

HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES

SPRING 2004



A SETTLEMENT FOR JUSTICE

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CASE

A PROLONGED AFTERMATH EXPERIENCE

THE EFFECTS OF GENOCIDE'S TRAUMA ON THE ARMENIAN COLLECTIVE PSYCHE

SHAHEN MEGHERIAN

HAYTOUGABED

HE WAS BORN IN THE GYULISTAN AREA OF THE SHAHOUMIAN REGION IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH 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 THEN TOOK COMMAND OF THE MARDAGERD REGIMENT.

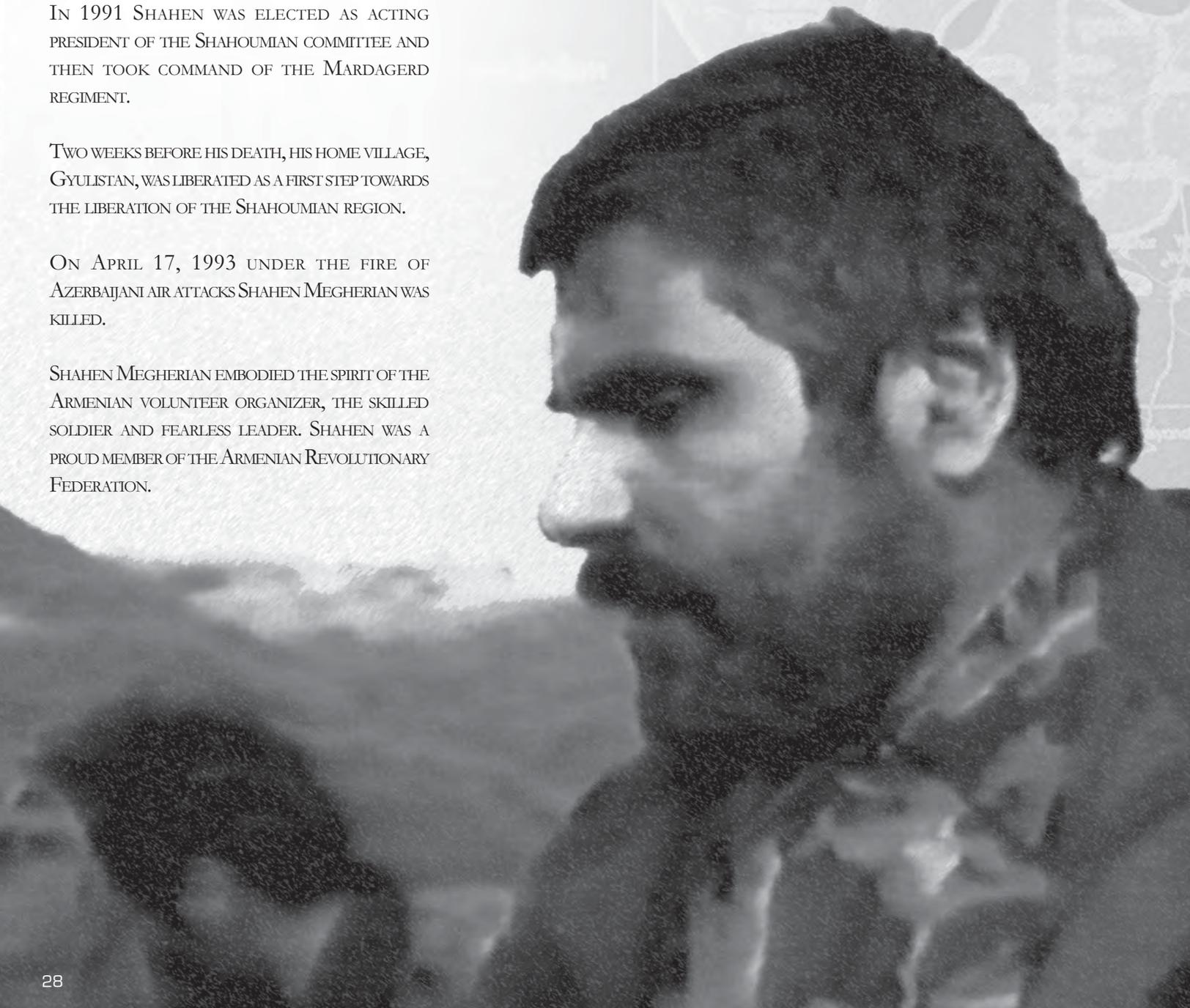
TWO WEEKS BEFORE HIS DEATH, HIS HOME VILLAGE, GYULISTAN, WAS LIBERATED AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE LIBERATION OF THE SHAHOUMIAN REGION.

ON APRIL 17, 1993 UNDER THE FIRE OF AZERBAIJANI AIR ATTACKS SHAHEN MEGHERIAN WAS KILLED.

SHAHEN MEGHERIAN EMBODIED THE SPIRIT OF THE ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER, THE SKILLED SOLDIER AND FEARLESS LEADER. SHAHEN WAS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION.

"COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES BEFORE
THEIR DEATHS; THE VALIANT
NEVER TASTE DEATH BUT ONCE."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





YOUTH CORPS SUMMER PROGRAM

2004

The Armenian Youth Federation Central Executive announced Monday that it will begin accepting applications for the 2004 Youth Corps summer program.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Youth Corps program. The program was initiated to reach out to the war-torn villages of Karabakh after the cease fire.

“This type of service to the homeland is unsurpassable,” commented Myrna Douzjian, Director of the Youth Corps program. “The mere fact that participants have the opportunity to feel the dirt, breathe the air, and drink the water of their land while doing their part in rebuilding Artsakh is something very special and memorable,” she further elaborated.

Every year since 1994, the AYF Youth Corps summer program determines a feasible need of the people of Artsakh and sets out to cultivate that need by sending a group of Armenian youth to the relevant areas for the span of five weeks.

“I’ve taken part in the Youth Corps program four times already, and I’d have to say that last year’s program was among the most rewarding of experiences,” explained Tro Tchekidjian, AYF Central Executive member and past Youth Corps participant. “We facilitated a Paraplegic center in Stepanakert with computers and set up an informational website for the center in addition to assisting with the construction of three new rooms for the center.”

All youth are encouraged to apply to this exceptional summer experience. Applications can be found online at www.AYFwest.org.

“The AYF Youth Corps Project gives Armenian youth from any background the opportunity to be introduced to their homeland. As a past participant of Youth Corps, I can honestly say that being in Hayasdan and Kharabakh that summer changed my life. I have returned 5 times since 1997, and know that no matter where I end up in life, Hayasdan will definitely be part of who I am... not just something I read about in a book or saw pictures of. Tebi Yergir.”

-Shoushig Avakian

“Go to Armenia, touch the soil at Lake Sevan, bring some back with you while you’re at it. Visit Khor Virab and look at Mount Ararat and close your eyes and just breathe the fresh Armenian air. I’ll never forget how much I cried when I sat on the plane, I wish I would never leave, but I remember Tro turning to me and saying, ‘Don’t worry, we’ll be back someday.’ I thank AYF for giving me the opportunity to be a part of Youth Corps 2003.”

-Talar Shekherdimian

“The AYF Youth Corps program provides Armenian youth across the Diaspora a chance to connect with their brethren in Armenia and Artsakh, along with the opportunity to better understand oneself. The work done by Youth Corps participants is a means to achieve numerous goals, such as making the idea of living in Armenia a tangible and reasonable option in your life. The chance to experience your homeland not as a tourist is an opportunity that most don’t have. This aspect helps the participant tap back into our deeply driven roots that some may have lost during their life time.”

-Tro Tchekijian

TAKE THE CHALLENGE.

ALL THAT IS

NEEDED IS THE WILL TO HELP.

www.AYFYouthCorps.org

LITTLE ARMENIA BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Armenian Youth Federation Garo Madenlian Public Affairs Office announced Friday that the AYF has finished developing and will soon begin implementing its "Little Armenia Beautification Program."

Implementation of the program, which consists of five different projects, began in March and will continue throughout the year. Projects being planned include tree planting, erection of an Armenian cultural sculpture, placement of trash receptacles throughout major streets in Little Armenia, volunteer assistance to business owners who wish to beautify their properties and a large-scale community clean up.

"Feedback received from the community last year about our Little Armenia Clean

Up encouraged us to renew and expand our efforts to beautify Little Armenia," said Raffi Semerdjian, Administrator of Public Relations for the AYF. "We look forward to working with Council member Eric Garcetti's office once again and are hopeful that together with the help of the Armenian-American community all of our projects can become a reality," explained Semerdjian.



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*Little Armenia
Clean Up 2003*

“As an area of the city which bears the name of our homeland, it’s crucial for Little Armenia to look

On September 6th of last year, the AYF Little Armenia Clean Up attracted 400 volunteers who collected more than 23,000 pounds of trash according to the City of Los Angeles Sanitation Department. Days after the clean up, the AYF, in cooperation with local businesses, was able to erect about forty "Welcome to Little Armenia" light-post banners.

clean and presentable to the public at large," said Vicken Sosikian, Chairman of the AYF Western Region. "Service to our communities is part of the AYF mission. With the Little Armenia Beautification Program we will not only be able to serve the Armenian-American community of Little Armenia, but the city of Los Angeles as well."

NEW AYF WEBSITES

The new websites will serve as the web portal for the Youth Corps Program, AYF Summer Camp, *Haytoug*, and other AYF programs and projects.

"The new websites will improve the lines of communication between the AYF and our community of web users," said Raffi Semerdjian, Administrator of Public Relations for the AYF. "The new websites will also be the medium through which information about our major programs will be readily available to our users, including applications for Summer Camp and Youth Corps," explained Semerdjian.

The new websites can be found at:
AYFwest.org, AYFYouthCorps.org, AYFCamp.org, and Haytoug.org.



EDITORIAL

A SIMPLE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE

As you read this editorial history is taking place and being recorded. Here in the United States, while some members of Congress fight to obtain US recognition of the Armenian Genocide, others are devising ways to deny justice to about 1 million Armenian-Americans. Clear and distinct forces are working to oppose the passage of the Genocide Resolution (House Resolution 193).



Although every year on May 28, we rejoice in the celebration of the anniversary of our nation's first independence, we cannot do so without the backdrop of injustice in our minds. Unfortunately, we must simultaneously face the reality that much like on October 20, 2000, the White House, in the name of "National Security", may once again undemocratically prevent the resolution recognizing the Genocide from being voted on as a direct result of pressure from the Turkish government.

During the current Bush Administration we witnessed the continuous decrease in US aid to Armenia; we witnessed yet another US President's refusal to keep Armenian Genocide campaign promises; and, not surprisingly, we also witnessed the improvement of US-Turkey relations, including a \$20 billion military aid package to Turkey's Defense Ministry.

We, as Americans, live in a country founded on the basis of revolutionary ideologies and formed as a direct result of revolution, namely the American Revolution, which ended two centuries of British rule for most of the North American colonies.

