

HAYTOUNG

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THE POWER OF THE PEN



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Editorial

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the first book printed in Armenian. But the impact of the written word stems back much further. Our history, tradition, and independent identity was facilitated through the establishment of the Armenian alphabet over 1600 years ago.

In the 18th-19th century, it was a literary renaissance (Zartonk) that awakened Armenians to their oppression and gave birth to the liberation movement. The struggle was fought not just with bullets, but with ideas and values often transmitted through writing.

The material conditions and oppression Armenians faced under the Turks was not enough to lead them to resistance. Only after writers and poets such as Mikael Nalbandyan, Khatchatur Abovian, Raffi, Khrimian Hairig, and many more came to the forefront expounding ideas of liberation and armed resistance did a revolutionary movement take hold, eventually leading to an independent Armenia.

As a new age dawns for the Republic of Armenia, the need for our own renaissance is ever increasing. From young Armenian writers who chronicle the conditions within the country and diaspora to youth who utilize technological advances to voice their concern and demands, exemplifying that the state of our country and society is dependent on our engagement with it.

In order for our culture, identity, and history to survive, we must continue to create it. The future is in our hands, and we must forge it with the power of the pen.



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THE POWER OF THE PEN

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. RUBINA PEROOMIAN

HAYTOUG: *Armenians have long took pride in education and having an alphabet that is now over 1,600 years old. Given this legacy, how big of a role would you say the written word and literature has actually had on shaping the destiny and identity of the Armenian people?*

RUBINA PEROOMIAN: Yes, we are proud of our culture, our heritage and our 1600-year-old alphabet. We are proud of the rich literary output that made the fifth century the Golden Age and the tenth and eleventh centuries the Silver Age of Armenian literature.

Yes, education has always been one of the key values upheld in Armenian families. But this consciousness was germinated, expounded and disseminated by the nineteenth-century Armenian Renaissance movement which was launched to enlighten and educate the Armenian masses, disseminate religious and cultural values, and propagate ideas of modernity. Before then, these values were esteemed and perpetuated by a relatively small class of men and women—which included the clergy, the ruling class, the nobility and the intellectuals—while the masses lived in ignorance and poverty under the yoke of foreign domination, deprived of basic human rights.

What shaped the destiny and the identity of the Armenian people, in other words, what sustained their survival throughout their turbulent history, was their devotion to Christianity in the midst of the encroaching Muslim world and a subconscious effort to maintain and perpetuate their ethnic origin, traditions and language. An influential factor here may have been the spoken word and not the written word or literature.

H: *It is often said that the cultural renaissance of the Zartonk (Awakening) period of the 19th century gave birth to the Armenian revolutionary movement. In what ways exactly did writers like Mikael Nalbandyan, Khatchadour Abovian, Raffi and others spur Armenians to stand up for their liberation? Weren't the material conditions experienced by Armenians in the Ottoman Empire alone enough to make them want to resist their oppression?*

R.P.: The political awakening was the final phase of the nineteenth-century Armenian Renaissance which began with an Enlightenment movement, the establishment of a network of modern schools, the periodical press, and the modernization of the language with the replacement of Grabar (which was unintelligible to the masses) by two literary languages closer to the dominant vernaculars. Through these vehicles the Armenian intelligentsia

were able to propagate the Renaissance ideology which was, in essence, the aspiration to live the life that all humankind deserved to live. And the model, or the source of inspiration, was not so much the European example but the glory of the Armenian past, drenched with an insatiable love of liberty and justice and bolstered by a rich culture that Armenians can be proud of. The Armenian masses needed to become conscious of their own deplorable situation before they were able to aspire to a better future.

It was during this period that the written word and the literature created by the Renaissance writers, some of whom you mentioned, assumed the role of reshaping the Armenian identity which had been buried in obscurity and the darkness of centuries of subjugation. This literature cultivated the Armenians' will to stand up and fight for their rights and take their destiny into their own hands. Call it tendentious or committed literature if you will, let some literary critics campaign against it, but the literature of the Zartonk period did the job. This literature can be considered the realization of the theory of "reflect and control," to use Melvin J. Vincent's expression. It presented Armenian life as it was in its ugliest aspects, and at the same time it propagated and cultivated what was desirable, what was worth fighting for, in the reader's mind. In

DR. RUBINA PEROOMIAN is a highly esteemed scholar, writer, lecturer, and community leader. She serves as Research Associate at the University of California, Los Angeles and has taught Armenian Studies courses at UCLA, Glendale Community College, and the University of La Verne. She has also written extensively on Armenian history, literature, and the Genocide in scholarly journals and publications.



In addition, Dr. Perroomian has lent her expertise to the development of curriculum in Armenian schools, both within the Diaspora and Armenia. Her community involvement also extends to the AYF, where in 1982, she was appointed Chair of the AYF Executive Committee and led the organization out of a turbulent and structurally transitional period.

She has been awarded an encyclical and medal by the Holy See of the Great House of Cilicia and a Gold Medal (Voske Hushamedal) by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Armenia for her contributions to the fields of education and Armenian Studies.

other words, the Renaissance artists not only held up a mirror to reflect life as it was, they presented a model of what it should be. These models created characters, heroes of national dimensions who acquired flesh and blood in the forthcoming national struggle for liberation.

The revolutionary movement was a byproduct of the Renaissance, as was the formation of the Armenian political parties (1885-90). It was not widespread, however. In fact, it was launched by a few who believed in the importance of self-defense as a means toward national liberation, and its followers were the few with arms-in-hand who were weary of the repression, the persecution, the Turkish and Kurdish assaults, the looting, rape and kidnapping that were rampant in the Ottoman Empire. It took years of struggle to move the masses—who were submerged in darkness and had

adapted to their lot—to sensitize them to their own predicament and influence them to see the possibility of changing the status quo.

H: *In many of the novels, poems, songs, and literature of the Zartonk period, we find a common emphasis on the theme of youth and the importance of passing on values of freedom and justice to the younger generation. Why was there such a strong emphasis on the youth by writers back then?*

R.P.: The Renaissance movement began with the enlightenment campaign in a newly established network of schools, that is, the education of the youth. If the Armenian Zartonk ideology called for a change in the destiny of the nation and for the destitute masses to once again become a nation with goals and aspirations, the young generation had to be prepared to take on the commitment and lead the way.

The significance of the power of youth activism can be seen throughout the history of mankind. “Youth are the future”—the statement is old and worn but it is true. An example close to our life in America, known to all, is that of the Mexican American Youth Movement of the 1960s and the changes brought about by the relentless activism of Chicano youth.

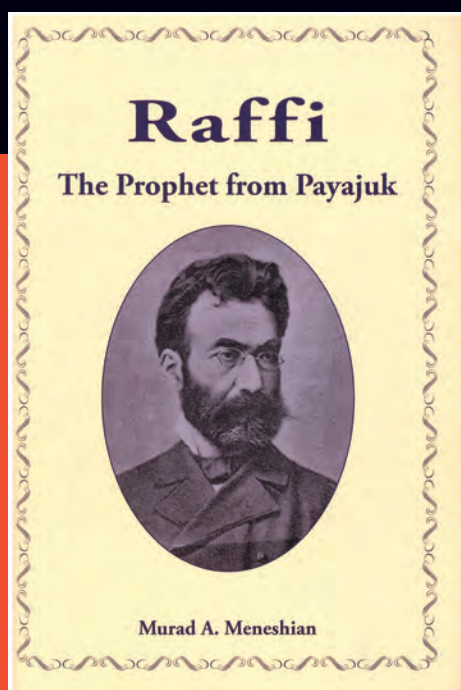
In the Armenian reality of the early nineteenth century, the imaginary characters that Renaissance writers created and hoped to see materialize in real life were young individuals with a profound consciousness of the plight of the nation and an unwavering commitment to bringing change. And we have seen the burgeoning of these young heroes thrusting forward even when their lives were at stake.

H: *You’ve written a great deal about literary responses in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. What can such literature convey to us about the Genocide that historical facts or oral history cannot?*

R.P.: Your question leads to the essence of my work as a genocide scholar whose field of research is artistic literature with the Genocide at its core. For many long years now, I have studied the literature of atrocity—to use Lawrence Langer’s terminology—in order to understand the human dimension of this colossal crime which today is called the Armenian Genocide. My writings expose the last cries of the victims of the great injustice that has still not been redressed. They speak of the survivors’ perceptions of the calamity and how their tragic experience has indelibly impacted their psyches and become a debilitating influence in their lives; how harrowing images of their past experience, triggered by visual, aural, olfactory or other associations, revisit them in their waking hours, and return in their sleep when the unconscious overrides conscious control to push dormant images to the surface.

In my reading and explication of these artistic creations—memoirs, auto-

“HEROES OF NATIONAL DIMENSIONS WHO ACQUIRED FLESH AND BLOOD IN THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION.”



biographical novels and other genres of genocide literature—I have tried to illuminate a dark corner of the horrendous landscape of the Armenian Genocide which will never be completely known, and the boundless sea of personal and collective pain and suffering that will never be fully recognized. Although I provide historical background to the places and events under discussion in my work, I never attempt to prove the veracity of the Genocide. It is there as the point of departure, as the source of the breach in Armenian life and all the paradigms of responses to historical catastrophes, and the source of the new reality which is life in the diaspora.

Literary responses to the collective catastrophe reflect the reality perceived by the writers. These writings are the truth as it happened. The reader relates to that truth and absorbs it like no other document or fact sheet.

