

# HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES

WINTER 2004



EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW:  
**DAVID  
BARSAMIAN**

UP CLOSE WITH  
**FREEWAY  
PEOPLE**

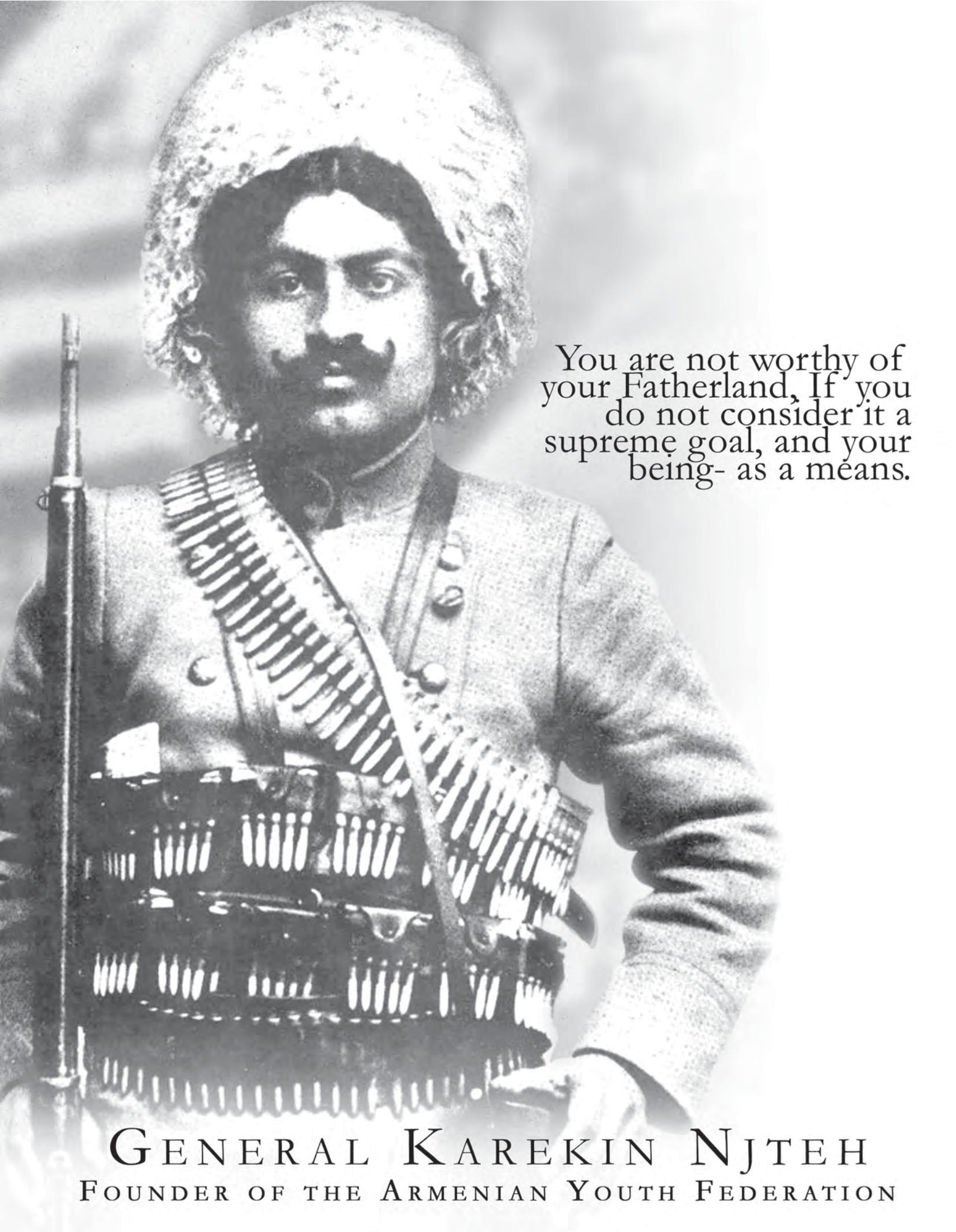
FEBRUARY  
REBELLION  
THE SUPREME  
INCLINATION

## TRAGEDY VITALITY REVIVAL

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN ARMENIA

## FROM FRESNO TO BAGHDAD

THE STORY OF A YOUNG ARMENIAN AWAY FROM HOME



You are not worthy of  
your Fatherland, If you  
do not consider it a  
supreme goal, and your  
being- as a means.

GENERAL KAREKIN NJTEH  
FOUNDER OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION

# ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION

## 113TH ANNIVERSARY

Ուրեմն, եղբայրներ, միանա՞ք յանուն  
սուրբ գործի ընդհանուր թշնամու դէմ:

Եւ դուք, երիտասարդներ, միշտ եւ ամէն  
տեղ վսեմ գաղափարների պաշտպաններ,  
միացէ՛ք ժողովրդի հետ:

Եւ դուք, ալեգարդ ծերունիներ,  
ոգեւորեցէ՛ք ձեր որդոց եւ օգնեցէք  
նոցա ձեր բազմամեայ փորձառութեամբ:

Եւ դուք, հարուստներ, բաց արէք ձեր  
քսակները, գէնք հայթայթելու ժողովրդին, որ նա կարող լինի  
պաշտպանել իր կուրծքը, որ բաց է արել թշնամու դէմ:

Եւ դու, հայ կին, ոգի ներշնչիր սուրբ գործի մէջ:

Եւ դու, հոգեւորական, օրհնիր ազատութեան զինուորներին...

Սպասելու ժամանակ չէ...

Համախմբուենք, հայեր, եւ քաջութեամբ առաջ տանենք  
հայրենիքի ազատութեան սուրբ գործը:

Հատուած՝ Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցութեան Մանիֆեստէն - 1890 թ.



ՀԱՅԿԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԿՆՆԱՆԻ ԿՐԹԱԿՐԱԿԱՆ ԿՈՄԻՏԵ



SPEND FIVE WEEKS WORKING AND  
SIGHTSEEING IN ARTSAKH AND  
ARMENIA. APPLY TO THE AYF  
YOUTH CORPS 2004 SUMMER  
PROGRAM.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DOWNLOAD AN  
APPLICATION VISIT US ONLINE AT

[WWW.AYFWEST.ORG](http://WWW.AYFWEST.ORG)

# contents

# contents

2	<i>Editorial</i>	THE CHALLENGES SET BEFORE US
3	<i>Perspectives</i>	BANANA REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
4	<i>Culture and Diaspora</i>	RETHINKING DIASPORA: A Move Towards a Transnational Armenian Nation
6	<i>AYF News</i>	AYF LAUNCHES THE ARMENIAN LITERARY PROJECT ARMENIAN YOUTH JOIN THE RANKS OF THE AYF DAVID BARSAMIAN - <i>Exclusive Interview</i> ARF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA CONFERENCE ARF YOUTH AND STUDENT CONFERENCE IN ARMENIA
10	<i>Art and Literature</i>	FREEWAY PEOPLE

## 12 TRAGEDY, VITALITY, REVIVAL

The 15th Anniversary of the Earthquake in Armenia

		THE LITERARY DOSE LIBERTY IN TRANSLATION: A Translation of Mikayel Nalbandian's Work
16	<i>Activism</i>	INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SOCIALIST YOUTH ARF Youth Participate in IUSY Conference
17	<i>AYF Juniors</i>	BADANEGAN THOUGHTS
18	<i>Lifestyles</i>	FROM FRESNO TO BAGHDAD A Story of a Young Armenian in Iraq
20	<i>Pages of our History</i>	FEBRUARY REBELLION
22	<i>Photo Album</i>	JUSTICE IN DEMAND A Pictorial Overview of the AYF in the Last Three Decades
24	<i>Our Heroes</i>	BOULGARATSI BEDO A Fedayee's Letter to his Father

