HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES WINTER 2010

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REBUILDING SPIRITS IN ARMENIA: AYF YOUTH CORPS



IN WHOSE INTEREST ARE THE PROTOCOLS? WWW.STOPTHEPROTOCOLS.COM

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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.

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SOME THINGS ARE NOT FOR SALE

The Armenia-Turkey Protocols present a critical juncture in our nation's history.

Through the stroke of a pen, the rights, dignity and interests of the Armenian people threaten to be sacrificed on the altar of political and economic expediency.

- ✓ The countless years of relentless work put into having the world open up its eyes to the reality of the Armenian Genocide risk being undermined through the creation of a so-called 'historic commission.'
- ✓ The Armenian people's legal and moral claims to Ararat, Ani, Kars, Van and the rest of our historic homeland threaten to be forfeited through the legitimization of a border created through Genocide and aggression.
- ✓ The sacrifice of thousands of our best men and women in the liberation of Artsakh threatens to be compromised by an agreement emphasizing artificial state boundaries above the right to selfdetermination.

The recent qualified ruling handed down by the Armenian Constitutional Court—while deciding that the Protocols are constitutional held serious judicial reservations. The Court stated that ratification of the Protocols cannot contradict Article 11 of Armenia's Declaration of Independence [The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia] and that the Protocols cannot speak on behalf of Artsakh.

The unprecedented international outpouring of anger and opposition to the provisions of the Protocols resounded in a loud and unified "NO!" to the officials in Yerevan. It reminded the ruling elite in Armenia and throughout the world that our perseverance as a people has never come out of submission and capitulation. Our triumph over the odds has not been a result of backdoor deals and political maneuverings. Rather, our survival has been due to the resilient determination to struggle for our basic rights.

The dangerous implications of the Protocols for our national interests point, more than ever, to the urgent need to change the undemocratic, unjust, and inequitable conditions in our homeland. The lack of accountability of those in power and the disillusionment of the general population must be reversed if we want to see the viable and prosperous Armenia we all envision in our hearts. Such a reversal will require us to not turn away from Armenia, but rather to flock more firmly towards it.

Just as we struggle against the odds to maintain our identity and community in the Diaspora, we must come together collectively organized and determined—to overcome the obstacles that stand before our nation's future.

The onus is on us to unite and do the work required to see our struggle through; to ensure the sanctity of our national and historical interests and to declare that they are not for sale, at any cost.

The goals remain to secure the international recognition of Artsakh's statehood, the pursuit of reparations from the Government of Turkey for the crime of Genocide, an end of the occupation of Western Armenia and the establishment of social justice, human rights and democracy in the Republic of Armenia.

The movement continues...

www.Stopthe Protocols.com

FROM REBUILDINGSHATTEREDBUILDINGS TOREVINIG BROKENSPIRITS: AYF YOUTHCORPS @ 15



With its majestic architecture and storied past, the city of Gyumri is a living museum to Armenia's greatest catastrophe following the Genocide. The devastating earthquake in 1988 killed some 20 thousand and nearly leveled Armenia's second largest city. Yet, the people of Gyumri are an inspiring example of how Armenians have the unique ability to look beyond disaster and despair, to come together, regroup, and work toward a better and brighter future.

Although Gyumri's pre-Soviet structures still stand, many parts of the city still remain in ruin. It's hard not to feel the pain this city has endured when walking through its dilapidated streets. Little economic development has occurred here since the earthquake, and Gyumri's people continue to struggle to survive. They live much more modest lives than their counterparts in Yerevan and lack many of the amenities capital city residents have enjoyed during the last few vears. Employment opportunities in Gyumri are limited and sometimes the prospects for change seem bleak. Only recently has the Armenian government become serious about rebuilding what was once the industrial center of the Caucasus.

Despite the adversities they face, the people of this storied town posses an uncanny sense of humor. They turn despair into laughter and sorrow into cheer. This becomes all the more apparent when looking at its energetic youth. Their future may seem gloomy and their material possessions may be as meager as the third-hand clothes they wear, but these children and teens find joy and excitement in the most modest of things.

This summer nine young diasporans from California traveled to Gyumri to set up a day-camp for the city's youth—to live among them, share in their experiences, and make a small but positive impact on their lives. They were not surprised that dozens of boys and girls flocked to the camp, excited that Armenians from abroad had come to their hometown to spend the summer with them.





A MISSION FOR THE YOUTH

Youth Corps began in 1994 as AYF's response to the desperate needs to rebuild war-torn villages in Artsakh. The program sent groups of young Armenians from the Diaspora to the Homeland every summer to help in reconstruction efforts throughout the region. In 2008, the program changed its focus from rebuilding shattered buildings to reviving broken spirits.

Gyumri was therefore chosen as the pilot location for what is becoming an



entirely new archetype for D i a s p o r a -H o m e l a n d relations.

"It's easy to blindly send money, but the impact and real value in rebuilding our people's confidence in the Armenian nation is priceless," explains Sose

Thomassian, the Director of the Youth Corps program. "The Youth Corps camp has given us an opportunity to interact with the children and youth of Gyumri, to build bonds with them, to teach them and learn from them, and show them that people outside Armenia have a vested interest in their future."

Fifteen-year-old Arax Manoukian was among the 150 children who attended the camp this summer. Seeing first-hand how much her Diasporan brothers and sisters really care about her existence and future was inspiring, she says, describing her feeling about the group in her winning entry in the camp's essay competition.

"The Youth Corps group is really inspiring the kids here," says Arax. "Their love of nation is motivating because they show us how supreme the fatherland is for them, even from thousands of miles away." That love of nation, and the invisible bond connecting young Armenians in the United States with their peers in the Homeland is evident in the effort Youth Corps volunteers make year-round to make their projects in Armenia a reality.

AYF members worked tirelessly, yearround, to raise the money needed to execute their visions for the Youth Corps program. Their work enabled them to connect Armenians regardless of distance, borders, and financial obstacles.

"Fundraising for the program began early in the year," explains Sose. "AYF chapters worked with the Youth Corps committee to organize events in their communities, and they raised money for the program. Chapters worked with the Youth Corps committee to sell merchandise. They organized car washes, breakfasts, dinners, and bowling nights."

Alongside the fundraising was a thorough effort to plan the camp's dayto-day activities. Camp Gyumri's curriculum, schedule, and mode of operation were adapted from the program used by AYF Camp Big Pines for the past 32 years. The schedule consisted of morning exercises, breakfast, English lessons, song and dance practice, Karate lessons, lunch, art & crafts, and group activities.

After months of hard work and preparation Serop Chalian, Levon Abrahamian, Berj Parseghian, Kevork Babayan, Kevork Kebabjian, Sanan Haroun, Arianna Deleon, and Nora Injeyan arrived at Yerevan's Zvartnotz airport on July 11 to begin their mission in the Homeland. They were joined in Yerevan by Manuk Gerbinyan, a local AYF member who volunteered to work with the group during their stay in Gyumri. A few weeks later, an anxious and jet-lagged Alex DerAlexanian landed in Yerevan, hopped on the first bus to Gyumri and also joined the group.

CAMP GYUMRI

"Imagine your summer filled with breath-taking landscape, food that entices your senses, monumental structures, endless laughter, meeting locals that will offer everything in their household to you, and taking on the responsibility of being a mentor to a group of children thousands of miles away," says Sanan Haroun, describing her first few days in Gyumri. "Reality transcends imagination when you find yourself in Gyumri."

Camp Gyumri opened its doors on July 22 at 10:30 AM. By 11:00 AM, the the run-down Armenian Relief Society (ARS) center used for the camp site had been flooded with more than 80 kids. "They were overwhelmed with excitement," says Sanan, recalling how the campers couldn't sit still in their seats. "The smiles on their faces and eagerness to start the camp session was absolutely priceless."

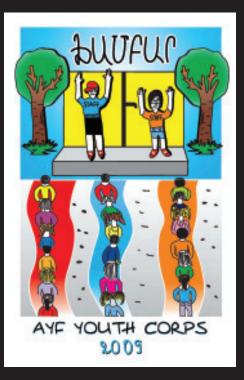
The first few days of camp were difficult for the group. Though most had served as counselors at AYF Camp, nothing could have prepared them for the kids of Gyumri. The campers were unrestrained and full of limitless energy.

"The kids in Gyumri are like AYF Camp kids, but on steroids," says Alex DerAlexanian. "They are constantly moving at 100-miles-an-hour, and they have no brakes or any intention of slowing down. However, they are the most humble and the sweetest kids I have ever worked with. They joke with us, they pick us flowers, and they never complain."

Alex, who participated in Youth Corps through the Birthright Armenia Program, landed in Armenia a few days after the camp began its operations. He says recuperation from jet lag would've been a waste of time, so he set out to immediately experience Armenia.

"It took us all a few days to get the hang of the whole thing," recalls Kevork Babayan. It's past midnight, and he hovers over an authentic wooden backgammon board at the Youth Corps house. In this moment of meditation and reflection, he says, "the hardest part of it all was coming up with daily agendas and work for the kids. But we eventually grew into our jobs, and it became sort of natural."

The next morning Kevork holds up flash cards of images for the children



to identify during English class, while Sanan Haroun and Nora Injeyan write down the words on a giant piece of paper for the kids to copy down in their notebooks.

"We check their notebooks at the end of every class, and whoever has it all right gets a sticker. They really loved this," says Sanan. "We have review sessions at the beginning of every day and have a quiz mid week on the words they have learned."

In a white-walled classroom furnished with school desks, the campers looked toward the future, working on essays about the Homeland. The essays will be entered in a composition competition at the end of the session. The campers also help design the logo for next year's camp t-shirt during arts and crafts. Between these activities, campers spend half-an-hour every day learning Karate with Berj, who holds a third degree black-belt. Berj says his goal for the trip was to instill discipline into the kids.

Donning their white AYF camp tshirts, the eager students form lines in the center's courtyard. Behind them is the picturesque ravine with an ancient church on the other side. In the patio, the campers stand firm in a defensive position taught to by their sensei. They wait for Berj to shout commands, orders, and names of moves they should perform during their martial arts lessons.

"Everyone needs to know how to defend themselves, so they don't get taken advantage of or hurt," explains Hovo, a 10-year-old camper. Hovo says Karate lessons were his favorite activity and that "those people who know how to defend themselves need to take care of the weak, who don't."