Allow me to quote a passage from my most recent book which discusses

Hakob Melik Hakobian, better known by his pen name Raffi, is a renowned Armenian author born in 1835 in Payajouk, an Armenian village situated in the Salmas province (presently in the north of Iran, near Urmia Lake) in Persia. He died in 1888 in Tiflis (present-day Tbilisi).

the same issue and demonstrates the intrinsic value of Genocide fiction and symbolic poetry “as elucidators of universal truths that lie at the roots of historical facts, putting inconceivable realities into human perspective... assisting readers to grasp the meaning of a historical event.”

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, a Jewish Holocaust scholar, once declared that “The Holocaust has already engendered more historical research than any single event in Jewish history, but I have no doubt whatsoever that its image is being shaped, not at the historian’s avail, but in the novelist’s crucible.” Indeed, it is the artist’s creative power that can capture the unthinkable horrors of genocide and bring them within the scope of the reader’s imagination. That is the power of the pen.

H: *Over recent years, there has been a small but growing number of Turks who have begun questioning the denialist narrative of Turkey regarding the Genocide. A significant proportion of these individuals have been writers, poets, novelists, and literary figures such as Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak. What role do you feel literature is playing in the development of a critical voice in Turkey on the Genocide?*

R.P.: There is certainly an ongoing metamorphosis at the intellectual level in Turkey, a change in perceptions of the Turkish past, to the extent of questioning the official Turkish narrative. And this is not so much a

matter of confronting the denial of the Armenian Genocide, but of challenging the Republican narrative based on the idealization of the founders of the Republic—many of whom were important political figures during the late Ottoman period and, thus, perpetrators of the Armenian massacres—and of questioning the denial of the multiethnic, multireligious and multilingual makeup of Turkey.

These intellectuals are in quest of their own true identity. They are struggling for the democratization of the republic and for the lifting of censorship on intellectual endeavors. Their influence on public opinion outside Istanbul is minimal, I would say, but change is in the making. It is undeniable. And the effect of artistic literature such as Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow*, Elif Shafak’s *The Bastard of Istanbul*, Fethiye Çetin’s *My Grandmother*, Kemal Yalçın’s *You Rejoice my Heart*, Mehmet Uzun’s *Pomegranate Flowers*, and other works are gradually being felt.

Of course, it is also undeniable that these artistic creations or memoirs are supported and reinforced by historical findings, by the books, exposés and discourses of historians, scholars and human rights activists such as Taner Akçam, Ayşe Gül Altınay, Fatma Müge Göçek, Osman Köker, Hülya Adak, Ayşe Günaysu and others.

H: *What are your thoughts on the rapid spread of modern technologies and the popular phenomena of social media today? Can these platforms serve as*

Born in New Nakhichevan to a family of a craftsman. Largely self-educated, Nalbandian initially pursued priesthood, but left it soon after, studied medicine briefly at Moscow University and finally succeeded in collaborating with Stepanos Nazaryan in the founding of an influential periodical, *Aurora Borealis* (Hyusisapayl).



useful tools for a modern, 21st century Zartonk and revival of Armenian literature?

R.P.: The spread of modern technology and the popularity of social media can be useful and harmful at the same time. The positive impact of this medium, so familiar to the young generation, is undeniable if used with a controlled effort, such as initiating monitored discussions, disseminating ideas, promoting understanding and support for the Armenian Cause and literature. It is possible today to send out information, organize fan clubs and groups, or rally support for or against an Armenian related piece of news in a matter of hours through Facebook and the like.

However, the downside of social media is that it does not lend itself to serious literature and is mostly a space for quick notes, observations, and so on. As for casual online discussions, they can go out of control and boil down to useless chat.

A revival in literature in Armenian? I doubt this. A unified easily accessible medium in cyberspace in Armenian is yet to be developed.

H: Do you have any upcoming projects or research you can tell our readers about?

R.P.: Yes, of course, and thank you for this question. My third book on Armenian Genocide literature was published in March this year, and I am already working on the next volume to complete my interpretation of the perceptions of the Genocide by Diasporan Armenian survivor writers of the first, second and third generations.

Meanwhile, I have been working on the project of teaching the Armenian Genocide to Armenian students in K-12, initiated years ago by the Board of Regents of Prelacy Armenian Schools. I have perfected the project, adding missing materials and lesson plans for each age group, and I introduced it at the biennial educational conference sponsored by the Ministry of Sciences

and Education of the Republic of Armenia. Because of the enthusiastic reception of the project by Armenian teachers from all over the world, the Ministry of Education agreed to adopt the project, prepare an online version of it and offer it for use by all interested parties, free of charge. It is now posted on the Ministry's website, at www.spyurq.dasagirq.am, to be exact.

In participating in the 2012 conference this summer, my goal will be to publicize the project and work for its worldwide distribution and dissemination so that every Armenian student, wherever he or she may be, will have the chance to learn about this important turning point in the history of the Armenian people, through age-appropriate materials, tools and methodologies.

I want to see Armenian youth armed with the knowledge of history and of Armenian national rights, logically, without emotional impulse. I want to see Armenian youth properly educated to become committed soldiers of Armenian national aspirations.



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TEGHUT, MASHTOTS PARK, & BEYOND

A REVIVAL OF ACTIVISM LED BY ARMENIA'S YOUTH

Local, diasporan, and even non-Armenian environmental activists have been hard at work in Armenia these past two months. Harnessing the organizing powers of social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, these activists are mobilizing people - especially the youth - to protest, demonstrate and occupy Teghut, the site of a controversial open-pit mining project in Northern Armenia, and Yerevan's Mashtots Park, where the construction of a fashion boutique threatens one of the few remaining green areas in the city.

TEGHUT

"OCCUPY TEGHUT" and "ԴՆՊԻ ԹԵԴԽՄ" graffiti tags have sprung up all around the city of Yerevan, along with videos on YouTube of activists tagging buildings. A Facebook group called "Save Teghut" has garnered thousands of members who post pictures, videos, news articles, and express their frustrations with the current state of Armenia's long neglected environment. Activists are capitalizing on this frustration and turning it into action, aided by the ability to quickly and efficiently mobilize demonstrators through the internet.

On January 15, the culminated into a march from Yerevan to Teghut, led by over 200 activists, carrying banners reading "We are Teghut" to protest the Armenian Copper Program's (ACP) plan to turn thousands of acres of lush green forests into an open-pit mining operation. Teghut is estimated to have 1.6 million tons of copper and 100,000 tons of molybdenum underground.

The majority of the protesters, many of whom were in their 20's, carried digital cameras and smartphones to document the deforestation already taking place. It is estimated one fifth of the forest has already been deforested by the ACP in preparation for the open-pit mine. The protesters were joined by countless local and state media outlets who are just now realizing the gravity of the situation. Police stopped them from marching any further into the min-

MASHTOTS PARK

All this momentum is spilling over into the latest set of demonstrations taking place at Yerevan's Mashtots Park, where activists are protesting the construction of expensive high-end fashion boutiques in one of the few remaining green areas in Yerevan. The activists, the very same who are protesting the developments in Teghut, claim that the construction is illegal as it is in the middle of a public park, and should be stopped immediately.

In the past two weeks hundreds have flocked to Mashtots Park, filling in and around the steel frame structure where the boutique is meant to be built. Many have roped themselves together, and some even lied down in front of cement trucks in an effort to prevent any more construction from taking place.

The construction crew tried to get around the protesters by waiting until the middle of the night to resume welding and ham-



ing project.

Environmentalists argue the project will cause damage to the diverse ecosystem, destruction of over 128,000 trees, and the dumping of millions of tons of toxic chemicals and waste into nearby regions, rivers, and water sources. They demand an immediate stop to all mining activities, and propose turning Teghut into a tourist attraction that makes use of the natural beauty of the region rather than destroying it.

Teghut, located in the Armenia's northern region of Lori, is one of the only remaining forests in the country with a diverse ecosystem made up of hundreds of exotic animal and plant species, many of which are internationally considered endangered.

In 2008 Armenia's government granted the Armenian Copper Program (ACP) mining rights to 357 hectares (almost 900 acres) of the forest for 25 years, which activists in Armenia and the international community claim this decision violates countless local and international laws. Adding to charges of corruption, Armenia's government allowed the ACP to perform its own environmental assessment report rather than requiring a review from an impartial third part group. Their findings were, unsurprisingly, that no harm would come to the region as a result of the open-pit mining.

A bike tour organized last summer by the protesters attracted the support of Armenian rock star Serj Tankian who wrote in a statement, "The destruction of wildlife and environmental havens can no longer be excused for the sake of progress or the attainment of natural resources. Mining is against our combined interest as a people and nation."

That same summer, a petition addressed to Armenia's President, Prime Minister, and Parliament collected signatures of over 5,000 citizens, including those of First Lady Rita Sarkisian and former First Lady Bella Kocharian.

Now, the environmentalist spirit is resonating overseas close to home. The ARF "Shant" Student Association is spearheading a "Save Teghut" T-shirt campaign, of which all proceeds will go towards helping the activists. In early February a panel discussion titled, "Armenia's Environmental Challenges in the 21st Century" was organized in Pasadena by the Armenia Tree Project and Armenian Engineers & Scientists of America in association with AGBU Young in order to foster dialogue about Teghut and the larger scope of environmental problems facing Armenia.



mering. In response, protesters are now occupying Mashtots Park day and night.

Protesters also picketed Yerevan's city hall chanting, "Parks without boutiques," and "Taron [Yerevan's mayor] come down". However, no official representative from the city has yet to step forward.

The city and police claim these boutiques are merely temporary structures which will be eventually removed, which runs contrary to the obvious fact that the boutiques are being built with lasting materials such as concrete, bricks, and steel.