HAYTOUG



THE OFFICIAL  
PUBLICATION OF THE  
ARMENIAN YOUTH  
FEDERATION WESTERN  
UNITED STATES

### Haytoug Council Members

Lorie Bartamian  
Caroon Gharakhanian  
Maria Hovsepian  
Raffi Issagholian  
Ara Koulayan  
Raffi Semerdjian  
Vicken Sosikian  
Vanan Yahnian

### Contributors

Talar Chahinian-Mahroukian  
Razmig Haroun  
Lara Talverdian  
Hrag Yedalian

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

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

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

104 N. Belmont St. Suite 206  
Glendale, CA 91206  
AYF@AYFwest.org 818.507.1933

www.haytoug.org

# EDITORIAL

## THE CHALLENGES SET BEFORE US

In 1944 Herbert Hoover said, "Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die." Let us not look to our elders to declare wars, instead we should declare wars, fight those wars, and eventually win them.

We look at the Armenian people and nation and see many challenges. An ever-increasing number of Armenians still leave our homeland in search of a better life; unemployment has invaded our economy; there is a lack of proper health care for the citizens of Armenia, and there is a lack of proper representation of Armenian Americans in the US government. We have the unresolved issue of Artsakh, the poor living conditions of Armenians in Javakhk, the continued denial of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey, the US, and other world powers, and the occupation of our homeland, Western Armenia. The list of challenges facing the Armenian nation and people goes on....

The aforementioned challenges may seem to be above our heads: it may seem that they are in the hands of governments and politicians. These challenges, however, are, by default, our challenges—by default, because we are Armenian.

Many organizations strive to overcome these challenges. For example, the Armenian Relief Society launched a fundraising campaign to benefit the Armenian community in Iraq, which was affected by the recent war. The Armenian National Committee of America works to lobby American legislation to benefit Armenian interests. Homenetmen prepares the next generation of Armenians through athletic and scouting programs.

Our organization, the AYF, served as a leading force in the effort to collect money and clothes to aid the victims of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. During the war in Artsakh we worked for several years to raise funds, and after the war, we developed the Youth Corps Program to help rebuild the war-torn areas in the region. Last year the AYF organized a large-scale clean up of Little Armenia, and recently created the Armenian Literary Project to translate works that present the ideology

of revolution as it pertains to the Armenian cause, in order to make it more accessible to our youth.

Without members, supporters, and the Armenian public at large, these organizations neither could have succeeded in their past accomplishments nor could they continue to do so.

Individuals play important roles in the resolutions of problems: individuals created the Youth Corps program; individuals created AYF Camp; individuals created this publication; individuals fought to liberate the land and people of Artsakh; and individuals founded the ARF, AYF, ARS, Homenetmen, and many other organizations which work to benefit the Armenian nation and homeland.

**“ If you expect to see changes in the community, then get involved; if you see the need for change in US policy towards the Armenian Genocide, then work to change it... ”**

Having said this, we turn to you, as an individual, and ask you to become an activist, and if you are an activist, to become more active, and if you already are very active, to recruit other activists.

If you expect to see changes in the community, then get involved; if you see the need for change in US policy towards the Armenian people and the Armenian Genocide, then work to change it; if the condition of our brethren in our homeland disappoints you, then become active and work to change that condition.

We have already mentioned the importance of every individual's active involvement; however, it is the collective effort and collaboration of individuals which leads to the development and implementation of successful programs and projects. Though we see and accept the challenges set before us, you as an individual play a vital role in developing the course of action we take and the outcome of our efforts.

# THE WAY I SEE IT

By: LARA TALVERDIAN

LARA TALVERDIAN IS A SENIOR AT CRESCENTA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, WHERE SHE IS CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE PAPER. SHE HOPES TO PURSUE JOURNALISM.



I paced hesitantly back and forth, glancing at the store and then turning away in contemplation. I read the name: Banana Republic. It was mid-November and I was called in for a seasonal job interview. Turning in a job application had been hard enough and now the hiring manager wanted to see me.

Great. One step closer to getting a job for the holiday season. That's what I thought as I picked up my pace and walked through the store in my semi-professional attire. I was a little early, so I began to look around to see what items of clothing I could see myself in. One plaid skirt stood out on the racks. I was checking the price tag and my eyes befell the words I was dreading: "Made in Turkey."

That was the last thing I wanted to see. I thought perhaps that by avoiding the label, I could console myself in my effort to find a job – even if it was at a store being boycotted by an organization with which I associate.

But this is capitalism at its best – we have the right to choose what items we buy. With that thought I entered the interview room with other applicants and prepared myself for the questions to come. After about an hour, I walked out of the store, my back to the Banana Republic sign, and something just didn't feel right. I couldn't understand why I should feel so bad about wanting a job. But there was more to it than that. I wanted a job at the expense of a cause.

I began to think about the logic behind the boycott led by the United Human Rights Council. From what I gather, this "movement," if you will, is to discourage consumers from supporting Turkey through the purchase of its products. In any instance my automatic response to this objective would be: Why not help Armenia build businesses so it can compete in the market rather than try to hinder sales of its opponent?

There is also the question of whether Armenians work at these factories that produce the clothing items. If we do not buy "Made in Turkey" products, we could probably hurt the salary of an Armenian worker who is trying to feed his family.

Maybe I'm looking into it too much. But to be quite frank, this boycott is not on a massive scale. If we are trying to hurt Banana Republic and its chains so that they will stop carrying Turkish items, we should be making more noise than what it seems we are. Then again, we can only reach that potential if each individual makes the effort to participate.

I was expecting a phone call from the hiring manager later that week. That was when I would have to make my decision: would I overlook a slowly but surely growing effort to make some cash or would I put the Cause above my needs?

I declined the job offer.

My first feeling? Relief. The moral conflicts I was dealing with inside my mind were at ease. As much as I think this boycott is not as effective as it can be, or that it may also not be the best way to go about our objectives, I gave it a chance.

The way I see it, supporting a cause is up to the individual. I cannot judge those who still apply for jobs at stores like Banana Republic because we all see things differently, even if we are all Armenian. All I know is that I made the decision that was right according to my ethical standards and added my voice to a growing effort. One at a time we can all do the same if we so choose. Just remember that what you are reading is one person's account. Not everyone will make the same choice, and we cannot expect them to.

BANANA  
REPUBLIC  
BOYCOTT



## A MOVE TOWARDS A TRANSNATIONAL ARMENIAN NATION

Talar Chahinian-Mahroukian, Third year Ph.D. Student, Department of Comparative Literature, UCLA

OUR LAST CENTURY IS CHARACTERIZED BY A PLETHORA OF WARS, MASSACRES AND POLITICAL UNREST, ALL OF WHICH HAVE LED TO THE FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES OF REFUGEES, EXILES AND IMMIGRANTS. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, WHICH HAVE MADE TRAVEL MORE FEASIBLE, HAVE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONSTANTLY CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE WORLD. As a result, the word “diaspora” is no longer limited by its singular definition hinting to the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian exile. Although the Word program on my computer refuses to recognize diaspora with a lower cap “d”, diaspora studies have become a new trend in the world of academia. In looking at different diasporan communities, one cannot evade the question of return. Is the idea of return to a homeland inherent in the meaning of diaspora? Chances are that we use the term diaspora to refer to a few groups of people, who in fact consider their situation as permanent. So, how does this question apply to the Armenian diaspora, which is not a stagnant reality, but one that has been changing vastly during the last few decades? I think it’s time that we re-define the very word that we continuously use to define ourselves. In this attempt of re-evaluation and re-definition, it’s important to stop viewing diaspora as a fixed entity, but rather regard it as an experience of crossings along geographical, political and cultural borders.