Among the many traits of revolution are the acts of going against the odds, identifying justice and working to produce the results of it, defending basic human rights in the face of their absence, using tools of modern society to demand and obtain righteousness, and the struggle to defend and serve a cause. These traits have served as the historic building blocks for many of the world's greatest countries. Unfortunately, these general traits of revolution also become necessary

in dealing with the Armenian Cause and the deserved recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Cause faces the all too well-known vice: the denial of justice to a whole people for the purposes of economic and territorial gains. In both the past and present, parties and organizations use the ideology of revolution to oppose the great odds we face, to struggle for justice and the preservation of our basic human rights. The testimonies of revolution provide us with the hope to continue in our pursuit of the otherwise impossible.

Thus, individual internalization of revolutionary ideologies and hope becomes crucial at this time. We shall not look to the Armenian Cause and say that the world's greatest powers are against us; we shall not turn our backs against justice and righteousness, and we must remember that until today our basic rights to our land and our life in Western Armenia have been stolen from us.

In the same revolutionary spirit that built the United States and the first Armenian Republic, we must now realize that the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is only a year away. In the face of that reality, we should unite and work together to demand and obtain that which is rightfully ours.

Knowing full well that thoughts, beliefs, and ideologies are in a sense contagious, we ask of every individual who reads this editorial to convince others to join us in our quest for recognition, reparation, and the return of our lands, or, in other words, our quest for the simple virtue of justice.

AYF CONDEMNS BRUTAL MURDER OF ARMENIAN SOLDIER BY AZERBAIJANI COUNTERPART DURING NATO EXERCISES

YEREVAN—The Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) categorically condemns the brutal murder of Armenian military officer Gurgen Markarian by his Azerbaijani counterpart last week in Budapest, where participants from various nations have gathered in the framework of a series of exercises of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace program. According to accounts from the scene, the Azerbaijani soldier violently stabbed and almost beheaded Lt. Markarian with an axe.

The AYF considers this horrific incident a continuation of the Azerbaijani government's radical anti-Armenian policies, which brought about the liberation movement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The Azerbaijani government's stance toward post-cease fire Armenia has not differed. Just last month, Azerbaijani officials refused entry to high ranking Armenian participants in NATO PFP planning meetings being held in the country's capital, Baku.



Despite these discriminatory actions, and extreme rhetoric of the Azerbaijani governing elite in dealing with Armenia, NATO, under whose auspices these exercises were being held, did not take proper action and hold the politically motivated Azerbaijani officials responsible for their actions. As a result, Azerbaijani violence against Armenians has escalated and it has claimed an innocent young life in an unspeakable manner.

The AYF calls on all IUSY-member organizations to clearly condemn these unjust and brutal actions by Azerbaijani government and military officials against Armenians and to call on their respective governments to strongly denounce these politically-motivated actions by Azerbaijan and its agents.

The AYF further calls on NATO and Hungarian authorities to properly investigate and truthfully characterize these inhumane events through the prosecution of the perpetrators according to the due process of international law.

“ARMENIANS UNITED, WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED!”

THOUGHTS ON APRIL 24...

SIAMANTO MARONIAN

I hear that slogan every year on the 24th of April in front the Turkish Consulate. Unfortunately, I don't believe it, because I don't see it and I don't even feel it. Sure, when we appear on television under the public eye, we act as if we are united and stand as one, but when the cameras are turned off a gray cloud creeps over us, and we stop acting.

I would love to know what you will be doing on April 24th this year. Let's see. Schools are closed, because it's a Saturday. But where are your children on that day? Magic Mountain? Disneyland? Or perhaps, having a barbecue at a friend's house? Where are they?

Oh, so you decided to close your business on that day? Where are you going to be? I hear Southwest's rates to Las Vegas are extremely cheap.

You say, "How dare you judge me? Who the hell are you? *I care and I mourn.*" I'm not judging. I'm just wondering why we can't gather 20,000 Armenians at the Turkish Consulate, when there are about half a million Armenians living in Los Angeles.

Let me guess, your political organization isn't organizing the protest. Or maybe you don't see the point, since the Genocide took place almost a century ago. You think we are wasting our time in front of an empty building, yelling and screaming for justice.

So what if you donated to an Armenian fund? Is that supposed to make you a good Armenian? Do you think your money is all that matters? Well let me tell you, it isn't.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 24th of April is only one day out of the year. It's a day we should stand united not just for the public eye, but for ourselves. We must prove to the world that we are united as one, demanding justice for a crime that has been left unpunished for EIGHTY NINE YEARS.

Yes, we have seven million Armenians in the world, but when we choose not to work for unity, and even worse, work against each other, then we are committing genocide against ourselves.



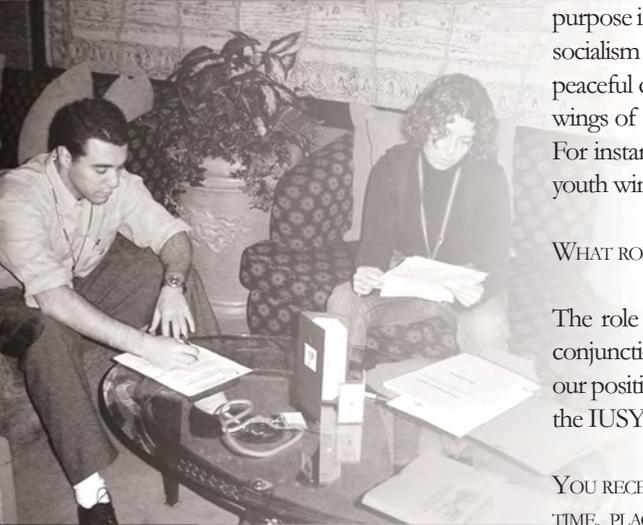
iUSY



STAFFWRITER

CAN YOU PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE IUSY?

The IUSY is essentially the youth counterpart of Socialist International. It is made up of 143 socialist, social democratic, and labor youth organizations from all over the world. It was founded over 90 years ago, on August 24, 1907, and is currently the largest student and youth political organization in the world. Its purpose is to establish bonds of solidarity between its members and promote the principles of democratic socialism throughout the world. These principles include such things as freedom, human rights, democracy, peaceful conflict resolution, equality, and social justice. Many of the member organizations are the youth wings of political parties that are either in power or are the main opposition in their respective countries. For instance, Fiatal Baloldal, the Hungarian youth organization that was co-hosting the Congress, is the youth wing of the ruling Socialist Party of Hungary.



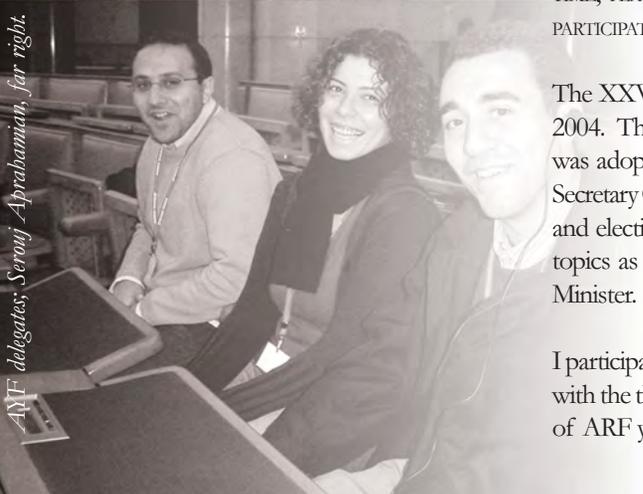
WHAT ROLE DOES THE AYF PLAY IN THE IUSY?

The role of the AYF in the IUSY is to establish ties with fellow member organizations and work in conjunction with them to further our common goals. We strive to contribute to the IUSY by presenting our position on the various topics and issues that are on the organization's agenda. In addition, we present the IUSY with information about the concerns, interests, and struggles of the Armenian people.

YOU RECENTLY TOOK PART IN AN IUSY MEETING. CAN YOU PLEASE PROVIDE SOME DETAILS (TYPE OF MEETING, TIME, PLACE, DELEGATIONS PRESENT, ETC.) ABOUT THE MEETING AND EXPLAIN THE CAPACITY IN WHICH YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING?

The XXV IUSY World Congress took place in Budapest, Hungary, on the weekend of February 27-29, 2004. The theme of the Congress was "Global Governance for Peace" and a document with that name was adopted at the Congress. Other items on the agenda included reports by the IUSY President and Secretary General, reform proposals of IUSY statutes, decisions on new membership, adoption of resolutions, and election of the new governing body. There were also open forums and panel discussions on such topics as "Action for Peace." Finally, there were several guest speakers including the Hungarian Prime Minister.

I participated in the Congress as the AYF delegate from the Western Region of the United States. I worked with the three other AYF delegates—two from Armenia and one from Lebanon—to present the position of ARF youth on the various items on the agenda.



AYF delegates; Seronj Aprahamian, far right.

WHAT DID THE AYPF CONTRIBUTE TO THE MEETING? WHAT WAS AYPF'S ROLE?

As mentioned above, we represented AYPF's position on the various items that were on the agenda of the Congress. We took part in the "Black Sea Area Cooperation" committee meetings, the Students Working Group, and the adoption process of the Global Governance for Peace document. We also expressed strong support for such resolutions as the one calling for the withdrawal of Turkish occupying forces from Northern Cyprus. In addition, we spoke with individual delegates from every region of the globe about the various activities and concerns of the AYPF. We were able to educate countless others by distributing copies of *Haytoug* and AYPF pamphlets.

Furthermore, during the open forum on the topic of "Action for Peace," we raised the issue of the Armenian soldier, Gurgun Markarian, murdered by an Azerbaijani soldier in Budapest during a NATO cooperation program. Unger Arsen Stepanian from Yerevan took to the podium and brought the details of this brutal murder to the attention of the entire Congress. He pointed out that the NATO operation took place less than a week prior to the IUSY Congress and was similarly held in Budapest under the concept of promoting peace. All member organizations were urged to condemn the murder and the reactionary Azerbaijani government policies which promote such violence. We followed

include the present form of corporate globalization which is exacerbating world economic inequalities and the strengthening of international law to prosecute crimes against humanity.

Finally, we can expose IUSY members to the countless violations of basic human rights carried out by the Turkish government. In addition to highlighting the Turkish government's active campaign of denying the Genocide, its illegal blockade on Armenia, the suppression of its Christian community, and the destruction of Armenian historical monuments, we can present IUSY members with the fact that Turkey continues to occupy one-third of Cyprus, represses independent journalists, carries out ethnic cleansing against its Kurdish population, tortures prisoners, plans the construction of a socially and environmentally hazardous pipeline to Baku, and the list is endless. It is our responsibility to expose the world to Turkey's true colors. I can't think of a more receptive and appropriate global forum than the IUSY for this. Our task is an extraordinarily significant one given the fact that many of the European members of the IUSY are likely to play a role in deciding whether Turkey will be accepted to the European Union. It is crucial that we inform them of the aforementioned facts.

ACT LOCALLY THINK GLOBALLY

up on this presentation by distributing a press release we had prepared about the matter to all the delegates at the Congress.

