legacy had absorbed us, and who would truly be our "unger" upon our departure. On our drive, we read aloud an article in *Haytoug* written by Hampig in the early '90's and were wondering whether or not we were doing justice to his calls for action.



Would he be proud of us? Had we fallen short of his dreams? We still had a night to reflect on those questions, although at the time of saying our temporary good-byes, it was not clear who was more proud of whom.

We had to enter the facilities in 2 groups of 5. Entering the facilities was undoubtedly a dehumanizing experience, forcing me to wonder yet again how it is that the mere presence

of a few authority figures will dupe otherwise hot-headed, temperamental, aggressive individuals into a complacent mass of abiding automatons. I wanted so badly to yell out, "Foucault was so right about self-subjugation...Come one, come all and witness the effects of the Panopticon." You're right in assuming that the words were not made audible...further proof of the internalized fear of the disciplined subject. And so we continued to wait in line, quietly and passively, so socialized in accepting the system; we were in line mostly with other "regulars"—those who were there, and are there every weekend, to see their fathers, brothers, spouses, lovers and friends, each of whom had their own story. Each. Own. These words of individuality would be lost, however, as the men at CMC were all clad in similar blue jeans and light blue shirts and viewed by society not through their individual stories, but through their criminal record—the thread of their undesired union; they have been dubbed as criminals, thieves, murderers, and thus it is no problem to have them live as civilly dead. Unaware of any protocol while waiting our turns in line, we did what all innocent bystanders do, we imitated those around us, and waited over an hour in the rain. It was sprinkling and misty at first. Then the fierceness and anger of the rain let on sparing no one. And of course, rain, captivity and subsequent freedom immediately conjures the following line articulated

so aptly in the movie *V for Vendetta*... "God is in the Rain." Although, the inmates, as well as I, wondered just where the hell God was hiding on their days of trial? In the spirit of *V*, however, I, just like "Evey" was prepared to meet the man behind the idea, and was getting impatient and anxious at the thought of our actually meeting Hampig. I thought about the irony of all of us visitors "wanting in" while those held in captivity whom we

were visiting were “wanting out.” After the torrential downpour, the guards let us wait inside. I was so angered at the bureaucratic stagnancy but did not want to jeopardize my chances of being let in, so I swallowed what would have been my polemics against the criminal Injustice system. After successfully passing through the hoops of a process that makes the security lines at airport check-ins seem eerily efficient and its personnel extremely kind, we were free to converse with the detained. My eyes caught the glance of a handsome blue-eyed Armenian man, his face at 19 which had been etched in my memory via newspaper photographs and profile sketches etched on t-shirts that read, “Free Hampig,” seemed even more innocent now. And then the floodgate that had been holding back my tears burst, the spillage resembling a deluge. I was overwhelmed beyond belief. Upon hugging us all, it was as if Hampig already knew us, that we had already met, and that we were just continuing a conversation that had started long ago...

And though barely in his presence for two hours, lifetimes of stories and experiences converged and imposed themselves on one another. Moments of silence were soon interrupted as we internalized that this was it. This was our moment. No time to ponder, but just to say, to be. Updates and briefings, jokes and laughter with tears interspersed, all unfolded while we were assembled around a plastic table, seated on plastic chairs...the usual mezze, kebab and oghi that accompanies such political discussions was missing; we substituted our *genats* with pepsi and feasted on chips and chocolate. But we did have the sunflower seeds! Hampig spoke optimistically of the future, of his parole to come in 2010, of his love for his wife, Salpi, whose strength and devotion he praises. She is his “hero” his “fedayi” he told us, with his heartening smile growing deeper and his blue eyes shining even brighter. He told us jokes that really made us laugh. Not like where you laugh just to be kind...he has a whole slew of them, and really they’re quite good. And just as we were consumed by the laughter and had ear to ear smiles, as we were lost in a moment of happiness that was almost too eerie to experience in a prison, reality slapped us in the face and grounded us...you know when you’re so lost in that moment, where the constructs of time and space are suddenly suspended, and you feel the power of being overwhelmed in a way that resonates piercingly yet equally peacefully throughout your entire being,

it’s that moment that reminds you that you are alive and that your feeble self may actually mean something to the world...well, just when you realize that you’re *in* it, it is right then that the moment is brutally seized from you; its rawness is forever gone. It may come back to you piecemeal, but never will you be consumed by it. And it was just after our laughter subsided that the guards announced that visitation time was over. And suddenly we realized that Time here represents a bitter paradox. Your precious Time is up with your visitors but your criminal ass is still going to do Time, so says the judge, or that jury of your peers or whomever found you guilty. Time, while you’re confined seems to last forever, especially when you’ve been sentenced to “25 with an L” but Time is so fleeting when you’re with your loved ones. Being the Armenians that we were, we took our sweet time in saying our good-byes. They were escorting the visitors out but we squiggled around in corners, to stay, if even for just a minute longer.

I looked around and saw lovers embracing and kissing. Such affection is permitted only during the last five minutes of visitation. And of course I thought about all those people in relationships who take the immediacy of their partners for granted...that immediacy I realized was what freedom meant for me. Being able to do something immediately, being able to be with someone immediately...that is the freedom I vow never to take for granted. Fathers were gazing one more time into the eyes of their newborns, loving them from afar, possibly showering them with blessings and goodness, and probably wishing someone would give them just one more chance. And really, this time, they wouldn’t mess up. I heard them, they promised! The cries fall on deaf ears, however, because they stay there and we all leave. And apparently the physical manifestation of tears representing my being so overwhelmed needed an outlet yet again because somehow I find myself being comforted

by Hampig as he puts his arm around me and says *mi lar*. The irony, well, I think it is apparent.

So naïve of us to think that we as Armenian youth were going to bring him emotional support and hope...it was Hampig in the end who



armed us with a sense of renewed faith and optimism. He will never know the extent of his legacy, which we tried to convey to him any chance we got but, of course, he wouldn’t have it. His humility and humbleness is almost puzzling. The sensitivity and kindness that so effortlessly accompanies his every action and word restored a bit of humanity to the institutional setting that tries to strip all semblance of personhood. As a man who seemed without regrets, I wondered how many of us would be in our mid-forties with the same resolve and dedication to our People, Cause and Homeland as Hampig is, even now while in the outskirts of San Luis Obispo. I cannot wait to greet him again. This time however, I’d like him to be entering through the doors of where I am, though I know his visit will be short. He made it very clear that immediately upon his freedom, his body is going to join his soul that I believe has already found its way Home.

TEBLYERGIR



Sasoon Sarkissian

Originally from: Tehran, Iran

Now resides in: Ajpnyak, Yerevan

Age: 25

Sasoon is originally from Tehran, Iran, where he was heavily involved in both AYF and ARF activities. Before moving to Armenia, he managed the Tehran AYF office.

Today, Sasoon lives in the Ajapnyak community of Yerevan and makes a living working in advertising. He has continued his organizational involvement as the Yerevan

Regional Executive Representative for the AYF in Armenia. Being away from his family in Iran has been somewhat mitigated by the fact that his sister and her family also reside in Armenia.

When asked about his experiences in Yerevan, Sasoon concedes that, as in every society, living in Armenia has its share of both good and bad features. As a Diasporan, he initially found the lifestyle and mentality of people towards certain issues to be somewhat different and a challenge to get used to. However, as time went on, he adjusted to the way of life and found the difficulties virtually disappearing.

After two years of living in Armenia, he now feels that moving there was the most important decision he has made in his life. Compared to Tehran, with its 19 million inhabitants and hectic environment, Sasoon explains that, "life here is more calm and enjoyable." He is proud of the fact that he now lives in a nation he can call his own and take part in its development. "I feel like I am being more productive here," he says. "Both for myself and my people."

"Doubts are unnecessary. This is our nation and if Armenians do not move here then we simply have not learned to stand by that which has belonged to us since the beginning of time."

What do you do for fun in Armenia?

We go to cafés, we take trips out of town, we spend time at Lake Sevan...

ADL: NO PLAC

By Allen Yekikan

On July 6 the Watertown Tab published a letter by David Boyajian spotlighting a statement from an April 21 Los Angeles Times article titled “Genocide Resolution Still Far from Certain” in which Anti-Defamation League National Director Abe Foxman argued that “The Turks and Armenians need to revisit their past” and that neither the Jewish community nor the U.S. Congress should be “the arbiter of that history.”

Boyajian’s letter to the Watertown Tab questioned the credibility of Watertown’s ADL “No Place for Hate” anti-racism and tolerance promotion program, noting in particular that the ADL “has made the Holocaust and its denial key pieces of NPFH while at the same time hypocritically working with Turkey to oppose recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23.”

Anger and frustration with Foxman and the ADL quickly began to mount, coming to the attention of the Boston Globe, which immediately began covering the ADL’s refusal to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and the ensuing controversy. The initial article, published on August 1, featured a demand by the chairwoman of ANC Eastern Massachusetts calling for Watertown’s No Place for Hate Program to sever ties with the ADL—its parent organization—unless it denounced Foxman’s position and acknowledged the genocide.

As criticism mounted in the press, Armenian American activists established the “No Place for Denial” web blog to track developments with the controversy and coordinate grassroots activism against the ADL.

On August 14, the ANC-EM led several Watertown residents and civil rights activists in expressing their discontent with the ADL and its denialist policies to an overflow crowd at the Watertown town council meeting. The heartfelt speeches moved the town council members to take decisive action

and sever Watertown’s ties with the “No Place for Hate” program.

Amid growing outrage by the community’s Jewish leaders, the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League called an emergency meeting on August 16 where, in an unprecedented move, the board broke ranks with its national leadership and adopted a resolution calling upon the ADL to change its policy vis-à-vis the Armenian Genocide.

Meanwhile, in an interview with the Boston Globe, Andrew H. Tarsy, the ADL’s New England regional director—an early defender of the ADL’s position—reversed course, voiced



Abe Foxman
Director of the Anti-Defamation League

disagreement with ADL’s national policy and called upon the organization to acknowledge the genocide. The regional board’s executive committee similarly broke ranks and resolved to support H.Res. 106, a resolution pending in Congress that acknowledges the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23.