Khachig Tololyan, the editor of *Diaspora* journal, calls diasporas “the exemplary communities of the transnational moment.”<sup>1</sup> Transnationalism refers to the way refugees, exiles or immigrants make connections between their place of origin and the new host country in which they have settled. These connections cross geographic, political, and cultural borders. Transnational diasporas, therefore, are communities that are dispersed across boundaries and borders.

For the Armenians, the transnational moment described by Tololyan has existed since the period of the 1915 Genocide. Thousands of refugees, having survived the massacres and deportations, found themselves within the borders of new nations, where they began to build their new lives. Be it in the Middle-East, France or the United States, they clustered themselves in refugee camps or apartment buildings in groups representing villages of origin

in Anatolia. As they joined the work force of their respective host countries and advanced economically, these groups began to disperse more widely. Yet the creation of institutions, like churches and schools, along with the formation of political and cultural organizations maintained the social relations that bound the new societies to the old.

In his book, *Writing Memory*, Lorne Shirinian argues that the Armenians of the diaspora have not yet been able to see themselves as transnationals. He writes:

Living in a diaspora brings one into a conflict of identity because identity discourses are still understood in terms of loyalty to nations and nation-states. However, this vision of a homogeneous nation is rapidly being replaced by one that is heterogeneous and in certain ways unstable. Most diaspora Armenians have not yet been able to reconceptualize themselves as transnationals, nor have they begun to articulate this transnational identity that involves the process of nation building in at least two nation-states.<sup>2</sup>

Although not a transnational one, Armenians in the diaspora have been able to construct a new sense of identity from their tragedy of 1915 and their physical displacement from the homeland. The diasporan Armenians share a history of their dispersion and make conscious effort to pass that history down from one generation to the next. They also employ their collective memory to pass down not only the history of dispersion, but the history of their people in general, including myths, legends and traditions that constitute an integral part of their contemporary identity. Up until the 1980s, it could be said that they continuously remain aware of being in a host country and see their situation as a temporary one, with the belief of an eventual return to the homeland. This idea of return has taken on a different meaning with the current generation, although the full acceptance of the idea of permanence is still being resisted, or perhaps consciously ignored. The idea of being an outsider in a host country is further fueled by denial, in countries such as the U.S., where the government does not officially recognize the very tragedy that defines their diasporan existence: the Genocide.

Such is the condition that defines the identity of Armenians outside of Armenia. Armenians in the diaspora are aware of the difficulties of adapting to a host country and simultaneously resisting assimilation. The history of dispersion that they share is further complicated by instances of double displacement, as is the case of many diasporan Armenians from countries of the Middle-East. The Armenian community of Los Angeles exemplifies a community of Armenians doubly removed from homeland. Alongside Armenians who have directly migrated here from the Soviet Republic of Armenia or the current independent Republic of Armenia, there are groups of Armenians who come from diasporan communities in the Middle-East, Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Russia and others. In this type of community, diasporan Armenians, who have moved back and forth between borders and set identifications, offer the possibility of cultural hybridization, which may in turn lead to a better understanding of a transnational identity. This process of

conceptualizing a transnational identity begins with the blurring of the notion of homeland. Shirinian writes:

For Armenians, the notion of homeland is complex, for it points to a variety of referents each of which can be activated through memory and the imagination... For diaspora Armenians, the homeland can be lost territory of historical Western Armenia, that is, Eastern Anatolia; it can be the short-lived Armenian Republic of 1918-1921; it might be Soviet Armenia, 1921-1991; it could be the new independent Republic of Armenia, created in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union; it might be within the boundaries of the Armenian communities in Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles, Montreal, New York, Toronto, for example. This last possibility might be the only Armenia some born in the diaspora may have experienced.<sup>3</sup>

For Shirinian, all of these ideas of homeland, in some way, form the transnational Armenian nation, at the same time provoking the wonder if any of these can constitute the Armenian homeland. It is clear that throughout the years, the homeland that Armenians long for can no longer be defined geographically, but exists as a state of mind, through the work of memory. In a community such as Los Angeles, diasporan Armenians might realize that the imagination of homeland that they have is different from that imagined by another Armenian, who comes from a different diasporan community. This realization not only confuses the idea of homeland, but in turn, the notion of nation as well. As a result of this sense of panic, diasporan Armenians employ memory to begin a search for home that attempts to locate nation as well. This search leads back to the moment of Genocide. In making a comparison of the differences between the Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, Gregory Goekjian writes, "Whereas the Holocaust resulted in the creation of a concentrated, modern center for Jewish historical discourse, the Armenian Genocide erased that center, creating a 'nation' that has had to exist in exile and memory- in diaspora."<sup>4</sup> A return to this idea of a center becomes essential for Armenians, in their effort to understand their move to peripheries. Using the moment of Genocide as a starting point, Armenians begin the process of reconstructing the homeland lost, which enables them to come closer to the understanding of their transnational situation, away from that homeland, in a new space between borders.

## References

1 Tololyan, Khachig. "The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface". *Diaspora* 1.1 (Spring 1991) 5.

2 Shirinian, Lorne. *Writing Memory: The Search for Home in Armenian Diaspora Literature as Cultural Practice*. (Kingston, Ontario: Blue Heron Press, 2000) 3.

3 Shirinian 1.

4 Goekjian, Gregory, F. "Diaspora and Denial: The Holocaust and the 'Question' of the Armenian Genocide". *Diaspora* 7:1, (1998).



## ARMENIAN LITERARY PROJECT

### STAFFWRITER

The ALP, established in light of the AYF's mission to preserve Armenian culture and national identity, will work to make Armenian literature readily available to the Armenian youth.

"The organization has noticed a decline in the accessibility of Armenian literature for the youth," said Myrna Douzjian, Director of the ALP. "In order to make our literary masterpieces less daunting for our youth and non-Armenians alike, we decided to translate important works, some in summary, and others in their entirety."

The ALP will provide both complete and abbreviated translations of major Armenian literary works while preserving and disseminating the rich history of the Armenian literary tradition.

Initially, the ALP will translate works that present the ideology of revolution as it pertains to the Armenian Cause, with the hope that through these texts, they will instill a renewed sense of Armenian identity in the youth today.

"We hope that in the coming years, with the expansion of the project, the scope of literary texts covered by the ALP will broaden," said Douzjian. "We encourage all interested bilingual individuals to participate in and contribute to this important project."

# AYF News

## ARMENIAN YOUTH JOIN THE RANKS OF THE AYF

Educational Discussion with ARF Bureau Member Dr. Viken Hovsepian  
STAFFWRITER

Over a dozen novice members of the Armenian Youth Federation took their organizational pledge on Sunday, November 23 at the Crescenta Valley Armenian Center.

Over one hundred members of the AYF were present, including a representative of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Western Region Central Committee. The evening began with a pledge ceremony conducted by ARF Bureau member Dr. Viken Hovsepian, who then led an educational discussion about the role of AYF members in the Armenian Cause.

"If you have come to this juncture, where you consciously pledge into this organization, you have a duty to justify your goal. If you do not work harder, extend your reach further, and dream of greater things for the Armenian Cause, you will be selling yourself short," said Hovsepian.