HOW CAN THE AYPF AND THE ARMENIAN YOUTH IN GENERAL BENEFIT FROM THE IUSY?

By participating in the IUSY we are presenting a voice for the Armenian people to organizations from every part of the globe. We can inform them of the issues important to us and defend our interests in case topics arise which pertain to us. Also, IUSY allows us to form early bonds with the future leaders of political parties who will likely have power in Europe and throughout the world. Just at this Congress alone we met people from established political parties in Greece, Israel, Palestine, Austria, Finland, Chile, Germany, South Africa, Hungary, and Italy. Furthermore, the IUSY is a good forum for sharing ideas and experiences with others from around the world. By staying in tune with what is going on in the rest of the world, we consequently become more aware of effective strategies to combat our own problems.

In the short-term, we can build bridges with members of the IUSY and establish worldwide support for our current campaigns. The issue of the Armenian soldier who was murdered by the Azerbaijani is a case in point. For the long-term, we can work with the IUSY on issues that are affecting the entire globe, including Armenia. Examples of such issues

HOW CAN THE IUSY BENEFIT FROM THE AYPF?

In return, we have many things to offer the IUSY. We are one of the only worldwide organizations in the IUSY, with branches in over 15 countries. We also have a consistent record of standing up for principles such as democracy, freedom, equality, self-determination, and social justice—principles which the IUSY officially strives to uphold. Thus, as a worldwide organization with a strong track-record of activism, we have a lot to contribute to the many activities of the IUSY.

HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THE HIGHEST MEETING OF ONE OF THE LARGEST YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS WORLDWIDE, WHAT MESSAGE CAN YOU GIVE TO THE ARMENIAN YOUTH HERE IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES?

My message to the Armenian youth here in the US would be to always remember "to act locally, but think globally." Take some time to step out of the local activities you are involved in and view activism on a more global level. Don't be afraid to learn about others in the world and make connections with them, while still furthering the cause of the AYPF. Contrary to what some mistakenly believe, there is no contradiction in struggling for your people while at the same time showing solidarity with other cultures. We must strive to control our own destiny, but never forget that we are an integral part of a larger world that affects our daily lives.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IUSY
WWW.IUSY.ORG

A P R O L O N G E D A F T E R M A T H E X P E R I E N C E :

THE EFFECTS OF GENOCIDE'S TRAUMA ON THE ARMENIAN COLLECTIVE PSYCHE

Talar Chabinian-Mabroukian
3rd Year PhD Student at UCLA

In 1996, a man by the name of Benjamin Wilkomirski published a book entitled *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*. The memoir, first written in German and soon after translated into English, received universal praise for depicting the story of a Jewish boy who lived through the horrific experiences of extermination camps in Poland during the Holocaust. Wilkomirski likens himself to hundreds of “children without identity” who survived the Holocaust¹ and attempts to recover his past from his own history of forgetting. This award-winning book, which, at the time, had a powerful impact on its readers, has now been proven to be a fabrication and is withdrawn from the market.

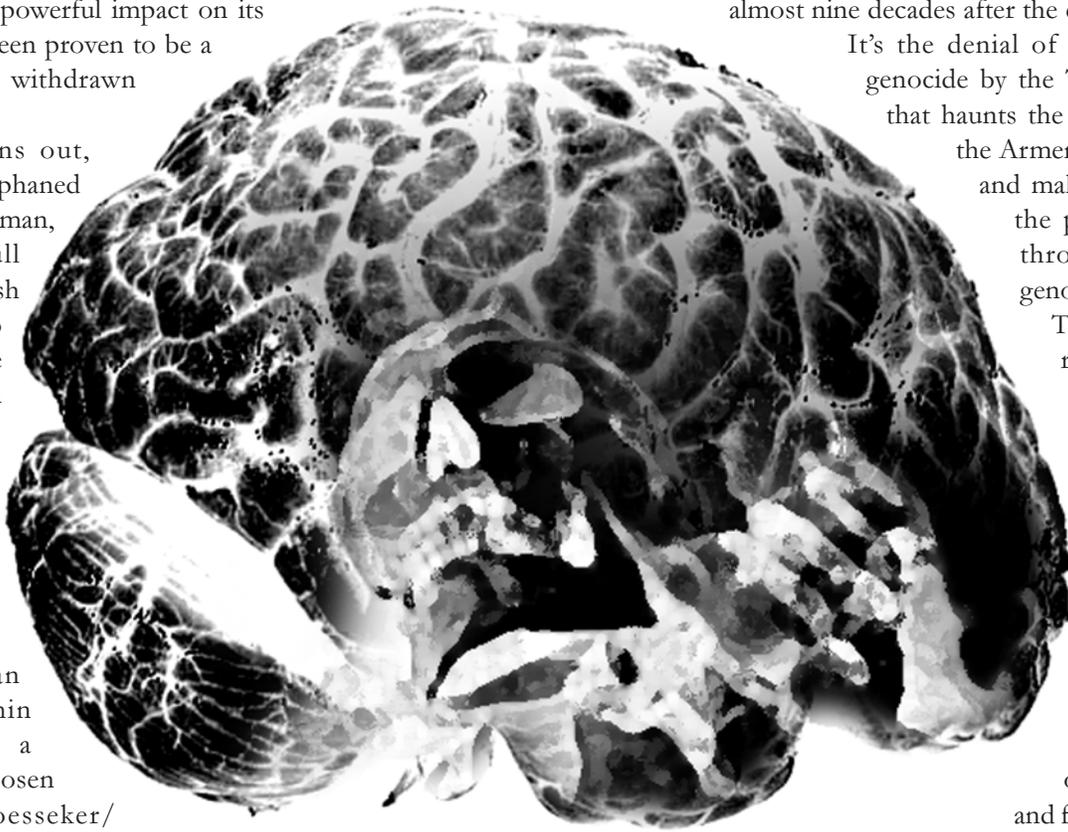
As it turns out, Wilkomirski, an orphaned child of a Swiss woman, took on the full identity of a Jewish orphan who survived the Holocaust. In exploring the complicated notion of memory and its representation in Holocaust literature, Susan Rubin Suleiman writes, “Benjamin Wilkomirski is a “found” name, chosen by Bruno Doesseker/Grosjean when he became convinced of his “true identity” as a child survivor of the Holocaust. His powerful memoir is based not on his experiences but on his fantasies and on the memories of others; before writing his book, Wilkomirski/Doesseker/Grosjean had read thousands of testimonies and historical works in his obsessive pursuit of a Holocaust identity.”² Wilkomirski’s case brings out the interesting connection between individual psychic trauma and cultural

representations of the traumatic event, which become part of a collective memory. As an orphan seeking identity and origin, Wilkomirski has used testimonies of individual traumatic experience in order to internalize and make his own the trauma of the Jews, which has a strong presence in recent European collective memory. So how invalid are his memories then, if he constructed them out of a collective trauma? And how does this individualization of trauma from a collective’s memory differ from trauma that gets passed down to second or third generation offspring of survivors? In the case of the Armenians of the diaspora, trauma of the genocide has a haunting presence in identity construction, almost nine decades after the event.

It’s the denial of recognition of the genocide by the Turkish government that haunts the collective psyche of the Armenians of the diaspora and makes it impossible for the process of working through the trauma of genocide to reach its end. The denial of the genocide complicates the notion of identity politics for diasporan Armenians, since so much of their identity is based on finding an origin for their exilic existence. In order to work through and free themselves of the trauma, the Armenians of the diaspora need

to give testimony to their story of survival. The act of testifying does not only include the witness, but also a listener, which the Armenians lack.

Theories on trauma and memory often argue that it is only through the act of giving testimony that the survivor begins to reclaim his/her position as a witness to the traumatic event, since the historical imperative to bear witness cannot be met during the





actual occurrence, when the survivor is *inside* the event. In time, and with enough distance from the traumatic moment, the survivor can begin to grasp the historic significance of the event, and work through the trauma by giving testimony. In an essay called, “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival,” Dori Laub writes, “What ultimately matters in all processes of witnessing, spasmodic and continuous, conscious and unconscious, is not simply information, the establishment of facts, but the experience itself of *living through* testimony, of giving testimony.”³ So how do diasporan Armenians give testimony to an event of which they were not witnesses? Today, actual survivors of the genocide are very few in number. In the 1980s, when survivors began to near

AMIDST THIS UNJUST POLITICAL CLIMATE, ARMENIANS OF THE DIASPORA HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED A TENDENCY TO GLORIFY LITERATURE AND ART THAT CONTAINS DEPICTIONS OF THE HORRORS OF GENOCIDE OR THE TRIUMPHS OF SURVIVAL.

the end of their lifespan, there were many organized efforts to record and archive their survivor stories. Their *e y e w i t n e s s* testimonies might have served to help them work through their individual traumas, but they have not contributed to the working through of the trauma of the Armenian collective psyche. The Turkish government and the United States continue to deny the Armenians’ call for recognition, and hence fail to serve as listeners to the testimony of the trauma of genocide. The Armenians of the diaspora now carry on the commitment to give testimony, not only as a duty to the victims of the genocide of 1915, but also as a duty to the survivors, now gone, whose own individual testimonies remain unheard.

The struggle to have their testimonies of the genocide heard and accepted by the Turkish government is further fueled by the growing number of revisionist historical texts. This latest weapon of the Turkish government’s denialist propaganda forces the Armenians of the diaspora to contest false claims by collecting and archiving evidence of their own. Amidst this unjust political climate, Armenians of the diaspora have also developed a tendency to glorify literature and art that contains depictions of the horrors of genocide or the triumphs of survival. Literature and art of the diaspora then, come to be seen as sites for testimonies of the Armenian collective memory, and hence serve as evidence of the genocide’s historical occurrence. Though art can play an immense role in presenting historical phenomena, glorification of genocide art can build harmful expectations on art in the diaspora, by limiting its function to solely a testimonial one. As a result then, the value of

a work of art or literature comes to be measured by its “armenianness”, or whether or not the work is doing something to help the cause of genocide recognition.

Looking back at last year’s release of Atom Egoyan’s *Ararat* reveals this type of glorification. The film was marketed to the Armenian community, as the first widely released dramatic movie presenting the Genocide and its denial. Armenians flooded the theaters blindly applauding the Canadian-born filmmaker’s efforts in telling their story, “our story.” After my first viewing, I often wondered if what I heard being praised everywhere around me was the same film I had seen. The film that I saw clearly criticized an objective view of history as well as notions of absolute Truth, and

presented the impossibility of telling the story of Genocide as it really happened. The film should be really applauded for creating an opportunity for a

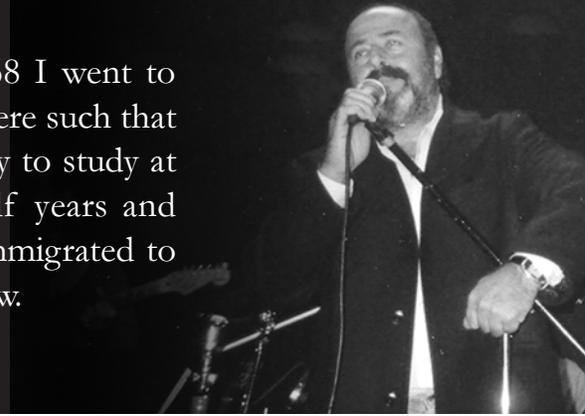
dialogue about the role of memory and the imagination in constructing images and representations of a homeland lost and making sense of a diasporan identity away from that home. Although that dialogue never really took place in the general public, the film has achieved in creating a cultural phenomenon by acting as a unifying force to the Armenian community of Los Angeles. In order to ensure the nation-wide release of the film, owned by Miramax, the very fragmented community of Los Angeles rallied in unison in promoting this film and produced sold-out showings at all three theaters for two consecutive weekends. It’s important that Armenians of the diaspora not limit the role of art in the diaspora by glorifying those works that give genocide testimony and overlook those which don’t. Egoyan has been a prominent film-maker for many years, and the rest of his works should have received the attention of the community over the years.