"You could really see how much they loved the Karate lessons," says Berj. "It's as if they have a natural inclination for learning how to defend. Maybe this comes natural to Armenians."

After jumping up with joy for answering the winning question for the blue team in a quizbowl competition, 14-year-old Rouben Abrahamian darts toward Kevork, his group leader, and thanks him. "I would be sitting at home, bored, and doing nothing if it weren't for you," Rouben says. But because of camp, Rouben was able to learn new things, meet new friends, and spend his time "in a much more enjoyable way than at home."

"Our schools don't teach us the things they teach us here," Rouben explains. "They don't go deep into Armenian history, about the Fedayees or their victories and struggles. But here, we have fun learning about our heroes and their stories inspire us and make us proud."

Early on, it was apparent to the entire group that these kids never experienced a summer like this before.

"Every game, every song, every activity we do, the kids genuinely



enjoy," says Serop. "Seeing their looks of amazement when they watch Sensei Berj do some karate moves and the giant smiles on their faces when they do the chicken dance during morning exercises are all we need to let us know that the kids are loving the camp."

The beneficiaries of this summer of fun, however, weren't just the kids of Gyumri. On any given evening, one would find the Youth Corps crew reminiscing about memorable moments throughout the day as they walked down Gyumri's brick-laden streets to their home-away-fromhome in the Turki Mayla neighborhood.

"I have been a counselor at AYF Camp for quite some time now, but it is different here," says Sanan. "It is very hard to explain with words, but there is this self-satisfaction you feel here. Because you realize that you are truly making a difference in these kids' lives."

Late one night, Sanan jots down notes into her journal, so that she will know what to post in her next blog entry. "Needless to say, this is worth more than anything in the world, because you know that it will shape your own life, and you will carry it on with you for the rest of your life."

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

For these young Diasporans, Youth Corps was more than just summer fun; they were in Armenia for a specific purpose, and each of them knew exactly what that was.

"The AYF sent us to Armenia to set the foundation for a new generation that will take ownership of its homeland and look forward to a future living on the land of their forefathers," explains Berj.

The Youth Corps program, from its inception, has sought to close the artificial gap created by the Genocide and widened by decades of isolation during the Cold War. The program exists to encourage Diasporans to take on a more direct role in the nation building process in Armenia.

"The homeland is very distant, and you can't fully comprehend what the situation is like here from watching it on television," says Artak Avedisian, the Chairman of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's Central Committee in Shirak. He is also a volunteer counselor at the camp, and he says it's hard for Diasporans to understand how people live in Armenia, what their needs are, and what are things that are to be cherished and preserved without Diasporans seeing them and experiencing them first-hand.

Sitting at a table at Camp Gyumri, Artak talks about his experience with the campers. He talks about working as a teacher and principal at a local school, and he sifts through a bucket of colorful beads, assembling tricolor bracelets for his campers.

"Through Youth Corps, the AYF volunteers experienced first hand what it is that Armenians here struggle with," says Artak. The volunteers also saw the country and met the people they work to promote, protect and empower through their unique position in the United States. Armenia became real for them here. It became more than something they read about or talk about or a dream they work toward. I believe this experience will inspire them to work much harder for their ideals."

Artak is 35-years-old, and he is a veteran of the Karabakh liberation struggle. He has been working for years with his fellow ARF members in Gyumri to establish regular Sunday schools and day camps for youth in the area. There's a desperate need for it, he says, referring back to his own experience in the school system.

"Quite frankly, the schools here don't instill love of country in the kids early on," he says with an air of concern while preparing supplies for his Arts & Crafts class at the camp. "There is no school here that starts off the day with the singing of the Armenian national anthem, and no book that animates for them the achievements of our people throughout history."

Camp Gyumri is a welcomed change for Artak and may parents who sent their children and teenagers to the Youth Corps program. It gave dozens of kids in Gyumri a completely different experience.

"Here the children sing the national anthem with pride every morning," says Artak. "They learn national and patriotic songs, and about our greatest moments like the establishment of the first Republic of Armenia, the Battle of Sardarapat, and the liberation of Arstakh. These are historic moments they can be proud of." He flips through the pages of an elementary school history book that only allocated two paragraphs to the liberation war in Artsakh. "These are things they learn very little about in their schoolbooks."

For Artak, and the families touched by the camp, these nine Diasporans who came to Gyumri from California had more of an impact than they may ever truly realize.

"Youth corps has laid the foundation for the ARF in Armenia to set up Sunday schools and regular day camps not just in Gyumri, but throughout the entire country," Artak proudly states. "At the end of the camp we had over 30 children sign up for the local ARF youth club. This would have taken us years of difficult work to do that without Camp Gyumri and the Youth Corps project."

AYF Youth Corps volunteers promise that extending this impact will be the mission of the program in the coming years. Upon their return home, volunteers quickly began planning for a second camp in another one of Armenia's less developed regions.







ԲԱՆԱԿՑՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՄԱՍԻՆ

Աշխարհի տարածքին գոյութիւն ունեցող բարդ եւ առկախ հակամարտութիւնները լուծելու համար հզօր պետութիւնները կը նախընտրեն դիւանագիտութեան ուղիով փոխադարձաբար ընդունելի արդիւնք ձեռք բերել՝ պատերազմի տանող քայլերու դիմելու փոխարէն։ Թէ ինչու՞ այդպէս է՝ պարզ է. թէեւ պատերազմով կարելի է ոեւէ հարց իր լուծումին յանգեցնել, այդ միջոցը յաւելեալ թշնամութիւն կը ստեղծէ, ինչ որ մնայուն խաղաղութիւն հաստատելու ճիգերը ատելութեամբ կը թունաւորէ։ Այս գլխաւոր

պատճառին կողքին կան նաեւ աւելի անմիջական մտահոգութիւններ ինչպէս՝ պատերազմի բերումով տնտեսութեան տկարացումը, տեղացի ժողովուրդին վերաբերմունքը եւ անոնցմէ նուազ ազդեցութեամբ միջազգային կարծիքը Պատմութիւնը բազմաթիւ եւայլն։ օրինակներով կու գայ փաստելու, որ լոկ լայնածաւալ զինուորական գործողութիւններով կերտուած խաղաղութիւնը խորքին մէջ մակերեսային եւ ժամանակաւոր է։ Աշխարհին շուրջ կը տեսնենք անբարհացակամ պետութիւններու միջեւ խորունկ հակասութիւնները՝ րլյան անոնք սառած կամ այժմէական հարցեր, դիւանագիտութեան բովով նախ մեղմացնել ու ապա լուծել։ Հնդկաստանը հրաժարեցաւ Փաքիստանին մարտական ուժով պատասխանել 2008ին Մումպայի մէջ

տեղի ունեցած ոճիրներէն ետք։ ՆԱԹՕի գերպետութիւնները կ'անապարեն Հիւսիսային Քորիային ետ բանակցութեան սեղանին շուրջ բերել։ Աֆղանիստանի մէջ զօրավարներուն չափ զբաղուած են դիւանագէտները։ Անշուշտ բացառութիւններ կան՝ Սրի Լանքայի կառավարութիւնը պարտութեան մատնեց եւ գրեթէ ոչնչացուց Թամիլ Վագրերը, որ կղզիին հիւսիսային տարածքին մէջ տարիներով պայքար մղեցին կառավարութեան դէմ։ Կը թուի որ պատերազմով հարց մը վերջնականապէս լուծելը կը նշանակէ հակառակորդը բնաջնջել։ Բարեբախտարար այնպիսի օրինակները քիչ են։ Ամենայնդէպս աշխարհին մէկ ծայրէն միւս ծայրը պետութիւնները սկսած են իրենք իրենց հարց տալ թէ՝ հ՞րբ պէտք է բանակցիլ թշնամիին հետ։

Ծատ դժուար է յաջող բանակցութիւն տանելու պատեհ պայմանները նախապէս ճշդել։ Ան հազար ու մէկ խանգարումներու ենթակայ է։ Լուսանցքի վրայ անվնաս երեւցող մանրամասնութիւն մը կրնայ սուր հակասութիւն մէջտեղ բերել, ինչպէս որ եղաւ Հոկտեմբերի առաջին շաբթուայ ընթացքին Հայ-թուրք յարաբերութիւններու բնականոնացման



նախապայմաններուն նկատմամբ Հայկական սփիւոքի ունեցած դրսեւորումով։ Ծատ անգամ անզուսպ եւ ծայրայեղ տարրերու անկարգապահութիւնը պատճառ կը դառնայ կառավարութիւնները զիրար անտեսելու եւ կռիւներու շարունակութեան, ինչպէս որ յաճախ կը պատահի պաղեստինցիներուն եւ հրէաներուն միջեւ։ Թերեւս զինեալ բախումներու կասեցումը ամէնէն հասարակ նախապայմանն կառավարութիւնները կ'արժեւորեն Ł որմով դիւանագիտութեան տարողութիւնը՝ անհամաձայնութիւնը վերացնելու գործին մէջ. բայց միակը չէ։ Այս տարուան սկզբին Կազան փաստօրէն Ֆաթահի իշխանութեան տակ կ'րլլար եւ ոչ Համասին։ Նախապայմանը տրամաբանական է, բայց սխալ հասցէին ուղղուած է. Ապպասը կարողութիւնը չունի այդ կատարելու։ Վիճաբանութեան սիրոյն երեւակայենք, որ ունի այդ ուժը։ Արդէօ՞ք այս նախապայմանը ընդունելի է։ Ուրեմն մեզ կը մնայ ստուգել անոր համաձայնութիւնը երկրորդ սկզբունքին հետ: Երկրորդ կէտր կր թեյադրէ արժեւորել նախապայմանին կիրարկման հետեւանքով դիրքերու փոփոխութիւնը։ Ուրիշ խօսքով սակարկելու ազատութիւնն ու ազդեցութիւնը պէտք է զերծ մնայ նախապայմաններու կաշկանդիչ կիրառումէն։ Եթէ կողմ մր որոշ քայլի մը պիտի համաձայնի եւ անոր դիմաց ձեռքէն շատ բան պիտի տայ, հասկնալի է, որ այդ քայլերը պիտի չուզէ առնել։ Այս պարագային ոմբարձակութիւնը կասեցնելով պաղեստինցիները ոչինչ զիջած կ'րլյան որովհետեւ այդ գործողութիւնները անմիջապէս շարունակելու կարողութիւնը տակաւին կ'ունենան։