"Make a difference – make a difference not only in AYF, make a difference in life, make a difference in your family, in your group of friends – make a difference all around you," Hovsepian further elaborated.

"Even as a novice member of this organization I was ready to give my time and effort to advancing the Armenian Cause," said Vazrik Shahoumian, member of the AYF Glendale "Roupen" Chapter. "But by taking my pledge, I instilled my dedication within me on an entirely different level – it was a truly touching experience."

Every year, dozens of Armenian youth become novices of the AYF and continue on to become full fledged members of the organization. "It is of importance to us that our membership be comprised of youth that are prepared and

knowledgeable in all aspects of the Armenian Cause," explained Vicken Sosikian, Chairperson of the AYF Central Executive. "That is why we work throughout the year with novice members with the hope that they too will join the thousands of other youth around the world as pledged members of the ARF Youth."

At the cessation of the ceremony, a standing ovation welcomed the new pledges into the organization. The ARF Central Committee presented the new members with a copy of *Tempest Born:*



*Dró* by Simon Vratsian. Upon presenting the book, the ARF CC representative explained, "Leaders like General Tro should serve as role models for members of the AYF. I encourage you to read about his life, and to understand the humility and modesty of Tro that becomes transparent in his accomplishments."

"The Central Executive is proud of these youth," expressed Sosikian. "We are proud because they know very well the demanding goals and aspirations of the AYF, yet, they bravely take grip of the torch and join us as we march forward to lead and serve the Armenian youth and the Armenian Cause."

After the almost two hour long discussion AYF members had the opportunity to converse with Dr. Hovsepian over dinner.

# David Barsamian

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

STAFFWRITER

David Barsamian is a radio producer, journalist, author and lecturer. He is founder and director of Alternative Radio, the independent award-winning weekly series based in Boulder, Colorado. He has been working in radio since 1978. His interviews and articles appear regularly in *The Progressive* and *Z Magazine*. He is the author of several books, including *Propaganda and The Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky*; *Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire* and *The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting*.

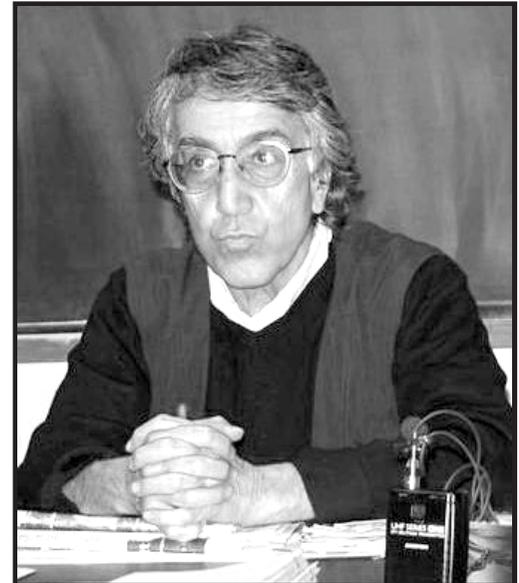
The Institute for Alternative Journalism named him one of its "Top Ten Media Heroes." Barsamian lectures on U.S. foreign policy, the media, propaganda, and corporate power in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, India and Europe. He is the winner of the ACLU's 2003 Upton Sinclair Award for independent journalism. His latest book is *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said*. He is currently working on a book with Arundhati Roy as well as one featuring his interviews in *The Progressive*.

...a few miles from where we are sitting to find victims of genocide. And so those kinds of alliances and connections even understandings I don't think have been developed - they haven't been recognized as important. I mean you can't develop something until you recognize that this is something that's positive, and the community should engage in, in terms of working on outreach to other immigrant communities. I can't stand it when I hear the most racist kind of blabbering coming from Armenians about Mexicans or Arabs or any other group. What's that about? Is that a way to build alliances and to build solidarity? I don't think so! I don't want to be overly critical, but I do get quite impatient with just this kind of whining: ...ooooo you know we just got this one issue, nobody is listening to us. Well why aren't they listening to us? Look at yourself! How are you presenting your issues? How are you interlocking, intersecting with other groups that can help you promote an agenda? You know, where can you find a kindred spirit? Where can you find a common bond and develop ways of acting in concert with others rather than acting alone? So there are lots of possibilities. This is a very open society and that's a good thing and there are many possibilities to develop different and innovative ways of presenting this issue, but you can't be whining. I think that's a real turn off. It turns off young people. You've gotta be really positive.

**On November 16, the AYF "Ashot Yergat" Chapter invited David Barsamian to give a public lecture at the Ghougassian Hall in Orange County. Preceding the lecture, the AYF had the opportunity to speak with Barsamian. The following interview was held by AYF member Serouj Abrahamian:**

**There is a lack of activity on changing US policy toward Turkey, can you blame the Armenian community for not doing enough outreach?**

I think it's a good deal of the latter. I think, in presenting the case of recognition, too many Armenians adopt a posture of victim, and I reject that. I think that's a very weak posture to advance an argument. I don't feel like a victim. I feel, you know, in a morally right position. So I don't feel transgressed upon or any kind of compromised or weakened position. That's just a psychological issue. How you present yourself to others. I think Armenians have been extremely inept and incompetent in reaching out to other communities and building alliances with, for example, Native Americans. I mean, you don't have to go far to find victims of genocide. You can just go a



**Do you think the United States will ever recognize the Armenian Genocide?**

No question about it. Absolutely. And how is that going to happen? It's going to happen with the perseverance and dedication of people that constantly keep this issue in front of the public, in front of the political class that kind of rules the country - not let them forget. I think it's so important it's going to happen. It's a question of when, and it will be a great liberation and we will leave. The Armenian community has finally gotten this monkey off its back and we'll leave. Also to the Turks who are burdened with denying some of the past. I'm looking forward to it.

READ MORE FROM THE INTERVIEW ONLINE AT [WWW.HAYTOUG.ORG](http://WWW.HAYTOUG.ORG)

# TRI-REGIONAL CENTRAL EXECUTIVE MEETING

## ՀԵՌ-ի Եռակողմանի Խորհրդաժողով



STAFFWRITER

The Central Executives of the Armenian Youth Federation of North America held a tri-regional meeting in Montreal on the weekend of December 19.

The Central Executives of the Western United States, Eastern United States, and Canada, along with representatives of the ARF Shant Student Association discussed various issues, including present day operations as well as plans for the New Year, during their two-day meeting.

The meeting decided to hold a week-long leadership seminar at AYF Camp in June of 2004, for AYF members from North and South America. The executive bodies also decided to encourage their members to participate in a similar seminar organized by the AYF of South America in March.

Plans were made for collaborated grassroots projects within all three regions for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The meeting participants also set the deadline for the first annual production of a joint publication of the *Haytoug*, *Ardziv*, and *Hokej*, the official publications of the AYF in the respective regions.

Participants of the meeting also met with AYF members from the Montreal and Laval chapters of the Canadian AYF. The representatives of the ARF Shant Student Association met with the AYF members in Canada who are active in their local universities.