Art doesn’t have to lose its value as a repository of culture, as a means of transmitting the culture’s collective memory from one generation to the other, but it can’t be limited to doing only that.

1 Suleiman, Susan Rubin. “Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs: Wilkomirski/Wiesel”. *Poetics Today* 21:3, (2000) 547.
 2 Suleiman 549.
 3 Laub, Dori. “An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival”. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 85

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH...

I was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1953. In 1968 I went to Tbrebank in Antelias. At that time, the rules were such that you did not have to be a member of the clergy to study at the Tbrebank. I was there for two and a half years and immigrated to Australia in 1971. In 1979 I immigrated to the United States. And what next? I don't know.



STAFFWRITER

HOW DID YOU SURFACE AS A REVOLUTIONARY SINGER?

In 1977, the Shant Student Association invited me to the United States to sing. When I was young, in Australia, I would sing in many languages – in many different styles. When I came to America in 1977, it was a time when so many families and young men had found refuge in the US from the war in Lebanon. The program was such that I began the evening with joghovrtagan songs followed by revolutionary songs. When I started to sing the revolutionary songs, there were many people in the field near Castaway's in Glendale – scattered, sitting on the ground. I began singing the songs and the mood of the people, who had just fled a war, and the acceptance of these revolutionary songs by the audience was a turning-point in my life as a singer. I decided that from then on, I would only sing revolutionary songs.

WHAT DOES THE REVOLUTIONARY SONG MEAN TO YOU?

The revolutionary song is unlike any other song. Most songs that you hear are hypothetical – love songs for example – there's nothing real. But revolutionary songs, they're existent – elucidating the sacrifice of a person. For example, when you sing about Kevork Chavoush, and you know the story of Kevork Chavoush, there is no way you cannot feel the meaning of the song and believe in it – because that person's real accomplishments are embodied in that song. I don't believe anyone can sing about Kevork Chavoush without feeling for his history and knowing about his life – we do not sing revolutionary songs for the sake of singing; we sing these songs because of their life long dedication and sacrifice.

In a sense, you as a revolutionary singer, alongside Harout Pamboukjian as a joghovrtagan singer have

turned into symbols for the Armenian youth - a tag team of some sort that the youth anticipate at every dinner dance or celebration. What are your thoughts on this?

I don't know how true that is – of us being symbols for the Armenian youth. We cannot make that judgment of ourselves as singers; however, we are always grateful when we see the influx of youth at the foot of the stage when we sing. It's important to note that no matter how highly a singer thinks of himself, when the people are not receptive and accepting of you, your songs are meaningless. And as important revolutionary songs are, joghovrtagan songs are just as important. When for example, Harout Pamboukjian gets on stage, the crowd of youth coming to the dance floor and dancing to the Armenian music is cultural preservation in action.

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO THE ARMENIAN YOUTH?

I feel for the Armenian youth in this country. Because they are here unwillingly as the Armenian people were forced to have ended up here and leave their motherland; yet they still try to find the means to struggle for those lands that are so many thousands of miles away from them. When you are struggling against a foe on your own land,

in your own country, the struggle becomes much more simplified, because at least you know you will be dying on your own soil.

“They say that without dreams, man does not survive. Deep down in my heart, I know that my dream is for my children to be able to live on the lands of my forefathers in Western Armenia.”

Without discouraging the youth, I'd like to point out that our resistance is very powerful, and winning our struggle will be very difficult; however, I should also like to remind them that they cannot struggle with word. They must struggle with work; the struggle does not take place atop stages and podiums; the struggle takes place at ground zero in the field. If the youth feels that it wants to struggle for the Armenian Cause, they must know that it will take many sacrifices. And with that, they must believe in their struggle. We cannot simply hope for the better, because hope can easily be deceived by despair; however, belief can remain strong in a person until death. As Christians we believe in Christ – period; as such we must believe in our struggle – period. And along with that, whatever sacrifices may come, we must accept them.



My parents emigrated from Lebanon in 1946 and I was born in Yerevan in 1950. After my primary education in Yerevan, I was accepted to the department of painting and sculpting at the Panos Terlemezian Fine Arts School. I am a painter and sculptor by expertise. After I graduated in 1975, my mother and I moved to Beirut, Lebanon. A year later the civil war began, and in 1977 I went to Greece where I stayed for only two months before I left for the United States. I've been here for 27 years now.

YOU'VE ACTIVELY COLLABORATED WITH THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION BACK IN LEBANON AND EVEN HERE IN THE UNITED STATES – HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU HAVE WITH THE ARF?

I was young – five or six years old – and my father would always say, “Son, there’s a political party that’s called the Armenian Revolutionary Federation that has done this and that, during the Genocide and before, brought forth revolutions against the oppression and so on and so forth. I was ten years old when I knew about Bank Ottoman; my dad would tell me these stories, but of course, in whispers, for if they heard anything about the Tashnagsutuin in Armenia at the time, we’d be finished right there and then. And he told me that they’ve been so loyal to our tri-color, our coat of arms, our culture and heritage for so many years simultaneously serving as the only organization in the Diaspora that has kept the Armenians close to their roots.

When the civil war began in Lebanon the young Armenian men began to take arms and protect Bourj Hammoud. So I went to the center – at that time the head of the ARF was the late Unger Khatchik Arabian – I walked in and said, “I’m a young Hayastantsi. I’m trapped in my home and my beard is growing long.” Of course it was dangerous in the streets; that’s why we’d all stay confined to our own homes. I said, “I served in the military for two years in Armenia. I know how a gun works; give me one and I will stand with the boys outside.” He asked what my profession was and I told him. I happened to have a guitar with me too. And so one thing led to another: I found myself singing for Unger Arabian in his office. Unger Arabian explained to me that my job was to sing, and that I needn’t bear arms. Nevertheless, I would still stand with the watch outside frequently. Khachik Arabian eventually suggested that we organize a concert, and he made it happen.

I remember it like today, February 18, 1976 in the Der Melkonian Hall. A free concert for all the armed Armenian militia in Lebanon. I sang for two and a half hours – revolutionary songs, Sayat Nova. I sang “Our Eir Asdvadz” for the first time at that concert. And I had no idea that the concert was recorded. The next day, the tape was spread all across Bourj Hamoud and found its way to the US.

Furthermore, I’d like to open up and say that – I am not a member of the ARF; however, I am an unsurpassed supporter of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation because I am familiar with the program of the ARF; I believe in their work; and after all, they are the only resilient force in the diasporas that keeps our scattered communities all across the world Armenian. That is my bond with the ARF – I believe in the ARF, and I am always ready to support the ARF in any way I can.

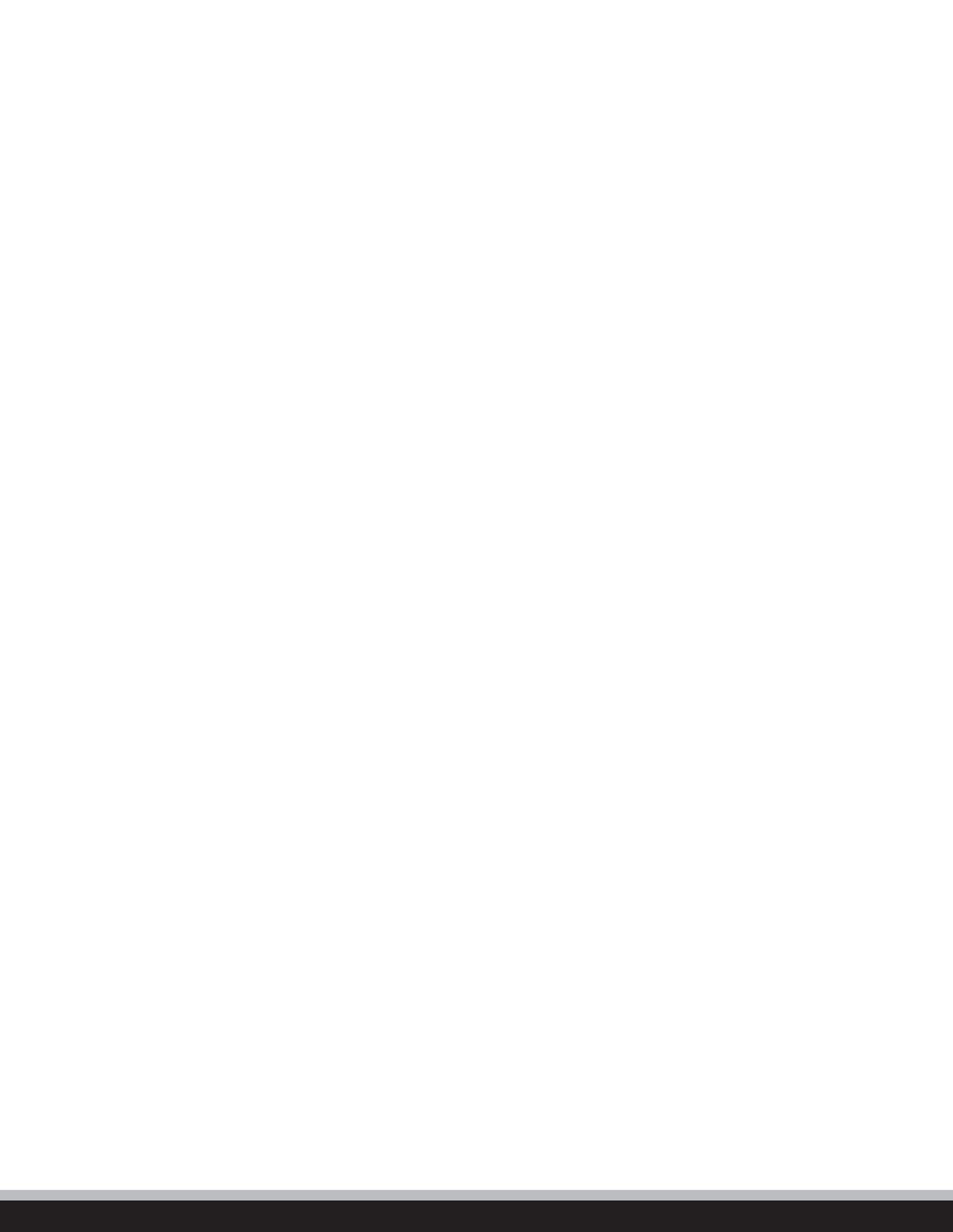
“The youth will decide the course of our people. The question of our existence will be left up to them. I’m proud that we have such a strong youth and I encourage them to always remain true to their organizations, their church, and their culture.”