Although Tarsy’s decision was backed by his board’s executive committee, Foxman immediately fired him. Hours after Tarsy was fired, however, two prominent regional board

members of the ADL, former chairman of the Polaroid Corp. Steward L. Cohen and City Council member Mike Ross, resigned in disappointment, stating that they could not be part of an organization that refused to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

The firing of Tarsy and the resignation of two prominent regional board members exacerbated the current controversy. Discontent quickly spread from Watertown to Arlington, where the cities “No Place for Hate” commission voted to suspend its ties with the ADL over the organization’s denial of the Armenian Genocide.

By mid-August Foxman and the ADL became the target of a national campaign of protest initiated by the Armenian National Committee of Eastern Massachusetts, backed nationally by the ANCA and supported by Massachusetts human rights organizations and leading voices in the Jewish American community. Under immense pressure, Foxman issued a statement on behalf of the ADL on August 21 effectively recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Although the statement reiterated that the Congressional Resolution was “counterproductive” and threatened the safety of Turkish Jews, Foxman’s remarks came as a rare reversal for an organization that had not faltered on this issue for decades.

The new policy, however, came too little too late for the Newton Human Rights Commission, which issued a strong message to Foxman, threatening the withdrawal of Newton from the No Place for Hate Program unless he and the ADL recognize, unambiguously, the Armenian Genocide and fully support the resolution affirming the genocide pending in Congress. As tensions began to mount, Turkey became involved and issued a statement condemning the ADL’s apparent reversal as being “without historical and legal basis.” Abdulla Gul, then Foreign Minister of Turkey, went so far as to bring the safety of Turkish Jews into question, citing Turkey’s “anger and disappointment”

E FOR DENIAL!

over the “great injustice” that was done to the Turkish people. Uneasy over the future of its relationship with Turkey, Israel began putting pressure on Jewish organizations in the United States to steer clear from the issue. Meanwhile Foxman sent a conciliatory letter to Gul in which he acknowledged the need “for further dispassionate scholarly examination of the details of those dark and terrible days.”

Amid the flurry, however, Genocide and Holocaust scholars continued to criticize the ADL Position on Armenian Genocide. The American Jewish Committee, which for years toted a pro-Turkish policy, broke ranks and acknowledged the Armenian Genocide, while an umbrella group composed of the presidents of all the Jewish organizations held a conference call to discuss the adoption of a clear position on the Armenian Genocide.

By September, Foxman had been backed into yet another corner and was forced to reinstate Tarsy. Jewish and Armenian Americans along with human rights organizations were, however, still unsatisfied and becoming increasingly vocal.

On September 7, while Foxman was in New York participating in a panel on “Modern Anti-Semitism,” almost one hundred protesters, organized by the Armenian Youth Federation and Jewcy.com—a new Jewish Youth publication—rallied at his location to protest the hypocrisy in ADL’s approach to the Armenian Genocide calling upon Foxman to reverse the organization’s policy.

The ADL’s unrelenting refusal to endorse the congressional resolution acknowledging the Genocide had, by mid-September, fueled two more towns in Massachusetts—Belmont and Newton—to completely sever all ties with the ADL and its “No Place for Hate” program and join Watertown in protest against the organization’s refusal to unequivocally recognize the Armenian Genocide. Despite it all, Foxman continued to maintain that the US Congress was not the appropriate place to “discuss Armenian Allegations.”

Foxman’s remarks came immediately after a meeting at the UN where the Turkish Prime Minister met with various Israel lobbies to ask for their continued “support against the Armenian Genocide allegations.”

On October 10, H.Res.106 was brought to a vote by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, where it passed 27-21, in a chamber marred by an ever looming threat of what Congressman Albio Sires called a “Turkish sword.”

Just days after the Congressional Committee vote, three more

“ARMENIAN AMERICAN
ACTIVISTS ESTABLISHED
THE ‘NO PLACE FOR
DENIAL’ WEB BLOG TO
TRACK DEVELOPMENTS
WITH THE CONTRO-
VERSY AND COORDINATE
GRASSROOTS ACTIV-
ISM AGAINST THE ADL”

Massachusetts towns—Arlington, Lexington, and Westwood—voted to sever ties with the ADL and its “No Place for Hate” program. Two days later, the Medford Human Rights Commission unanimously voted to suspend the city’s ties with the ADL. Frustration with the ADL was spreading quickly.

Just weeks away from its national convention, the ADL—once considered a monolith in the lobby industry—found itself facing a growing movement from the bottom up, not only from Armenians, but from communities traditionally considered to be the bastion of support for many of the ADL’s human rights campaigns.

On November 1, ANC-NY and AYPF-NY in conjunction with No Place for Denial and Jewcy.com, organized a rally

in front of the ADL’s national headquarters in New York on the eve of its national convention, where members of the organization were discussing the ADL’s position on the Armenian Genocide.

The ADL’s board, however, decided in that meeting not to take further action on whether to classify as genocide the Ottoman Empire’s massacre of as many as 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923. As a result, the organization quickly lost whatever benefit of the doubt it had left and passed up its last opportunity to become the human rights organization it claims to be. The town of Bedford, which had been holding off their decision to sever ties with the organization, responded to the national convention’s decision by becoming the latest to join the growing list of Massachusetts communities distancing themselves from the ADL.

Although the national convention did not yield a decision by the ADL to support the Armenian Genocide resolution, it became apparent that the ADL was no longer sacrosanct and was, in fact, being vehemently criticized by the Jewish community for their dodgy perspective on the Armenian Genocide. The organization’s hypocritical policy of genocide denial, its vehement opposition to congressional recognition for the Armenian Genocide, and its unholy alliance with Turkey had caused an outcry from thousands throughout the nation. More than half a dozen cities had severed their ties with its anti-bigotry programs. Jewish and Armenian activists had rallied against such double standards. Scholars and politicians had fervently criticized the fallacy of the ADL’s arguments and its membership had begun questioning the very moral authority of the organization.

Genocide denial was given a fatal blow this year, as the nation’s largest and most influential Jewish human rights organization was judged in the court of public opinion for its hypocritical denial of the Armenian Genocide.

"DASHNAKTSUTYUN IS OUR OLD FRIEND"

EXAMINING ARMENIA'S 2008 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

By Staffwriter

Two-thousand and seven was a year of political development within Armenia. In May, the country chose a new National Assembly in what many hailed to be the most democratic Armenian elections in to date. The elections revealed a change taking place in the political climate of Armenia. Although the fog of disillusion did not dissipate, serious efforts were made during the year against corruption. One of Armenia's oldest political parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, entered the parliamentary elections pledging to intensify its fight for social, political and economic justice. Despite an intense campaign against corruption, the parliamentary elections were still marred by the country's stubborn mechanisms of fraud. Unsatisfied with the rate of progress and concerned over the monopolization of political power in Armenia, the ARF broke from the ruling coalition to nominate its own candidate to serve as a viable alternative in the 2008 presidential election.

The ARF entered the May 12 elections on a platform promoting social justice, increased pensions and minimum wages, economic growth through export-oriented manufacturing and a concerted effort to abolish corruption. They fielded 122 candidates, 28 of which were women.

The ARF kicked off its campaign on April 8 by unveiling its official slogan, "Our Old Friend is the Dashnaktsutyun." The following day, they held a campaign rally at Charles Aznavour Square, which saw thousands turn out to hear candidates and party leaders discuss the organization's ideologies, initiatives, and goals. In the weeks leading up to the election, ARF candidates and party members traveled throughout the country, mobilizing people to participate in the political process and encouraging them to stand up against corruption and hold their leaders accountable.

On Election Day, almost 60% of registered voters in Armenia turned out to cast their ballots. Among the political parties participating in the elections were Yerevan's former communist mayor Arashes Geghamyan's National Unity Party (Azhayin Miabanutyun), Stepan Demirchyan's Justice Alliance (Artarutyun), Millionaire Gagik Tsarukyan's

Prosperous Armenia Party (Bargavatch Hayastan), Prime Minister Serzh Sarkisian's Republican Party (Hanrapetakan), Arthur Baghdasaryan's Rule of Law Party (Orinats Yerkir) and Raffi Hovannisian's opposition Heritage Party (Jharangutyun). Thousands of Armenian and foreign observers stationed at polling locations throughout the country monitored the weekend elections.

Although some polling stations reported a number of voting irregularities and attempted bribing, most observers reported that the elections were significantly more democratic and represented a major improvement from the past. According to the OSCE, which had some 400 observers stationed throughout the country, the elections were conducted largely in accordance with international standards. The mostly free and transparent elections were regarded as a step forward in the democratization of Armenia's political system. No Armenian election had been judged free and fair since the country became independent in 1991.

A total of five political parties passed the 5% threshold of votes needed to enter parliament. The Republican's received 34 % of the vote, Prosperous Armenia came in a distant second, followed by the ARF with almost 13%, and Heritage and the Rule of Law with more than 5%. While the smaller parties composing Armenia's fractured and disorganized opposition were voted out.

There was real progress in the elections. But the "deep-rooted...practice of garnering votes through coercion and bribery" still lingered, Vice Speaker of the National Assembly and ARF Bureau Member Vahan Hovannesian told reporters during a press conference following the announcement of election results. Although fewer votes were bought and even fewer were wasted on rash and ineffective political forces from the fractured opposition, many observers still reported sporadic instances of corruption and fraud during the casting of ballots. Much speculation also revolved around the proportions gained by Prosperous Armenia and the Republican Party. The coalition agreement signed between the two, envisaged complete support for Prime Minister Serzh Sarkisian's presidential bid. The ARF, which gained five more seats in the legislature, declined to join the coalition arguing that Sarkisian's presidency would move result in the monopolization of political power by one force and prevent any real progress in Armenia.

The ARF's gain of 16 seats in the National Assembly, despite their fracture from the ruling party's coalition was a clear signal of increased confidence by the voting population in the party's overall messages and goals. This break and the public criticisms of the problems plaguing Armenia's current political system and ruling regime were further bolstered by the ARF's decision to put forth its own candidate for the upcoming Presidential elections.