Շաբաթ 20 և Կիրակի 21 Դեկտեմբեր 2003ին երկարող շաբաթավերջին, Մոնթրեալի մէջ տեղի ունեցաւ ՀՅԴ Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Երիտասարդական Միութեանց Կեդրոնական Վարչութիւններու այս տարեշրջանի Բ. խորհրդաժողովը: Առաջին խորհրդաժողովը տեղի ունեցած էր Յուլիս ամսուան աւարտին, Լոս Անճելըսի մէջ:

Արեւելեան ու Արեւմտեան Ամերիկայի եւ Գանատայի Կեդրոնական Վարչութեանց կազմերը, ինչպէս նաեւ Արեւմտեան Ամերիկայի ՀՅԴ «Շանթ» Ուսանողական Միութեան կոմիտէի ներկայացուցիչները, երկու օրերու նիստերուն ընթացքին օրակարգի վրայ ունեցան բազմակողմանի նիւթեր: Արժարժուեցան ու քննութեան առարկայ դարձան երիտասարդականի ներկայի իրավիճակն ու ապագայ գործունէութեան ծրագիրները:

Այս ժողովին ընթացքին քննարկուեացան ու ճամբայ հանուեցան Մարտ եւ Յունիս 2004-ի ընթացքին կայանալիք զոյգ սեմինարներու աշխատանքները: Անոնցմէ առաջինը տեղի պիտի ունենայ Արժանթինի մէջ, տեղւոյն երիտասարդական միաւորին հետ գործունէութեան նոր ծիր մը բանալով: Իսկ երկրորդը՝ Քալիֆորնիոյ մէջ, որ քատրերու պատրաստութեան յատուկ դաստիարակչական բանակում մըն է:

Ծրագիրներ մշակուեցան նաեւ ցեղասպանութեան 90-ամեակի տեւողութեան համակարգուած քայլերու առնչութեամբ, ինչպէս նաեւ պահանջատիրական միացեալ ձեռնարկներու գծով:

Խորհրդաժողովի ընթացքին դաստիարակչական միատեսակ դրութիւն մը հաստատելու գծով նախագիծեր պատրաստուեցան, եւ որոշուեցաւ «Հոգի», «Հայդուկ» եւ «Արծի» երիտասարդական պարբերաթերթերու միացեալ թիւ մը հրատարակել: Քննարկուեցան կազմակերպչական, քարոզչական եւ Հայաստանի ու Արցախի մէջ նախատեսուած աշխատանքներուն կապուած օրակարգի կէտեր:

Այս նիստերուն կողքին, ժողովի մասնակիցները հանդիպում մը ունեցան Մոնթրեալի եւ Լաւալի ՀՅԴ ԳԵՄ-ի մասնաճիւղներու անդամներուն հետ, իսկ ՀՅԴ «Շանթ» Ուսանողական Միութեան ներկայացուցիչները, յատուկ նիստի մը ընթացքին ԳԵՄ-ի համալսարանական ընկերուհիներուն եւ ընկերներուն ներկայացուցիչն ուսանողական մարզէն ներս իրենց տարած գործունէութեան մասին զեկուցում մը եւ միասնաբար քննարկեցին այդ աշխատանքներուն ծիրը ընդլայնելու եւ ծաւալելու կարելիութիւնները:

Վերջապէս, ժողովի մասնակիցները վերանորոգեցին յանձնառութիւնը՝ եռակողմանի եւ շուտով քառակողմանի այս յարաբերութիւնները դարձնել առաւել արդիւնաւետ, համադրուած եւ հետեւողական:



## ARF YOUTH AND STUDENT CONFERENCE

STAFFWRITER

ՀՅԴ երիտասարդական և ուսանողական միություններու կեդրոնական վարչություններու և երիտասարդական հարցերով պատասխանատուներու խորհրդատուովը տեղի ունեցաւ Դեկտեմբերի 19-21, 2003-ին Ծաղկաձորի մէջ, Հայաստան:

Խորհրդատուովին կը մասնակցէին տասնհինգ երկիրներու երիտասարդական և հինգ ուսանողական միություններու ներկայացուցիչները՝ 28 անդամներով:

Մասնակիցները նախ լսեցին շրջաններու միամտայ գործ ունեւթեան տեղեկագիրները և գնահատական տուին ՀՅԴ երիտասարդական և ուսանողական միություններու գործունեւթեանց մասին:

Ապա քննարկուեացաւ հայրենիքի և սփիւռքի հայ երիտասարդութեան և մասնաւորապէս Դաշնակցական երիտասարդութեան այսօրուան իրավիճակը ու դիմագրուած մարտահրաւէրները, համաշխարհայնացման և հայ իրականութեան լոյսին տակ:

Խորհրդատուովը հաստատելով որ հայ իրականութեան մէջ կազմակերպուած գաղափարական ու համատարած երիտասարդական ուժը կը մնայ ՀՅԴ Դաշնակցութեան երիտասարդականը, ընդգծեց, որ հայ երիտասարդութեան և հայ ժողովուրդին առջեւ դրուած մարտահրաւէրները կը պահանջեն Դաշնակցութեան երիտասարդականի քանակական և որակական աճ, գործունեւթեան առաւել աշխուժացում և ազդեցիկ ներկայութիւն ներկազմակերպական, ազգային և արտաքին-յարաբերական կեանքէն ներս:

Առ այդ, խորհրդատուովը նկատի ունենալով

երիտասարդականի գործունեւթեան ոլորտները, որոշեց խտացնել իր շարքերը, և իր շուրջ համախմբել անելի մեծ թիւով երիտասարդներ, միասնաբար ծառայելու համար ազգին և հայրենիքին:

Խորհրդատուովը իր աշխատանքները ասարտեց «Համախմբուած ու յանձնառու երիտասարդութիւն՝ հայրենիքի ու հայութեան համար» կարգախօսով:



Visit  
[www.Gaydzer.am](http://www.Gaydzer.am)  
[www.ARF.am](http://www.ARF.am)

Representatives of the Youth and Student organizations of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) held their conference in Tsakhkadzor during the weekend of December 19-21, reported the ARF press service.

Twenty-eight delegates represented youth organizations of fifteen countries and student organizations of five regions. The delegates heard annual reports and then discussed the challenges Armenian youth – and ARF members in particular – face in Armenia and abroad.

The conference decided to encourage more young Armenians to join the organizations of the respective regions in order to possess a greater scope of influence in national and foreign issues.

The conference concluded its work with the motto "Organized and responsible youth for both the Homeland and Armenians."



# FREEWAY PEOPLE

INTERVIEW BY ARA KOULAYAN

**“Defending the Armenian culture is one of the most important things.”**

IN LOS ANGELES, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF STANDARDS. Fine dining, corporate towers generating economic ups and downs, a diverse pool of cultures and peoples interconnected through subways, highways, and byways, and most of all the traffic that slows us down as we try to find a common destination via freeways. In the midst of all this the Los Angeles underground music scene—among which many are local Armenian youth—is ever growing.

From Hollywood to Tujunga, the San Fernando Valley to Glendale – George Hakopian, John Aslanyan, Michael Hovaguimian, and Jack Hovsepien connect as Freeway People with a message to the Armenian youth through their gift of music.

“We started playing for the church band, for our Sunday services, and slowly we realized we love making music,” explained Hakopian, Freeway People vocalist.

As a result of this realization, Freeway People surfaced from the basement-turned-studio ‘neath a Pasadena church, and delved into the LA music scene with a mission.

“I was listening to bands that would only give their problems. These kids would give these bands money and get nothing out of it,” protests Hakopian. “If there’re bands out there that are

making money off fake depression, we just want to spread some positivity to these kids.”

And “positivity” is exactly what holds this band together. Their traditional prayer before performing, the energy they create through their on-stage buildups, and the strength of their beliefs are the obvious trademarks of this band. And all this they can do from a backyard without wanting anything in return. What’s the deal?

“There’s a lot of lost kids out there, just to have one kid turn his life around, and have our music be that reason is such an awesome blessing for us,” says Aslanyan, Freeway People bassist.

Freeway People communicate with a vast and diverse fan base. Shant Taslakian of Porter Ranch explains why this band appeals to him, “It’s great that they’re a Christian band. There’s tons of Christian bands out

there – signed or underground – but what makes them distinct is their Armenian heritage.”