The activists are using the "Save Teghut" Facebook group to organize people and spread information. Their latest event page calls on people near Yerevan to bring tea, blankets, and warm food to support the protesters who are occupying Mashtots Park in the cruel cold of Yerevan nights.

VICTORY & BEYOND

In a surprising turn of events, President Serj Sarkisian personally visited the park in early May. He announced that Yerevan's Mayor had been instructed to grant the demands of the activists and dismantle the boutiques. By May 10, all of the boutiques were torn down. This marks yet another victory for Armenia's green movement. Still, nobody knows where exactly this growing movement is headed. What will become of the mining operation in Teghut in light of the victory in Mashtots Park has yet to be determined.

Nobody knows where exactly this growing movement is headed. What will become of the mining operation in Teghut or the boutique construction in Mashtots park has yet to be deter-

mined. What is clear however, is that people are finally fed up. Fed up with the government's backdoor-dealing, oligarch-favoring, corrupt-to-the-core methods of advancing its own interests at the expense and total disregard of its people, its environment, and its nation's future. People are finally refusing the status quo, finally silencing the cynics indifferent to injustice, finally realizing the power in unity, and finally writing what are only the opening chapters of a movement tenacious in its demand for change in Armenia.

Razmig Sarkissian

Հայրենիքը՝ Մեր Բոլորին Պարտականությունը



2000 թուականին, ընկատիքիս հետ միասին, առաջին անգամ ըլլալով աճեցիւցի հայրենիք: Թէեւ բաւական փոքր էի տարիքով, սակայն Հայաստանը վրաս մեծ ազդեցութիւն գործեց ու զիս մղեց որ յաճախ վերադառնամ այնտեղ: Հայաստանգտնուածեմզանազանառիթմերով. Մասնակցած եմ ժողովներու, սեմինարներու եւ զբոսաշրջումներու, սակայն բախտաւորութիւնը չէի ունեցած կամաւորաբար աշխատելու Հայաստանի մէջ:

Զբաւարարուելով Թորոնթոյի Հայ գաղութէն ներս տարած յամեստ գործունեութեամբս, որոշեցի այս տարի վերադառնալ Հայաստան, սովորականէն քիչ մը աւելի երկար ժամանակով, կամաւոր աշխատանքի ճամբով, ու «Դէպի Հայք» կազմակերպութեան աջակցութեամբ, ծառայելու եւ ուղղակի ներդրում ունենալու հայրենիքիս աստիճանաւոր վերելքին. Որոշում մը, որ իմ կածիքով, ամեն Հայ երիտասարդ, արնուազն մէկ անգամ պէտք է արնէ: Փափաքս էր աշխատիլ

«Հրայր Մարուխեան» Հիմնադրամին մէջ: «Հրայր Մարուխեան» Հիմնադրամը սոցեալ-դեմոկրատական հիմնարկ մըն է, հիմնուած 2009 թուականին, որուն նպատակն է տառածել հաւասարութեան, ազատութեան եւ ժողովրդավարութեան արժէքները Հայաստանի եւ տարածաշրջանի մէջ: Հիմնադրամը կիրադրծէ գիտական հետազոտութիւններ, կը կազմակերպէ համաժողովներ եւ դասընթացքներ երիտասարդ քաղաքական ղեկավարներու համար, եւ կը հրատարակէ բժախնդրորեն

պատրաստուած ուսումնասիրութիւններ՝ բարելաւելու համար երկրի սոցիալական, տնտեսական եւ քաղաքական վիճակը: Հիմնադրամը նաեւ սերտօրէն կը գործակցի Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան խորհրդարանի խմբակցութիւններուն, տեղական տարածաշրջանային եւ միջազգային քաղաքական ու հետազոտական այլ հաստատութիւններու հետ:

Երեք ամիսներու ընթացքին, աշխատանքային շրջանիս մասնակից եղայ կազմակերպչական ծրագրային աշխատանքներուն, ուսումնասիրութիւններուն եւ խորհրդաժողովներուն, որոնց ընդմէջէն, աւելի լաւ ըմբռնեցի թէ մեր հայրենիքը որքան շատ կարիքը ունի նոյնաման կազմակերպութիւններու իր քաղաքական, սոցիալական եւ տնտեսական բնագաւառներու վիճակը բրելաւելու համար:

21 Սեպտեմբեր, 1991-ին Հայաստանի Հանրապետութիւնը հրչակուեցաւ ազատ եւ անկախ պետութիւն, վերջ դնելով 70 տարուայ համայնավարական տիրապետութեան: Հայ ժողովուրդի աւելի քան 99 տոկոսը «այր» բուեարկեց՝ երկար ժամանակէ ի վեր սպասուած վերանկախութեան: Սակայն յաջորդող տարիները որ անմիջապէս յետեւեցան հրչակման եղան դժուարին եւ յուսախաբեցուցիչ: Յաճախակի եւ շարունակական պատերազմ Ատրպէճանի դէմ, համատարած թշուարութիւն ու աղքատութիւն, 7 Դեկտեմբեր, 1988-ի երկրաշարժի ահրելի հետեւանքներն ու լայնատարած տնտեսական անապահովութիւնը պատճառ եղան որպէսզի Հայաստանի քաղաքացիները յետայետե յուսահատին եւ սկսին երկմտութիւններ ու կասկածներ ունենալ վերանկախութեան բերած բարիքներու մասին:

Ահաւասիկ անցած են քսան երկար տարիներ Հայաստանի վերանկախացման օրերէն: Դժբախտաբար շատ բան չէ փոխուած Հայաստանի քաղաքացիական, տնտեսական եւ հասարակական ընթացքները ներս: Միևնեւ օրս, Ատրպէճանի հետ կայուն եւ ստոյք

համաձայնություն չէ հաստատում: Տակաւին կան արտաքին ճնշումներ: Հասարակութեան տնտեսական արժեքները կը ոտնակոխուին մի քանի օլիկարքներու կողմէ, որոնք տնտեսական մենաշնորհներ (monopolies) ըլլալով՝ թոյլ չեն տար որպէսզի տնտեսութիւնը, մասնաւորաբար փոքր ու միջին գործատերերը զարգացնեն իրենց սկսած գործերը, զագացնելով նաեւ հայրենիքը: Հասարակական արդարութիւն եւ ընկերային անարդարութիւն երկրի չորս կողմը կը տիրէ, եւ Հայաստանը կը շարունակէ մնալ անկայուն, սահմանափակում եւ կաշկանդուած իր իսկ սահմաններուն մէջ:

Այս բոլորին հանդերձ, հսկայ ուրախութիւն էր ինծի համար ապրիլ, շնչել եւ գործել Հայաստանի մէջ, եւ աւելին՝ ներկայ գտնուիլ ու մասնակից դառնալ Հայաստանի վերանկախացման 20 ամեակի տօնակատարութիւններուն: Անհատաւոր զգացում մըն էր ականատես ըլլալ եւ վայելել ժողովուրդիս ցնծութիւնը՝ իր երկրին հանդէպ ունեցած սէրն ու գուրգուրաբքը, եւ դարձեալ ազատ ու անկախ պետութիւն ունենալու ուրախութիւնն ու հպարտութիւնը: Անբացատրելի զգացում էր տեսնել բազմահազար հայրենակիցներ՝ տատիկներ ու պապիկներ, չափահասներ, երիտասարդ-երիտասարդուհիներ, պատանիներ եւ նոյնիսկ մանուկներ ու երեխաներ որոնք լայն ժպիտներ իրենց դէմքին կը յետեւին քաղաքի չորս կողմը տեղի ունեցող հրաշալի եւ անմոռանալի վերանկախացման միջոցարարութիւններուն: Վերանկախացման տօնակատարութիւնները վերջացան հանրապետութեան հրապարակի մէջ տեղի ունեցող բարձր մակարդակի եւ հիանալի սինֆօնիք երաժշտական համերգով, որուն յաջորդեցին գեղեցիկ ու լուսաւոր հրավառութեան փայլատակումներ: Պայթումներ, որոնք ցնցեցին եւ անակնկալի ենթարկեցին բոլորիս: Դեռ շատ փոքր եմ յիշելու այն օրերը, ճիշդ այդ թուական էր որ մտածումներս զիտ փոխադրեցին Արցախեան պատերազմի դժուար տարիներուն, ուր մեր հայրենի եղբայրներն

ու բոյրերը, մայրերն ու հայրերը վախով ու սարսափով կը լսէին մարտական ռումբերու պայթումները, մեր պապեանական սահմանները պաշտպանելու ընդացքին: Այսօր, 20 տարեկան ետք, այն նոյն սարսափելի պայթումները վերածուած են ուրախութեան ու ցնծութեան փայլատակումներու, որոնք հպարտութեամբ կը լսենք միասնաբար, ու անգամ մը եւս կ'ստիպէին զիս որպէսզի խոնարհիմ մեր հերոս մարտիկներու եւ նահատակներու յիշատակին առջեւ, քաջ գիտնալով թէ անոնց անձուկը նուիրումի հետեւանքովն է որ մենք ունինք 2 անկախ, ազատ, ու գիրար ամբողջացնող պետութիւններ այսօր:

Անցեալ մի գանի ամիսներու ընթացքին, ինծի համար շատ աւելի հստակացաւ թէ մեր հայրենիքը կարիք ունի անձուկ երիտասարդներու, որոնք պատրաստ են նուիրեալ աշխատանք տանելու երկն ներս, ու բարելաւել Հայաստանի ներկայ վիճակը: Ես կը հաւատամ որ անցած են այն օրերը, երբ Հայաստանը մեր սրտերու ու մտքերու մէջ միայն իտեալ մըն էր, մեր տուններու պատերուն կախուած Արարատ լեռան նկարով խորհրդանշուող: Հայաստանը իրական երկիր է իրական խնդիրներով:

Հայրենի հողին վրայ, ֆիզիքական ներկայութեամբ, մեր մասնագիտական կարելիութիւններով թափ տանք աստիճանաբար դէպի վեր բարեցրացող մեր անկախ հայրենիքի վերելքին՝ հաստատելու համար մարդկային իրաւունքներու հաւասարութիւն, պաշտպանելու տկարներն ու անիրաւութեան զոհ զացած հայրենակիցները եւ օգնելու համար մեր երկրին ընկերային, քաղաքական եւ տնտեսական վիճակին: «Հրայր Մարուխեան» Հիմնադրամը օրինակ մըն է միայն շատ մը այլ հաստատութիւններու կողքին, որոնք կը պայքարին փոփոխութեան ու բարելաւման ենթարկելու Հայաստանի իրավիճակը: Մեր բոլորին պարտականութիւնն է, հակարակ որ ափերուն վրայ կ'ապրինք, հաւատարիմ մնալու անկախութեան գաղաքարին եւ եականօրէն ցեփիլ Հայաստանը անգամ մը եւս ուղղելու դէպի իրաւացի եւ ճշգրիտ ժողովրդավար պետութիւն:

Ռուբէն Ճանապագեան
Երեւան, 2011

Կոչ կ'ուղղեմ բոլորիդ, մանաւանդ իմ տարեկից երիտասարդ ընկեր-ընկերուհիներուն՝ որեւէ ձեւով մասնակից ըլլալու երկրի իրադարձութիւններուն, եւ գործօն դեր վերցնելու երկրի զարգացման եւ յառաջդիմութեան համար տարուող աշխատանքներուն մէջ:



*Իրականացնել նորարարական ու հարաբեր լուծումներ՝
սոցիալական, տնտեսական եւ քաղաքական
մարտահրավերներին*



Levon Shant & Nietzsche

“What do savage tribes today take over first of all from the Europeans? Liquor and Christianity, the narcotics of Europe.” – Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

Liquor and Christianity are similar to the effect that they both have the ability to alter one's state of mind and dull one's senses. Where alcohol is able to intoxicate physically, as a result of the release of inhibitory chemicals in the brain, Christianity's ability to intoxicate is of a wildly complex, counterintuitive, and entirely mental nature. Christianity is grounded on the assumption that the real world is attainable only after death, in the form of an afterlife, and is promised only to the pious. Piety entails the denial of worldly pleasures and refusal of the temptations of the present life. In essence, the present life is to be turned away from and treated merely as a means to an end—that end being admission to heaven. The concept of the afterlife is one that has greatly influenced the reality and behavior of many faithful Christians, argued Nietzsche, similarly to liquor and other “narcotics”.

Liquor and religion both appear in a different context for Nietzsche in his earlier work *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this work Nietzsche gives a historical explanation of the concept of Greek tragedy, and highlights the existence of a dichotomy in tragedy that includes both Dionysian and Apollonian influences. The Dionysian

was named after Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, and signifies intoxication, irrationality, instinctual behavior, and ecstatic pleasure. The Apollonian, on the other hand, was named after Apollo who represents rationality, sobriety, and discipline. An ongoing struggle between these two influential elements is essential in preserving the balance necessary for the continuity of progress. Therefore, neither the Dionysian nor the Apollonian forces are to succeed in triumphing over the other. Though Christianity is not explicitly mentioned in this particular work, it shares in common with the Apollonian the fundamental principles of choosing rationality over instinct and a dedication to discipline in the face of life's temptations. Similarly to the Apollonian, religion strongly antagonizes all of the objectives of the Dionysian.

These and many other ideas articulated by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche have influenced the works of various Armenian authors from the early twentieth century until the present. The work *Hin Astvatsner* by the playwright Levon Shant is one of such works. As the title suggests, the Dionysian–Apollonian dichotomy present in the play *Hin Ast-*

vatsner corresponds to the clashing of the ancient gods with the Christian god. A young monk is torn between an Apollonian drive to devote himself entirely to what he believes to be rational teachings of Christianity, and a Dionysian longing to worship the ancient gods Vahagn and Anahit, who represent the visceral and worldly passions of war and love. After leading a monastic life of utter isolation from the outside world in an effort to ward off all worldly temptation, he falls in love with a girl whom he rescues from drowning. His faith is tested as he is consumed with delusions of the girl, in which she introduces him to the ancient gods that previously occupied the land his monastery is built on. The teachings of these gods encourage treating life as an end in and of itself rather than disconnecting from one's life to contemplate the afterlife. He is intrigued by the revolutionary idea of living in fulfillment of the present and pursuing rather than renouncing one's desires. The young monk's balance is ultimately disturbed when the Dionysian forces win him over, leading to his tragic end by unintentional suicide.

The influence of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy on Armenian thought is evident in Levon Shant's play *Hin Astvatsner*, and may also be found in the writings of the famous Armenian poets Varuzhan and Avedik Isahakyan.

Laila Babaeian

...On Being an Armenian Writer in Southern California

Ever since I was a young —and vigilantly idealistic— little girl, I dreamed of becoming noticed in magazine covers, my name plastered all over it as if I were someone praised and adored. My Barbies were all superstars that attended parties for their book releases; my dolls their fans that eagerly awaited their autographs. It was as if my mind was filled to the brim with a set goal to become a writer; I had no intention of turning back — even at the ripe old age of eight.

It is now that I see myself as more than just a writer. I identify myself more as an editor, a writer-grammar enthusiast hybrid that adores anything written by someone other than herself. I have edited thousands of others works, given feedback, and often procrastinated writing my own work. Ernest Hemingway once wrote “A writer does not sit and write, he sits down at a typewriter and bleeds.” Every time I am in front of my measly — and often back-numbing-computer, I stare at the keyboard for days wondering how to configure sentences into a structure that is meaningful. Maybe a little less dramatic than bleeding, but it still rings true to the amount of emotion, sweat, and tears a finalized written piece of work may evolve into.

And in such procrastination, being an Armenian writer often implies that you are stereotyped into the vicinity of the Kardashians, praised for Cher’s comeback, and often eluded to William Saroyan. Some may even latch onto the idea of Yerevan magazine to imply what it’s like for Armenians seeking journalism — if we are not writing for an Armenian publication, we must be writing about being Armenian, right? Wrong!

As a half-Armenian, half-European mut, I often look towards Michael Arlen’s *Passage to Ararat* for a little inspiration on finding my own identity through the rich culture being Armenian provides for me. Arlen (who is half-Armenian himself) claimed that by searching for his past, he will “find in the present”. I, too, consistently look towards my Armenian roots as a guide to find my inner workings. The rich substance our culture provides works as an insight to the most meaningful, and often emotional, pieces of work.

As the Editor-in-Chief and founder of the women’s online magazine *Reasons to Be Beautiful*, an intern at Access Hollywood, and a editor for an on-campus women’s website I find myself busy with learning to identify myself as a writer and work towards representing the Armenian writing community in the best way possible. The moments I have to talk with co-workers, I often find myself stating that I am half-Armenian, and I am (fill in any positive adjective here) because of my strong heritage.

Even stepping foot in any interviewers door, I often claim that yes, I like the Kardashians, and yes, I do love my heritage. And yes, I am eager to learn about others because of the strong cultural implications I have already discovered about myself.

Because that is what writers do, at first they will allude to their own inner creativity and then warmly welcome any spout of inspiration you may have for them; we lust over meaningful chats over coffee and resort to sharing memories with our readers, and ultimately, our listeners.

Alissa Medina



Asbarez|mobile

It's here.

STAIN of DENIAL



Cultivating Silence in Advocacy

The voice is a human gift to be embraced and used. It is through speech that one may relay their most pertinent ideas and engage others with their vision. Yet, the spoken word is an obligation, viewed as an essential in the advocacy of any cause. But the ability to remain silent, constitutes a strength in and of itself, and allows each person to foster their power. We have created tactics and methods that aim to generate the greatest amount of noise, which have, nonetheless, proven to be successful in the past. Yet, we have passed over the notion of silence as a tool for the mass portrayal of a message as well as the increased consciousness of individuals.

On Thursday, January 26, 2012, the affiliated schools and organizations of the Confederation of All-Armenian Student Associations joined in silence to protest the denial of the Armenian Genocide. Silent protests were organized in conjunction at UCLA, USC, UCSD, UCSB,

UC Irvine, Cal State LA and CSUN. The "Stain of Denial" was aimed at informing the greater campus communities about the Armenian Genocide and the ensuing denial campaign by the government of Turkey. Through their individual student bodies, the respective All-ASA organizations spread the collective message of the detrimental effects of injustice and denial, generations after the initial crime was committed. Covering their mouths with tape and bearing written signs as testaments of their message, hundreds of college students coalesced to condemn the cyclical precedent of the repression of justice. Following the passage of legislation in France criminalizing the Armenian Genocide, these students encouraged the US government not to succumb to political bullying and reject Turkey's gag rule.