The decision by the ARF to nominate its own candidate had been in the making since the new National Assembly was announced. In September, during the organization's 11th convention in Shushi, delegates echoed earlier concerns



about the country's political landscape. While the parliamentary elections were recognized as a vast improvement from the past, the delegates concluded that more work needed to be done in the face of increased consolidation of powers by Sarkissian's ruling regime. There was a serious concern that such a development in the forthcoming presidential elections would polarize the country, slow democratic progress, and bring about a resurgence of the waning pessimism and apathy amongst the

general populace.

The nomination process was carried out in two phases. Vahan Hovannesian and ARF Armenia Supreme Body Representative and Chairman of Armenia's Foreign Affairs Committee Armen Rustamian were fielded as the party's two potential candidates. A special convention was scheduled to vote between the two after gauging public opinion. During the following months, the two men toured the country, speaking to sup-

porters and encouraging potential voters to participate. that the party has gained experience and has achieved several key objectives within the current political structure. The time was ripe for the party to participate in the presidential election with its own candidate. The ARF, he added, can bring guaranteed changes in a country whose political landscape is made up of extremes where one group believes that no changes are necessary; while another—the previous regime—aims to dismantle everything.

A new year is upon us and all across Armenia it is evident that the country is preparing to go to the polls on February 19 to elect a new president. It is also apparent that much has changed in Armenia over the past few years in general, but the most recent 12 months in particular. Politics in Armenia is drastically changing. The arcane, apolitical method of post-soviet politics that has facilitated the rise to and maintenance of power for a minority of Armenians is coming under intense pressure for change. 2007 saw a new paradigm emerge to challenge the traditional models of civic participation in Armenia. The capacity of the people to participate in the political process is expanding, as the ARF continues to provide citizens the opportunity to be more than just rally goers. By the end of the year the ARF had printed 400,000 social contracts to be signed by Hovannesian and each individual citizen.

Under the agreement he and the ARF committed to ensuring free and just elections, real social changes, political stability, social solidarity, and continued democratic development. The contract essentially represents an agreement by Vahan Hovannesian to uphold the responsibilities of an elected official, the ARF as a political organization and each individual person as citizen of a democratic Republic of Armenia, Hovannesian noted during a press conference on December 24. This practice, much like the early election primaries held in November, is something completely new in the Armenian political culture, providing Armenian citizens with the opportunity to participate in democracy and reclaim their agency.

There is a myth in Armenia that is currently being disproven. Despite the remnants of a stubborn shadow economy and a growing income gap, the economy continues to grow at double digits. The pressure to change is growing and Democracy is budding. Two years ago, major polls indicated that most Armenians felt cynicism toward the political system. Last year, however, revealed that the practice of genuine platform based and citizen oriented politics is taking root in society. And while continued progress hinges on the outcome of next year's elections, the May elections have significantly raised the expectations of society and shown people tired of corruption and injustice, a viable way to effect change. Of course the true test of whether these historic achievements will last and become a mainstay of the Armenian political process still remain to be seen and can only be judged over time. But the willingness of a major party to break from the ruling coalition, to openly criticize the faults of the current system, the introduction of an inter-party primary for a national candidate, and the distribution of hundreds of thousands of social contracts to the citizens are important accomplishments worthy of recognition.

But as the old Chinese saying goes, "The road of a thousand miles begins with the very first step."



porters and encouraging potential voters to participate.

In November, the ARF held a non-binding poll to determine who the public preferred as the party's candidate. Between November 24 and 28, over 288,000 registered voters turned out at makeshift polling stations across the country to vote for one of two candidates. Many observers labeled the process as the first ever election primary held in Armenia.

The results of the poll were announced during the party's special convention on November 30. Hovannesian was deemed the more popular candidate with 53% of the vote. Although the results were non-binding, Rustamian said that the early election poll was a historic step toward further democratization and urged his colleagues to take the poll into account when voting for the party's candidate. Hovannesian was overwhelmingly chosen as the party's candidate.

On December 16 Presidential Candidate Hovannesian made his first appearance in the United States since being nominated to discuss the upcoming elections with the Los Angeles Armenian community at the 117th anniversary celebration of the ARF. "The president should directly and once and for all, guarantee the constitutional norms and structure...he should call all those who have fraudulently secured their desired election results and tell them we don't need you anymore. You can go home," he exclaimed. "From now on the decisive factor in the election will be only the people's vote." Hovannesian summed up the ARF's decision to enter the presidential race with its own candidate by saying

Նոր Հայաստան, Նոր Սփիրքահայեր

Դպրոցին անճշան մէկ անկիւնը, Հայ երիտասարդներ անգամ մը եւս այլազգներու խումբ մը արգելափակած, ծխախոտները մատներնուն միջեւ սեղմած՝ կը փորձեն անոնց Հայաստանը ծախել. կարծես թէ այդ խեղճները ե՞րբ ըսած են թէ՛ Հայաստանը անպէտք տեղ մըն է: Այսպիսով մեր «գիտակից» երիտասարդները կը սկսին թութակի պէս հայութեան արժանիքները հաշուել: Անոնք կը սկսին ըսելով՝ թէ մենք առաջին Բրիտանացի պետութիւնն ենք, ջարդուած ժողովուրդ ենք եւ տակաւին խաշ ու խորոված կ'ուտենք: Այս մէկը շուարած կը ձգէ այլազգները. անոնք ինչ ըսելիքնին կը շուարին եւ կը հարցնեն՝ եթէ Հայաստան կը բարգաւաճի տարիներու ընթացքին:

«Կը բարգաւաճի՞... կը բարգաւաճի՞... անշուշտ որ կը բարգաւաճի» կ'ըմբոստանան հայերը:

Վերջապէս իրենք աւելի լաւ պիտի գիտնային այդ մէկը. չէ որ ամէն ամառ հայրենիքին օգնելու համար մեր ազգայնասէր հայերը «դէպի երկիր» կ'ուղղուին:

«Այդ չէ ալ Հայաստան ի՞նչ կայ որ ընելու» կը հարցնէին *օտարները*:

Այս հարցը լսելուն պէս յանկարծ մեր աշխուժ երիտասարդները իրենց ձեռքի ծխախոտները մէկդի կը նետեն, որ կարողանան երկու ձեռքերը օգտագործելով աւելի պատկերազարդօրէն ներկայացնեն հայրենիքի տեսարժան վայրերը:

Այսպէս կ'սկսին՝ «Հայաստան պէտք է Օգոստոսին երթցուի, որովհետեւ այն ատեն Երեւանի մէջ *Կլէմենտի* նման կրնաս առանց Հայերէնի գլուխդ ազատել: Այսինքն՝ բաւարար անգլերէն խօսող կ'ըլլայ: Գիշերային կեանքն ալ գիշերուայ 12-էն ետք կ'սկսի՝ փոխանակ աւարտելու, եւ այսպէս մինչեւ առաւօտ քէֆ կ'ընէք»:

«Հոյակապ են այդ բոլորը սակայն միջոցին բան կա՞նք ընելու» կը հարցնէին այլազգները:

Հայերը իրար կը նային, անգամ մը կը ծիծաղին եւ կը բացականչեն «վա՛յ միջոցին սրճարան կ'երթաս: Երեւան նշանաւոր է իր բազմաթիւ սրճարաններով»:

«Միթէ կատակ կ'ընէ՞ք» կ'ապշին *օտարները*:

«Կատակ ընելու ատենը չէ՛, սա Երեւանն է՛, մենք այնտեղ քաղաքին կեդրոնը ունինք անուանի *Շէզվէ* սրճարանը»:

Այսպէս ժամերով խօսակցութիւնը երկարելէ ետք, ամէն մարդ իր գործին կ'ուղղուի:

*

* *



Հայաստան փոխադրուիլը շատ լաւ գաղափար է, ի մասնաւորի այն մարդկանց համար որոնք տակաւին Գաղթային (colonial) ժամանակուայ մտայնութիւն ունին: Այսինքն՝ կը հաւատան թէ ամէն գաղութ կրկին համախմբուելով՝ գարտէսին վրայ որոշ տեղ մը պէտք է ապրի: Այս գաղափարը գործնականի դրուեցաւ 20-րդ դարու ցեղասպանութիւնէն ետք՝ ներգաղթի գաղափարախօսութեամբ, եւ յատուկ յաջողութեամբ մը չպսակուեցաւ: Փաստօրէն, Սովետ Միութեան քայքայումէն ծլած արտագաղթողներուն մեծ մասը այդ հին *հայրենադարձ* ժողովուրդն է: Այս կը նշանակէ թէ 50-60 տարուայ ընթացքին այս մարդիկը, հայրենադարձները, չկրցան ընտելանալ Հայաստանին եւ բնիկ ժողովուրդին, որը մեզ պէտք չէ զարմացնէ, որովհետեւ թէեւ մենք բոլորս ալ Հայ ենք սակայն սփիւռքը ցեղասպանութենէն ետք չէր որ ստեղծուեցաւ: Մենք Անին 1045-ին կորսնցուցինք եւ այդ օրունէն որ Բագրատունեանց տոհմը կործանեցաւ, մենք Հայաստանի տարածքին վրայ կառուցուած հայրենիքը վերջնականապէս կորսնցուցինք:

Այսօր, անշուշտ կարգ մը դրութիւններ տարբեր են եւ կացութիւնը տարբեր. ունինք Հայաստան մը, որ թէեւ ազատ չէ բայց կը բաւէ որ անկախ է: 1946-ի ներգաղթի ժամանակ, Հայաստանի Հայութիւնը վարժ չէր Սփիւռ-