Այն դիւանագէտները որ նախապայմաններ դնելու նախասիրութիւն ունին բայց ժողովուրդին վերաբերմունքով մտահոգուած են, զանոնք կը դնեն որպէսզի ժողովուրդին առջեւ պահպանողական երեւին եւ հակառակորդին հաւանութիւնը ապահովելու պարագային փոքր նուաճումով ներկայանան որպէս ազգային շահերու պաշտպաններ։ Այն դիւանագէտները որոնք անձնապէս հն դէմ՝ նախապայմաններու, զանոնք չափազանց անընդունելի բանաձեւումով կ'առաջարկեն որպէսզի անհամաձայնութեան պատրուակով բանակցութիւնները յքեն։ Դժբախտաբար նախապայման դնելու ախորժակը աւելի մեծ է քան առողջ վերլուծութեան ջանքերը։ Այս իրականութիւնը բանակցողներուն կը մղէ դէպի շատ աժան քաղաքական նպատակայարմարութեան։ Այս մօտեցումը այնքան վնասակար է որ շատ անգամ նախապայմաններէ ազատ կապերու ստեղծումը աւելի նպաստաւոր կ'րլյալ։

ՖՈՒԹՊՈԼ ԽԱՂԱԼԸ ՆԱԽԱՊԱՅՄԱՆ Չ'ՈՒՉԵՐ

Հայ-թուրք յարաբերութեանց բնականոնացման գործընթացը իր պաշտօնական ծնունդը առաւ Հոկտեմբեր 10ին, Ցիւրիխի մէջ, բայց անոր պատրաստութիւնը աւելի քան մէկ տարի տեւեց եւ պահանջեց գերպետութիւններու հետեւողակ եւ անխախտ աջակցութիւնը։ Դժուար է հերքել այն կարծիքը որ Հայաստանն ու Թուրքիան առանց արտաքին միջամտութեան կը կարենային իրար հետ լեզու գտնել։ Թուրքիան իր սահմանը բանալով չնչին տնտեսական շահ

Իսրայէլը յայտարարեց, որ պատրաստ էր Պաղեստինեան իշխանութեան հետ բանակցիլ միայն երբ ան պաշտօնապէս ճանչնայ Իսրայէլը որպէս հրէական պետութիւն։ Միացեալ Նահանգները Պարսկաստանէն կը պահանջէ հիւլէական ուժի ստեղծման գործընթացին սառեցումը նախքան վերսկսումը։ խօսակցութեան Երբեմն ալ կառավարութիւններ անգիտակցաբար նախապայմաններ կը պարտադրեն իրենք իրենց վրայ, օրինակի համար երբ կ'որոշեն որ իրենց հասկացողութեամբ «ահաբեկչական» կազմակերպութիւններու հետ ոեւէ կապ պիտի չհաստատեն, ինչպէս եղաւ 2006ին երբ Համասը մեծ յաջողութիւն արձանագրեց պաղեստինեան խորհրդարանական ընտրութիւններուն, բայց Իսրայէլը եւ ԱՄՆր մերժեցին անոր հետ գործակցիլ, թէպէտեւ քուէարկութիւնը ընդունուեցաւ որպէս ազատ եւ առանց րացայայտ խախտումներու։ Թէ այս հարցերը ինչպէ՞ս կ'որոշուին շատ կարեւոր է։ Մէկ կողմէն շահեկան նախապայմաններու արհամարհումը կրնայ բանակցութեան ազդեցութիւնը նուազեցնել իսկ միւս կողմէն անփութութեամբ ձեռնարկուած նախապայմաններ կրնան դիւանագիտութեան հնարաւորութիւնը բոլորովին վերացնել։

ՆԱԽԱՊԱՅՄԱՆՆԵՐՈՒ ՊԱՅՄԱՆՆԵՐԸ

Դիւանագիտութեան միջոցաւ հաշտութեան հող մշակելու համար բանակցային կողմերը պէտք է իրենց համակ ուշադրութիւնը դարձնեն երկու հարցերու՝

ա) տուեալ կառավարութեան կարողութիւնը իրմէ պահանջուած նախապայմանները լրացնելու

բ) տուեալ նախապայմաններու գոհացումով ենթակայ կառավարութեան ապագայ ռազմավարական դիրքը բանակցութեան ծիրէն ներս

Նախապայմաններ ընդունելի են այնքան ատեն որ այս սկզբունքները կը բաւարարեն։ Հակառակ պարագային նախապայմանները փուն խեղկատակութիւն ըլլալէ զատ կը ծառայեն անհանդուրժողութեան եւ անվստահութեան մթնոլորտ ստեղծելու։ Առաջին կէտը պարզ է, նոյնիսկ բացայայտ, բայց զարմանալի է որ միշտ չի գործադրուիր։ Օրինակի համար Իսրայէլը պաղեստինցիներէն, մասնաւորապէս Մահմուտ Ապպասի Ֆաթահ կուսակցութենէն կը պահանջէ հրթիռաձգութեան դադրեցումը։ Ապպաս Կազայէն Իսրայէլ ուղղուած հրթիռներու տարափը արգիլելու ուժը ունի՞. Եթէ ունենար՝

Այս պայմաններուն տակ եւ երրորդ դէմքերու մղումներով Հայաստանն ու Թուրքիան բանակցութեան սեղանին մուրջ նստեցան յարաբերութեանց բնոյթը ճշդելու։ Թէ ո՞վ աւելի կշիոք ունի պարզ է։ Արդէն զօրաւորը միշտ պատրաստ է բանակցութեան նստելու, որովհետեւ քաջ գիտէ որ թշնամին չի կրնար իրեն զիջումի տանիլ այլ ինք պիտի փորձէ առաւելագոյն զիջումներու մատնել թշնամիին։ Եթէ զօրաւոր

հղած ատեն չես բանակցիր, հ°րբ պիտի բանակցիս։ Ամէն պարագային, տուեալ նախապայմանները հաշտութիւն քաջալերելու տեղ աւելորդ փորձանքներու դուռը կը բանան, մանաւանդ մեզի համար, Եւ ընդհանուր գործընթացը ձախողութեան կը տանին։ Այս երկիրներուն մերձեցումը պէտք է րլյայ առանց նախապայմաններով եւ չափազանց դանդաղ աշխատելակերպով, որովհետեւ փոքրագոյն անհամաձայնութիւնը կրնայ ընթացքը խափանել։ Ի՞նչ կր նշանակէ ներկայ սահմաններու ճանաչումը կամ անբարեացակամ քարոզչութեան դադրեցումը. անկախ երկիրներու միջեւ կապեր ստեղծելու տարրական քայլերն են ասոնք։ Յարաբերութեանց բնականոնացումը կը

Մեկնաբանութիւն առանց հասկացողութեան իրականութենէ կտրուած վիճակագրութիւն է։

պիտի արձանագրէր, բայց գտած շահը բացումին ընկերակցող դիւանագիտական գլխացաւը՝ այսինքն Ատրպէյճանի զայրոյթը, պիտի չ'արդարացներ։ Իսկ Հայաստանը ապացուցած էր, որ նոյնիսկ փակ սահմանով կրնայ տնտեսական աճ արձանագրել առանց ոչ մէկ զիջում ընելով Արցախէն։ Բայց Ռուսաստան-Վրաստան պատերազմը մէջտեղ բերաւ Հայաստանի վտանգաւոր առեւտրական

վիճակը՝ երբեք np գաղտնիք չէր բայց ոչ ալ բոլորովին րմբռնուած որպէս ապահովութեան չուզելով խնդիր, Եւ վերյիշեցինք անոր տարածաշրջանային մեկուսացումը։ Իսկ Թուրքիոյ նկատմամբ այդ պատերազմը արթնցուց Պատերազմ»ի «պաղ զգացումները եւ վախը որ Ռուսերը Թրքական սահման վերադառնալով պիտի վտանգեն իր ուժանիւթերու փոխադրամիջոցի նախանձելի դիրքը։ Յիշենք np այստեղէն պիտի անցնին Եւրոպային ուժանիւթի պահանջքները բաւարարեցնող քարիւղի բնական կազի եւ խողովակները։ Քանի որ խողովակներուն կառուցումը հսկայական ծախսերու նայեցաւ, անոնց անխափան գործելը եւ

ապահովութիւնը հրաշխաւորելը Եւրապային եւ որոշ չափով ԱՄՆին հիմնական մտահոգութիւնն է։ Եւրոպային՝ որովհետեւ իրենք պիտի սպառեն այդ ուժանիւթերը եւ ԱՄՆին՝ որովհետեւ այս բոլորը կը համընկնի տարածաշրջանին վերաբերեալ իր ունեցած հեռատես ծրագիրներուն. Հայաստանը Ռուսաստանին գիրկէն հանել, որուն հետեւանքով Ռուսաստանին ազդեցութեան գօտին նահանջի կ'ենթարկուի, եւ Պարսկաստանի հետ ցամաքային կապը կը կորսնցնէ, որ աւելի կ'առանձնացնէ Պարսկաստանը։ փորձեն այսպէս ներկայացնել՝ երկու պետութիւններու պաշտօնական կապերու հաստատման գործընթաց եւ ոչ աւելին, որպէսզի այս բոլորը անվնաս երեւի եւ անհամաձայն գտնուողները անտրամաբանական ու ծայրայեղ երեւին:

Իրականութեան մէջ պատմութեան ընթացքին Թուրքիոյ նուաճած շահերը, հակառակ որ անոնք անիրաւ միջոցներով ձեռք բերուած են, այսպէս կու գան վերջնականապէս վաւերագուեյու։ ՖՈՒԹՊՈԼԻ ՀԱԾԻՒ 0-2 ԻՍԿ ԴԻՒԱՆԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱԾԻՒ...