YOU ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE PAIRED UP WITH KARNIG SARKISSIAN AT DINNER DANCES – WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT KARNIG HAVING SUNG ON THE SAME STAGE AS HIM?

There are singers who get on the stage and lie to the people. It is evident in the way they sing that basically, they come to sing and leave. That is being deceitful, in my opinion. You can’t lie to the youth. The youth believes in Karnig’s songs as pure and wholesome revolutionary songs. And I, too, when I begin singing those songs on stage, it is as if I am entering a sacred realm. And that is why the youth accepts those songs. In regards to Karnig let me say, whatever you sing, you must believe in. If you don’t believe in what you sing, the people will not believe. Karnig believes in what he sings; he understands very well what he is saying – being a man of ideology who values his people above everything. When Karnig sings, it does not travel to the ears of the listeners, but directly to their hearts.

WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE DREAM FOR THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE?

This country is a great nation - a very advanced nation. However, it is not ours. Now, we’re here whether we like it or not. Nevertheless, we can be helpful to all aspects of our heritage and people from here, working from here, organizing fundraisers and what not. But my dream is for the time to come – I wish to see that – for us to all go back to Armenia hand in hand. Take the work we do here, the money we make here, the riches we have here to Armenia, and witness the progress there in six or seven years.





ARF BADANEGAN

THE FUTURE OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION

STAFFWRITER

Most of tomorrow's AYF members will be coming from the ranks of the ARF Badanegan Organization. With almost 400 badanees (juniors) in 13 chapters throughout California and Houston-Texas, the ARF Badanegan Organization of Western America places emphasis on the moral, ideological, mental and physical development of badanees, while educating them regarding national, party and civic issues. Badanees learn to love their friends as they love themselves, respect those who have served for their homeland and their national heroes, love their traditions, language, history, literature and music.

Some of the activities we have as a Badanegan Organization include executive leadership workshops, social evenings with different chapters, Badanegan olympics, winter seminars, and an annual promise ceremony.

If you would like more information on how to become an ARF Badanee, email us at :

BADANEGANCENTRALCOUNCIL@HOTMAIL.COM





Clashing Perspectives INTERRACIAL DATING

BY LARA TALVERDIAN

Interracial dating. It's the classic debate among Armenians. It was the point of discussion at a get-together my AYF chapter organized. Never had I seen everyone have something to say about the issue and say it with such passion.

A friend of mine (outside the chapter) once shared his belief that dating “odars” is “a slap in the face of everyone who died, and I don't just mean 1915.”

Alright, those of you who are seeing anyone whose name doesn't end in “ian,” you are being disrespectful... Fair statement? I think not.

Many Armenians are under the impression that we can preserve our culture and heritage by keeping the blood pure. Preventing assimilation seems to be an inherent objective of our community.

Let me begin by saying that yes, maintaining our culture is important. But at a place and time where we interact with people of all ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds on a day to day basis, attraction between any two people is inevitable and it would be ignorant and stubborn of us to let a last name be a barrier.

Some may criticize me for taking a stance on the issue of interracial dating when I, myself, have very limited experience in the dating arena. But being an observer alone has been enlightening.

Many Armenian couples have strong relationships because of the ethnic comfort zone, so to speak. They dance to Andy with their hands up in the air, kicking their feet from side to side. They chow down the dolma at each others' relatives' house. They engage in repartee with slang words only Armenians can understand. Perhaps you are chuckling to yourself at how trivial this may all be, but I admit they do bring two people together.

And yet, is that all it takes to prevent assimilation? My interests, for example, go beyond Armenian issues; I love journalism. If I were to date a

John Smith based on our shared passion for the profession, would it make me any less Armenian? I can't say that it would.

Bringing an “odar” to a barahandes does not make me less self-conscious about dancing to Andy; if anything, it may make the people who are not used to seeing “odars” there uncomfortable. Eating a non-Armenian cuisine at my “odar” boyfriend's house does not seem less appealing. Perhaps we can't engage in Armenian slang talk, but we can exchange our knowledge of our languages. And we understand each others' interests in areas that go beyond what is associated with a last name, whether they are journalism, art, or finding a cure for cancer.

The way I see it, we live in a country with dynamic cultural demographics. We may come across a non-Armenian we are attracted to. I have family members who have dated outside the Armenian community. They are, in some respects, better Armenians for doing so; they are challenging the commonly-accepted beliefs about dating and compelling everyone around them to, in the least, consider a perspective other than their own. There is more that solidifies emotional ties between any two people than an ethnic song, a cultural food, or even a common tongue. Of course, any issue that has to do with people is an all-gray area. Individuals can face the same choices but deal with them differently based on their beliefs and past experiences. Just remember, we're not talking marriage here. *That* is a whole other issue.

NG & MARRIAGES

BY SHANT VARTANIAN

Two fundamental factors must be taken into account in reference to interracial dating. The first detrimental object in the condition is that of the subject's cultural values. Secondly, the concept of dating must be evaluated. These factors must be considered together as they focus on the single concept.

In its broader context, the identity of a person is comprised of the aspects that make up who the individual is. It is a critical dynamic in determining the realities of interracial dating. All cultures have a unique value system. In a relationship between two people, incompatibilities are inevitable. In all such cases, compromise is necessary and when it comes to this unavoidable point, the two value systems are assumed to be in contradiction to a degree. This leads to a level of discomfort between the two parties. Hence, this interaction leads to a negative relationship.

The cultural aspect of the identity encompasses several themes such as music, religion, and language. A relationship between one with an Armenian cultural grounding and one of a Latino cultural system will contradict on one level or another. For example, the music of the Armenian culture will strike as odd to the Latino and vice versa. There are certainly exceptions, but in all practical senses (after all, that's what a relationship comes down to), a challenge has been posed. In terms of religion, the worship of God through the means of Jesus in the Armenian tradition and through Mother Mary in the Latino tradition creates another contradiction. The most challenging issue arises when it comes down to language. Language has been strategically articulated to express a cultural essence through speech. A relationship with one of a different cultural background will certainly pose an obstacle in the grasping and the expression of essential concepts and ideas.

In assuming that a couple is ready to move on to the commitment of marriage, another critical issue arises when the two decide in bringing a child into this world.

This issue is probably a most vital one. As the child grows up, he or she will come to make a decision on following a specific cultural system. In all practical terms, this issue is unavoidable. In choosing one, the other will certainly lose a "cultural bearer". There are many such cases that exist today. All cultures deserve to survive the challenges of time and as individuals of any culture, it is a responsibility to make sure that no culture loses out.

In establishing the idea of interracial dating (and eventual marriage) to be unhealthy, recent developments in the field of genetics have had their contribution. The Armenian people have the "Armenoid" gene, which is unique to them. This gene, in interacting with another gene through human reproduction leads to "genetic drift", a term referring to the "impurity" of a gene. As biologically humans are similar to animals, the idea of reproducing a child of a pure cultural line is applicable. This idea is analogous to the concept of breeding a Rottweiler, for example. The characteristics of a Rottweiler includes fierceness (encoded in its genetic composition). Breeding with another Rottweiler yields a dog that keeps its "fierceness". In contrast, breeding of a Rottweiler with a Golden Retriever reduces the pure characteristics of one or the other. These ideas surely sound foreign, but reality must be accepted regardless of its negativity or positivity.

This last notion certainly does not assume the supremacy of any culture over another. On the contrary, it allows for the beauty in cultural variety to exist. It also allows humans to experience these cultures in a pure form. We must consider it not only our duty as service to our culture, but also on a humanistic level, ensure the survival and purity of all cultures.

MONTEBELLO A Y F 4 5 T H ANNIVERSARY



Close to 1000 Armenian Youth Federation members, alumni, and supporters attended the AYF Montebello “Vahan Cardashian” chapter’s 45th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, January 31 at the Baghramian Hall in Montebello.

AYF alumni from as far back as 1958 were present at the event, where entertainment was provided by the Hosharian Brothers, the AYF “All Stars,” the John Mekenian Band, and performers of traditional Armenian music.

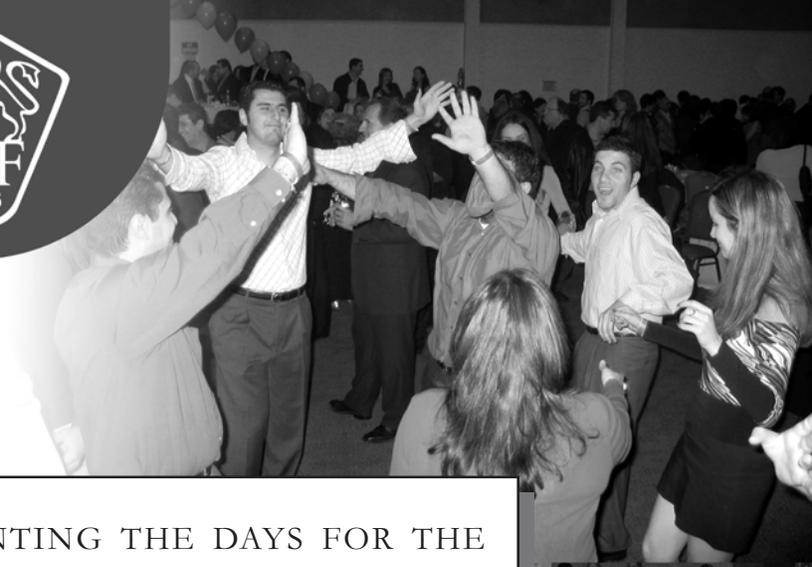
“The success of the evening was evinced by the reunion of AYF alumni and the establishment of closer relationships between past and present AYF members,” explained Marie Minassian, member of the Montebello “Vahan Cardashian” chapter, and one of the many who worked to make the celebration a success. “The presence of the many young individuals shows our alumni that the work they did in their time is being continued with even more activism today.”

“I was counting the days for the event and it was the first time I showed up before eight o’clock for a dance,” commented Greg Krekorian, member of the Glendale Board of Education and alumnus of the Hartford, Connecticut “Ararat” AYF chapter. “I encourage all AYF alumni to support AYF’s programs,” continued Krekorian.

“In marking the Montebello “Vahan Cardashian” chapter’s 45th anniversary, we not only celebrate the AYF’s successes thus far, but we also look forward to expanding the reach of our efforts to serve the Armenian youth in the coming years,” remarked Vicken Sosikian, Chairman of the AYF.

I WAS COUNTING THE DAYS FOR THE
EVENT AND IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I
SHOWED UP BEFORE EIGHT O’CLOCK
FOR A DANCE...