քահապետեան եւ ո՛չ ալ Սփիւթաբանալը գիտէր ինչ տեսակի տեղ մըն է Հայաստանը: Սփիւթաբանալուն համար Հայաստանը միշտ ալ եղած է արտերով հարուստ՝ ինչպէս կը նկարագրէ Վարուժան: Ան ունեցած է փառաւոր պատմութիւն՝ ինչպէս կ'ըսէ Խորենացին եւ գերազանց մշակոյթ՝ ինչպէս բիրեղացուցած էր Կոմիտաս: Բայց երբ ներգաղթողները Սովետական Հայաստանի իրականութեան հետ դէմ հանդիման գտնուեցան, այս բաները չգտան, պարզապէս որովհետեւ Հայաստանը այդ տիպար վիճակին մէջ չէր գտնուէր: Իսկ Անկախ Հայաստանը թէեւ աւելի լաւ վիճակի մէջ է, սակայն տակաւին այդ իտիալական պատկերը չունի, որ սնած էր Սփիւթաբանալերու մտքերուն մէջ: Ներկայիս, թէ՛ Սփիւթաբանալերս աւելի ժամանակակից պատկեր մը ունինք Հայաստանի նկատմամբ եւ թէ՛ ալ՝ Հայաստանցիք վարժուած են ընդունելու տարբեր ցամաքամասերէն եկած հայեր: Այո՛, ինչքան ալ ժամանակը մեզ փոխած է: Ո՛չ թէ միայն քիչ մը, այլ այնքան մեզ փոխած է, որ մենք սկսած ենք Հայաստանը օտարացնել՝ պարզապէս որ մենք մեզի օտար չզգանք եւ Հայաստան երթալով չկորսնցնենք մեր Սփիւթի արժանիքները: Սփիւթի մէջ մենք լաղէ, դաքո, բիցա, շաուրմա եւ շարան մը տարբեր անշնորհքութիւններ ունինք եւ մենք հարկ կը զգանք այս գիտերը Հայաստան փոխանցելը: Այսօր, Երեւանի կեանքին մէջ կ'անցնի ճէզվէ սրճարան երթալը: Ծառ չեմ զարմանար եթէ քանի մը տարիէն Երեւանի յաջորդ տեսարժան վայրը ըլլայ դազան ճաշարանը: **Այլ խօսքով, դժբախտաբար Հայաստանը կը փորձենք նմանցնել մեր զանազան գաղութներուն:**

Գալով ներկայիս Հայաստան փոխադրուելու խնդիրին, ես կը կարծեմ թէ մարդիկ ազատ են: Եթէ կ'ուզեն ամէն բանէ հրաժարուելով նոր կեանք սկսին՝ ինչո՞ւ չէ: Եթէ երիտասարդ մը կ'ուզէ Հայաստանի մէջ ամուսնանալով եւ այնտեղ գործ գտնելով կեանքը շարունակել՝ ինչո՞ւ չէ: Բայց յիմարութիւն կը նկատեմ այն մարդկանց արարքները երբ *Եանուլայի վկաներուն* պէս մէջտեղ ինկած կը փորձեն Հայ ընտանիքներուն ճնշում բանեցնելով համոզել եւ գործադրել տալ այս փոխադրուելու դժուարին գործը: Սփիւթաբանալերս տարիներու ընթացքին, մարզուած եւ վարժուած ենք Հայաստանին՝ սփիւթէ՛ն օգտակար դառնալու դրոյթին, եւ դժուար պիտի ըլլայ կարգ մը մարդոց նոյն ձեւով աշխատիլը տարբեր իրողութեան առջեւ:

Եթէ կ'ուզէք Հայաստան երթալ եւ հայրենիքին ծառայել որպէս Հայ՝ կը խնդրեմ որ ալ խուսափիք այլակերպել Երեւանը. գացէ՛ք տարբեր գաւառներ, տեսէ՛ք թէ Հայ գիւղացին տակաւին ի՞նչ տագնապներէ կ'անցնի: Գտէ՛ք որբ երեխաները եւ իրենց ձեր գիտելիքներէն մի քանին նուիրեցէ՛ք: Այսպէս, Հայաստանը կը զարգանայ եւ ազգը կը բարգաւաճի:

Արդ, «դէպի երկիր»ը լոկ Հայաստան փոխադրուիլ չէ: Այս գաղափարը կը յաջողի երբ իբրեւ Սփիւթաբանալ, իւրաքանչիւր անհատ իր իւրապատուկ ձեւը կը գտնէ, ի խնդիր Հայրենիքի բարեւաման, իր ներդրումը բերելու:

Յովիկ Գանտիլեան

GET INVOLVED WITH AYF

✦ *become a member*

✦ *volunteer*

✦ *register as an
alumni*

WWW.AYFWEST.ORG

GO TO THE
"GET INVOLVED"
SECTION TO JOIN,
REGISTER, AND
SIGN-UP FOR OUR
MAILING LIST
ONLINE FOR UPDATES
ON EVENTS AND
VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES!

CONFRONTING TURKEY'S CORPORATE ALLIES

By Serouj Aprahamian

While heated debates were ongoing regarding H. Res 106 an organization calling themselves the American Business Forum in Turkey (ABFT), issued a press release announcing that it has been lobbying members of Congress to oppose the Armenian Genocide Resolution in the U.S. Congress. On its official website (www.abft.net), this organization boasted of having members and supporters among the likes of Microsoft, Oracle, Xerox, Cargill, and other major US corporations. Thus, it sought to present itself as speaking in the name of corporate America and saying to Congress that big business is opposed to passing the Genocide Resolution.

One of the companies that stuck out in the list of ABFT supporters and members was Ritz-Carlton Hotels. They had their logo put on the website as an official "Supporter" and one of their general managers was listed as an "Alternate Board Member" of the ABFT. The Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) decided to come together to find out whether Ritz-Carlton actually supported the position of the ABFT.

A letter was sent to corporate headquarters followed by phone calls and local walk-ins to company hotels in every part of the country where Armenian communities existed. From San Francisco, to Pasadena, to Orange County, to DC, to Boston, and several other major cities, AYF members personally walked in to Ritz-Carlton Hotels around the country and demanded to know what their company's position was on this troubling matter.

As a result of this activism, Ritz-Carlton contacted the ANCA in early May and informed them that they in no way support the position of the ABFT and certainly do not oppose the Genocide Resolution. What's more, they withdrew their General Manager from the ABFT board and demanded that the Ritz-Carlton logo be immediately taken down from their website. Similar actions were taken by other companies such as Microsoft and Oracle. Today, if you visit the ABFT site, there are no more corporate logos at all—reducing their veil of their legitimacy to what it really is: just another Turkish website.

This concerted campaign was also extended to various other major companies and led to a series of articles featured in *Roll Call*, a leading newspaper covering events

on Capitol Hill. In March, the paper wrote a piece focusing on the business interests alleged to be opposed to the adoption of the Genocide Resolution. A month later, another article described the ANCA's ongoing efforts to "poke holes in its corporate-backed opposition" and explained how companies such as Philip Morris, earlier claimed to be leading opponents of the Resolution, have distanced themselves from any resistance to the measure.

Eliciting the threat of economic fallout should the U.S. Congress pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution was one of the leading arguments Turkey and its hired lobbyists planned to utilize. The revelation that major American corporations tied to Turkey, in fact, do not oppose the Genocide Resolution served to effectively neutralize yet another hollow threat emanating from Ankara.

This victory won on behalf of a coordinated AYF-ANCA effort around the country shows that, when put into action strategically, the power of the youth can accomplish a great deal for our cause. It also proves, once again, that the Turkish side is dependent on lies, threats and illusions of legitimacy to back their denial campaign. It is up to all of us to speak the truth and dismantle their false claims every chance we get.



Microsoft has not participated in any discussions or decisions of ABFT, and was not involved with the communication to which you referred in your letter.



Xerox is not a member of the ABFT. Therefore, Xerox did not participate in any way in the decision of the ABFT to send a letter to the United States Congress. Xerox has been a "sponsor" of ABFT, which is separate and apart from membership and does not include any input on the policies and positions of ABFT.

TEBI YERGIR



Raffi Kortoshian at the Sourp Arakelots Monastery in Mush (Turkey), holding broken fragments of Armenian khachkars (cross-stones).

Raffi Kortoshian

Originally from: Aleppo, Syria

Currently resides in: Gomidas, Yerevan

Age: 28

Growing up as an AYF member in Syria, Raffi was always taught that all Armenians should make it their goal to one day return back to Armenia. As he grew older, he joined the ARF Kristapor Student association, eventually becoming its chairman and passing on this same message to younger members who he was now responsible for educating. However, as he looked around and saw that his older peers were still living in Syria, he began to fear that his words would remain empty statements unless he did something without wasting another moment. Thus, in 2006, Raffi decided to move from Syria to Yerevan and never looked back.

Today, he continues his organizational involvement as a member of the local ARF committee in the Gomidas community of Yerevan. He also works as a Turkish language specialist for the Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA) NGO. Through his work he has been able to conduct research on Armenian historical monuments throughout the Caucasus and recently released his first book, a guide on the Armenian language written in Turkish. It is prepared specifically for those Armenians living in Western Armenia (under Turkey) who have been Islamicized but still maintain knowledge of their Armenian origins.

Raffi warns that moving to Armenia requires a significant level of sacrifice, given the fact that the country is still newly developing. However, he insists that it is the responsibility of all Armenians to aid in this development, including by moving to Armenia if they can. He adds that, contrary to what he heard before moving, people in Armenia do not dislike Diasporans but, rather, respond with respect and trust when they see people moving there and doing things to actually improve the country.

“You must decide whether you want to live in a house where all the luxuries are provided for you, but which is not yours [i.e. foreign countries], or in a place where you yourself must build everything up from scratch but which is actually your home [i.e. Armenia].”

What do you for fun in Armenia?

Life in Yerevan is comfortable. The city is not that big so it is great that all your friends are within 5 minutes. Its easy to pick up the phone and make plans for your day within a matter of minutes.



1.866.775.AYFC



AYF CAMP 2008:

Week 1: July 6 - July 13

Week 2: July 13 - July 20

Week 3: July 20 - July 27

Week 4: July 27 - August 3

Week 5: August 3 - August 10

Week 6: August 10 - August 17

Week 7: August 17 - August 24



**FOR MORE INFO, VISIT:
www.ayfcamp.org**

AYF SUMMER CAMP: HOME AWAY FROM HOMELAND

By Vatche Soghomonian

When I was younger, still without a driver's license, I used to count the days until school would end, anxiously awaiting the summertime. Once summer came around, the first couple days were fun and carefree and I thought to myself, "how can this get any better, this is life!" Soon, after a week or so, the sense of freedom wore off and boredom set in.

This cycle continues until the first time I became a camper at AYF Summer Camp. By far the greatest, most enjoyable and most memorable times of my life, are the times I spent at AYF camp. It's a place I have made life long friends, and although we may not see each other everyday or even every month, when we do see each other, it seems like we are best friends and we are back at camp again.