Արտգործնախարարի ստորագրութեամբ համաձայնագիրը այժմ մտաւ Երկրորդ հանգրուան։ Ցոյսով ենք որ այստեղ իսկական քննարկումներ կը կատարուին եւ այդ քննարկումներուն եզրակացութիւնները կը հասնին հանրութեան ի տարբերութիւն անցեալին, ուր իշխանութիւնը մակերեսային ակնարկներով թիւրիմացութիւն տարածեց։ Իշխանութիւնը հարցումներու պատասխանելու ատեն միշտ կ'րսէ թէ ամէն ինչ մեր ուզածին պէս պիտի չրլյայ եւ ինչպէս Թուրքերը կրնան որոշ հարցեր մեկնաբանել մենք ալ կրնանք տարբեր մեկնաբանութիւն ունենալ։ Քաղաքականութեան մէջ ընդհանրապէս մեր ուզածը չրլլար, ուրեմն զարմանալի չէ որ այս անգամ ալ մեր ուզածր տեղի չեղաւ։ Բայց այս նախապայմաններուն շուրջ մենք ի՞նչ նպաստաւոր մեկնաբանութիւն կրնանք ունենալ, տակաւին յայտնի չէ։ Սահմաններու ճանաչումը ինչպէ՞ս մեկնաբանենք որպէսզի հողային իրաւական պահանջքները չթաղենք։ Անբարեացակամ քարոզչութիւնը ինչպէ՞ս մեկնաբանենք որպէսզի Մեծ Եղեռնի ճանաչման գործընթացը բարի դրացնութեան չխանգարէ։ Պատմական հարցեր ուսումնասիրելու միջ-կառավարական յանձնախումբը ինչպէ՞ս մեկնաբանենք որպէսզի մեր պատմութիւնը չխեղաթիւրեն։ Մեկնաբանութիւն առանց հասկացողութեան իրականութենէ կտրուած վիճակագրութիւն է։

Վերջին երկու ամիսները ցոյց տուին, որ թէեւ Հայաստանի արտաքին քաաքականութիւնը ինքզինք յառաջադէմ կը ներկայացնէ, իրականութեան մէջ իր ուղղութիւնը յետադիմական հոսանքներու ենթակայ է։ Սկսած բանակցութիւնները գաղտնի հրապարակայնացնելու որոշումէն եւ վերջացած Թրքական քարոզչութեան առջեւ լռութիւն պահելով, արտաքին գործոց նախարարութեան պաշտօնեաները կ'աշխուժանան միայն bրբ քննադատութիւննbրու bլbւէջր իր գագաթնակէտին հասնի եւ այն ատեն, կարծես թէ ակամայ, տակաւին անբաւարար բացատրութիւններ կու տան եւ շատ անգամ նոյնիսկ հարցերուն հարցումով կը պատասխանեն։ Նման ասուլիսներու ընթացքին տարակուսութեան զգացումը անխուսափելի է։

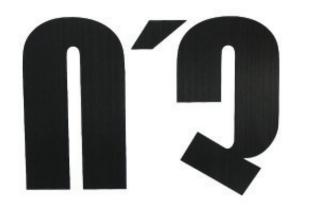
ԼՈՒՌ ՎՏԱՆԳՆԵՐ

Սահմանի բացումով կան երկու վտանգներ, որոնց մասին ցարդ պէտք եղած զրոյցները տեղի չեն ունենար։ Առաջինը գաղթի օրէնքներու եւ համակարգի բնորոշումն է։ Մտահոգութիւնս Թուրքերու ներխուժումը չէ այլ Հայաստանի հայաթափումն է։ Մարդիկ իրենց տնտեսական իրավիճակը բարելաւելու համար կը վերաբնակուին դիւրին ապրուստ խոստացող երկիրներ։ Ներկայիս Թուրքիոյ մէջ արդէն յիսուն հազար հայեր կը բնակին անօրէն, այս թիւր ՀՀ բնակչութեան մօտաւորապէս երկու տոկոսը կը ներկայացնէ։ Այնպէս չէ որ Թրքական մշակոյթին հանդէպ խոր համակրանքը մղեց այդ բազմութիւնը Պոլիս Երթալու, այլ անոնք այդ քայլին դիմեցին որովհետեւ Թուրքիոյ ուռնացող միջին դասակարգը աշխատանքի լայն հորիզոններ բացած է իրենց առջեւ։ Իսկ Հայաստանի մէջ դասակարգերու միջեւ եկամուտի անհաւասարութիւնը նոսրացած միջին դասակարգ ստեղծեց եւ այդպէս կը շարունակէ պահել։ Յոյսով ենք, որ իշխանութիւնը ծրագիրներ մշակած է, որոնք սահմանի բացումը դրդապատճառ օգտագործելով անգործութեան դէմ պիտի պայքարին։ Հակառակ պարագային աժան ապրանքներու ներմուծումը կրնայ որոշ ասպարէզներու վրայ ահագին ճնշում հրաւիրել, որը ի վերջոյ անգործութեան կը տանի։

Երկրորդ վտանգը տնտեսական եւ ընկերային փորձանքներով յղի է։ Թուրքիան ծանօթ է որպէս թմրեցուցիչներ արտադրող եւ անոնց տարանցիկ ճանապարհներ տրամադրող պետութիւն։ Սահմանի բացումէն ետք այս շուկան ի՞նչ ազդեցութիւն պիտի ունենայ Հայաստանի տնտեսութեան եւ ընկերային կեանքին վրայ։ Վստահ եմ որ «սեւ շուկայ»ի մենաշնորհեալները պիտի ուզեն իրենց կործանիչ սպասարկութիւնները բերել Հայաստան եւ չարաշահել զայն իրենց ապրանքը անոր ցամաքին վրայէն փոխադրելով։

Վտանքգերուն զուգահեր կան նաեւ սահմանի բացման հետեւանքով առաւելութիւններ, որոնց մասին կը լսենք նախապայմաններուն ջատագովներէն։ Սակայն մինչեւ այսօր բոլոր այն առաւելութիւններուն մասին որ լսածենք տնտեսական ոլորտին մէջ սահմանափակուած են իսկ վտանգները կը թափանցեն առնուազն տնտեսական, ընկերային, իրաւական, պատմական եւ ապահովական ոլորտները։ Հայաստանի ապագայ դիրքը յաջորդող բանակցութիւններուն հաւանաբար տկարացած ըլլայ, որովհետեւ սահմանափակուած պիտի ըլլայ միայն տնտեսականով։ Ըստ վերոնչեալ երկրորդ կէտին այս նախապայմաններու շարանը պէտք էր անընդունելի ըլլար Հայկական կողմին։

- Ռազմիկ Հարուն



www.StopTheProtocols.com



French riot police violently disburse Armenian demonstrators protesting Serzh Sarkisian on his visit to Paris on October 2, 2009. Photo Credit: Jean Ekian.



AYF members lead chants during a community rally in Glendale that attracted more than 10,000 people on September 27, before Sarkisian set out on his whirlwind tour of the Diaspora. Photo Credit: Allen Yekikan



French riot police violently disburse Armenian demonstrators protesting Serzh Sarkisian on his visit to Paris on October 2, 2009. Photo Credit: Jean Ekian.



For two days, Armenians from across Southern California converged at the Montebello Martyrs' Monument in anticipation of a possible visit to the memorial by Sarkisian's on his trip to Los Angeles. The president never showed. Photo Credit: Allen Yekikan.



Over12,000 Armenians in Los Angeles surround the Beverly Hills Hilton on October 4, demanding President Sarkisian pull back from talks with Turkey immediately or resign from office. Photo Credit: Helena Grigorian.



Hours after the protocols were signed in Zurich, the streets of Yerevan were overflowing with more than 60,000 angry citizens on October 10. Photo Credit: Photolur



Armen Rustamian of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation rallies thousands at Yerevan's Charles Aznavour Square on October 16, six days after the protocols were signed. The demonstration was organized with 12 other political parties. Photo Credit: Arsineh Khachikian



Thirty impassioned young Armenians held a 5-day hungerstrike across from the Armenian Consulate in Glendale, CA in the days leading up to the scheduled signing of the protocols. Photo Credit: Allen Yekikan.



Catholicos Aram I delivers compelling sermon to thousands gathered at the Holy See of Cilicia ahead of Sarkisian's visit, galvanizing Lebanese Armenians' struggle against the protocols.

Մաշտոցեան Քաղաքականութիւն

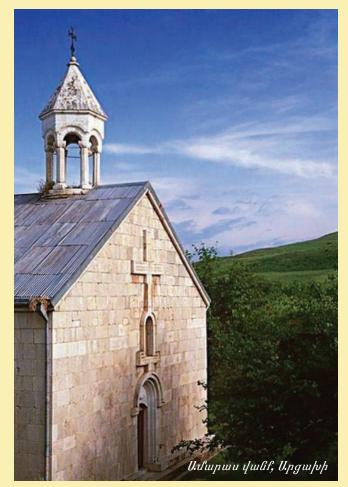
Ամարաս վանքը Եղած է Արցախի Եւ ինչու չէ՛ հայկական ամէնէն պատմական Եւ Քրիստոնէական կեդրոններէն մէկը։ Ամարաս կը գտնուի Մարտունի քաղաքէն մօտաւորապէս 10քմ հարաւ-արԵւԵլք, Խազազի Եւ Լուսաւորիչի սարերու միջեւ, Սօս գիւղին մօտ։

Ինչպէս մեր միւս պատմական եկեղեցիներն ու վանքերը, Ամարաս նոյնքան, եթէ ոչ աւելի՛, հետաքրքրական առասպելներ ունի։ 4րդ դարու սկիզբը Ամարաս վանքը կառուցուած է Գրիգոր Լուսաւորիչի հրամանով եւ իր թոռը՝, Գրիգոր եպիսկոպոսը, շինարարութիւնը աւարտած է։ Ներկայիս գտնուած մատուրին խորանի բաժինը շինուած է 5րդ դարու վերջը, Վաչական Գ. Բարեպաշտ թագաւորի հրամանով, հիմնադիր Գրիգոր եպիսկոպոսի գերեզմանին վրայ։

Ամարասի վանքը հոգեւոր կեդրոն ըլլալու կողքին, 5րդ դարէն սկսեալ կը դառնայ նաեւ մշակութային ու տնտեսական կեդրոն, մանաւա'նդ երբ Մեսրոպ Մաշտոց վանքին մէջ կը հիմնէ Արցախի առաջին դպրոցը։ Հետագային, այս դպրոցը գլխաւոր դեր պիտի ունենար հայկական ձեռագիր լեզուի կազմաւորման եւ աճման գործընթացքին։