A sudden silence ensuing on a normal school day in January can really take us back to the fundamentals. It takes the si-

lent portrayal of our message to reveal to us the multi-faceted approaches involved in the advocacy of our cause. Through my participation in the silent protest at UCSD, I saw a dynamic overcome the participants throughout the day. As students first arrived, they giggled in skepticism when we placed tape over their mouths, handed them a poster and asked them to sit silently in a high-traffic area on campus. Hesitant at first, they continuously peeled off their tape, distracted themselves with conversations, and mingled with friends. After about an hour, a certain sense of solemnity came over the participants, as the gravity of their task seemed to finally settle in. Silence ensued and each person became cognizant of their individual contribution in our collective message. Contemplating over their current situation, a certain aura of consciousness was obvious within each student, recognizing the substantive importance of the message they were relaying. Instead of being merely



supportive of an event or project, these students were the spectacle themselves, feeling the characterization on their own skin and physically carrying the label of their message.

Cultivating silence as a means of advocacy has proven challenging, as it lacks the galvanizing effect of the fervent, loud desperation of spoken word. Silence and powerlessness are often equated through a causal relationship. Nevertheless, where silent demonstrations lack in ardency, they make up for in attracting inquisitive interest. From the participant standpoint, what seemed elusive and were solely held as ideas, had now become a tangible reality. Individuals were challenged to not only advocate the reality of our issue, but to become a representative part of it. To the unknowing passerby on campus at these colleges, written messages and their human characterizations incited curiosity as to the rigor of this sit-down, silent demonstration. Media coverage, via school and community newspapers, television news networks, magazines, and blogs, created a vibrant buzz around events where virtually no words were spoken. Almost all participating schools had segments published in either their community or school newspapers, with several protesters being featured on the covers of well-known school media.

There are many situations in which silence has the loudest voice. The ability for a person to say nothing and stand for a cause nurtures a great strength and understanding. What is said through spoken word is understood, but what is said through silence is felt. Part of our responsibility as student leaders is to ensure that there is a resonant consciousness among our student bodies of the issues that we all represent. Before we can render others responsible for our causes, we need to promote education and understanding within our own ranks. The collective message will be relayed, be it through traditional modes of demonstration or newly employed tactics, but focus on developing the individual advertence to our cause is a priority. Thus, it was this very zeal for raising awareness and setting demands that incited hundreds of college students to demonstrate that sometimes saying nothing actually says the most.

Nare Kupelian





Build it.
Do it.
Fix it.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A NATION?

There are several important elements necessary in the continuous process of state development. Among these are fair and transparent elections, an active and engaged civil society and a functioning judicial system. Today, Armenia seems to be at a turning point and its subsequent steps will be critical for her to develop into a stable democratic nation. Any meaningful attempt to challenge inequity or injustice will require a meaningful alternative to the status quo. These alternatives can be represented through another important element in state development: public policy.

The Hrayr Maroukhian Foundation (HMF) was created in the Republic of Armenia in 2009 by the Supreme Council of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun. HMF is a social democratic think-tank that produces academic research papers, linking them to political decision-making and policy. The foundation is committed to the development and advancement of public policy issues and works to strengthen democratic institutions through social and economic policy

research.

To date, HMF has produced three policy papers, recommending improvements to the healthcare, housing and employment sectors of Armenia. Through a designated working group of experts focusing on each specific policy area, these studies aim to implement the populations' right to quality housing, employment and accessible and affordable health care.

Currently, new working groups are undertaking three other sectors in need of reforms: agriculture, mining and education. They will be examining the current state of these areas and recommending alternative, original and applicable solutions from a social democratic perspective.

Working at HMF, I am privileged to be taking a part in the cultivation of our nation on a daily basis, and am proud of the work we produce. There is a difference when conservative parties in Armenia preach socially favorable rhetoric and when true leftist parties create policies in the interest of the public. The policies produced by

this foundation reflect social democratic principles and therefore work to defend the general welfare of the population.

However, during my fifteen minute walk to work every morning, I think about the endless problems of our nation, from population decline and extreme poverty, to hostile neighbors and exploitive leaders. I cannot help but ask myself, "Is what we're doing enough?"

Policy interventions are done in a complex system where many other factors must be considered. They are surely an important part of the entire process of nation-building, but their potential is compromised when entrusted to the hands of corrupt officials. In a hierarchical environment, such as the one in Armenia, there is bound to be resistance to progress and difficulty rallying the public to enforce necessary change. Therefore, along with policy analysis there needs to be political will and public pressure to implement solutions.

There also needs to be a collective

effort of society, participating in different ways. HMF is working to implement change through policy alternatives, but we need more to do the same. We need more people joining the environmentalists protesting in the streets day and night. We need more scholars receiving their doctorate in political science and international development. We need more women raising their voices in the name of equality. In order to reach the level of stability and even prosperity our nation deserves, we need this intricate network of participants working alongside each other.

To say that the current government of Armenia is solely dedicated to the special interests of the elite is no major revelation. It is fairly obvious that the personal gain of the privileged upper class and the preservation of business interests is reinforced at the expense of the nation's prosperity. This is a direct infringement on people's freedoms. We have failed to even create a façade of formal institutions to give the illusion of democracy. And the question on everyone's mind is the same: How do we fix it?

Some may think that Armenian society should push for idealist notions of revolutionary uprisings. Others believe we need to work towards democratic manifestations of social and political progress. I suppose the former sees genuine victory being born from an abrupt spark that will ignite a revolution and uproot our entire system of operation. Conversely, the latter trusts a process of gradual democratic accomplishments. All I can be sure of is this: whether a transformation comes from uprisings like we have seen across the Middle East or through more steady means, it can only come from the force and the will of the people. That is the only clearly definable victory. A government established on the basis of the general will is a victory. And to what extent the government responds to the will of the people will determine the amount of force used by the people.

Therefore, whether you are working at a policy institute, campaigning for the elections or organizing a rebellion, stay active. Your participation is a necessity in establishing a politically stable, socially just and economically prosperous nation.

Sanan Shirinian



AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE WILL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF FORCE USED BY THE PEOPLE.



CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

TELLING UNHEARD STORIES



OUR COMMUNITY IS FILLED WITH HUNDREDS OF TALENTED YOUNG ARTISTS PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF EXPRESSION AND CREATIVITY IN VARIOUS FIELDS. HAYTOUG RECENTLY HAD THE CHANCE TO SIT DOWN WITH ONE SUCH PROMINENT YOUNG ARTIST: FILMMAKER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND WRITER APO AVEDISSIAN.

HAYTOUG: *Can you give us some background on how you got involved in photography, videography and art in general?*

APO AVEDISSIAN: During the 2003 war in Iraq, I was a 13-year-old kid in Baghdad with a camera, walking around taking pictures of arms and legs detached from bodies. I found a subject to tell a story about: the war.

Photography wasn't my hobby, storytelling was. That's why I've not only done photography, but also filmmaking, stenciling, and writing. Art is my tool of choice.

High school in the U.S. also gave me a major push towards getting into the business aspect of art itself. I was invited to Hoover High School's Art Academy during the first two months of a photography class and was soon given two awards that allowed me to buy a new, professional camera. It was

my first professional camera.

H: *Is your foundation based on formal training from those classes or did you develop your talent outside of the school setting?*

A.A.: I do tend to be an egomaniac, so I will say everything is based on myself. Although I am influenced by things around me, just like anyone else, once I took those classes I really wasn't a fan of being told how to make art.

In math, when one person discovers a new formula, they're praised as scientists, and they should be. In art, however, there's that one fine line you need to follow. I don't like that.

Art is self expression to me, and the fact that a class exists to teach you how to be creative is just a bit too much. The fact that there are classes shows other people's opinions, however, so as long

as I'm not forced to join an art class, anyone is free into joining one and experimenting with anything they'd like.

H: *A lot of people know you for directing and producing music videos. What is it about the intersection of music and video that you enjoy?*

A.A.: Storytelling. I don't talk a lot in person. I tend to observe and create art in my mind. Art is how I express myself. If I feel a certain way about an event or anything around me, I will tell the story through art.

H: *What are some of the key projects you've worked on, and the achievements you've had so far?*

A.A.: My ability to reach out and have thousands of people being a click away from viewing my work online is what I consider my main major achievement. With the \$100 cheap camera that I

started with, I built a 35,000 people fan base on MySpace when I first started. Now I'm on Twitter, which was also a tool I used for a really cool Armenian project.

I love being criticized. I live for the feedback. Feedback and criticism are more important, to me, than medals and trophies.

H: *For many people, finding motivation to be creative and developing original concepts is not easy. Where do you find your inspiration/influence?*

A.A.: I wake up with it. Not in the same bed though [laughs].

All jokes aside, I do have rituals and certain things I do and go through daily to have a good artistic day. Another artist once said "you're crazy," when they saw what I go through daily, to which I replied "I'm making art every day. What are you doing?"

H: *How do you think being Armenian and from a family that has survived Genocide and war has affected your art?*

A.A.: With what my grand-grandparents went through during the Armenian Genocide, you can only think of the negatives. After going through and surviving the Genocide itself, they settled in Baghdad, Iraq. Soon enough that country was another bleeding place for everyone in it.

I left Iraq late 2004, about two years into the war. What I saw made me who I am, so I can only use my imagination to try

and see what my grand-grandparents went through back around 1915. The first half of my life was based on the Genocide stories, and the quarter that followed it is based on the war I, myself, went through and survived, as well.

The Armenian Community in Iraq did a really good job teaching us our culture, language, and everything they could keep alive from the past. So good, in fact, that I still remember and know most of my elementary school lessons about Armenians. Because of all of that, my work shows more tears than smiles, I realize.

H: *In addition to your work with the camera, you've become known for your incisive blog entries and writings on Apotize.com. What are your thoughts on the power of conveying ideas through mediums such as writing as opposed to words or visuals?*

A.A.: Writing and visuals are the tools I use to tell what I have in mind. Whatever fits the topic, I will use. Sometimes a picture does it all. At other times, that picture isn't clear enough, not as clear as a blog. I like to influence people. I don't like forcing anyone into doing anything. I want to influence, yet again, giving them the full option of choosing what they do next. Just like a reminder, I'll bring up some facts from both sides without forcing a decision. You are reminded; you choose to snooze or wake up.