AYF Camp is located in Angeles National Forest near the city of Wrightwood, CA. Since 1977 AYF Camp has been home to countless groups of young Armenians who have come to seminars, camps, educationals, ski trips and other amazing activities. The camp itself has 10 cabins, the lodge, arts and crafts building, a pool and basketball courts. Recently camp has undergone serious renovation, rebuilding and modernizing most of the camp grounds and structures; with a lot left to be done.

That's a decent enough description of camp; my real purpose here is to try to explain the magic of camp.

Coming to AYF Camp is a special experience. It's a getaway from our everyday lives, as it is a gateway into a piece of our homeland. For one week, it's almost as if you're away from reality and in an environment unlike any other. You start your day off by raising the Armenian flag and singing our national anthem, seeing your flag rise every morning reminds all the kids that although they live outside of their homeland, they do have a home called

Armenia and are still a vital part of the future of our motherland.

Everyday campers receive an educational ranging teaching about Armenian history and current events happening worldwide that the involve Armenia. After the speaker is done, camper after camper raises their hand and asks questions, fascinated to learn about themselves, their homeland and how they can make a difference.

Each week the campers are divided



into three teams: red, blue and orange. During daily competitions between the teams the kids push themselves to do their best and to cheer on their teammates. Games like steal the bacon, butt-volleyball and tug-of-war, teach camaraderie and sportsmanship where towards the end of the game the odds could be completely against one team, but that team would never lose hope.

AYF Camp tells many stories, it's the story of the 10 year old girl who

climbs to the top of the rock wall and takes the path that even the oldest boys couldn't go up. The story of a little boy who is too shy to meet new people, but ends up with a hundred new friends. It's the story of a last second home-run in kickball. It's the story of playing your heart out and motivating each other; that's a life long lesson campers learn – to never quit.

One of my fondest memories of camp was during the song competition; the event everyone looks forward to, where each team sings Armenian patriotic songs. The day of the competition we taught one of the little boys a song to sing solo. When his turn came along, he tried to start but choked, tried again, choked again, I went up to help him and we got to singing the introduction, but as soon as I left he choked again. My co-counselor then ran up and stood beside the camper and sang the whole song with him. The camper sang great, he started the song and finished the song. The point isn't that he messed up; it's that he refused to leave until he finished that song. Afterwards, all the other campers, his whole team, gathered around him and told him how great he was, and how well he sang, and how proud they were that he didn't give up. I didn't think these young kids had the capability to do that, to support someone, who they knew might have cost them championship, but they did. That's when I realized that

kids are a lot smarter then we give them credit for, they are a lot sharper, and they are a lot more compassionate, caring, and thoughtful. They have the potential to go so far and do so great, and it's us, who don't see that, and who sometimes limit them. For a brief week every summer, AYF Camp takes away those limitations and only provides campers with an opportunity to shine.

It's that for a week, one whole week, they are actually in Armenia.

FILM REVIEW: THE PEOPLE'S

By Hrag Yedalian

Not too long ago, I read an interesting article that discussed the burgeoning “art” of independent film promotion. In it, the author (who happens to have directed one of my favorite documentaries) spoke about the shocking realization he came to after completing his film: yes, he had completed a film—but the journey was far from over. He had to put in as much effort, if not more, to create a buzz around the product and get it out to audiences. The effort is grueling and tedious and provides few, if any, guarantees.

But, most filmmakers know what the process entails, and muster up the courage to walk down the long road. They talk to as many people as possible and hope that a few will be interested in watching their product. Documentarians seek “built-in” audiences, and naturally approach them first. Therefore, a filmmaker who analyzes the psyche of hip-hop emcees will try to market his or her film to the fans of the musical genre. The process is pretty simple and rather predictable. But, the logic is sound and clear.

So, when I completed my documentary about famed civil rights attorney Charles R. Garry, I had plenty to work off of. Garry gained national prominence during the 1960s for his groundbreaking work in defending anti-war activists and leaders of the Black Panther Party. I figured that the people who had lived through the era, or were interested in the times, would probably serve as ideal audiences. But, I knew of one additional group that would be just as interested: Armenian-Americans. “Garry and the Armenians?” you ask

Well, yes. Garry was originally named “Garabedian,” and was the son of Armenian immigrants who had fled the Ottoman Empire during the massacres of the 1890s. Born in Massachusetts in 1909, he was raised on the rough streets of Fresno, Calif., at a time when store front signs read “No Dogs, No Niggers, No Armenians.” Several times a week, he would find himself in the middle of a fist fight with some kid who had insulted “his people.” Luckily, he was a good fighter and would almost always knock his opponent out.

I was immediately drawn to Garry’s story. I was fascinated by the 1960s and couldn’t believe that a lawyer of Armenian descent was at the center of the decade’s most important political cases. But, many proud Armenians at the time questioned Garry’s “Armenian-ness.” He had, after all, anglicized his name, and for many that was enough to

prove that he succumbed to the pressures exerted by “white America.”

Of course, Garry was well aware of such criticisms. It might have even bothered him a bit. A statement he made in his later years is quite revealing: “I knew what it was to be Armenian, and I knew what it was to be black as I became a lawyer. Fortunately, I was able to leave all that, because I wasn’t black. All I had to do was change my name. I’ve never denied my nationality. I’m proud of my nationality. And, I’m proud of the Armenian people to be able to stand all those years.”

Indeed, times were tough during the first half of the 20th century. Garry, like numerous other immigrants, realized that his name was too exotic for his own good. When jobs were scarce during the Depression era, employers would almost always pass up on applicants with unpronounceable last names like “Garabedian” in favor for those with more “acceptable” surnames. Garry changed his name to avoid the second-class treatment meted towards people in his position. But, he didn’t ignore the lessons that the experience offered.

It was his handling of precisely these lessons that motivated me to work on “The People’s Advocate: The Life & Times of Charles R. Garry.” Here was a man who had experienced discrimination first hand, and had subsequently decided to use the tool at his disposal—the law—to combat such hatred wherever it reared its ugly head. For him, a person’s skin color or ethnic origin did not matter. He simply saw injustice, and felt compelled to fight it. I couldn’t help but admire this man and his work.

The key to Garry’s approach was his understanding about the interconnectivity of things. It

was not uncommon for him to talk to jurors about his own past in an effort to draw common parallels with the case at hand. While delivering the closing statement during the internationally watched trial of Black Panther co-founder Huey P. Newton, Garry stated: “We know through history that there is and there have been



**THE PEOPLE'S
ADVOCATE**
A FILM BY HRAG YEDALIAN



ADVOCATE

massacres of people. The Armenians have gone through several massacres. Other nations have gone through genocide in more ways than one, but history tells me that the black people of the world have had genocide in excess of 50 million...The black community today, the black ghetto, is fighting for the right of survival-ship. The white community is sitting smug and saying, 'Let's have more police, let's have more guns, let's arm ourselves against the blacks.' They are saying that time and time again."

Garry's clients adored him for his approach, and many of them walked away with a newly found education about the Armenian people. They all knew that Garry "comes from a poor, oppressed people." Black Panther chairman Bobby Seale described Garry's personal history in the 1972 autobiography *Seize the Time*. In it, he mistakenly attributes the Armenian genocide as the doing of Adolph Hitler: "He's of Armenian descent, from people who were destroyed by being scattered throughout Europe and around the world, when Hitler went forth to massacre and slaughter them during his regime."

But, Garry's relationship with his ethnic roots wasn't all about politics. While going through the legendary attorney's personal papers, which are currently housed at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library, I came across a folder titled "BULLSHIT FILE CRG." In it, I found a letter from Garry dated Sept. 13, 1977. The note was addressed to a pair of authors working on a book that chronicled how celebrities would spend their "last night on earth before embarking onto a space colony." Garry describes in great detail the meal he would have during the fictional evening: "...steak tender enough to melt in your mouth, broiled to perfection, full of flavor... Fresh asparagus with melted butter, sweet corn—fresh of course—again with melted butter, pizza bread, Armenian cracker bread, a salad..." He then moves on to note that he would also like to have some of the tasty delicacy commonly referred to as *chicofteh*—the Armenian equivalent of steak tartare. He even included the recipe: "1 lb. top sirloin steak, fat removed, ground 3 times..."

And, so, in terms of finding an ideal "built-in audience" for my documentary, I am now looking for progressive Armenian-Americans who love steak tartare.

While a student studying history at the University of California, Berkeley, Hrag Yedalian ventured into the world of documentary filmmaking. Subsequently, he left UCLA Law School to pursue filmmaking at the American Film Institute Conservatory. "The People's Advocate: The Life & Times of Charles R. Garry" (www.peoplesadvocatethemovie.com) is his first feature length documentary.

Hrag can be reached at hragyed@gmail.com.

A Moment from Youth Corps

Walking into the house on the corner of Martuni and Karekin Njdeh the place that we called our home for nearly one month, we heard the most unexpected sound coming out of the living room. It was the sound of a little girl singing at the top of her lungs to Rihanna's Umbrella song. Who would have thought, coming to Artsakh you would hear a girl singing with such enthusiasms to an American pop hit. And thus began the journey of Youth Corps 2007.

After laboring days at work, we would walk to the internet cafe where we spent time trying to somehow get in touch with our lives back home. As we were walking one day, it suddenly began to rain. Yeah rain in July is strange but seeing two girls walking through the streets of Stepanakert in dirty work clothes was an even stranger site for the locals. We took refuge in the cafe we had become regulars at.

After managing to befriend one of the girls running the place, she started to tell us places we should be visiting outside the city. She told us of a place to go that was quite beautiful but she had no directions on how to get

there. She called it Zontig - umbrella in Russian, not the first or last Russian word we learned throughout the trip. Describing it as a serene place with waterfall and rocks everywhere, seemed like a cool place to visit.