5րդ դարէն ետք, Ամարաս Վանքի ճակատագիրը կ'ամփոփէ Հայ ժողովուրդի մօտաւորապէս հազար տարիներու պատմութիւնը։ Դարեր շարունակ, Ամարաս վանքը ներփակուած էր հաստավէմ պարիսպներով եւ դարձած էր բերդամրոց ոեւէ մօտակալ վտանգի ժամանակ։ Այս պատճառով ալ ທພຸກທີ່ມີກັ້ງພຸກກໍເມີພູ ປີກາທິພະນີກພຽກເອນີ້ພູໃ ենթարկուած է։ 5րդ դարուն արդէն իսկ գրաւուած է պարսիկներուն կողմէ, ետքը՝ 7րդ դարուն Արաբներու կողմէ, իսկ 13րդ դարու վերջաւորութէան՝ Մոնկոլ Ճենկիզ Խանի զօրքերուն միջոցաւ, սակայն վանքը միշտ այ արագօրէն վերականգնած է։ Վանքը բազմաթիւ անգամներ քանդուած եւ վերակառուցուած է, այնքան, որ ան դարձած է ժողովրդական աւանդութիւն։ Այս աւանդոյթը լսելով՝ մօտաւորապէս 150 տարիներ ետք, Լենկթիմուրի աւերակիչ զօրքերը կը յաջողին անգամ մը եւս քանդել գեղեցիկ Ամարասը եւ վանքին քանդուած քարերը մէկիկ–մէկիկ կը նետեն գետին մէջ, որպէսզի այս անգամ անկարելի դառնայ անոր վերակառուցուիլը։ Կ'րսուի թէ, Լենկթիմուրի զօրավարներէն փրկուած Հայ վարդապետները թշնամիին հեռանալէն ետք, փախած են իրենց թաքստոցներէն եւ Երասխ գետէն քարերը հանելով վանքը վերակառուցած են... Լենկթիմուրը չյսէ...։

Այս վերջին արշաւանքին իբրեւ հետեւանք, Ամարաս խիստ կերպով աւերուեցաւ, սակայն երբէք եպիսկոպոսական աթոռը չկորսնցուց եւ այդ ամէնէն դժուարին պայմաններուն մէջ միշտ ալ եղաւ Հայ մշակոյթի ու լեզուի կեդրոն։ Այսօր շատ մը թանկարժէք ձեռագրեր ունինք մեր գանձարաններուն մէջ շնորհիւ այս վանքին։ Այժմ Ամարաս իր բաց մոխրագոյն սրբատաշ քարերով, Արցախի տեսարժան



վայրերեն մէկն է։ Տակաւին պարիսպներեն եւ վանքի օժանդակ շինութենեն կարգ մը բաժիններ պահպանուած են, նաեւ այնտեղ յայտնաբերուած է 925 թուականով թուագրուած խաչքար մը. (պէտք է այստեղ յիշենք որ, թուագրուած խաչքարերը աւելի վաւերագրական են հետեւաբար՝ աւելի յարգի)։

Ամարասի աւանդոյթը զիս կը մղէ զանազան մտորումներու ի տես ազգային եւ հասարակական կեանքին...

Մենք 21րդ դարուն տակաւին մեր գաղութները կը փորձենք ղեկավարել Լենկթիմուրի օրուայ Ամարասի վարդապետներուն որդեգրած քաղաքականութեամբ փոխան՝ Մաշտոցի։

Միշտ օտար թշնամիի վտանգը մեզ զօրակոչի կ'ենթարկէ պաշտպանելու հայրենիքը կամ բարելաւելու ժողովուրդի պայմանները, կարծես թէ վարժ չենք խաղաղ ժամանակներուն համագործակցութեամբ, սէր միութեամբ յառաջխաղաց ունենալու... Լենկթիմուրը յաղթական...

Միշտ կը փորձենք ժողովուրդը զգաստ եւ արթուն պահել թշնամիի մօտալուտ վտանգը ազդարարելով։ Կը կարդանք եւ կը լսենք ազերիներուն ներկայբանակին հզօրացման մասին. գործեր կան, օրը մէկ՝ կազմակերպութիւն ստեղծել եւ միւս խմբակներուն դէմ պատերազմ մղել, կամ երկու թեմերու եկեղեցիներ մէկ թաղի մէջ զետեղել եւ վիճաբանիլ թէ՝ որ մէկը «մերն է», կամ ալ, հին լուրերով տասը հատ օրաթերթ տպել եւ 1970ականի որակով հեռատեսիլի կայաններ ստեղծել՝ աւելի թափով այս խայտառակութիւններու մասին խօսելու։

Ղեկավար չկա՞յ. ով որ ինքզինքը մխրճած է քանի մը հայկական կազմակերպութիւններու մէջ եւ պաշտօններու տէր է ինքն իրեն ղեկավար կը կարծէ եւ նայելով շուրջի իր ընկերներուն, որոնք կ'ուզեն իր պաշտօնը տիրանալ, կր համոզուի, որ ինք



ղեկավար է եւ թէ համայն հայութիւնը իր ցանած սերմերու պտուղները կը վայելէ. վերջապէս ամէն մարդ իր աթոռին տիրանալ կ'ուզէ, կը նշանակէ որ ինք բան մը կ'րնէ, իսկ այն անձերը, որոնք քիչ մը հեռուէն կը դիտեն ո՛չ կը տեսնեն սերմ եւ ո'չ ալ պտուղ, այլ՝ անձնասէր սերմնացաններ։ Նոյն ղեկավար թեկնածուները, միշտ նուագովիրենց աթոռախաղ կ'րնեն ապակիէ պարիսպի մը մէջ․․․ միայն իրենք կը լսեն այդ երաժշտութիւնը եւ գիտեն այդ կոպիտ խաղը, իսկ ժողովուրդը զիրենք ապակիին ետեւէն կը դիտէ եւ իրենց ապարդիւն հեւքը տեսնելով ապշահար hbnwûwj...: կը

կամ ահազանգ կը հնչեցնենք Թուրքիոյ Հայաստանը մեկուսացնելու քաղաքականութեան դէմ, որպէսզի հայկական գաղութները եւ, ինչու չէ, հայրենի զանգուածները զօրաշարժի ենթարկուին եւ բրնցքուելով աշխատանք տանին ի նպաստ հայրենիքսփիւոք հզօրացման։

Դժուարին ժամանակներու ժողովուրդ ենք։ Ինչո՞ւ խաղաղ ժամանակը չ'օգտագործել բարեզարդելու եւ զարգացնելու հայրենիքը... եթէ վտանգ գոյութիւն չունի, շատ աւելի «կարեւոր» Լենկթիմուրը անգամ մը եւս յաղթական։

Եկէ'ք խաղաղ ժամանակները ի նպաստ մեր ժողովուրդի պայծառացոման, հայրենիքի եւ Ամարասի ու անոր պէս հազար ու մէկ վանքերու, ուսումնարաններու եւ կրթօճախներու կառուցման ծառայեցնենք։ Մեր հայկական հոգերանութենէն դուրս բերենք թշնամիներէ վախնալով ճգնաժամեր ստեղծելու քաղաքականութենէն։

Հայը պարտի տիրանալ խաղաղ ժամանակներու մէջ ստեղծագործելու գաղտնիքին...

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

By Serouj Aprahamian and Allen Yekikan

The Turkey-Armenia Protocols ushered in an unprecedented wave of international outcry against the policies of the Armenian government.

Massive demonstrations took place in almost every major city of the Diaspora; 60,000 protestors took to the streets in Yerevan; leading Armenian academics and Genocide scholars forcefully spoke out against the Protocols; two former Foreign Ministers of Armenia came out against the measure; 14 political parties and dozens of organizations within Armenia signed a statement against ratification of the documents; and the sole opinion poll taken on the issue showed that 52.4%[1] of the population in Yerevan was against the signing.

Nevertheless, the Foreign Minister of Armenia traveled to Zurich on October 10, 2009 and signed the Protocols with his Turkish counterpart. Today, the Armenian government vehemently calls on Turkey to ratify the agreement, after which it promises to immediately follow suit.

Given the widespread opposition and detrimental effects the Protocols are deemed to have on such pan-Armenian interests as Genocide recognition, legal claims to the Armenian homeland, and the liberation of Artsakh, many people have been left to wonder why Yerevan has pushed forward with this controversial policy with such vigor.

Why would the Armenian government risk going against the will of the majority of its people and give up so much in return for mere Turkish promises of normal relations?

Who Gains, Who Loses

To find answers to this question, it's essential to look beyond just technical issues about what the Protocols entail and the arguments of both its proponents and opponents. We must look, instead, at the core interests of those in Armenia who hold the levers of power. To put it more simply, in order to understand how policy is formed, it is important to understand those who form policy.

By now, it should be common knowledge that decision-making in Armenia is controlled by a small circle of elites, who dominate the country's political and economic landscape. Whether we look at the President's administration, the makeup of the National Assembly, or the heads and support-base of political parties in the coalition government, we find an easily distinguishable lineup of oligarchs that have woven their noose around Armenia's institutions and its society. What's unique about this social class is the magnitude of power they command, far surpassing the influence of any other segment of the general population. These oligarchs also share a common set of economic interests, living standards, values, and norms of behavior. They are, in fact, a distinct social class with tight links to one another, who operate on a political plane detached from the general public.

When looking into the business interests of this group of people, we find that a large number of them have made their wealth by dominating key commodity imports (e.g. gas, wheat, oil, butter, sugar, and so on). These business interests of the oligarchic class reflect the makeup of Armenia's skewed economic landscape as a whole, with imports making up 40% of GDP, while exports only account for 10%. Meanwhile, 70% of exports are comprised of raw materials, minerals, and stones. A large fraction of this class became rich through controlling the mining and exporting of Armenia's diamonds, copper, and gold, to name a few. That virtually all of these individuals have also acquired large tracts of land and property throughout the country is no coincidence either, as 40% of Armenia's annual growth is accredited to construction and real-estate. [2]

As such, a considerable level of power is in the hands of these oligarchs whose monopoly over key sectors of the economy has significantly stymied the country's economic development.

The lifting of the Turkish blockade is anticipated to further enrich these dominant figures by allowing them to directly bring in products over the Turkish border, rather than the more costly route currently used through Georgia. In turn, opening the border is anticipated to provide new opportunities for those seeking to sell Armenia's natural minerals in the international market. Property values and foreign investments are also expected to rise once relations are normalized with Turkey, placing many of those in Armenia's oligarchic class who possess major realestate and retail interests in a privileged position to reap profits.