Writing is a very powerful tool to put out emotions and ideas. Last year, on April 24th, I wrote a blog on Apotize.com asking everyone to use Twitter to post or "tweet" a fact about the Armenian Genocide, and add the hashtag #ArmenianGenocide in the tweet itself. By doing that, we might be able to "trend" that phrase, which means millions of visitors on the site, whether Armenian or not, could see the phrase as 'most used/popular' for that day and time. Later that day, we had "#ArmenianGenocide" and "Armenians" trending in Los Angeles. That was a huge success on our end, and with the help of the readers we were actually able to do something very productive, and answered many "odars" questions about the trend, which they had no idea about.





On that day, we taught thousands of people about the Armenian Genocide, all with one simple idea that came to my mind, and through my writing, got many great minds involved. This year, I intend to try it again, hopefully trending the phrase #ArmenianGenocide worldwide, having everyone logging in to Twitter see it, and once they click on it, see the facts we're posting and our unheard stories.

H: *What role do you think artists play in society, specifically for the Armenian community in the Diaspora?*

A.A.: Teachers. Artists show you things you haven't seen before or have forgotten about. Artists put your attention on an important topic to them, and you choose whether to understand it or not. Artists can be teachers, inventors, and even historians, to be honest. When you have a 100 year old art piece, that is good enough, you will look at the picture and remember stories about that time.

H: *What are some upcoming projects we can expect from you?*

A.A.: I'm in the process of stenciling a 17x7 ft. wall for a music video I will be featured in. I'm also working on a documentary titled Yergat. The rest is your imagination.

I don't plan things, they just happen. I know about those two because the

documentary I've been working on for about five years now, and the stencil I planned two days ago. I'll soon stencil and shoot the video for it.

H: *How do people get in touch with you regarding commissioning work?*

A.A.: My personal website (www.apo-montage.com) has my email, Twitter, and Facebook links beside my work.



Read.
Connect.
Engage.



HAYTOUG.ORG

BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE HOMELAND



AYFYOUTHCORPS.COM

AYF Youth Corps is a six week summer program combining volunteer work with exciting sightseeing for a truly unforgettable experience. ALL Armenian youth 18-26 are encouraged to apply.



C'est La Vie

There were two stacks of newspapers at any newsstand in the small, seaside town of La Vie. One was the La Vie Times and the other was the Press de Vie. On any given day, one newspaper outsold the other by a small number of copies. In large, this was due to the appeal of the articles written by each of the newspapers' famous political columnists. The La Vie Times held in great regard their young writer Claude Dubois as equally as the Press de Vie held in regard their own columnist, Edouard Guillotine. It was once a week from the years of 1909 to 1910 that each would have their opinions printed in their papers. The material they wrote was deathly contradicting to one another. The time was approaching for the town of La Vie to vote for a new representative; Charles Leroy, whom Guillotine fended for, and Benjamin Moreau, who Claude greatly admired. The two writers both expressed their ideas and opinions with pleasure and passion; and certain weeks Guillotine's article would be praised more than Claude's, and sometimes the opposite. Of their many similarities, both worked from home, and both shared a particular dislike for one another.

One morning, Claude had returned from his trip to the La Vie Times building to turn in his latest work. He'd just taken off his hat and coat when a knock came at the door. He opened it and in came Bernadette, a long time friend of the writer.

"Bernadette," said Claude, "what a surprise—" Bernadette

whisked by without a greeting.

"A pleasant one, I hope," she said, with an uneasiness in her tone indicating there was an important issue at hand.

"As always," said Claude and the two walked to the middle of the small apartment where Bernadette sat and Claude went off to the small kitchen to bring pastries and coffee. He placed them on a small table between the two chairs and sat down.

"To what may I owe this visit, my dear?"

"Need I a reason to visit an old friend—?" Claude raised his brow. "Well if you insist I need a reason, yes, I do have one. Alarming, and you must take it seriously; you know how you have a problem with that—"

"I do not. Go on then," he said and, with a smile on his face, bit an éclair. Bernadette didn't speak, but pulled out a folded up newspaper from her purse and held it up to Claude's face. He took the copy from her white-gloved hand and opened it. It read:

"La Vie Times columnist Claude Dubois seems to be swinging the votes with his weekly articles in the paper...."

Claude continued but Bernadette pulled the paper from out of his hands.

"That's not very nice you know," he said.

"What's not nice is that you're mingling with politics. And if you're not a politician, it's not your place and you know that well and yet you keep writing these columns and it's—not right. For you to write the things you do, and for a newspaper in Paris to say this about you, it's dangerous and you know it." She sank back into her chair and sighed.

"And why is this all an issue for you? I'm doing my job. Besides, you know as well as anyone else that the politics isn't what I truly care about. To be in newspapers, Bernadette, it's my dream. It's my work—"

"Doing your job doesn't mean writing the way you do. You write about politics in such a stern way in this feud and you seek fame doing it. Look at writers and artists of this day and the past. Famous were many and they did not have to create terrible and vile works to achieve the feats they did. Why must you be so hesitant to create pleasant writings?" She grabbed a pastry and sank even deep into her chair.

"It's not simply a feud, dear Bernadette, it's a battle, between two skilled opponents. Our weapons? The pen, though I have been trying to get my hands on the latest typewriter from America. A new machine. With a pushing of buttons, one will have a sentence in seconds.... It is true; pleasant works would evoke less tension in the town, but my dear, people have an uncanny desire to see the dark, live it, be a part of it. The dangerous is what we all seek inside, the thrill. Either way, you mustn't worry, I've it all under control."

"Then I take you expected that what you wrote would change the votes around the whole town?"

"Ah yes," mumbled Claude, "well I didn't think of that happening—but this just means I'm winning against that ancient sac of bones." Bernadette wiped her mouth of crème and put her hands together on her lap.

"Yes well, one more thing I wanted to tell you. See, they've been writing about Guillotine as well. He's shifting the votes just as much as you. The way I see it, you're both in danger, so perhaps—"

"Let that old man be in danger. All I have to do is write better than he, and I'll be back at the top, like I was until he decided to move into La Vie. You'll see, dear, I'll have this whole town in my hands when I'm through writing." Bernadette quickly rose from her seat and drove her heel into Claude's foot.

"Sure, you fool, go against everything I say right in front of me. Keep this up and one of you will get hurt, or worse you'll have to answer to me. Goodbye," she said and marched out of the apartment. She shut the door behind her and chips of paint fell to the ground. Claude sniggered and limped to his writing table where he began creating his next article.

Many streets and shops away, on the other side of La Vie, lived Edouard Guillotine, a slender old man with a long, black goatee and a damp air around him. His accommodations were larger than most in the town; his home was full of long hallways which housed rooms engulfed in dust with a few chairs thrown around. The walls of empty corridors were spotted by places pictures once hung and only the faintest light was ever lit. His writing room looked over his front garden, which had hedges not manicured for years and grass as green as could be. Earlier this afternoon, Edouard had read of how his writing and fame had reached Paris and sooner or later, the whole of France would know of his name. He also read of how Claude Dubois was also reaching ears as far as Paris. The rivalry,

Guillotine thought, was in vain, for in the end, there was no chance of Claude writing something so much more praised than his own work.

Guillotine stood alone in his office which was burgundy in color, and watched with his hands behind him as people walked the streets and an occasional leaf, still green, flew in the light wind. The sunlight shined into the room, dimmed and dispersed by the chiffrons, drapes and curtains sun bleached. He sighed, then slowly walked to his typewriter, the latest from America, and began to write. At night, he appeared much like a ghost, covered in a pearly light from the moon. He seldom slept most evenings, but only walked the halls of his home. And when morning came, he would sometimes walk around the nearest block or two, then return home to read or work.

After the morning, at around noon, Claude finished the final draft of his new column on the silliness of Charles Leroy and those who followed him, particularly Edouard Guillotine, "a man with much to say, but sadly not enough worth in his speech to match." Claude slipped into his coat, put on his hat, and began his walk to the La Vie Times building near town square. He passed by many news stands on his way and was often greeted, and always smiled when he saw that a stack of the La Vie Times was lower than a stack of the Press de Vie. A wonderful sun hung over the town and the waves were never too far so that their shanties could not be heard. Seagulls flew overhead. Returning home, he wished he'd taken enough money to buy groceries, so all he purchased was a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread.

The following Sunday, both Claude's and Guillotine's articles were printed in their respective newspapers. Guillotine's ended as such:

"Anyone who ambles about in favor of Benjamin Moreau should reconsider the circumstances, particularly those who seem so compelled that they find the need to write about him and praise him. We mustn't forget people who write such bias works of such bias people are unreliable, and are perhaps in somewhat of a need of a course correction. Bonne vie to all; I will be writing soon again."

And Claude's:

"I do agree that Charles Leroy is a fine man, but do not be tricked into thinking he is a fine politician, or even decent, when compared to Benjamin Moreau. Must we think so hard on something so simple? and by such deep thought be blinded by the clear answer that stands before us? Perhaps those who do, particularly the slender type, with small glasses who type away on fangled machines should open their eyes to the truth and not wallow in their bias. Until next week, my dear readers, Claude Dubois."