“As an Armenian, and as an AYF member, I find it important to support young Armenians with aspirations in the arts. We all know how far art can take us – System of a Down and Atom Egoyan are proof of this. I hope that Freeway People and other bands just like them also reach that level of contribution to the Armenian Cause,” Taslakian further explained.

At the Whiskey, a common Hollywood venue for emerging talents, the atmosphere is animated just seconds before Freeway People start the show. As their drum-techs and guitar-techs set up, tune, and test all the essentials, an assorted pool of fans begins to throng toward the stage and settle in before Hovsepien’s guitar strikes the environment with its highs and lows, Hovaguimian’s tapping at the drums releases the intensity of their song, Aslanyan’s bass adds its punch, and the emotional vocals of Hakopian takes charge.

“I know they’re a Christian band, but that doesn’t even matter to me – because musically they’re tuned well, their music is tied together well, and they’re a great sounding band,” says Mikey Magliari Jr., M-Productions.

But on the other hand, what matters most to Freeway People, is what their sounds convey.

“The faith Armenians once had that kept us alive and striving through the hard times – that’s our testimony to the Armenian youth. The worst thing we can do is think Armenians are just about land and a mountain – defending the Armenian culture is one of the most important things,” concluded Hakopian.



[www.freewaypeople.com](http://www.freewaypeople.com)

# TRAGEDY VIT

& Najarian tell of visit



Newsweek

The Agony



## 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE

STAFFWRITER

**“My youngest son, along with all of his classmates, died in the classroom.** The children of other families have become orphaned; I am adopting two such children to at least provide them the opportunity to have a good father.”

These are the words uttered by a weeping father of an only child, Vanig Shamoyan, following the earthquake. Shamoyan was an engineer at a sugar factory in Spitak, which was destroyed, leaving him unemployed.

Fifteen years ago on December 7 at 11:41am an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale jolted Armenia, Georgia, Western Armenia, and Northern Iran. The earthquake was estimated to be 100 times the force of an atomic bomb. Four minutes and 17 seconds later, an aftershock with a magnitude of 5.8 rocked the already destroyed areas of Armenia.

The lives of hundreds of thousands of Armenians changed in less than five minutes. Massive destruction overtook the second largest city of Armenia, Leninakan, as well as Girovakan, Spitak, Stepanavan, Kukark, and surrounding villages.

Structures in some areas were completely razed.

The initial death toll immediately following the earthquake was 200. Within six days that number rose astronomically, while cold weather, the lack of shelter, and potentials for outbreaks threatened an even larger death toll.

Due to the huge loss of life, family members of victims experienced difficulty in providing proper funerals for their loved ones, as the supply of coffins was low. Armenian organizations within the community and the Diaspora as a whole united to help the victims.

The day after the earthquake the Armenian Relief Society of the Western United States created the Earthquake Relief Fund for Armenia. A mere four days after the earthquake the Central Executive of the ARS had already collected \$3 million to assist the victims.

Local ARS and AYF chapters in Southern California raised over \$500,000 during the first 6 days. The ARS Central Executive announced that relief efforts within the first week of the earthquake had collected \$7 million in money and supplies.

As of December 20 over \$100 million was collected worldwide to build upward from a tragic day, which took the lives of 25,000 Armenians, injured 19,000, and left 540,000 homeless.

The huge losses and destruction in Armenia led the governments of many sympathetic countries, including the United States, Australia, France, Pakistan, Uganda, Algeria, Greece, Ireland, Finland, Latvia, Syria, and the Czech Republic, to extend a helping hand to the victims.

During the days and weeks following the earthquake, all AYF members volunteered for 24-hour fundraising hotlines and efforts in the collection and organization of donated clothing and medical supplies.

Experts attribute the large loss of life to the poor quality of Soviet engineering, shoddy construction, lack of prior warning and preparedness, and the slow pace of recovery.

# ACTIVITY REVIVAL



of crisis, Dr. Najarian in his turn challenged the local Armenian community to help repopulate the cities destroyed in the quake. "We can build the houses again. We can build the schools. But how do we fill them?" Najarian asked.

...beauties of Armenians in the quake. He then praised teams of U.S. rescue dogs that had helped find victims trapped in the rubble.

"Find in your heart what the difference is between a dog and a Turk," he said, again to wild cheers.

Tertzakian and Najarian said the two men served as the Armenian Relief Society's first president and secretary. Tertzakian, a 44-year-old, has a medical background and provides to counterparts in the earthquake. On December 7, he established the Armenian Relief Society.

## ARS Mobilizes Hundreds of Volunteers throughout California in Relief Effort

GLENDALE—Hundreds of Armenian and American volunteers have been mobilized by the Armenian Relief Society throughout Southern California in the past week toward the Armenian earthquake relief effort.

The ARS, under the auspices of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, reacted immediately to the call for aid following the earthquake.

## EARTHQUAKE IN ARMENIA

AS OF DECEMBER 20 OVER \$100 MILLION WAS COLLECTED WORLDWIDE TO BUILD UPWARD FROM A TRAGIC DAY, WHICH TOOK THE LIVES OF 25,000 ARMENIANS, INJURED 19,000, AND LEFT 540,000 HOMELESS.

### COMMUNIQUE

#### A CALL TO ARMENIANS OF THE DIASPORA

"For Armenians, the New Year has not been coming for a long time. For a long time now, the years that follow one another have been bringing them nothing but persecution, slaughter, blood, and tears..."

KRISTAPOR

The tragedy of the devastating earthquake that caused the destruction of three cities in Armenia steered public attention away from criminal Azeri attempts to oust Armenians from their land.

And, as the entire world prepares for the celebrations of the New Year, only blood and tears await the Armenian minority which once served as the agent of prosperity in the land of the barbarian. But, the Armenians of the homeland are in a state of mobilization, to adopt a stand against not only the blow dealt by nature, but against the alarming situation of the Armenians displaced by the Azeris.

The Armenian Diaspora does not and cannot have a New Year full of traditional rejoicing. The surviving populace of the homeland looks upon the Diaspora with hope and faith as a source of financial and moral assistance and a refuge of security.

Thus, we call upon all Armenians, regardless of differences in faith or ideology, to suspend all traditional forms of celebrations during this New Year in order to provide the monetary elixir to our stricken nation, in the broadest manner possible. Only by lending our utmost in assistance and support can we welcome the New Year in a manner deserving of Armenians.

More than ever before do the stricken masses of the homeland need our solace and sacrifice in order to gain the confidence that the Armenian community of the world as an indivisible entity needs withstand the blows that serve as its lot—whether as natural disasters or political crimes.

The greatest gesture during this New Year to ease the grief of the Armenian people will be the hand that the Diaspora is able to lend them.

A.R.F. BUREAU

#### AN APPEAL TO THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

The devastating earthquake which struck Armenia on December 7 had a profound impact on the lives of Armenians of the homeland, and, in turn, put the Armenian people in a state of mourning. Tragic images of destroyed cities and villages, along with the grave situation of the sufferers—devoid of shelter, triggered tremendous grief among all Armenians, from the homeland to the farthest extents of the Diaspora.

The Diaspora has not only channeled its deep condolences to the Armenian authorities and people through the three Armenian political parties but has also initiated drives in each community to secure financial and humanitarian aid. The proceeds will be immediately dispatched to Armenia as expressions of support and solidarity with the suffering victims and the displaced Armenians who have sought shelter in Armenia, escaping Azeri persecution. The victims of the earthquake now add to the list of victims of the Artsakh Movement, providing for the Armenians yet another critical challenge.