*-Greg Krekorian, Glendale Board of Education and alumnus
of the Hartford Connecticut “Ararat” AYF Chapter*



AYF 71ST ANNIVERSARY

The Armenian Youth Federation Western United States Garo Madenlian Public Affairs Office announced Monday that over 700 AYF members, supporters, and friends gathered on March 27 to celebrate the 71st anniversary of the AYF.

Entertainment for the celebration-dinner dance, held at the Pasadena Armenian Center, was provided by Harout Pamboukjian and Karnig Sarkissian.

The dinner dance not only served the purpose of celebrating the AYF’s 71st anniversary, but also as the AYF Central Executive’s annual

fundraiser. Proceeds from the evening as well as contributions from supporters will be used to fund the AYF’s upcoming Armenian Genocide recognition activities including the annual AYF protest at the Turkish Consulate.

“We are encouraged and motivated by the numerous donations and large turnout of the evening,” said Vicken Sosikian, chairman of the AYF Western Region. “Our 71st anniversary is a celebration of our past accomplishments and a reaffirmation of our pledge to work for the Armenian Cause with renewed strength and determination,” said Sosikian.



EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR 2004

AYF CAMP BIG PINES

The Armenian Youth Federation Western United States Garo Madenlian Public Affairs Office announced Tuesday that over 100 AYF members participated in the Annual AYF Educational Seminar on March 19-21 at AYF Camp Big Pines.

The weekend, which was directed by Karnig Sarkissian, incorporated several educational activities, lectures, and discussions about developments within the ARF in light of the conclusion of the 29th World Congress, activism in the American political system, and the translation of ideology into ideological work.

“The seminar was a great success,” explained Raffi Semerdjian, Administrator of Public Relations and Publications for the AYF. “New and innovative methods of educational, combined with a patriotic and social atmosphere provided the opportunity for our members to learn more about political activism, the ARF, and even a better understanding of ourselves,” elaborated Semerdjian.

The educational included a mock presidential election conducted by chairman of the Armenian National Committee

of America Western Region, Raffi Hamparian, and a discussion about the 29th World Congress of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation led by ARF Western Region Central Committee Chairman Hovig Saliba.

“Participants from eight chapters gathered at AYF Camp and learned about various new topics currently involving Armenia and Armenians, while being able to learn from one another through feedback and debate,” said Melanie Vartabedian, member of the AYF Educational Central Council.

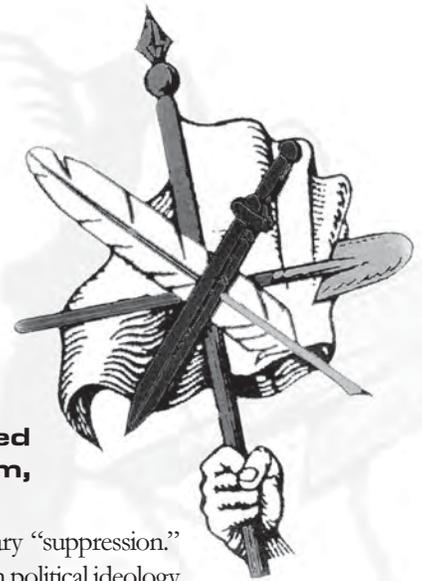
In what has become customary of AYF seminars and camps, the participants sang Armenian patriotic and revolutionary songs Saturday Night.

“To best serve our cause we must first be well educated about the issues at hand,” said Vicken Sosikian, Chairman of the AYF Western Region. “We hope that our members implement what they have taken from the weekend into productive, results-driven work toward the realization of our goals,” explained Sosikian.



QUESTIONS TO THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION

During the 2003 Parliamentary elections in Armenia, the ARF answered various questions about the party's structure, ideology, platform, worldview & activities. The general Armenian populace was the source of the questions. The AYF's ALP is currently working on the translation of all these questions and answers. Two samples of their work in progress comprise the content of this article.



What is the reason for the stringent internal discipline implemented by the ARF's structure? Is that not a violation of people's freedom, since freedom does not necessarily entail anarchy?

Reflecting back on the immediate past, it is with pain that we recall the last few years, when everything was subject to a physical and moral collapse in our country, and the general organization involved in all types of work, in all fields also weakened. The political party, as a working entity, naturally, also needs a foundational principle for the organization of its members and the inter-relations between governing bodies, their responsibilities and duties. After all, the word “organization” itself conveys a meaning of order. Order, in its turn, becomes possible when the society obediently follows a process of law and order established by the general populace; otherwise, no entity would be able to subsist.

For instance, one of the reasons for the dissolution of the inordinate number of political parties and unions that have arisen in the past few years lies in the organizations' disorder and lack of discipline.

Like all of these organizations, the ARF also unites people on a voluntary basis, and nobody is forced to join or remain in its ranks. Furthermore, before becoming a member an individual must first be familiar with the ARF constitution; only then can he/she make a final decision to join.

Upon entering the ranks of the political organization, the individual is already aware that he/she becomes someone with a particular ideological and political disposition; he/she may remain distinct in terms of personal life, though his/her political and organizational activities must coincide with the party's demands and overall direction.

Individuals who strive to be socially and politically active subject

The ARF is the only party that conducts its meetings behind closed doors. Why is it so cautious and what does it have to hide from the public?

We have seen that in communist times party meetings were held in public and, whenever possible, on a grand scale with many people present. No one can remember if at these meetings the party discussed organizational issues or future tactics and evaluated past activities or mistakes. In the best case, guidelines that had been prepared before the meeting would be introduced at the meeting only to be unanimously accepted by those present. This means that the party was having its real meetings behind closed doors; that the decisions were being made by a small group, while the majority was offered a predetermined plan.

The ARF's meetings are peculiar in that the agenda for a given meeting is passed down to the ranks in advance and a free, open discussion (sometimes lasting days) is held at each organizational level. Decisions and guidelines are cultivated according to the outcome of the evaluations made. This method of examining issues at every level reflects the party's democracy. At such meetings, thousands of individuals examine issues; their decisions are then relayed back to the members. This process can hardly be called

themselves to such voluntary “suppression.” They have declared a certain political ideology for the sake of which they are prepared to input their strengths and capabilities in order to benefit the general effort and goal.

For that very reason, perhaps the unconditional acceptance of the party's agenda and operational procedures is not sufficient for becoming an ARF member. One must also be subject to the Constitution and the party's decisions. The organizational bodies' decisions are mandatory for the members, because they reveal the opinion of the majority; therefore, they are the product of the general will of the party.

As one of the pioneers of the ARF once said, “This is an oath that a free man accepts freely, for himself, with his own free will. This is one necessity for the cooperation of free men: freely accepted, yet realized forcibly; whereby man is his own slave, not another's; he submits to himself, not another, which means he is entirely free.” Yes, this is the very same freedom, to which the individual arrives, when he/she is able to serve a sacred belief and spiritually familiar cause.

Let us remember, that our greatest freedom-loving members, from Aghpyur Serop to Kevork Chavoush, Tro, Aram Manougjan, and many others, voluntarily and unconditionally subjected themselves to the same Constitution, which entails nothing more than the maintenance of simple righteousness and disciplined respect toward fellow members and the common effort.

secretive. Who does not understand that today the whisper of a secret meeting is more clearly heard than the racket of a public one?

Moving on to the question of what the ARF is cautious of and what it has to hide... The ARF is cautious and wary of the misconceptions prevalent in the atmosphere and the contrived interpretations. If many organizations hold meetings with predetermined decisions and nothing but a public presentation is left, then the ARF makes decisions at those meetings where opinions collide and mentalities wrestle until a final resolution is reached that satisfies the majority. The decision is then delivered to the public. Is not the decision most important?

Simply put, the ARF, like many other political parties, realizes its decisions in a workable environment; however, unlike other parties, it does not prepare a presentation consisting merely of propaganda. Thus, conversations about the secrecy of ARF meetings are not only the result of misunderstandings. More commonly, they are made with the intention of misguiding uninformed people.

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HAYTOUG



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

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ԻՐԱԴԱՐՁՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐ

Ռազմիկ Հարուն



Հայտար Ալիեի մահէն ի վեր, Հայաստանի եւ Ատրպէյճանի յարաբերութիւնները նոր բնոյթ ստացած են: Այս երկու երկիրներու ցարդ նուաճած բոլոր համաձայնութիւնները կարծես այլևս չեղեալ կը նկատուին Իլիամ Ալիեի կողմէ: Զառակ Ալիեի մուտքով, Ատրպէյճան Արցախի նկատմամբ իր վարած քաղաքականութիւնը փոփոխութեան ենթարկեց: Այժմ՝ Ազերիները աւելի պատերազմական ուղեգիծ մը բռնած են, ինչ որ բացալայտ է Իլիամ Ալիեի յայտարարութիւններէն եւ ընդհանրապէս Ատրպէյճանի կառավարութեան որդեգրած դիրքէն:

Այս ռազմավարութեան առաջին արտացոլումը Հայաստանէն հեռու Պոտաբեշօի մէջ ձեւ առաւ, ուր չափազանց «քաջ» Ազերի սպայ մը կացինահար ըրաւ Հայաստանի բանակի սպայի Գուրգէն Մարգարեանը, մինչ Մարգարեան տակաին կը քնանար: Ծիծաղելի էր Ատրպէյճանի պաշտօնական մօտեցումը այս արարքին նկատմամբ, որովհետեւ անոնք փորձեցին ոճիրը արդարացնել ըսելով թէ Մարգարեան Ազերի սպան գրգռած էր վարկաբեկիչ խօսքերով եւ հեզնական նայուածքներով: Իրողութիւնը խեղափոխելով ի Ատրպէյճան կը ձգտի մեղմ պատիժ մը ապահովել իր վախկոտ սպային, որպէսզի կարենան զինք իբրեւ հերոս Ատրպէյճան վերադարձնել:

Հայաստանի արտգործնախարարութիւնը դատապարտեց ոճիրը ու աւելցուց, որ անոր դրդապատճառը Ատրպէյճանի ներկայ իշխանութեան ստեղծած հակահայ մթնոլորտն է: Այս տեսակի մթնոլորտի մը մէջ տրամաբանական է որ Արցախի բանակցութիւնները դանդաղ ընթանան: Հակառակ այս բոլորին, արտաքին ուժեր կան որոնք կը փորձեն Արցախի խնդիրը արագ եւ խաղաղ ձեւով լուծել: Զանազան շահերէ մղուած, գլխաւորաբար Ատրպէյճանի քարիւղի շահերէն ելլելով, այս ուժերը կ'ուզեն կոռուղ կողմերը հաշտեցնել: Օրինակ՝ Ամերիկան յաջողած է ձեռքերը երկարել մինչեւ Վրաստան եւ Ատրպէյճան, ուր այսօր կը վայելէ Ամերիկեան արտաքին քաղաքականութեան պատմութեան մէջ աննախադէպ ազդեցութիւն մը: Մարտ 26 – 28 2004-ի շաբաթավերջին, Ամերիկայի պետական քարտուղարի առաջին տեղակալ՝ Ռիչըրտ Արմիթաժը Հայաստան այցելեց, Միացեալ Նահանգներու եւ Հայաստանի համագործակցութեան ընդլայնման հնարաւորութիւնները քննելու համար: Այցելութեան ընթացքին, Արմիթաժ ըսաւ, որ Հայաստան-Թուրքիա սահմանի բացումը նպաստաւոր է բոլորին համար եւ առաւելաբար օգտաշատ՝ Արցախի խնդրի լուծման համար: Սակայն, Իլիամ Ալիե չի բաժներ Արմիթաժի ունեցած Հայաստան-Թուրքիայ եւ Հայաստան-Ատրպէյճան