Garbage, thought Mr. Guillotine. How could they publish such lies for all to see? I wouldn't be surprised if this has reached Paris already. The old man walked to his window and stared out as he often did during different hours of the day. Today he would not write, for the sun seemed odd and there wasn't enough wine to get him through it. Today he would only read, and remember, and do his best to not pay any attention to news of the hideously bias, extremely famous writer, Mr. Claude Dubois.

Claude himself was out celebrating his latest and favorite publication with his darling Bernadette. She spoke little, though he could not stop speaking away of how he believed he'd completely destroyed "the old bag of cracking bones and that typing machine of his." The two ate by a place near the sea where a wonderful café

hung over huge cliffs and seagulls nested on pointed rocks. The sun was just a few hours away from dipping back into the ocean to bring night along to the town of La Vie, and Bernadette felt it was time to go home. Claude agreed, and, placing her coat over her shoulders and giving her a kiss as she reluctantly allowed, the two parted ways on Mouette Avenue and each went to their separate houses.

The most shocking event occurred in the days following. At all the newsstands in the town, the La Vie Times was outselling the Press de Vie by not just a few copies, but rather stacks and stacks. Readers were demanding more copies, and demanding that those copies had more of Mr. Claude Dubois' columns in them. His employers agreed to double his payment for each article, and Claude could not have been more happy for he was now receiving optimum recognition and a fine pay with three publications a week. On the contrary, Edouard Guillotine was struggling to aid the Press de Vie return to its previous popularity. Alas, his efforts were to little avail, for the Press was barely selling enough copies to remain in print and a great deal of the blame was put on Guillotine.

It was nearly sunset and Edouard was out at the beach standing in the wet sand where the water would ease up to him but never come to surround his feet. Then it would ebb back to the vast sea. Wearing mostly black, he looked over his spectacles to the orange horizon. Pink clouds spanned over the water with the rays of the sun, covering the sky. A shimmering road of light went over the sea from the sun to the docks miles from where Edouard was. No shimmering road of light led to him. The sun soon disappeared and Edouard began walking back to his home. The walk was long, longer than usual, and turning onto Corrotto Road, he stood before his home. Only, his home was not there. His hedges were not there. No neighbors were around. Edouard found himself on the wrong street. With a sigh and a smile, he walked down a few blocks, and again found himself standing before a house that was not his.

He could not find his home. He searched the roads, and often became lost.

It was not until ten in the evening, after hours of walking, that Edouard Guillotine found his home, and upon entering, went straight to bed.

In one of his new, weekday articles, Claude wrote of his content and pleasure toward the fact that Benjamin Moreau was rising in the polls and it seemed that he was ascending to the position of representative. While Claude's career blossomed with humble prosperity, Edouard Guillotine still struggled to win the appeal of his audience once more. He began to spend more and more time on his typewriter; every second there was a clack from the keys and red wine, looking more like blood than the drink itself, rippled beside him. Columns were published, but Guillotine continued to write with no light shining on his work. There came a time soon after where the clacking of the typewriter lost its rhythm and often the wine spilled onto the table and dripped to the floor. He began producing irrelevant columns; articles that had dozens of topics but none of which had anything to do with politics. Only two more publications were tolerated, after which the Press de Vie handed him his final payment, and wished him a happy career.

Claude remained in his old apartment, only he chose more lavish furnishings and finer china. Together with Bernadette, the two sat in his home in solemn conversation.

"You mustn't think you had no hand in this," said Bernadette.

"Now I've caused the old man's mind to crumble? He had it coming to him for years. He had plenty of time to back out of this project—"

"Doesn't matter what he chose to do; You know what you wrote, and know it moved him just as much as it did your readers. Foolish to deny...." Claude was silent, but he then spoke:

"Was it Newton that spoke of how the only reason he could see far was if he were standing on the shoulders of giants? I believe it was him...yes...." He slipped into thought, looking out the window to a sunny day.

"He was a man just as dignified and worthy as you, and a writer just as famous and read as you, too. You can't deny that, and I know you don't darling. I'll be going now, Claude, I'll speak with you later." Bernadette rose from the chair and walked to the door, and opening it, was soon gone down the hall. Claude's deadline for a finished draft was upcoming, as his articles appeared more often. So he walked slowly to his writing desk with his hands in his pockets, and, sitting down, picked up his pen and quickly began running it over the paper. Writing.

The last column Claude ever wrote of Monsieur Edouard Guillotine appeared in the following weeks, and read as follows:

"Methods and traditions have come and gone, but the way of a writer has remained honest and truthful to its origin. Particularly to we who write of our opinions. We place ourselves, our true thoughts and true beings out before all. We are judged; sometimes favorably and sometimes not. However, it is not for these judgments which we write, it is to continue the life of our civilizations which have for so long lived upon it, a part of it. Our earth is merely two billion souls and two billion perspectives. And it is these strong opinions that allow us to endure through what an overgrowth of societal influence poses on those who prefer to write their minds. We are the peoples we are only because there have been so many brave peoples before us, many no longer present, who chose to fight and cope, and build a civilization upon which ours rests today. Without that very bedrock of those who have gone before us, we would go as they, only with no purpose to our existence. Such a bedrock I dealt with, and feuded with, for some areas of it were not perfect. Though, it is those imperfections that allow us to excel today, for with perfection, we become still, a cloud that never moves in a sky that never darkens. Though few have been able to gaze down the vistas and sweeping fields that I have seen in my short time, there is no doubt in my mind that such wonderful, open places would not be if it weren't for the giants whose shoulders we stand on, and for those who ever dared to change what was around them instead of them themselves being eroded by the times. And though the wind-swept souls and subtle hearts, that have not survived an equitable time, toll in their graves with unrest, we who change that which is around us with the word, my dear God, we are the ones who set them free, and in their gratitude, the passed people give us their bodies so that our world shall not die. And so that all continues from the previous stone left standing. Yours truly, Claude Dubois."

=Arin L. Shane is a student at Providence High School. His writings and short stories have been featured in the Los Angeles Times 'Kids Reading Room', among others.

A short story by Arin L. Shane



THE LOST HOMELAND, INDEED

Ever since I could remember, I've always been around the Armenian Genocide April 24th demonstrations staged in front of the Turkish Consulate in Jerusalem, shouting slogans for recognition, cursing the state denial of Turkey, and singing revolutionary songs knitted with the memories of the lost homeland. For me the demand for recognition by Turkey was inflamed by the hope that, once after recognition, Armenia and Turkey would sit around a table and discuss the issue of justice: "what now?"

Naturally, if such a situation did come to unfold, there would be scores of Armenians attaching the obligation of compensation with the return of Western Armenia. But before banging on the table and ordering the realignment of borders, there is a bit of reflection that is necessary before stomping our feet and roaring for the restoration of Van, Mush, and Ararat under Armenian rule—no matter how right and reasonable.

Somewhere in our decades-long struggle for Genocide recognition and subsequent justice, we seem to have overlooked the changes that transpired in the lost homeland. Not only were these changes not addressed properly, they still seem to be avoided; and that act of evading will do nothing but sadly blind the hopeful Armenians whom desire to resettle the Armenian

nation in the lands we consider our cradle of civilization.

Though the Ottoman Turks were not successful in wiping out the Armenian nation from the face of the earth, they did have a significant success that came to light only after the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the following years of the Republic of Turkey. They were successful in their genocide of Western Armenia, the land. The painful truth is that Western Armenia is indefinitely lost. It is impossible to imagine Armenian authority established there within the foreseeable future—or even the unforeseeable future. The facts on the ground impede our national desires from ever being materialized if Turkey one day decides to right the wrong and return Armenian lands to Armenia.

There are somewhere between 12-14 million Kurds residing in lands we passionately call Western Armenia. The Kurds are themselves busy with a national struggle for independence, or at least a more extensive autonomy than the present one offered to them by the Turkish state. Make no mistake that the nationalist Kurdish movements, fueled by the wish for independence, will fiercely defend their claim on many Western Armenian lands, especially Van and Mount Ararat. It seems that for years, Armenian

nationalists have known that if such a situation unfolded where Western Armenia is to be returned to Armenia, the Turks would no longer be our number one adversaries; rather, the Kurds and Armenians will be caught in a confrontation. Yet, this possibility of a Kurdish-Armenian conflict has been swept under the rug for the moment, while both parties are still dealing with Turkey.

However, I'd like to state that Armenians have already lost this conflict over Western Armenia. If Armenia did get the lands returned to its sovereign rule, the country will have to face the national aspirations of 14 million Kurds. These aspirations will inescapably be opposed by Armenians, and low and behold, the occupation of the Kurdish people will begin.

Living in Jerusalem has given me a foresight into what would transpire if Western Armenia was put under the authority of the Republic of Armenia. And I fear that that potential-scenario will unintentionally turn Armenia into the Israel of the Caucasus. I don't mean the good Israel that is equipped with a decent healthcare system, an unshakeable prosperous economy, or a place of sanctuary for many refugees fleeing the slaughters of Africa. I mean the other Israel that carries out the daily occupation of the Palestin-



ian people, whom have their own national aspirations for independence.

The outnumbering Kurdish population will surely put up an armed resistance towards Armenian rule, but it is safe to say that Armenia's organized military will overcome the Kurdish opposition. But it will not overcome the Kurdish presence. Similar to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (a land which holds biblical and historical meaning to the Jewish people where Palestinians reside by the millions), Armenia will have to occupy Western Armenia, a land which holds national and historical meaning to the Armenian people where the Kurds reside by the millions.

Occupation of a people is an ill and a state-evil that cannot be justified no matter what. Thus, occupation is not the way, and should not even be considered for a minute.