The majority of Armenians, on the other hand, who struggle to make ends meet as farmers, wage laborers, or small businessmen are not likely to see much of the gains from opening the border. On the contrary, agricultural workers and local producers stand to suffer greatly under the weight of cheaper imports flooding in from Turkey, while laborers are likely to witness declining or stagnating wages under the pressure of foreign capital. Furthermore, rampant corruption and tax evasion ensure that whatever financial gains do accrue at the top will not be distributed down to the majority of the population.

The chairman of the Union of Domestic Manufacturers of Armenia, Vazgen Safarian, recently explained, "On the one hand, our consumers [and importers] will benefit from the cheap goods, but on the other hand, this will doom our local producers to having to shut down or to suspend operations." Another Yerevan businessman, who actually imports fabrics from Turkey, stated "Then, many people will start importing goods, maybe the prices will go down. [T]his will hit everyone, [but] I think my business will suffer."[3]

Edgar Helgelyan, an expert with the Mitk Analytical Center, also weighed in on the issue. "We are seriously concerned that the opening of the border will considerably damage the Armenian economy. Imports from Turkey to Armenia account for about \$178 million, while exports from Armenia to Turkey do not surpass \$1.8 million," he said during a press conference releasing a report submitted to the Armenian government on the subject.[4]

In other words, the much-touted "growth in GDP" or "improvement of the Armenian economy" that IMF technocrats and government apologists alike parrot as the silver bullet behind supporting the Protocols, is likely to provide a boom for the oligarchic elite but a bust for nearly everyone else. This might help to explain

why many average citizens in Armenia are opposed to the Protocols on economic, in addition to national, grounds; they fear having to bare the economic costs of the agreement while the elite reap the benefits.

This reality also helps to explain why Armenia's leading class has lent its unflinching support to the Protocols, with many being vocally in favor of the move, both in parliament and in business circles.

To give one of many examples, a leading proponent of the agreements in Armenia is Vardan Ayvazyan, the current head of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Economic Issues. Throughout his years in government, Mr. Ayvazyan has secured various mining licenses for himself and his family, including an ironstone mine in Hrazdan and two mines for his brother in Syunik and Lori provinces. It therefore comes as no surprise that he repeatedly boasts about the benefits of the protocols, claiming that, "Opening of the border can lead to 4 percent growth of GDP" or that the Protocols will "ensure a

new economic path for our country." For individuals such as Ayvazyan, who have used Armenia's legislative process towards their economic gains, opening the border provides new opportunities to capitalize on the exploitation of Armenia's natural resources. [5] The mere fact that the agreement has advanced this far is itself a testimony to the backing the government—many of who themselves make up the oligarchic class—has received from Armenia's wealthy elite. Indeed, in a recent interview to an Armenian newspaper, President Serzh Sargsyan smugly stated, "I have not heard from any serious businessperson in Armenia that has doubts of the economic benefit of opening the border."

Capitalism Over Nationalism

Significant profits are surely anticipated to be made in the upper echelons of Armenian society once the borders are opened. But at what cost



Armenian farmer and laborer

are Armenia's oligarchs willing to pursue their pocket books? Would they be willing to give in to Turkish conditions and renounce Armenia's national rights for the sake of lifting the blockade? Unfortunately, for many of the Armenian elite, national interests such as Karabakh's self determination, justice for the Armenian Genocide or legal claims to historic lands do not seem to be as much of a concern as they are for the general population.[6] This was perhaps most famously demonstrated by the head of the Armenian Football Federation (AFF), well-known oligarch Ruben Hairapetyan.[7] In the runup to the Turkish president's visit to Armenia for the much-touted soccer match between the two nations, Hairapetyan suddenly removed the image of Ararat from the AFF's official logo, sparking a major outcry within Armenia. Although he was later forced to reinstate the original logo with Ararat as the centerpiece, the inherent disregard for Armenia's national

rights and dignity was blatantly exposed by the scandal.

It should be pointed out that such a dismissive attitude towards pan-national interests is not a new phenomenon among the ruling class in Armenia. We saw similar sentiments expressed during the tenure of Armenia's first president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who was the chief architect of the system of autocracy and oligopoly we presently see in Armenia.[8] It was, thus, not surprising to see Ter-Petrosyan's newly formed opposition immediately suspend their protest actions against the government in September 2008, when they learned that the Turkish president would be coming to town for a soccer match.[9] More recently, despite his earlier bitter denunciations of the government, Ter-Petrosyan has praised the Sargsyan regime's policy on Turkish-Armenian relations and has even expressed his desire to establish cooperation with the ruling regime.[10]

Russia's Backyard

In addition to the economic incentives and tendency to compromise national rights, there is an equally powerful factor to be considered when examining the ruling elite's support for the Protocols: alignment with Russia.

Most of the prominent business and political elites in Armenia have direct personal ties to business and political interests in their former Soviet patron. We find that they either have major business ventures in Russia or serve as the overseers of Russian capital investments in Armenia. As one member of the ARF Western US Central Committee recently put it, "If Armenia is Russia's backyard, then they [oligarchs] are the gardeners."[11]

Indeed, Russia itself has a controlling stake in many of Armenia's most strategic assets-gas, oil, nuclear power, electricity, telecommunications, rail, and finance, to name a few. It is estimated that Russia has over \$2.5 billion of economic interests in the country. Given Armenia's vulnerability to any instability Russia could potentially cause in these strategically important sectors, no major decision on the magnitude of the Protocols could be made without the blessing of the "Big Uncle." The ruling elite in Armenia must pay special heed to the wishes of Moscow if they want to avoid any unwanted disruptions to the state and economy. Thus, it was no accident that President Sargsyan, during a state visit to Moscow in June 2008, extended an invitation to his Turkish counterpart to come to Armenia for the first soccer match.

For its part, Russia has openly expressed its support for the Protocols, with many analysts pointing out that it would be the main beneficiary of potential energy and transportation projects between Armenia and Turkey. Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, Grigori Karasin, was recently quoted as saying, "The Russian Inter RAO EES Company, which has energy facilities in Armenia, is exporting electricity to Turkey and the Russian Railway CJSC is ready to ensure uninterrupted rail communication between the two countries Dogukapy-Akhuryan through the checkpoint."[12] Interestingly enough, two of the main initial projects expected to develop following the implementation of the Protocols are the sale of Armenian electricity to Turkey and the opening of joint railroad transportation-both of which are Armenian industries dominated by Russia.

The Path Forward

Of course, the West is also keen to see rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey. The heavy dependence Armenia has on Western loans and the desire to deflect attention away from the state's crackdowns of March 1 is surely another motivation for Armenia's pursuit of the Protocols.

Yet, blame for the Protocols cannot be laid at the door of foreign pressure (whether from Russia, Turkey, or the West). As Armenia's Foreign Minister himself explained, "All states except for one or two supported the process and did not pressure us. It was Armenia's initiative. We reached the agreement jointly with Turkey."[13]

The responsibility, thus, lies with the ruling elite in Armenia. These elite hold the reigns of power in the country and have obvious motivations for seeing the Turkish blockade lifted despite its costs. In the end, the Protocols and the ensuing establishment of relations between Armenia and Turkey are a direct reflection of the interests of this tiny set of powerbrokers within Armenia.

The question, then, becomes how can the people act to prevent the ruling class from negotiating away Armenian national rights? The answer to this question lies partly in the international public opposition against the Protocols witnessed in recent months.

The unprecedented wave of mass demonstrations organized against the Armenian government pointed to a potential constraint on government decision-making. Hence, the public awareness raised against the Protocols, the delay by Nalbandian during the signing ceremony in Zurich, and President Sargsyan's televised public address hours before the signing were a direct consequence of people taking to the streets in Yerevan and capitals throughout the world.

To date, these demonstrations have been the most serious disruption to the Armenian government's plans for pushing through the Protocols. Indeed, the constant secrecy, media control, and deceptive statements issued by the government indicate their concern over the Armenian public's negative reaction to their policies.

By putting into question the reality of the Armenian Genocide through a so-called historical commission, recognizing the existing illegitimate border that forfeits legal claims to the Armenian homeland, and compromising Armenia's ability to defend the freedom of Artsakh, the Protocols pose a grave threat to the Armenian Cause—a cause considered to be paramount in the hearts and minds of Armenians around the world.

However, protests and negative opinion alone are likely not to be enough to stop the regime from ratifying the agreements. Public opposition must be translated into serious organization and concerted action in order to raise the costs high enough to be heeded by the administration in Yerevan. The system of centralized, elite power in Armenia must be checked by a vigilant and organized populace in order to restrain the wreckage of the self-interested schemes of the oligarchic elite.

The Diaspora has a special role to play in this battle. Through its relative freedom and more abundant resources, it has an important obligation to stand in support of those in Armenia who are genuinely struggling to create a more just and equitable future in the Homeland. As in the past, only by coming together collectively and reaching beyond artificial divisions will the Armenian people succeed in defending their pannational interests.

SOURCES:

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[2] Ara Nranyan, "Neoliberalism and Armenia: 18 Years of Integration with Capitalism," presentation delivered at the 2009 Armenians and Progressive Politics conference in Glendale, CA

[3] Marianna Grigoryan, "Is Yerevan Caught in a Trade Trap?" Eurasianet, October 5, 2009. See also Hasmik Hambardzumian, "Armenians Wary of Turkish Trade," Asia Times, September 29, 2009.

[4] "Opening of Border with Turkey Will Devastate Armenian Businesses," PanArmenian.net, September 25, 2009. See also the thorough, 192-page study commissioned by the ARF Bureau on the economic impact of opening the border: Mher Dzadourian, Pavel Hovhannisan, and Albert Babayan, "Economic-Trade Issues Surrounding the Opening of the Armenia-Turkey Border," June 2009, Yerevan.

[5] Gayane Abrahamyan, "Parliament Debates Diplomatic Normalization with Turkey," Eurasianet, October 1, 2009. For a background on Ayvazyan's interests in the mining industry, see Edik Baghdasaryan, "Vardan Ayvazyan's Business Project," Hetq, April 2, 2007.