During the weekends, we spent our Sundays exploring Artsakh outside Stepanakert. Our final weekend approached quicker than expected. Our Artsakhtsi ungers had invited us on a hike near Shoushi. Although we were looking forward to exploring, we were not looking forward to a two hour hike. As we began the hike, it felt like a scene out of the TV show *Lost*. The hike was not easy, but the view just kept getting better and better. We managed to slip and fall while crossing creekbeds, but the ungers were always thereto help us and, make sure we were okay. "There used to be a village here", said Marat who was leading the hike. And if you paid close attention you would see the remains of stone houses tucked in the forest. After what seemed forever, we came across a river which led to what looked like a cave with a waterfall. Marat explained this as a Zontig. We were happy to already know what he was talking about! And it was beautiful indeed. We ended up in a little picnic area where the fire for the khorovadz was already underway. After eating the delicious barbeque, we sat around singing our songs. Our friendship was solidified through the common bond of singing. These were the moments when we felt closest to each other. It didn't matter where we were from; our revolutionary songs seemed to always bring us together.

The AYF Youth Corps is open to all youth over the age of 18 who are motivated and enthusiastic about helping Armenia. This is a unique opportunity for dedicated individuals to spend approximately six weeks in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh and make a tangible contribution to their homeland. Please contact ayfyouthcorps@gmail.com or 818.507.1933 for more info.



Առժամեայ Տեղացի

Ընդհանրապես երբ ճամբորդենք մտային եւ հոգեկան զանազան ապրումներ կը զգանք, օրինակ խանդավառություն եւ մտախոհություն: Երբեմն նույնիսկ երկշտ կը զգանք եւ անթիւ ժամեր զոհելով ցանկեր կը պատրաստենք, որոնք տասը անգամ վերագաղի կ'ենթարկուին որպէսզի հաստատօրէն վստահ ըլլանք թէ մեր բոլոր պէտքերը հոգացած ենք: Մեր ապրանքները պաշտօնականօրէն մէջ կը լեցնենք, տեղերը կը փոխենք, կը հանենք, ետ կը զետեղենք վերջապէս կը կղպենք եւ արագ մը աղօթք ըսելով կը կշռենք: Երկար շունչ մը կը փախի մեր շրթներէն. պաշտօնական վաճառքէն բաւական է, շատ ծանր է: Պաշտօնական կ'անհիծուի եւ կրկին կը բացուի, ապրանքներուն տեղերը կը փոխուին, ուրիշ պաշտօնական մըն ալ կը բերուի...

Հետաքրքրական երեւոյթներ են, չէ՞: Օրերով տունը տակնուվրայ կ'ըլլայ. ամէն կողմ հագուստ, կոշիկ, ակոյալի վրձին, կերակուր, եալուն, եալուն: Վստահաբար բոլորս ալ այս նոյն փորձառութիւններէն անցած ենք: Մասնաւոր երբ այս ճամբորդութիւնները երկար տեւողութիւն ունին, եւ յատկապէս երբ հեռաւոր ակտիւ պիտի այցելենք, ուր կեանքի պայմաններուն վարժուած չենք: Եւ այս պատրաստութիւնները տեսնելու ընթացքին, յանկարծ նոր ու ծանր զգացում մը կը ծնի մեր մէջ. կ'անդրադառնանք որ իսկապէս պիտի ճամբորդենք. ամիսով մը տունէն պիտի հեռանանք: Փախուստ չի կայ. անհա տգանալի տոմսակները հոս են. իսկ անձագիրը երէկ հասաւ: Պիտի երթանք...

Կը ներէք շատ թատերական ոճ առի վերը: Հիմա պէտք է խօստովանիմ: Այս ամառ, երբ հինգերորդ անգամ ըլլալով Հայաստան այցելեցի եղբօրս եւ ընկերներուն հետ, վերը ակնարկածս երբէք չպատահեցաւ: Այսինքն պաշտօնական կղպուեցան բայց ինծի չէր թուէր թէ քանի մը օրէն աշխարհին միւս ծայրը պիտի հասնէի: Հայաստան ճամբորդելը բնական ու պարզ երեւոյթ էր, կարծես: Ծառ բարդ խնդիր մը չէր: Երբ օդանաւը Զուարդոնոց հասաւ տակաւին նոյն համոզումի տակ էի, թէ եւ Հայաստանը ընդհանրապէս կախարդական եւ հրապուրիչ ազդեցութիւն ունի իր այցելողներուն վրայ որը ես ալ զգացած եմ: Կարծեմ գիտէք չէ՞, երբ պէտք է հարկը անգամ մտքիդ մէջ կրկնես որ Հայաստան հասաւ որպէսզի վերջապէս հաւատաս որ իրապէս հոն ես: Քանի մը վայրկեան երազային աշխարհի մը մէջ կ'ըլլանք:

Կամաց-կամաց կը սթափինք ու կը վերադառնանք աշխարհ: Սակայն այս անգամ, թէ եւ Լա Գրէսէնդան Երեւանէն 7180 մղոն հեռու է, ինքզինքս տարբեր երկրի մէջ չէի զգար: Դժուար է մտածումներս գրի առնել: Միշտ զգացած եմ որ Հայաստանը իմ երկիրս

է, բայց անի զբօսաշրջիկի ակնոցով դիտած եմ ամեն ինչ: Այս անգամ այդ ակնոցներուն պէտք չունէի: Կարծեմ եղբայրս ամենէն հասկնալի կերպով արտայայտեց մեր նոր հոգեբանութիւնը. զբօսաշրջիկի փոխարէն, առժամեայ կերպով տեղացի էինք այլեւս: Հայաստանը ձեռով մը տունիս պէս էր: Նոր ու հետաքրքրական զգացում ու միտք էր:

Տեղացիներու պէս ալ, ինքնաշարժ մը վարձեցինք եւ Հայաստանի շուրջ պտտեցանք՝ այցելելով Գորիսէն մինչեւ Լոռիի շրջանները, որոնք ամառնային հանգստարաններ են տեղացի հայերուն համար: Սարեր մագլցեցանք, եկեղեցիներ այցելեցինք, գիւղական դպրոցներ տեսանք եւ տեղացիներու հետ շփուեցանք: Ամառներս Հայաստան անցնելը միշտ ապագայիս ծրագիրներուն մաս կազմած է: Բայց յանկարծ տարբեր միտք մը ծնաւ մէջս. կրնայի արդեօք Հայաստան փոխադրուիլ եւ տարի մը հոն ապրիլ ու աշխատիլ. կամ տա՛նը տարի հոն հաստատուիլ եւ Հայաստանի առօրեային մասնակցիլ:

Վերջերս Սփիւքէն բազմաթիւ հայեր իրենց ընտանիքներուն հետ Հայաստան վերադարձած եւ հաստատուած են: Հոն ապրելով Հայաստանի բարգաւաճման մէջ ներդրում կ'ունենան: Իրենց զաւակները հայկական շրջապատի մէջ մեծցնելով ծուլումի վախը ոտնակոխ կ'ընեն: Եւ Ամերիկեան կեանքի անհարկի ճնշումներուն մեծամասնութիւնը կ'անհետանան: Երեւան փոխադրուած Սփիւքեանայումի մը ակնարկեց իր արդի կեանքի մը ինչ-ինչ բացատրելով թէ Հայաստանի կեանքը թովչանք ու դիտարկութիւն մը ունի որ Ամերիկեան կեանքէն պակաս է:



Ներկայիս Հայաստանի մէջ բազմաթիւ առիթներ կան Սփիւռքահայերու համար նոր գործեր սկսելու, շինարարութիւն ընելու, ճաշարաններ ու գործարաններ բանալու, դպրոցներ հիմնելու, հիւանդանոցներ բանալու, ուսուցչութիւն ընելու, եւայլն: Սփիւռքահայութիւնը շատ մեծ դրական ազդեցութիւն ունի Հայաստանի յառաջացման մէջ, բայց այս բոլորը կ'ընենք Հայաստանի սահմաններէն դուրս ապրելով: Հայաստանի սահմաններէն ներս՝ իրաքանչիւր հաշ աւելի պիտանի կերպով ամէնօրեայ ճիգով կրնայ յաւելեալ ներդրում ունենալ եւ իր մասնակցութիւնը բերել հայրենիքի բարգաւաճման եւ յառաջդիմութեան: Կրնանք ուղղակիօրէն ապրիլ, տեսնել ու տասնապատիկը սատարել Հայաստանի տնտեսութեան զարգացման:

Ծառերը կ'ըսեն թէ դժուար քաջ է Ամերիկային հրաժեշտ տալը եւ Հայաստան փոխադրուիլը: Սակայն սկսած եմ մտածել, իրապէս այդքան դժուար է: Այս հարցումին պատասխանը չեմ գիտեր եւ չեմ կրնար վստահօրէն պատասխանել: Իրաքանչիւր անձ իրեն համար պէտք է այս հարցումին պատասխանը փնտռէ: Մտքերուս մէջ սուզուած կը քննեմ այս հարցը, փորձելով տրամաբանական մօտեմալ առանց զգացական ըլլալու. «Կրնա՞մ Հայաստան ապրիլ»: Սակայն այս նախադասութիւնը պէտք չէ հարցումի ձեւ առնէ: Բոլորս ալ կրնանք Հայաստան, կամ որեւէ ուրիշ երկիր, փոխադրուիլ որ կենանք ստեղծել: Մեր ժողովուրդը ատոր փաստը ունի արդէն. դիտեցէ՛ք Սփիւռքը: Սակայն, մտային եւ հոգեկան համոզումը անհրաժեշտ են այս քայլի իրագործման համար: Խոր մտածում պէտք է ասոր համար որպէսզի զգացականէն դուրս գանք՝ որ ընդհարմարապէս ժամանակ կ'առնէ: Ուրիշ հարցեր ալ կան որոնց լուծումը պէտք է գտնել նախքան Հայաստան փոխադրուիլը, բայց վերը նշուած իրողութենէն փախչիլ չի կայ: Երբ համոզումը եւ ըզձանքը կան, ուրիշ հարցեր դիւրաւ կը լուծուին:

Տարբեր կազմակերպութիւններ, օրինակ ՀԵԴ-ի Youth Corps ծրագիրը եւ «Դէպի Հայք»ը (Birthright Armenia), միջոցներ ստեղծած են երիտասարդներու համար որպէսզի անոնք կարենան Հայաստանի առօրեան համոտեսել: Դէպի Հայքը սքանչելի առիթ մըն է որուն միջոցաւ ամեն հայ երիտասարդ կրնայ ժամանակաւոր կերպով տեղացի ըլլալ եւ այս համոզումին կամաց-կամաց տիրանալ. ապագային, երիտասարդը կրնայ տեղացիի դրութիւնը տեսականի վերածել: Բայց երիտասարդութիւնը Հայաստանը տակաւին իբրեւ զբօսավայր կը տեսնէ: Պէտք է այս տեսակետը փոխենք: Զբօսաշրջիկի ակնոցները մէկ դի դնելով փորձենք տեղացիի ակնոցով դիտել Հայաստանը: Կրնայ ըլլալ որոշ բաներ տեսնենք եւ անդրադառնանք որոնք երբեք չէինք նկատած: Յաճախակի եւ երկար տեւողութեամբ Հայաստանը այցելելը լաւ սկզբնակէտ մըն է հայրենիքին հանդէպ մեր ունեցած մօտեցումը փոխելու:

Տասնըինը տարեկան եմ. շուտով կ'ըլլամ քսան: Այս տարի, մէկ ամիսով Հայաստան ժամանեցի եւ առանց ուզելու վերադարձայ Ամերիկայ եւ Ամերիկեան կեանքիս: Հիմա, համակարգիչիս դիմաց նստած կը մտածեմ թէ կ'ուզեմ Երեւան վերադառնալ: Նախորդ մեր բոլոր ճամբորդութիւններու ասարտին միշտ պատրաստ էի տուն վերադառնալու: Այս անգամ, այդպէս չէր: Չեմ կրնար բացատրել թէ ինչու, բայց սկսած եմ մտածել թէ համալսարանական կեանքը ասարտելէ ետք կ'ուզեմ փորձել տարի մը Հայաստան ապրիլ եւ այդ կեանքը համոտեսել: Ծառ երկար չէ. մէկ տարիով կրնամ սկսիլ, իբրեւ փորձ մը. յետոյ կը տեսնենք թէ ապագան ինչ կը բերէ...

- Մարալ Տէր Սարգիսեան

The Haytoug has been a free publication of the Armenian Youth Federation for many years.

If you would like to make a donation to the Haytoug in order to help out with production costs, please contact our offices or visit us online to make an electronic donation:

Armenian Youth Federation
104 North Belmont Street, Suite 206
Glendale, California 91206
www.ayfwest.org



We thank you in advance for your support and we hope you enjoyed this issue of the Haytoug.

DONATE

SOURJ FOR THE ARMENIAN SOUL

By
Allen
Yekikan

Every morning I wake up at around six am. I make a cup of tea and begin to read my daily news. I dedicate about two hours a day to Armenian news. I read my daily Asbarez newspaper, and then I move onto the online news: Azg daily, Hetq, Armenianow, and Armenialiberty. When I am done reading the Armenian news, I read the Azeri and Turkish news on their English websites. I have been doing this for a year now. Sometimes, I read something inspiring and hopeful; once or twice I have even read something worthy of praise. However, more often than not, I read something disappointing.

You might ask why I am so disappointed. After all, isn't

Armenia experiencing double digit economic growth? Haven't the streets in Yerevan been repaved, and electricity and water fully restored? Aren't Armenia and Artsakh free, independent and free of Soviet Authoritarianism? I mean, this is what we want to believe isn't it? Finally, our 3000 year old Nation is finally on the right track. Isn't it? Unfortunately, no it is not. Armenia and the Armenian people have strayed far from the right path. We have learned nothing from history and the harsh lessons it has taught us and are continuously making the same mistakes.

There are about three million Armenian's living in our Transcaucasian homeland today and about five million living as exiles

spread throughout the four corners of the world. We are an international people. Our cosmopolitan background has given us an incredible understanding of how the world operates. There is no system of government foreign to our people. The Byzantine Empire of the ninth century was governed by Armenian Emperors, bureaucrats, and generals. Armenian's in the Russian and Ottoman Empires of the late 19th and early 20th centuries held positions of stature in governing circles. Egypt has had an Armenian prime minister. The President of the Soviet Union was at one time an Armenian. Today Armenians in America are rising to the ranks of city governance, state senators, assemblymen and congressman. Why is it that we cannot govern our own state? Do we not have an understanding of Economics, science, or civics? I say NO, that is not the reason.

Some of the richest and brightest people on earth are Armenian. Kirk Krikorian is arguably one of the most powerful and successful businessmen in his industry. The MRI, a breakthrough in healthcare, was invented by an Armenian. The entire Soviet Republic of Armenia was considered the silicon valley of the Soviet Union. Our people have always been successful engineers, doctors, chemists, lawyers, academics, and among other things administrators wherever they have lived. We have become rich, successful, and powerful in Islamic monarchies, Totalitarian dictatorships, and Capitalist democracies. Armenian's have flourished regardless of circumstance.

So if we as a people have always been able to pull ourselves from the bootstraps and rise to success under any circumstances why are some labeling Armenia the "Potato Democracy," where votes can be bought with potatoes because the people are poor and starving? Why are struggling people being evicted from their homes without just compensation? Why is a small

minority of the country in control of the government, legal system and economy, while the majority struggles with barely enough to survive? Why are Yerevan and a few other choice locations the only developed cities in Armenia? And why is Armenia signing away its National security to become a Russian Satellite in Transcaucasia? Armenia is not a democracy that's why! Justice, education, healthcare, and opportunity only exist for the privileged few who have spent the last decade and a half squandering our independence for the benefit of their bank accounts.

This is the reality. We all know it. Sometimes we acknowledge it and make a smug comment about the tyranny of the oligarchic state of the Nation, but most of the time we ignore it, deny it, or worst of all—try to rationalize it. The challenge of youth is ascribed to our problems. We pretend this is the first time we have attempted to build a state, and that it will get better as time goes on. Well it is not the first time Armenians have attempted statehood, and it sure enough is not getting better.

We have had some form of an independent state five times throughout history. The life span of our Kingdoms and States have varied anywhere from 400 years to two years. We are by no means new to the game. We just don't learn from our mistake that's all.

about in history books 400 years later. A great power collapsed and left a power vacuum in its wake. In 1991 the Armenian people filled the streets of Armenia and Artsakh, raised the tricolor flag and democratically voted for independence. The entire world watched our struggle for freedom and democracy with fascination, understanding and support. For over a week straight the American people were shown footage and images of a struggling people as they fought for survival during the wake of political and economic collapse. Bree Walker and CBS brought the Armenian Cause to the homes of every American man, woman and child. The American People supported us as we fought to defend our ancestral homeland of Artsakh. They sent food, aid, doctors, and engineers to help alleviate the catastrophes of natural disaster and economic collapse. The world was with us when we proclaimed independence. We were not alone. The governments of the western world supported our Cause, and more importantly we had a deeply established, privileged and motivated Diaspora that had recovered from genocide and forced exile. We were in one of the best historic situations imaginable. Jews did not even have what we did when they were struggling for Israel. So what went wrong??

For over seventy years we in the Diaspora have preached the national

campfires, behind dinner tables, on stages, in front of classrooms, in dark alleys and secret hideouts discussing our moral responsibility to the Nation. Those in Soviet Armenia protested for unification with Artsakh, Nakhichevan, and Javakhk. While those in the Diaspora pledged, that when the opportunity arose, they would use their privileged status, resources and knowledge to make a better home for our people. Unfortunately, when the time came, we failed to act.



Over a million Armenians fled the republic in its first years of independence. They continue to leave their homeland to this day. The Diaspora as a whole, besides the efforts of a select few, does nothing but closes its eyes, opens its checkbooks and sends a few million dollars a year to their *Hayrenik*. When the situation suites us—and this is not often—we begin to complain of corruption, poverty, and lack of democracy. For the majority of the time, however, we continue to deny reality, pretend that Armenia is on a path to success and that we are fulfilling our national responsibility.

We all dream of a comfortable life in which our children have nothing to worry about and are given everything we never had. Is it so difficult to imagine that we could have such a life in Armenia? Not so long ago a group of men in Pennsylvania imagined a similar life where they could live a free and equal life of prosperity. When they were given the opportunity they took it. You and I live in the byproduct of their efforts. Is there something different between the Armenians and the founding fathers? Yes. We just haven't woken up to reality that if we don't act NOW our sixth attempt at statehood will also fail. This time, however, it won't be because of the Romans, Greeks, Persians, Mongols, Turks, or Russians. It will be because we failed to do what was required of our generation. **WAKE UP!!!!**

"THIS IS THE REALITY. WE ALL KNOW IT. SOMETIMES WE ACKNOWLEDGE IT AND MAKE A SMUG COMMENT ABOUT THE TYRANNY OF THE OLIGARCHIC STATE OF THE NATION, BUT MOST OF THE TIME WE IGNORE IT, DENY IT, OR WORST OF ALL - TRY TO RATIONALIZE IT."

Eighteen years ago our Nation was given another opportunity for Independence and statehood. The disintegration of the Soviet Empire which began in the late 80s created one of those moments that you read

duty of repatriation, while our brothers and sisters in Soviet Armenia preached—sometimes secretly, and at times openly—a similar duty toward the fatherland and the Nation. We sat around



Arsineh at Deem's one year anniversary party in Yerevan.

Arsineh Khachikian
Originally from: Washington, DC
Currently resides in: Central Yerevan
Age: 30

From an early age, Arsineh Khachikian had become involved in the AYF and Armenian-American community affairs. As a Badanee, she regularly attended Camp Haiastan in Massachusetts and went on to volunteer there as a counselor. She also served on her local Chapter Executive, the Eastern Region Central Executive, numerous central councils and committees, directed the AYF Internship Program in Armenia and helped found the Eastern Region's quarterly publication, *Hoki*.

By the time she was 23, Arsineh became an active member of the ARF. In that same year, she decided to move to Armenia for a nine month stay, wherein her ties to the homeland and commitment to moving there solidified. Although she returned to the U.S.

and worked for two years as the Director of the ANCA Capital Gateway Program, her sights were set on establishing herself in Armenia as soon as the time was right. That time ultimately came in 2006, when Arsineh picked up and moved to Armenia for good. Upon arriving, she teamed up with fellow repatriate Raffi Niziblian to start Deem Communications, a comprehensive marketing and public relations agency (see www.deemcommunications.com). With a staff of nine (all locals except Raffi and Arsineh) Deem recently celebrated its successful 1 year anniversary.