Western Armenia holds almost 14 million Kurds—Kurds that wish for a free Kurdistan from Northern Iraq to Southern Turkey, and also northeastern Syria. Indeed there are a few thousand Hamshen Armenians and an allegedly one million 'hidden' Armenians in Western Armenia. But these numbers don't stand a chance against the strong 14 million of the freedom fighting Kurdish people. Hence, Armenia, on the day of receiving the returned lands of Western Armenia, will have to cede the lands to the Kurdish national aspirations. Demography, the most crucial element in this matter, is against the Armenian dream of having Western Armenia back.

On a more pragmatic and practical level, there can be solutions to satisfy both the

Armenian and Kurdish contradictory aspirations. Mount Ararat and an outlet to the sea should be given to Armenia, the former because of its unspeakable and infinite attachment to Armenian culture, and the latter for the basic reason of opening Armenia's trade routes. In return, the Kurds will be able to establish a free independent Kurdistan with the promise of granting autonomous Armenian provinces within the newly-independent country. This is not the ideal solution for the inescapable conflict that will rise if Turkey ever decides to relinquish Western Armenia, but it is a basis on which to start contemplating.

For the many whom believe that occupation is an unnecessary exaggeration and will not come to be, they should think once more about perhaps offering Armenian citizenship to the Kurds of Western Armenia. In such a future, Armenia's population will still be outnumbered by the Kurds, and through elections (taking advantage of their new citizenship), the government and the state of Armenia will be altered, as the Kurdish political figures will win overwhelmingly. This latent fate should be averted, for the sake of the Republic of Armenia.

And for others whom deem population-transfer as a means for a solution, let it be known to them that a transfer of a population (distinct from yours and in the context of conflict) is absolutely inadmissible and tantamount to genocide. Whether a neo-fascist Armenian is convinced that the Kurds should abandon the Caucasus and return to their Mesopotamia, or another zealous nationalist does not see anything wrong and immoral in simply relocating the Kurds to a Kurdish state in

Northern Iraq, forced population-transfer is inhumane and an insult to the history of Armenians; that is beneath us.

It is by national misfortune, an unpreventable reality, and a sad patriotic heart that I say to all Armenians that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide cannot deliver territorial compensation favorable to the current Armenian veracity. With that in mind, the Armenian nation should concentrate its efforts in territories where Armenians do actually reside—the Republic, Kharabagh, and Javakhk. Western Armenia will always remain in our hearts and minds, but not in our hands. It's a truth we have yet to face.

This article is not meant to picture a bleak, somewhat semi-apocalyptic future for Armenia; the article is based on assumptions only, and is heavily anchored by the actions of Turkey—if Turkey returns Western Armenia to Armenia. Similar to John Mearsheimer's controversial article 'Back to the Future' in which his assumptions are exclusively cemented in specific future actions of the US in Europe, my article follows the same pattern of heavily relying on the specific future actions of Turkey. However, that is an 'if' that is far from materializing, and there are many other factors that have not been taken into account in this article. Nonetheless, what I tried to detail out is a brief, general idea of what is most likely to transpire if, and only if, Turkey hands over Western Armenia to Armenia. Suffice to say, that is a future scenario that should be handled and facilitated cautiously and pragmatically...not ideologically.

Apo Sahagian

KHOSEENK HAYEREN, OR YOU CAN SAY IT IN ENGLISH



Armenian (while my Mom would refuse to speak in English) and, coincidentally, I forgot it, all of it – how to read, how to write, almost completely how to speak.

Success!

Then I met them. Those who I can only describe as racists. Or maybe xenophobes, if we want to be slightly euphemistic. Over the years, they came out of the woodwork in the most unexpected places, in the most subtle of ways. For these people, it didn't matter how much I tried, how American I thought I'd become – I was still an immigrant, an outsider, a foreigner. And I began to wonder: I was actively attempting to expunge, in earnest, a 5,000 year old culture which I was born into while some non-Armenians around me were clamoring for an identity, whether real or made up. My idiocy slapped me silly.

But I had walked far enough away from the tribe, and for enough time, that I could at least know how to fashion myself. Spiraling into an outwardly extreme supposed Armenian persona was uninteresting to me and, frankly, overdone. I saw “aga, shakhs, aper, khob”, the blotte or taviuh, the crosses or clothes, as replacements for what we had lost somewhere along the way. My familial upbringing, as much as I tried rejecting the Armenian underpinnings, had left its residue. With it came the contrast of what we were against what we thought we were supposed to be. So, I embarked on the excruciating journey of learning how to be Armenian in the truest form I could conceive.

Excruciating. That's a rough description of what should be a pleasant adventure of discovering the wondrous essence of your being. Or: this is supposed to be fun, not painful. But it is. It is painful when you are trying to eke out words in Armenian, torturing yourself so foreign verbiage doesn't invade your speech lest you become complicit in perverting the language you are struggling to maintain, and, alas, your fellow interlocutor is more concerned with highlighting your inadequate fluency and, naturally, their superior usage ability – their impeccable

It's hard learning Armenian. The obviousness of that statement is clear to anyone who knows the language. For students and speakers of the language alike, it's indisputable. The ancient, convoluted pronunciation rules; the syntactical flexibility that allows you to say the same thing with five words 20 different ways and still get your point across; the myriad dialects suggestive of a much larger land than currently exists – which serves to remind of the vast lands Armenians once inhabited before successive onslaughts and submissions.

But I mean something different. The personal difficulty one might have with those pronunciations, the challenges they may face with constructing the sentences with the fluidity required of a native speaker, or much less, are that person's business and matters of their mettle. I'm talking about the challenges these individuals who are far from fluent, or even close, that are imposed on them not by language but by people – Armenians.

The most formal Armenian education I got was whatever is gotten by 4th grade. Thereafter, I was all smiles as I entered the public school system – a vicious place unlike the uniform (indeed, pun intended), disciplined, no-nonsense world of Armenian private school. If ever one is interested in testing the tenacity of their teachings with a child, they should send them to public school.

Within a few years – two or three – I was about as assimilated as a sugar cube in water; you could hardly tell me apart. This was not a sudden, unfounded change. I was surrounded by non-Armenians whose attitude toward foreigners, or what they considered foreign, was far from welcoming. Being the friendless new kid

in public school, I desperately wanted to fit in. I shirked every aspect of my Armenianness that I could, and language was at the top of what was going on the chopping block.

If ever my parents spoke Armenian with me in public, I would turn red with embarrassment. Their carelessness, – in my slavish, juvenile mind – let the non-Armenians in on the secret that we were not the American I saw myself as. I couldn't understand why they had immigrated here from Armenian-speaking lands to this place they extolled as what saved them yet they continued speaking Armenian, eating Armenian, acting Armenian. I resolved that American was what I was and that was it.

I played baseball (possibly the most nonsensical of all sports to an Armenian), football (a close second to baseball), I only spoke English, I listened to rock and roll and heavy metal (the latter being the nonsensical parallel of baseball in the musical world, if it could be considered music), I developed a love affair with American muscle cars, and I preferred burger joints and hot dogs to any food prepared at home. I refused to speak



reprimands infused with “ishteh” and “yani” - than with acting as a guide toward the realization of, ostensibly, both your goal. The concluding recommendation being, “you can say it in English” or, if especially audacious, switching languages on you without notice, thus surreptitiously opining about the (inferior) quality of your spoken work.

This proclamation from the same person who is likely a steadfast source of the righteous imposition that “bedk’eh khose(e)nk Hayeren” (“we must speak Armenian”)! Imagine the state of your brain as it is trying to compute someone telling you that you must speak Armenian while telling you that if you can’t manage - and it’s obvious you can’t - just switch to the other language that they, since they’re more multilingual than you, can understand just as well. Instances like these may very well be the beginnings of bipolarity.

I’m loathe to offer this as a crusade of solely personal proportion. This is one example of what I know is commonplace. As a Diasporan, and one who not only lives, but works, within its (otherwise supremely pleasant) confines, I am uncomfortably privy to the growing apathy and, in my estimation, lethargy, which has started to overtake the community. It requires much less energy to let your surroundings have their way with your psyche and person than to confront them with the conviction of who you are. It requires an exceptional level of diligence and discipline. And, for those who have taken the valiant plunge into cultural preservation and growth, the last thing on their long list of worries should be the overt or subtle discouragement of those who need to otherwise be the cheerleaders.

I already disdain that I may not ever be able to speak Armenian as beautifully as my parents, or the poets whose gifts I want to read – and understand. But that I not become the charlatan who discourages the believer that they may realize such an unattainable treasure is of similarly paramount importance. To damage the wish of a striver to reach that end is unforgivable.

Hence my gratitude is conveyed to the corps of individuals whose object is not to outdo but to include. Thanks are due that they believe that one’s elevation requires them to elevate, not smile down from upon their perch. Without the sagacity and measured patience of this limited group, the treacherousness of this journey would be compounded unimaginably.

To the the bipolar self-styled linguists, I am writing this in English because I can’t write it in Armenian – I probably couldn’t even say it the way that I wanted without taking twice as long. But, I’ll get there, determined to gain total facility in this unique language, my language. Or, for their understanding ease: yani, no problem, brat.

Hayeren will prosper and perpetuate under the tutelage of the previously incapable upon their mastery of this language they love. Fortunately, history is not made by the faithless.

This piece is dedicated to the haters and the innocent bystanders.

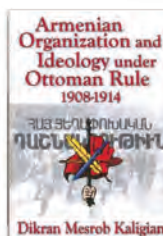
William Bairamian



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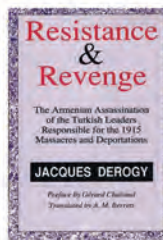
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