[6] Despite the constant propaganda meted out to the contrary, people within Armenia consistently express their support for the cause of Genocide recognition and reparations from Turkey. See Serouj Aprahamian, "Armenia vs. Diaspora: The Myth of Diverging Interests Over the Genocide," Haytoug, Spring 2009, 6–9. In the most recent opinion poll taken after the announcement of the Protocols, 52.4% of Yerevan residents rejected the terms of the agreements and 41% insisted that they want the Turkish-Armenian border to remain closed. "Poll Finds Turkey Deal Unpopular in Yerevan," Asbarez, October 19, 2009.

[7] Hayrapetyan owns several businesses and is the Chairman of the Armtobacco Company. Most recently, he took ownership of the Bjni Mineral Water Factory in a controversial deal following the original owner's (oligarch Khachatur Sukiasyan) fall out with the government over his support of Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his alleged role in the March 1st events. See Gayane Mkrtchyan, "The Politics of Table Water: 'National Treasure' Bjni Changes hands in Disputed Sale," Armenia Now, September 2, 2009.

[8] See Ian Bremmer and Cory Welt, "Armenia's New Autocrats," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 8, 3, July 1997, 77-91.

[9] Marianna Grigoryan, "Armenia, Turkey Put Differences Aside for Soccer," Eurasianet, September 5, 2008.

[10] "Armenian Opposition Leader Backs President on Turkey," RFE/RL, November 12, 2009.

[11] Town Hall Meeting on Pan-Armenian Challenges. November 19, 2009. Encino, CA. Personal notes.

For a more historical perspective of this same phenomenon, we are reminded of the following quote from Armenian revolutionary hero, Aram Manukian: "That [exploitative] class is the capitalist class, which by descent is Armenian but in fact serves as the defender of foreign and Russian interests. They pretend to pose as the leaders of our people, but they consider Armenians to be only a pedestal under Russian tutelage for them to use to advance a more vibrant life. This class has turned into a threat to the Armenian people's unity. They have become bait for our neighbors to use against us. They have become a 'fishing hook' in the hands of the Russians with which to 'catch' Armenians. Although they may possess Armenian names, this class is, in fact, our enemy." Roupen Der-Minassian, Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary, Vol. 2.

[12] "Russia to Support Armenia-Turkey Ties With Economic Projects," Asbarez, November 4, 2009.

[13] "Nalbandyan Does Not Feel 'Embarrassed and Insulted", News.am, October 30, 2009.

MAKING OUR NEST

By Aida Bagdasaryan

Each fall the migratory cranes embark on a journey to warmer grounds due to annual seasonality, to escape the winter's bitter arrival. The crane's migratory behavior is very much similar to that of the Armenians. When we feel the first cruel chill of winter, when times grow to be difficult, we flee. We fly across the Atlantic to a warmer climate, in hopes of leading a more fruitful life. It is only natural to seek something better, yet there is one significant difference between the cranes and the Armenian people...the cranes eventually fly back to their homes in the spring time, and we do not.

Most Armenians from the United States who visit

return with a laundry list of complaints concerning the poverty displayed on street corners, the lack of modernization in the underdeveloped villages of Nagorno-Karabakh, the lawlessness of the people, the unpaved roads,...etc. All these negative aspects have happened to be almost a nuisance to the visiting Armenian-Americans who have grown accustomed to the comfortable and effortless lifestyle, and find it unbearable to



ever live in a country such as Armenia. It pains me to say that the land that had fathered our ancestors has become a foreign land to its faraway youth.

Instead of incessantly listing grievances about all the features that Armenia lacks, let us learn to accept those faults as that of our own and develop a way to amend all its inadequacies. It is the duty of the Armenian-American youth to acknowledge their responsibility of rebuilding Armenia and guiding its transformation to a thriving site of culture, history, prosperity, education, beauty, and fiscal stability. It is evident that we know that Armenia has its share of shortcomings, but what we fail to realize is that with that knowledge comes power. We hold the future of our country's fate in our hands. Armenia's current state is economists, doctors, lawyers, benefactors, and other substantial leaders that can provide aid to every weak element of Armenia that is found necessary. A prosperous Armenia is not an unreachable goal or even a beautiful pipe-dream; we have the power to make it a reality.

Let us live according to the words of the talented and legendary Armenian poet Hovhannes Shiraz and ask ourselves the same question that Shiraz addresses to those who are far from their motherland.

> «Այս ո՞ւր եք փախչում, խելագար ջրեր, Մեր բուր հողն էլ ծով ծարավ թողած, – Դարձեք, ետ վագքե, որ դարձնենք անմառ Թեկուզ հայրենի մի խեղճ ջրաղաց»:

fairly grave and that is understandable, but we cannot lose faith in the idea that one day, if every Armenian-American fulfills their moral obligation, over time it will undergo a complete metamorphosis.

The city of Yerevan, Armenia's capitol, has greatly altered over the years and in moderation has become somewhat modern and urbanized, but what of the outlying regions of Yerevan? What of Gymuri? What of Lori? What of Artsakh? They are also in desperate need of transformation, so that all of Armenia (every region, every village) will rise to its feet. To some of us Armenian-Americans, Armenia is only defined by Mount Ararat, by

Geghard the monastery, by the Ejmiatsin Cathedral, or anv other historical landmark. Armenia is so much more than a beautiful painting hanging from a wall. It is a healthcare system that needs repair, an economy that needs guidance. an education system that needs improvement, а government that needs direction, and so much more. We have many brilliant Armenian-American



Arthur Mgrditchyan (1959-1992)

Very few people can be said to have had as large an impact on the liberation movement of Artsakh as Arthur Mgrditchyan. He was a model Tashnaktsagan who internalized his ideological oath and served his people with integrity and conviction.

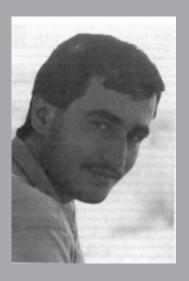
Born in the Etilou village of Hatrout on February 16, 1959, Mgrditchyan was a humble activist and sterling intellectual. He received his PhD in history from Yerevan State University in 1980 and went on to be appointed as principle of the Hatrout National Museum.

Mgrditchyan later joined the ARF and became a central figure in the defense and organization of his native region of Hatrout. He went on to be elected as the local representative of Hatrout to the newly formed Artsakh National Assembly. Following the official proclamation of the Artsakh Republic, the

National Assembly voted overwhelmingly for Mgrditchyan to become the first President of the country on January 8, 1992.

During his term as President, Artsakh faced one of the most difficult periods in the liberation struggle. It was blockaded on all sides, prices for basic goods were sky high, Stepanakert was being bombed daily, and the government of Armenia exhibited a neglectful stance toward their struggle. Nevertheless, Mgrditchyan succeeded in unifying the people and leading Artsakh to various military victories. It was also during his term that the world's attention began to focus more intently on the war for survival being waged by Armenians.

On the evening of April 14, 1992—only 97 days into his presidency—Mgrditchyan tragically passed away in Stepanakert. His central role in the formation of the Republic of Artsakh and his unwavering dedication to its victorious struggle made him a national hero for Armenians worldwide.



Mher Choulhajian (1967-1993)

Born in Beirut in 1967, Choulhajian was steeped in ARF community life at a very young age. During the Lebanese Civil War, he took part in the self-defense of the Armenian community as a member of the Lebanese Armenian Youth Association (LEM). Serving on executive and leadership positions, he took on various responsibilities and helped create a spirit of unity among all of his fellow *ungers*.

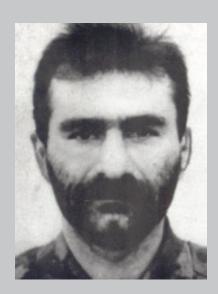
In 1989, Choulhajian earned a Bachelor's degree in science from the American University in Beirut. His goal was to continue his studies and utilize his talents for the betterment of his homeland. Soon after joining the ARF in 1990, he went to Armenia to further his education at Yerevan State University.

However, the struggle of his people in Artsakh kept calling him. As a firm believer in the ideology of Tebi Yergir, he felt that the first step in the process of rebuilding his homeland was the liberation of Artsakh. On August 23, 1993, while surveying the recently recaptured

border regions of the Marzili village in Marduni, his vehicle exploded from a land mine.

Choulhajian is one of the many Diasporan volunteers that went to fight in Artsakh. He personified the pan-Armenian ideology of the ARF which does not recognize the differences created by geography among Armenians. He reconnected the links between Armenians that had been broken for over 70 years and sacrificed his young life for the just cause of his people.

MOVEMENT



Ashod "Pegor" Ghoulyan (1959-1992)

There are some names which, when uttered, conjure up emotions of pride, patriotism and undying heroism. One of those names is Ashod Ghoulyan.

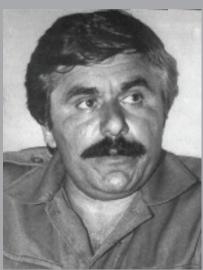
Born in Baku in 1959, he soon moved to his native village of Khentsrisdan (Asgerani region). He became involved in the Artsakh struggle from the very beginning, starting in 1987 with the gathering of signatures and petitions. By the time the mass protests started, he was already questioning the effectiveness of demonstrations and contemplating the necessity of armed struggle.

He joined the ARF in 1990 and went on to become a legendary commander who took part in most of Artsakh's major heroic battles: Askeran, Shahoumian, Lachin, Mardagerd, Grgjan, Arkhavend, and Malibeili to name

a few. It was also the first Artsakh battalion, under Pegor's command, which was the first to enter Shoushi on the morning of May 8, 1992, during the city's decisive recapturing.

Ghoulyan received his nickname "Pegor" (meaning fragment) due to the fact that he was wounded 11 times, with the shrapnel of mines, bullets and rockets lodged within his body. On August 24, 1992, he received his final fatal bullet while fighting to liberate the Trmpon village in Mardagerd.

Pegor is remembered as saying, "Patriotism is nothing else than the wholehearted fulfillment of the responsibilities which have been put on our shoulders." It was with this faith that he took on the many responsibilities of his nation and helped ensure the liberation of Artsakh.