յարաբերութեանց հեռանկարը: Ան կառչած է այն սկզկալութեան, որ Թուրքիան չի բանար սահմանը մինչեւ Հայաստան Արցախը Ազրպէյճանին վերադարձնէ: Իլիամ Ալիե իր յոյսը անկայուն հիմքերու վրայ հաստատած է, որովհետեւ Թուրքիա Եւրոմիութեան անդամակցելու շահերէն մեկնած, կը ջանայ ինքզինք համակրելի ձեւաձնել, իրմէ սպասուած Եւրոպական չափանիշներու համապատասխան բարեփոխումներ կատարելով: Թէեւ Թուրքիա այսօր Կիպրոսով զբաղած է, ուշ կամ կանուխ իր ուշադրութիւնը Հայաստանի հետ սահմանին վրայ պիտի կեդրոնացնէ, որովհետեւ այդ հարցի դրական լուծումը նախապայմաններէն մէկն է իր Եւրոմիութեան անդամակցութեան: Հետեւաբար, հաւանական է որ մօտ ապագային լուրջ քայլեր առնուին այս հարցը կարգաւորելու համար:

Թուրքիոյ հետ սահմանի բացման վատ հետեւանքներէն զերծ մնալու համար, Հայաստան պէտք է կայուն յենարաններ ապահովէ, որպէսզի բանակցութիւններու ատեն վնասաբեր զիջումներ ընելու կացութեան մէջ չզտնուի: Թէեւ Ռուսերը Հայաստանի մէջ զօրքեր ունին եւ Հայաստանին տնտեսական օժանդակութիւն կը հասնի տարբեր երկիրներէ եւ կազմակերպութիւններէ, Հայաստանի կառավարութիւնը պարտականութիւն ունի իր ծառայած ժողովուրդին ներկան բարելաւել եւ ապագան երաշխաւորել երկրին թերութիւնները սրբագրելով: Այսինքնի կաշառակերութեան, կոռուպցիայի եւ ստուերային տնտեսութեան դէմ պայքարելով Հայաստանի մէջ յառաջացնել մրցակցային տնտեսութիւն եւ ազատ շուկայական պայմաններ, ուր ժողովուրդին աւելի շահ վերապահուած ըլլայ, քան այն դրութիւնը որ միայն մէկ կամ երկու ընկերութիւն շուկային կը տիրեն: Աւելինս նիւթական օժանդակութիւնը օգտագործել իսկապէս անմիջական հիմնախնդիրներ լուծելու համար, ինչպէս Հայաստանի համար հիսիս-հարաւ մայրուղիի մը կառուցում, գիւղական կեանքի դժուարութիւններու վերացում, այսինքնի գիւղերու ելեկտրական հոսանքի եւ ջրի ապահովում, որպէսզի վերաբնակեցման աշխատանքները իրենց գերագոյն նպատակին հասնին, իբրեւ արդիւնք արձանագրելով մնայուն ու աճող գիւղեր: Տնտեսապէս զարգացած Հայաստան մը զիջում ընելու ստիպուած չ'ըլլար եւ շրջափակման պատճառով երկրին հասած վնասներէն քիչ կ'ազդուի ու սահմանը բանալու կը համաձայնի միայն այն ատեն, երբ պայմանները իրեն համար ընդունելի են, եւ ոչ թէ պարտադրաբար: Միայն այսպիսի հայրենիք մը կարողութիւնը կ'ունենայ արտաքին ուժերէ նուազագոյն չափով ազդուած իր ապագան կերտել:

A MESSAGE

By ArtHaroutioun

We've been here for over a century now,
Where have you been, my friend?
Through roads with bends and turns,
Dead ends, but always fighting through.

An identity out of which we grew
Will surely grow for years to come
And always some will come along
And try to be the *new*.

But we're the *old* why don't you listen,
Our coats of arms will glisten long
And from the beginning our existence
Promised justice and will prolong.

Our cause is righteous, unlike few,
Who dew on leaves and dry up fast,
We're the sun that sucks you up!
But you keep on coming, then you pass.

Oh when they see, thank God. Alas!
A thorough mass realization,
That we will fight until the end,
A battle-cry turned inspiration.

P.S.

Wear not the clothes of The Republic,
Stay away from dreaded Camels,
Pay attention to the infamous Gap,
The cause is all that matters.

Indulge in leaves of wretched wonders,
Inhale the break that it bleeds,
If it helps you rally the force of thunder,
So be it, for that's what we need.

The pots of gold are not enough,
I know for I have wondered,
For every pot of gold they got,
Our hearts grow only stronger.



ON JANUARY 27, 2004 a significant victory was achieved in the pursuit of justice for the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide. The New York Life Insurance Company finally agreed to settle some of the claims for life insurance policies purchased in the Ottoman Empire before the Genocide. Eighty-nine years belated, the matter was resolved following a lawsuit brought forward by some of the Armenian descendants of the policyholders and their attorneys. \$20 million was the final figure agreed upon to be distributed to the descendants, Armenian churches and some of the long-time community organizations involved in the process.



SETTLEMENT

Two Sides of the Coin:

This settlement, without a doubt, represents a victory for the Armenian people. I do not need to point out all the positive repercussions of this victory or the doors that it will open for other beneficiaries of policyholders. Similarly, I need not remind you of the sentimental value of justice being served, on however small a scale, after nearly nine decades. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the frustrations and concerns this achievement paradoxically entails.

In no way belittling the efforts of the individuals involved in the success of the settlement, or undermining the importance of their accomplishment, I cannot help but ask myself the simple question: Why did it take so long for New York Life to finally assume responsibility for its obligations? And further questions inevitably abound: Why did the Armenian community have to spend thousands of dollars and hours to obtain something that was so blatantly theirs? Furthermore, I am certain that the Armenian attorneys did their best to settle on the highest possible final sum. Why didn't New York Life agree to more? After all, the money had been collecting interest for 89 years since the Genocide. Was this a fair offer?

I do not mean to be a pessimist, but I believe that the Armenian people should not be satisfied with this alone. The settlement of the lawsuit was a great triumph, but not enough. The Armenian community should not suddenly express gratitude to New York Life for agreeing to pay for what already belonged to the thousands of victims of the Armenian Genocide and their surviving families. I am

Brief Background

In the mid 1800's, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were thriving both intellectually and financially. It cannot be denied that some Armenians were becoming a solid economic base for Turkish financial institutions. Increasingly, the success of the Armenian merchants, traders, bankers, and industries spread rapidly throughout the Caucuses and in some instances even Europe. As such, these Armenians were becoming more in touch with the western way of life.

Starting in 1875, The New York Life Insurance Company, through their offices in Paris, France, found a new market in which to sell life insurance policies. The entrepreneurial Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire became perfect potential clients. By 1914, New York Life had sold nearly 8000 life insurance policies to Armenian families in the region, totaling about ten million dollars at the time.

After the Armenian Genocide in 1915, the New York Life Insurance company claimed that they were able to locate and pay only about one-third of the surviving members of their policy holders, assuming that the rest and any of their close kin had perished. Subsequently,

New York Life kept any and all uncollected and allegedly unclaimed insurance policies.

After the initial payout in the few years following the Genocide, New York Life denied all further responsibility to the remaining policies, refusing to acknowledge any other claims. For over eighty years numerous individuals and groups tried to collect and resolve the matter of the unpaid policies to no avail. The Company simply did not see or feel the need to honor its obligations.

As a result, Mr. Martin Marootian, a descendent of Genocide survivors, along with ten other beneficiaries of unpaid life insurance policies issued by New York Life in Turkey prior to 1915 initiated a class action lawsuit in November 1999. Over four years later, thanks to the collective effort of dedicated Armenian attorneys, the Armenian churches, and other community groups and organizations, as stated earlier, New York Life finally agreed to pay settlement claims of \$20 million filed in the California lawsuit.

Currently this settlement awaits review by a California judge. The court should make its final ruling by July of 2004.

MENT FOR JUSTICE

BY MELKON MELKONIAN

A Concerned Perspective

appreciative of the fact that the case was settled finally this year, but I will not be thankful for something the company should have done decades ago. This was a matter of justice and right and wrong; I am glad New York Life made the right decision, but the Armenian community does not owe it anything.

A final point on a more positive note: the successful outcome of the case, as mentioned, depended on the tireless work of many people, who, in the suit's initial stages, informed the Armenian and non-Armenian public regarding this issue, and the efforts of those involved in the legal process. It was a collective effort, a belief in a common goal and justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide that helped the Armenian community succeed. It was because of our dedication to a cause, not the generosity of others, that we were able to achieve this goal. With our unity we found strength to accomplish something that would otherwise have been unlikely. The struggle for justice has not been an easy task for the Armenian people, nor will it be any easier in the future, but the outcome of this case serves to prove that if we work together, we can accomplish anything- from the recognition of the Armenian Genocide worldwide and the return of our lands, to the resolution of the Karabagh and Javakhk issues, and the betterment of our homeland.

“HOPEFULLY, A LARGE COMPANY LIKE NEW YORK LIFE PAYING A SETTLEMENT WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ACHIEVING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. CERTAINLY THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE DESERVES AS MUCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AS THE HOLOCAUST AND OTHER TRAGEDIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY.”

-Brian Kabateck, Esq.

SOURCE: WWW.CBSNEWS.COM

ARENA PRODUCTIONS

Exploring and Exposing the Arts

STAFFWRITER

The Armenian theatre has gained stirring momentum in the past few years, and its fervor and popularity continues to grow. A new and rather avant-garde group of artists have come together in the name of art in order to work toward its creation and presentation through various mediums- acting, writing, singing, or any means possible. The artists then introduce their products to a community thirsting for intellectual and aesthetic stimulation. This new group, namely Arena Productions, is comprised of artists practicing various genres and who have joined their forces in the common effort to kindle, revive and contribute to the arts. This combination allows for the establishment of a mutually inclusive relationship between the community and the arts and artists.

"I work with students, and I get many talented students in acting, writing, and many forms of art, very talented people, and that inspired me to actually bring together a group of people and to introduce Armenian literature to a non-Armenian community through theatre," explained Anahit Aramouni, Professor of Armenian Language at the University of California Los Angeles and director of Arena Productions.

Arena Productions established itself about a year ago with the staging of an Aghassi Ayvazyan play entitled Props, translated by Myrna Douzjian. Their performances sparked great attention and gained widespread support from fellow artists and art-lovers.

"We had great success. The author was invited from Armenia, and it was shown 9 times in the greater LA community, UCLA, Burbank, and Glendale. We received great reviews and coverage," explained Lilit Keshishian, member of Arena Production.