It is comforting to note the willingness of the international community in Please see APPEAL, next page

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE, SOCIAL DEMOCRAT HUNCHAKIAN PARTY  
ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION BUREAU  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE, ARMENIAN DEMOCRATIC LIBERAL LEAGUE

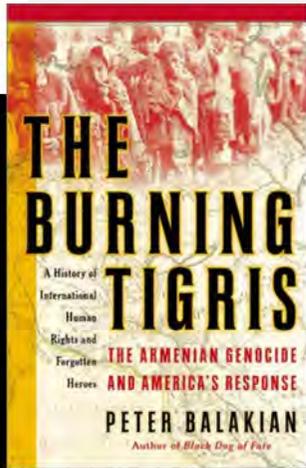


# THE LITERARY DOSE

STAFFWRITER

## Book Reviews

In his latest novel, *Burning Tigris*, Peter Balakian takes an approach to the Armenian Genocide that few Armenians have made an effort to explore: he views the entire thing from the American point of view. From American missionaries and relief workers, to two presidents of the United States of America, Balakian uses a wide array of different voices to tell the story of the great tragedy that befell our people.



**BALAKIAN IS ABLE TO CAPTURE THE ARMENIAN EXPERIENCE FROM AND FOR THE EYES OF AMERICANS.**

Balakian depicts this point of view well; as an American-Armenian, from New Jersey, he is able to write from the point of view of Americans with no noticeable difficulty. By engaging in this endeavor, Balakian allows the book to speak to more than just Armenians; he makes it a personal issue for all

Americans, who will realize that support of and friendship with Armenia is not only a wise political future, but also a part of American history, as real as apple pie.

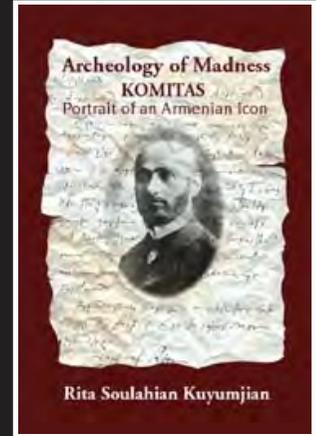
This same strength, however, can also be viewed as a weakness. In his eagerness to

maintain an almost un-Armenian sense of an outsider looking in, Balakian sometimes fails to convey the weight of the tragedy of the Genocide. Although he never loses track of the ultimate goal, he sometimes becomes too mired

in the telling of the story to focus on the actual tale itself. By focusing so much on the American view point, the victim of the events, the Armenian, is in danger of being lost.

The danger never comes to pass; nevertheless, although the Armenian side of the story sometimes seems to grow hazy behind a fog, it never vanishes from view. Balakian is able to capture the Armenian experience from and for the eyes of Americans, without alienating the Armenian readers

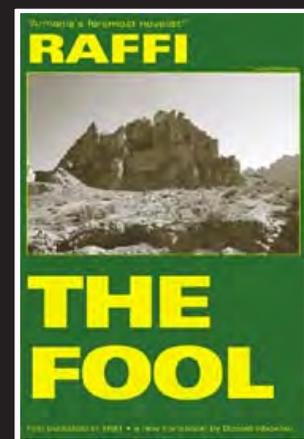
who are obviously going to flock to this book. His writing style is, needless to say, absolutely fluid, and he uses it masterfully to convey the message that the Armenian Genocide was not only a tragedy for Armenians, but for Americans, and, indeed, for all of humanity.



### Archeology of Madness

Rita Soulahian

A psychiatrist looks into the tortured psyche of Komitas, the great compiler and arranger of Armenian folk music. After surviving a death camp, Komitas developed a severe form of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and spent twenty years in virtual silence in mental asylums.



### The Fool

By Raffi

First published in 1881, a translation of a historical novel that contributed to the reawakening of the Armenian people under Ottoman rule.

FIND THESE BOOKS AND MORE AT SARDARABAD BOOKSTORE! WWW.SARDARABAD.COM

# Liberty Ազատութիւն

## TRANSLATION: A Means of Survival

STAFFWRITER

It is quite inspiring to see that Armenian literature not only astounds Armenians, but also resonates to the world at large. Alice Stone Blackwell, a native of New Jersey, was captivated by the echoes of Armenian literature in 1893, and along with Isabel Barrows and Ohannes Chatschumian, worked to translate several dozen poems into English. Most of the poems were composed by nineteenth century poets such as Bedros Tourian, Michael Nalbandian and Raphael Patkanian, all of whom were part of a Renaissance in Armenian culture. Together they composed an anthology entitled *Armenian Poems*, published in 1896. The book had an introduction about Armenian history and the massacres contemporary to that time-period, as well as essays about the Armenian church and the advanced status of Armenian women, according to Peter Balakian's book, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*.

Having read a few examples of the poems, I was initially critical of the exactitude of the translations. However, after taking into consideration the noble intentions of the translations, I was able to fully appreciate them in their innovative form. The translations do provide a true interpretation of the original text, although reading them in the original almost seems to materialize their sincerity. On this note, I would like to encourage the newly formed AYP Armenian Literary Project dedicated to the translation of texts that correspond to the goals of our organization. Any effort geared toward translating texts, be it from English to Armenian or Armenian to English, is an essential task that serves to preserve a language, as well as to provide a means for appreciation by a larger audience.

Alice Stone Blackwell has helped Armenian literature gain acknowledgement on a wider scale by exposing the literature to a wider reading audience. The translations she and her colleagues have pieced together are a valuable asset to the advancement of our cause. In recognizing this effort, we as educated Armenians, should contribute to this endeavor and utilize translations as a means toward widespread recognition of our culture, as well as our ideologies.

## MIKAYEL NALBANDIAN

(1830-1866) TRANSLATED BY ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

When God, who is forever free,  
Breathed life into my earthly frame, -  
From that first day, by His free will  
When I a living soul became, -  
A babe upon my mother's breast,  
Ere power of speech was given to me,  
Even then I stretched my feeble arms  
Forth to embrace thee, Liberty!

Wrapped round with many swaddling bands,  
All night I did not cease to weep,  
And in the cradle, restless still,  
My cries disturbed my mother's sleep.  
"O mother!" in my heart I prayed,  
"Unbind my arms and leave me free!"  
And even from that hour I vowed  
To love thee ever, Liberty!

When first my faltering tongue was freed,  
And when my parents' hearts were stirred  
With thrilling joy, to hear their son  
Pronounce his first clear-spoken word,  
"Papa, mama," as children use,  
Were not the names first said by me;  
The first word on my childish lips  
Was thy great name, O Liberty!

"Liberty!" answered from on high  
The sovereign voice of Destiny:  
"Wilt thou enroll thyself henceforth  
A soldier true of Liberty?  
The path is thorny all the way,  
And many trials wait for thee;  
Too strait and narrow in this world  
For him who loveth Liberty?"

"Freedom!" I answered, "on my head  
Let fire descend and thunder burst;  
Let foes against my life conspire,  
Let all who hate thee do their worst:  
I will be true to thee till death;  
Yea, even upon the gallows tree  
The last breath of a death of shame  
Shall shout thy name, O Liberty!"