Shahen Megherian (1952-1993)

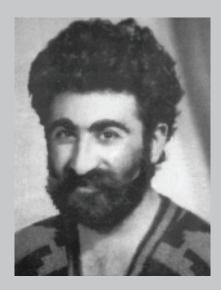
He was born in the Gyulistan area of the Shahoumian region in Artsakh on January 2, 1952. Shahen received his primary education in the region and continued his studies at Yerevan State University, where he majored in economics. After graduation, Shahen returned to Gyulistan and became the Chief Economist of Manufacturing and Production in the Shahoumian region and later a food provider for his village. He also became the President of Agricultural and Production Management.

In 1991, Shahen was elected as acting president of the Shahoumian Committee and took on command of the Mardagerd regiment. He was also a proud member of the ARF and attended the organization's 25th General Assembly.

In the early stages of the liberation struggle, Megherian and his band of guerilla fighters would penetrate enemy lines, carrying out irregular warfare in an attempt to liberate Armenian lands from Azeri occupation. Two weeks before his death, Megherian's home village, Gyulistan, was liberated as a first step towards the liberation of the Shahoumian region.

On April 17, 1993, under the fire of Azerbaijani air attacks, Shahen Megherian was killed.

Megherian embodied the spirit of the Armenian volunteer organizer, the skilled soldier and fearless leader.



Tatoul Grbeyan (1965-1991)

Tatoul Grbeyan was a popular local school teacher in the village of Kedashen who emerged as one of the early heroic martyrs of the Artsakh liberation struggle.

With his stated determination to "stay and defend the homeland and its people forever," Grbeyan served as an inspiration to those around him. He would always be seen with a natural smile on his face—full of hope, faith, and an iron will.

By 1988, he was already an active member of the Miastum (Unification) Movement and was fully devoted to seeing his homeland liberated from foreign oppression. In 1990, he joined the ranks of the ARF and took part in the self-defense battles of Kedashen and Martunashen.

On April 30, 1991, the Soviet government attempted to extinguish the heart

of the Artsakh movement through terror and ethnic cleansing. With the enlistment of the notorious Azeri "black beret" forces, the Soviet army surrounded Grbeyan's village of Kedashen and subjected the local population to violence and forced evacuation. The men were arrested while the village was bombarded by artillery fire.

Although the population was unable to mount an organized resistance, Grbeyan bravely stood against the odds to defend his home against the military onslaught. He was able to alone capture a Soviet armored car with twelve of its Russian officers and commander, but ultimately fell victim to the sinister operation.

Grbeyan's deeds remain one of the bravest episodes in the history of the Artsakh struggle. His sacrifice for his people will continue to serve as an inspiration for countless generations of Armenians.



Viken Zakarian (1969-1992)

Born on March 15, 1969 in Beirut, Viken Zakarian was the embodiment of the ARF's celebrated *angeghdz zinvor* ("sincere soldier"). He worked tirelessly for his community without seeking praise and journeyed to his homeland to take part in its historic struggle for liberation.

As a youth, Zakarian was a member of the ARF Lebanese Youth Association (LEM), in which he took on countless responsibilities and leadership positions. During the Lebanese Civil War, he helped defend the Armenian community and served on the frontlines during the most critical periods of the war.

After graduating from Melankton and Haig Arslanian College in 1988, he attended Haigazian University where he studied business administration. But the cry for

freedom in Artsakh was one he could not ignore. On April 17, 1992, he left Lebanon for Armenia and soon crossed over to Artsakh.

Upon arrival, he joined forces with the ARF battalion and took part in the important battles that liberated Shoushi. He was martyred on May 8, 1992, while capturing the village of Lisagor. He was only 23 years old.

Zakarian represented the true spirit of a committed Armenian youth. He was determined to be everywhere at once; doing anything and everything that was needed to see the dream of a free, independent, and united Armenia turn into reality.

He was buried in the Yeraplour Martyrs' Pantheon in Yerevan.

AVF CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: PHOENIX "KEDASHEN" FROM THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Maintaining your heritage and identity is difficult enough when living outside of your Homeland. But the smaller the concentration of Armenians and cultural institutions in your community, the more pronounced this struggle becomes.

For the Armenian youth of Phoenix, Arizona—one of the fastest-growing Armenian-American communities in the US—the fight to maintain one's culture and remain active is an especially challenging one.

"At times it can be a little difficult living in our Armenian community because it is relatively small," says Liza Baltajian, the chair of the Phoenix "Kedashen" AYF. "Everything we do here is done on a much smaller scale when compared to places like Los Angeles. We struggle constantly to try and get involvement from our community; but, in the end, it's that struggle which makes our chapter so strong."

It was this spirit of determination and persistence upon which the Phoenix AYF was built from day one.

After a year of organizing youth in the community and pursuing the proper organizational procedures, the chapter was officially founded in February of 2006. The founding members decided to name their chapter "Kedashen," after the region of Artsakh which heroically stood up in 1991 to defend itself against the combined attack of Soviet and Azeri forces. The members related to Kedashen's brave resistance and its people's determination to overcome even the most daunting of obstacles.

"Everybody doubted and said that we would never be able to start an AYF chapter in Phoenix due to our small numbers," says Leza Gasparian, part of the original group which founded the Phoenix Chapter. "But all it took was a dedicated group of strong and passionate Armenian youth who believed in themselves and wanted to see an AYF here in our community. Taking the initiative and working towards that goal with blood, sweat and tears, we managed to prove all the doubters wrong, and are still here today."

Since its founding, the chapter has organized countless social gatherings, educational activities, political actions, and outreach efforts to young Armenians throughout Arizona. Some of its main activities include an annual April 23rd candlelight vigil at the Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza, across the street from the Phoenix City Hall, as well as an April 24th protest march in downtown. A St. Patrick's Day Carnival, game nights for youth at the local community center, and an annual Summer Luau have also become staple events carried out by the chapter.

Today, the "Kedashen" Chapter is one of the most active and vital parts of the Armenian community in Phoenix, with over 25 members, 13 alumni, and countless new novices teaming to join. "We have a good amount of youth here and the chapter is a very important vehicle for us to stay together," explains Baltajian. "The AYF helps the youth connect to their heritage and always remember where they came from."

As a budding new Armenian-American community, the youth of the AYF in Phoenix have even higher hopes for the future. "We want our presence to be known not only to the community here but outside as well," says Taleen Kanetchdjian, the former chapter treasurer. "We have our work cut out for us but we're confident that the chapter will grow stronger and succeed throughout the years."





BOOK REVIEW "YES, WE HAVE" BY STEPAN PARTAMIAN



Review by Ani Nalbandian

Stepan Partamian's "Yes We Have" is not a single story but a compilation of various stories about the incredible Armenians who changed American history through their inventions, discoveries and talents. Partamian compiled over one hundred stories of influential Armenian-Americans starting from the first Armenian colonists who settled in Jamestown.

The multi-faceted Partamian is also the founder of the Armenian Arts Fund, which encourages people to enhance their artistic ability in various ways. He is perhaps best known as a flamboyant and controversial daytime talk show host.

When opening to the first page of the book I was stunned to see a picture of President Obama instead of a picture of the author or a famous Armenian. Under the picture of 44th President of the

United States, Barrack Obama, was a section of his April 24th Armenian Genocide commemoration speech. In his speech he states, "The United States of America is a far richer country because of the many Americans of Armenian descent who have contributed to our society..." This first page set a very nationalistic and enthusiastic tone to the rest of the book.

"Yes We Have" includes stories of inventors, musicians, actors and actresses, businessmen and women, war heroes, politicians, scientists, and authors. I found myself learning about countless amazing contributions to American society made by Armenian-Americans.

This is an attention grabbing, page-turner that is very successful in keeping the reader's attention because it not only includes well known Armenian-Americans' stories, but also the lesser-known influential Armenians such as Luther G Simjian who invented the ATM machine.

I would have to say this book was a complete joy to read and I guarantee everyone and anyone who reads it will be surprised and gratified by the incredible things Armenians have contributed to America, I know I was.

Census 2010 that share of the s

According to the United States Constitution, the Census must count every person living in the United States every ten years. What many people don't realize is that Census numbers are closely tied with funding and political representation. Funding at the Federal, State and local levels is usually divided up according to population, and that means Census numbers. Will your community get its fair share of funding dollars?

Census Partnership Specialist Anahit Tovmasyan does outreach to the Armenian community in Southern California on behalf of the Census. She points out that back in 2000, only one third of the Armenians

living in Unites States had been identified as Armenians by the Census. "An accurate Census count of Armenian-Americans will ensure that Armenians will have a stronger voice and better political representation to address the needs of our community. Especially in these hard economic times, we need to make sure that the communities we work, live, pray and play in have access to their share of resources. The Armenian community is dynamic and plays a significant role in the United States. Through the collaborative efforts of faith and community based organizations, schools, and businesses, we can make sure all Armenians are counted."

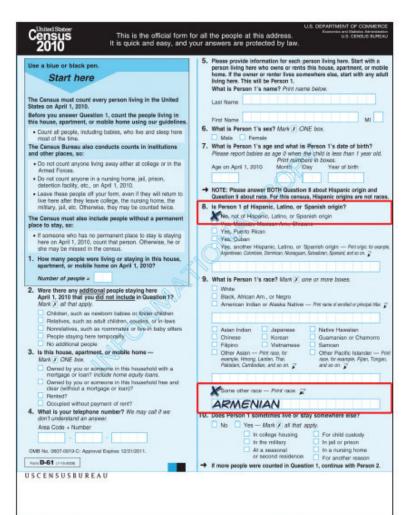
When filling out the Census questionnaire, Anahit reminds us that people can check more than one box in the category for race. "Many Armenians will check the box for 'white' and also check the box for

'other' and write in 'Armenian.' The best thing you can do is to fill out the form and mail it back without waiting for someone to come to your door. That saves the taxpayers money, and ensures that your community will be counted."

The Census does not share personal information (like your name) with any other government agency - not with Immigration, not with the I.R.S, and not with law enforcement. The Census counts every person – regardless of age, race ethnicity or legal residential status. In fact, the Census form does not ask about a person's citizenship status. Census participation is safe, simple, and important.

The Census is in your hands! Don't pass up this opportunity to help our communities and the future generations of America.

There are several ways that you can participate in raising awareness of the 2010 Census in your own community. For more information please contact Anahit Tovmasyan @ anahit.tovmasyan@census.gov.





2010 CENSUS: IT'S IN OUR HANDS



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WWW.AYFWest.org Get Active! Get Involved!