Adding to this momentum, Arena is currently working on three projects, one of which is an original production of a play based on the authorship of Shakespeare's works, tentatively entitled *The Great Stage of the Fools*.

"We wanted to continue this type of work; produce works that would be accepted by all people in LA and not strictly Armenians, so we decided to write an original work, an original play, based on Shakespeare's works... We decided that if we do that and have a good production, we can establish ourselves in LA as a major theater group and after that point, we can bring in our own literature to a non-Armenian audience," explained Aramouni.

Arena is not only recognized by the Armenian community for its endeavors, but the city of Glendale also acknowledged the work that this group puts forth.

"The City of Glendale Art Commission was inspired as well by the excitement of our group and has accommodated us with the Adult Recreation Center in Glendale for our rehearsals. They have been very cooperative with us and we thank them for all their efforts," explained Karine Mkrchyan, Vice-President of Arena Productions.

Arena Productions is an ever-growing group that brings together artists and art-lovers alike, thereby creating an 'arena' for artistic expression.



Արցախի Ազատագրման 16 Ամեակին Նուիրում Դասախօսութիւն

ՌԻԹԱ ԶԻՆԴԵԱՆ - «Ասպարէզ» օրաթերթ

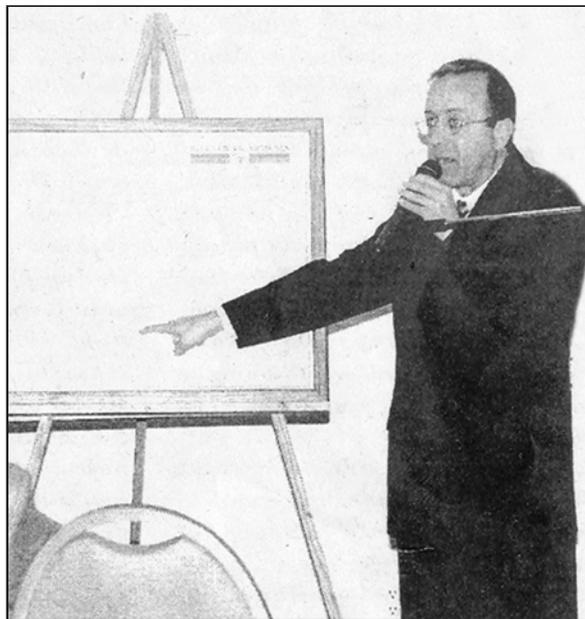
ՍԱՆԹԱ ԱՆԱ.- Օրէնք Քաունթիի 3այ Երիտասարդաց Դաշնակցութեան «Աշոտ Երկաթ» ուխտին կազմակերպութեամբ, Արցախի ազատագրական 16ամեակին նուիրում դասախօսական ձեռնարկը տեղի ունեցաւ Կիրակի 14 Մարտ 2004ի յետ միջօրէին, Օրէնք Քաունթիի 3այ կեդրոնի «Ղազարեան» սրահին մէջ, ներկայութեամբ շուրջ 60 երիտասարդներու եւ երեցներու:

Յ.Ե.Դ. «Աշոտ Երկաթ» ուխտին կողմէ ձեռնարկին բացումը կատարեց Կարօ Քիլիճեան եւ խնդրեց, որ ներկաները մէկ վայրկեան յոտնկայս յարգեն յիշատակը Արցախի ազատագրական պայքարի նահատակներուն: Ան բացատրեց, թէ «իբրեւ դաշնակցական երիտասարդներ կը գիտակցին, որ ազգային ազատագրութեան աշխատանքը սրբազան ու զոհողութիւններով լի է»: Ապա, ան հրաւիրեց «Ասպարէզ» օրաթերթի խմբագիր Վաչէ Բրուտեանը, որ իր խօսքը փոխանցէ:

Վ ա չ է Բ ր ու տ ե ա ն համալսարանական ուսումը ստացած է Լիբանանի մէջ, ուր Յ.Յ.Դ. Բիրոյի Մամլոյ դիւանի անձնակազմին մաս կազմած է, ապա վարած է «Վանայ ծայն» ռատիոկայանը: «Ասպարէզ»ի քաղաքական բաժնի պատասխանատուութեան եւ ապա խմբագրի պաշտօնները յանձն առնելէ առաջ, խմբագրած է Պոսթընի «Յայրենիք»ը եւ պաշտօնավարած է Յիւս. Ամերիկայի Արեւմտեան թեմի ազգային առաջնորդարանէն ներս:

Վաչէ Բրուտեան նախ հետաքրքրուեցաւ, թէ ներկաներէն որո՞նք Յայաստան եւ Ղարաբաղ այցելած են, ապա դիտել տուաւ, թէ «հայոց պատմական Արցախի ազատագրումով, դարերէ ի վեր առաջին անգամ ըլլալով մեր ժողովուրդին երազը իրականացնելու ընթացքին մէջ կը գտնուինք», եւ աւելցուց. «Երբ կը խօսինք Միացեալ, Ազատ եւ Անկախ Յայաստանի մասին, Ղարաբաղի ազատագրումը այդ միացեալ Յայաստանի ստեղծումին առաջին հանգրուանն է»: Ապա ան հանգամանօրէն բացատրեց անցեալ դարասկիզբէն ի վեր տեղի ունեցած իրադարձութիւնները, թէ ինչպէս պատմական Արցախը, 1918-20 տարիներուն, կրցաւ պահել իր ուրոյն դիմագիծը եւ երբեք չենթարկուեցաւ Ատրպէյճանի: Ան նշեց նաեւ շրջանէն ներս տեղի ունեցած կարեւոր դէպքերը, յատկապէս սկսելով 1960ական թուականներէն երբ Ատրպէյճան

Արցախի մտաւորականութիւնը սկսաւ հալածել, ապա թուեց Բենիկ Մովսիսեանի դէպքը՝ 30ական թուականներու կէտերուն: Ան դիտել տուաւ, որ Ատրպէյճանի հայահալած քաղաքականութեան առանց հանդուրժելու տոկացող Ղարաբաղի ժողովուրդը ի վերջոյ հարցը հասցուցած էր խորհրդային Միութեան իսկ օրէնքներով նախատեսուած հանրաքուէին, արինի գնով բռնագրաւուած հողերու ազատագրումին ու այժմու միջազգային բանակցութիւններուն: Վ. Բրուտեան թելադրեց այցելել գործնականապէս Յայաստանի մաս կազմող Ղարաբաղը՝



Վաչէ Բրուտեան բացատրութիւններ կու տայ քարտէսին վրայ

անձամբ ականատես ըլլալու հսկայական ճիգերով ազատագրուած շրջանները, եւ ապա ներկաներուն այլեւայլ հարցումներուն պատասխանեց: Ապա Քիլիճեան հրաւիրեց Յ.Ե.Դ.ի անդամ Սիամանթօ Մարոնեանը, որ իր ականատեսի վկայութիւնները փոխանցէ Ղարաբաղի Աշան գիւղի իր փորձառութենէն: Մարոնեան «AYF Youth Corps»ի հետ նախ աշխատած էր Ղարաբաղի հիւանդանոցներէն մէկուն մէջ, ապա, Յայաստանի տեսարժան վայրերը տեսնելէ ու Կապանի բանակումին մասնակցելէ ետք, երեք ամիս անցուցած էր Արցախի Մարտունիի շրջանի հիւսիս-արեւմտեան կողմէ գտնուող 675 հոգինոց գիւղի մը մէջ, որ փողոց եւ հոսանքով հայթայթուող ջուրի դրութիւն չունի: Ան

մանրամասնօրէն պատմեց Աշանի գիւղական նախնական, բայց բնական կեանքին մասին, ուր անգլերէն դասաւանդած էր եւ պատանիներուն հետ կազմակերպչական աշխատանք տարած էր ու փորձած էր մօտէն ծանօթանալ ժողովուրդի առօրեային:

Մարոնեան մեծ հրճուանքով իր տպաւորութիւնները փոխանցեց, կրկնելով հայրենի հողը անձնապէս տեսնելու ու անոր զարգացումը ապահովելու կարեւորութիւնը: Մէկ կողմէ կը խօսէր գիւղական փոխադրական իր միջոցին իշուն մասին, միւս կողմէն կը ներկայացներ իր ապրած հոգեփոխութիւնը: Մէկ կողմէն կը խօսէր աղցան ուտելու համար պարտէզէն իր քաղած բանջարեղէններուն մասին, միւս կողմէն կը յորդորէր ծնողները, որ իրենց զաւակներուն Յայաստան երթալու առիթը ընծայեն:

Ձեռնարկի աւարտին տեղի ունեցած հիւրասիրութիւնը առիթ ընծայեց, որ ներկաները զրուցեն հիւրերուն հետ:



1915...



NEVER AGAIN!

AYF ALUMNI IN A FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS



ACTION

THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION IS MORE THAN AN ORGANIZATION. IT IS A FAMILY. AND JUST AS A JUVENILE WOULD LOOK TO HIS FATHER, OLDER SISTER AND ELDERS FOR GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT, THE AYF IS LUCKY TO HAVE ITS ALUMNI TO TURN TO FOR DIRECTION AND VITAL SUPPORT.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ARMENIAN YOUTH HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE AYF IN AMERICA ALONE. AMONG THEM, DOCTORS, LAWYERS, SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMEN, PHILANTHROPISTS, INNOVATORS AND INTELLECTUALS, EMBODY THE SPIRIT OF THE AYF IN THEIR STATURE AS EXEMPLARY CITIZENS AND ARMENIANS IN THE COMMUNITY.

SOMETIMES WE DO NOT REALIZE THE FACT THAT AS GRADUATES OF THE AYF, THE ALUMNI ENTER A DIFFERENT REALM OF SERVICE IN THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND DEDICATION TO THE AYF. ALTHOUGH WE LEARN MANY THINGS IN OUR *FAMILY*, IT IS VERY EASY TO DISREGARD THE DEEPLY-ROOTED VIRTUES WE HAVE ATTAINED THROUGH OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE AYF, ESPECIALLY WHEN DISTRACTED AND SENT OFF COURSE BY DIFFERENT DISTRACTIONS IN LIFE; HOWEVER, AFTER PARTING FROM THE AYF (AT LEAST AS A MEMBER), THOSE VALUES AND MORALS CAN STILL BE HELD CLOSE AND IMPLEMENTED IN OUR DAILY LIVES. THAT IN ITSELF HELPS STRENGTHEN THE SPIRIT OF THE AYF AND INSPIRES THE NEW GENERATIONS PROFOUNDLY.

THE AYF ALWAYS STRIVES TO DEVELOP BETTER COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH THE ALUMNI. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BRIDGES BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW GENERATIONS OF THE AYF SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED AND USED AS PATHWAYS FOR CROSS-EXAMINATION OF EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ACTIVISM FROM THE PAST FOR THE PRESENT. IN A WORD, OUR FUTURE WILL BE SHAPED BASED ON OUR PREDECESSORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