Arsineh has succeeded in making Armenia her home and cherishes her move there as one of the most fulfilling decisions she has made in her life. In addition to staying busy with Deem, Arsineh is involved in various organizational activities and pursues photography as an active hobby (see www.digitalrailroad.net/arsineh). Above all, what she says she enjoys most about Armenia is being surrounded by people from different walks of life who get a sense of completion by being in their homeland.

“The land, people and culture makes you feel complete as a human being, and the need to fight for your identity fades away because you simply start to exist as you are. There will always be bumps in the road and struggles to overcome, but there are those things anywhere you go in the world. In Armenia, they start to seem worth it.”

What do you do for fun in Armenia?

I have a strong network of friends with which I attend lots of concerts, parties, hiking and camping trips, restaurants, cafés, and whatever else we feel like at the moment. Armenia is rich with personalities, so we rarely need to do something to be entertained, we entertain ourselves quite a bit.

ԴԷԱՅԻ ԵՐԿԻՐԻ ԳԱՊԼԱՓԱՐՐ

«Դէպի Երկիր» գաղափարախօսութիւնը անմնացորդ մէկ բաժնիկը կը մնայ սփիւռքահայութեան ամէնօրեայ մտածումներէն ներս: Ոգեւորուած Հրայր Մարուխեանի կողմէ, այս գաղափարը կը շարունակէ գործոն հայ պատանիի կամ երիտասարդի մը կեանքին ազդել: Սակայն, այս մտապատկերին մակերեսը պէտք չէ միայն թափանցել. ինքնին, այս խորհուրդը իտեալական յատկանիշերէ բաղկացած է: Կը կարօտի այնպիսի զոհաբերութեան որ ամէն մէկ հայ իրադարձութեան պէտք է բերէ կեանքին ընթացքին:

«Դէպի Երկիր» գաղափարապաշտը մօտաւորապէս 117 տարի կը գոյատեւէ Դաշնակցութեան գործէն ներս եւ ամէն անգամ որ աշխարհի դիրքը փոփոխութիւն կրած է, գաղափարն ալ նոյնպէս քայլ պահած է փոփոխութեան: Այսինքն, ազգային ազատագրական պայքարի ժամանակ ունեցանք մեր ֆետայիները որոնք ցուցաբերեցին անմասն զոհաբերութիւն մը որ բոլոր հայերս այդպիսի ոգիով պէտք է ապրիլ: Ներկայիս ունինք մեր սփիւռքի հերոսները որոնք առիթը օգտագործելով ետ Հայաստան փոխադրուելու միջոցները տեսէր են որպէսզի շենցնէն եւ պահպանէն մեր Հայրենիքը: Դաշնակցական պատանին, երիտասարդը, ընկերը այս միտքին վերնագրով չի բաւարարուիր: Այլեւ, խորքը կը տեսնէ անհրաժեշտութիւն մը, կարեւորութիւն մը որ ամէն մէկ հայ պէտք է ըմբռնէ: Կը որոնէ ձեւեր որպէսզի այդ գաղափարին իրագործումը վերջաւորումին հասնի: Կ'ընէ ատի, որովհետեւ կատարած գործին կը հաւատայ, որովհետեւ կը հասկնայ նախահայրերուն տարած աշխատանքը Հայաստանն ու Հայութիւնը միացնելու եւ ամրապնդելու ուղին: Այդ ուղին, փաստած է ինքզինք մի քանի անգամ: Ունեցանք մեր ֆետայական շարժումը, մեր մտաւորականները որոնք հասկցած էին մեր ժողովուրդին տանջանքն ու վիշտը դժբախտաբար զոհ դառնալով Մեծ Եղեռնին եւ հիմա ունինք մեր Արցախեան ազատամարտիկները որոնք սահմաններու վրայ կայնած են պատրաստ սպասելով հանկարծակի հարցակումներու:

Մենք, բոլոր այժմէական հարցեր քննող անհատներ, գործոն կեանք վարող

ու դեր խաղցող անձեր, այս միտքին հանդէպ հանդիսատէս չենք կրնար ըլլալ: Իրաւունքը չունինք, որովհետեւ ներկայի պայմանները չեն ներէր մեր հանգիստ վիճակը երբ դռներու միւս կողմը կայնած է առաջնահերթութիւն մը՝ Հայաստանը: Մասնակցութիւն մեր բոլորին կողմէ հարկաւոր է, որպէսզի նոր թափ տանք շարունակելու այս սրբութիւնը որ իրապէս ապագային պիտի ազդէ Մեր Հայաստանի դիրքին: Այո՛, երթանք ու տեսնենք Ֆրանսան, Յունաստանը, լաւ ժամանակ անցնենք, բայց կեանքի աւարտին մեր վերջին շունջն ու աչքերու պատկերը թող ըլլայ Արարատը, Սարդարապատը, Հայաստանը:

Ամէն մէկ Հայի պարտականութիւնն է ապահովագրելու այս գաղափարը որ շարունակէ արդիւնաւէտ ըլլալ, որովհետեւ Հայաստանը սփիւռքահայութեան ուսումին եւ ուժին տիրանալու պէտք ունի: Մէկ կողմէ որդեգրել նորութիւն, միւս կողմէ գործադրել զանոնք: Ներկայի սերունդը ցուպը ձեռին կայնած է ու երթը կ'ընթանայ: Սակայն, վստահ ըլլանք որ մեր գործով, յաջորդող սերունդները մեծնան այս վստահութեամբ եւ ապահով զգան բացայայտօրէն կոչելու որ մենք հայրենիք ունինք՝ Հայաստան ու մեր երկրէն զատ աւելի անուշ եւ գեղեցիկ հայրենիք չկայ:



Our Nataline...

Nataline Sarkisyan was born on July 10th, 1990 to Hilda and Koko Sarkisyan. She was their only daughter, with an older brother, Bedig. At the age of 12 Nataline joined the San Fernando Valley "Arapo" Badanegan chapter. The excitement and anticipation in her crystal blue eyes could be seen when we taught her Karekin Njdeh's song; what an incredibly enthusiastic youngster. Looking at her, you knew she was one of those people who would be a devoted, lifelong AYF member, devoted to her community and to our Cause. As time passed she was elected by her peers to be an executive member of the Badanegan Chapter. She was one of the most, if not the most active Badanee in our region.

At the age of 14, Nataline was diagnosed with leukemia. Leukemia, which can be described as a cancer of the blood, is characterized by an abnormal production of blood cells, usually white blood cells. The abnormal cells cause the victim to become very susceptible to even the simplest infection and lead to uncontrolled bleeding. When Nataline was diagnosed with her illness and confined to the hospital none of us knew what to do or how to react. We had never dealt with a situation like this before. Our words of encouragement were "Y'alla Ungerohi Nataline, you have a meeting to come to on Friday, get this over with and come back to us..."

I sincerely wish I could portray to the reader, the Nataline that I knew, as we knew her. She was supposed to move up to the "Sardarabad" Chapter. She would have been on the Chapter Executive, she would have been on the Central Executive. She was supposed to grow, learn and develop as an activist, a leader. Nataline was destined to do these things because of her strong work ethic, her unwavering morals, and continued loyalty to the ideals of the AYF. While some members occasionally missed meetings because they are busy, had a party to go to, or for whatever reason; the ONLY time Nataline missed a meeting was because she in the hospital fighting for her life. Her commitment was truly inspirational.

Nataline's struggle had become AYF's struggle; the pain of one of our own was the pain of us all. She battled the leukemia for two years, and at the age of 16, she along with her doctors believed her future looked bright. With her cancer in remission, it seemed she could get on with her life. The support of the community and members with blood platelet donations and Nataline's will to survive had seemingly overpowered the leukemia.

Things took a turn for the worse when Nataline, now 17 years old, had a relapse. This was hard news to swallow for all those who were close to her. The dosage of chemo got stronger, her young body became weaker than ever before, necessitating a bone marrow transplant. A ray of

hope emerged when Nataline's brother, Bedig, testing as a positive bone marrow match. Again, almost instinctively, our community showed its unity organizing a blood drive at Ferrahian High School, where hundreds of people came to donate blood and show support for Nataline and her family. During the Thanksgiving holiday, while most of us were with our families, Nataline underwent a bone marrow transplant at the UCLA Medical Center.

Sadly, our prayers for a speedy recovery were met with further anguish. A few weeks after the bone marrow transplant complications led to liver failure. The medical staff at the UCLA Medical Center concluded that the only chance Nataline had for survival would be a liver transplant. Going against the direct recommendations of her doctors, Cigna, the medical insurance company, refused to approve the operation; citing it as too experimental. Instantaneously, our community once again stood up for our Ungerouhi, rallying in front of the Cigna Headquarters in Glendale, CA and demanding them to approve the life-saving procedure. Miraculously, Cigna caved in and approved the operation on the afternoon of December 20. Sadly, their delay cost us dearly. Nataline passed away on December 20 2007 at 5:50pm.

In a sense Nataline was the glue that united us. Her struggle put into perspective the insignificance of some petty 'issues' which we see as so important. As a 17 year old, she showed more heart, more fortitude and more perseverance than anyone I have ever met. Since her passing, things have seemed surreal. It's hard to understand why such a selfless and perhaps the strongest person I have ever known was the one that was taken away under such heartbreaking circumstances.

Since Nataline's death the media has unrelentingly covered her tragic story. The nationwide attention her passing has gotten, can hopefully shed light on the murky health care industry, in order for this type of calculated murder never to happen again. We can make a difference in the way healthcare providers treat their clients; to learn that profit/loss analysis cannot determine a chance to live. We can't bring our beloved Nataline back. We can no longer turn to her for a comforting smile. We can, however, keep her memory alive within us, by using her incredible strength, courage and determination as a model for our own lives. We can do our part to make sure that no young person and no family is put through this type of anguish. We can do it for Nataline.

Your spirit will always be with us Ungerouhi.

We love you.

Rest in Peace Nataline



July 10, 1990 - December 20, 2007

Աստուած Հոգի
Լուսաւորէ

YOUTH CORPS 2008



**REBUILDING OUR
FUTURE**

*One Smile
At a Time*

SPEND THE SUMMER IN ARMENIA

WWW.AYFWEST.ORG

818 507 1933