Ազատ աստուածն այն օրից  
Երբ հաճեցաւ շունչ փչել,  
Իմ հողանիւթ շինուածքին  
Կենդանութիւն պարգեւել,  
Ես անբարբառ մի մանուկ  
Երկու ձեռքս պարզեցի  
Եւ իմ անզօր թելերով  
Ազատութիւն գրկեցի:

Մինչ գիշերը անհանգիստ  
Օրօրօցուն կապկապուած  
Լալիս էի անդադար,  
Մօրս քունը խանգարած,  
Խնդրում էի Նրանից  
Բազուկներս արծակել,  
Ես այն օրից ուխտեցի  
Ազատութիւնը սիրել:

Թոթով լեզուիս մինչ կապերը  
Արծակուեցան, բացուեցան,  
Մինչ ծնողքս իմ ծայնից  
Խնդացին ու բերկրեցան,  
Նախկին խօսքն, որ ասացի,  
Քեր հայր, կամ մայր, կամ այլ ինչ,  
Ազատութիւն, դուրս թռաւ  
Իմ մանկական բերանից:

«Ազատութիւն», ինձ կրկնեց  
Ճակատագիրը վերեւից.  
«Ազատութեա՞ն դու զինուոր  
Կամիս գրուիլ այս օրից:  
Ո՛հ, փշոտ է ճանապարհդ,  
Քեզ շատ փորձանք կը սպասէ.  
Ազատութիւն սիրողին  
Այս աշխարհը խիստ նեղ է»:

-Ազատութիւն,- գոչեցի,-  
Թող որոտայ իմ գլխին  
Փայլակ, կայծակ, հուր, երկաթ,  
Թող դաւ դնէ թշնամին,  
Ես մինչ ի մահ, կախաղան,  
Մինչեւ անարգ մահու սիւն,  
Պիտի գոռամ, պիտ կրկնեմ  
Անդադար. ազատութիւն:

# ARF YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN



## INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SOCIALIST YOUTH CONFERENCE

### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MEETING DELEGATE, ARSEN STEPANIAN

The ARF “Nigol Aghbalian” Student Association of Armenia and the Armenian Youth Federation of France were represented at the European Committee of International Union of Socialist Youth conference on the weekend of October 3, 2003.

The IUSY is an organization made up of 135 socialist, social democratic, and labor youth organizations from over 100 countries. The ARF youth groups are the only Armenian members of the IUSY.

Arsen Stepanian, 28 of Yerevan, a consultant for a parliamentary development project, attended the IUSY meeting in Vienna. The two and a half day meeting in October of last year attracted 60 members from 35 countries, of which Armenia represented the only country from the Caucasus.

The main issues discussed in the meeting included the reform of the IUSY charter and their position paper entitled, “Global Governance for Peace.” If ratified at the IUSY World Council meeting, the position paper will be the main strategic paper of the IUSY for the next two years.

Stepanian addressed the meeting by first explaining the points of view of the ARF Youth Organizations with respect to resolutions being discussed. Stepanian emphasized the important role the IUSY plays in incorporating the protection of minority and basic human rights in their future strategies. He brought the Armenian Genocide as a primary example of a crime against humanity and stressed the importance of punishing those responsible for such crimes to prevent their repetition.

The resolution condemning Genocides and other crimes against humanity will be discussed and voted on at the IUSY World Council in three months.

“Participation in such meetings gives us the opportunity to present our goals and demands to an international community of political youth all over the world,” said Stepanian. “It allows us to obtain political experience, while influencing organizations world wide.”

The Secretariat of the IUSY decided to get better acquainted with the AYF and in late November of last year, an official delegation of the IUSY visited the AYF in Armenia.

“Representation is important, when you don’t participate everybody forgets about you and your problems. On the other hand, participation opens doors for cooperation and the exchange of experiences with other political youth organizations, while providing the opportunity to obtain political allies, and through them, influencing their respective governments,” said Stepanian in response to a question about why the AYF should further relationships with international groups.

When asked if Stepanian, in light of his participation at the IUSY meeting, has a message for the AYF of the Western United States, he said, “Actively participate in politics, particularly your politics and any kind of youth activities; become leaders, both on local and international levels; make our voice heard and do it in a way to make the Armenian nation one of the most respected and influential in the world.”

Learn More About the IUSY Online

[www.iusy.org](http://www.iusy.org)

# BADANEAN

Badanees (AYF juniors) are of fundamental importance to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, for they will become tomorrow's youth and make up tomorrow's generation who will take over the responsibility of carrying on the mission of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation until the goals it has been striving for have been realized. Therefore, badanegan organizations must place great emphasis on the moral, ideological, mental, and physical development of badanees while also educating them regarding national, party and civil issues.



T  
H  
O  
U  
G  
H  
T  
S

## WHAT DOES GENOCIDE RECOGNITION MEAN TO YOU?

One of the main reasons we became Badanees is to do anything to be helping Armenians get the recognition of the Genocide. We believe that Armenians will end up getting the recognition, and until we do, and until one of our main struggles and goals are met, we will not give up.

*Megbrie Papazian and Natalie Hairabedian—Age 13*

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ACT OF LISBON FIVE?

Personally, the heroes of Lisbon five are a part of every Armenian. They were courageous, bold, and brave. Their act showed determination and dedication. They should be praised by all for changing history and opening the eyes of society.

*Vana Kouyoumji—Age 16*



## WHY DID YOU BECOME A BADANEE?

Frankly, I wanted to become like my father: a *կուսակցական*. What also fueled me to become a Badanee were the ideas presented in Armenian revolutionary songs (*Ռաշնակցական երգեր*).

*Hovig Keushgerian—Age 14*

# FROM FRESNO TO BAGHDAD

STAFFWRITER

THE STORY OF A YOUNG ARMENIAN

**IRAQ. THE WAR THERE HAS TAKEN HOLD OF OUR COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION, AND BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT NEWS ITEM IN THE UNITED STATES, AND, INDEED, THE WORLD. THE MIGHTIEST ARMY IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD INVADING A NATION ONLY A FRACTION OF ITS SIZE AND STRENGTH; A COUNTRY AND A DICTATOR THAT HAVE BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH “EVIL” IN THE US MEDIA FOR THE PAST DECADE BOTH BEING DEFEATED IN ONE FELL SWOOP. THE US ITSELF ERUPTED WITH A FLURRY OF DIFFERENT REACTIONS, FROM ANGRY PROTESTS TO LIMITLESS SUPPORT, AND THE SEEDS FOR THE GREATEST POLITICAL CONFLICT IN MODERN AMERICAN HISTORY WERE PLANTED.**

The war, however, is taking place on the other side of the world; for most of the Armenian community, the fact that America is attacking Iraq is a mild worry, at most. Armenians have had a long history of being the underdog in military conflicts; the United States going on the offensive against anyone other than Armenia was a matter of no small relief, with the knowledge that its Turkish allies are always ready to try and finish the Genocide they perpetrated 88 years ago. The war is distant, the combatants foreigners; it has nothing to do with the Armenians.

The problem with that reasoning is that it is untrue. As a result of the US war against Iraq, Turkey, an insincere, yet sly ally, is reaping the financial benefits of continually increasing US aid. In this case, with the pretense of assisting the US in overthrowing a ruthless dictator, the Turkish government can continue the harsh mistreatment of its Kurdish population. In addition, Turkey can take advantage of its financial benefits by funding the recreation and obliteration of history. All this is made possible by Turkey's agreement to “assist” the US in its war on terror. In the meantime, the livelihood of the Armenian population of Iraq, like that of the entire Iraqi population, is threatened.

Another factor we must consider is that America boasts the largest number of Armenians outside of Armenia itself. With so many of us living in this country, we have developed our own martial tradition here: one of service in the armed forces of the United States. From World War II to the Vietnam War, Armenians have served under the Stars and Stripes faithfully,

fighting for their adopted country with all the courage and tenacity that has made our people legendary fighters throughout all of history.

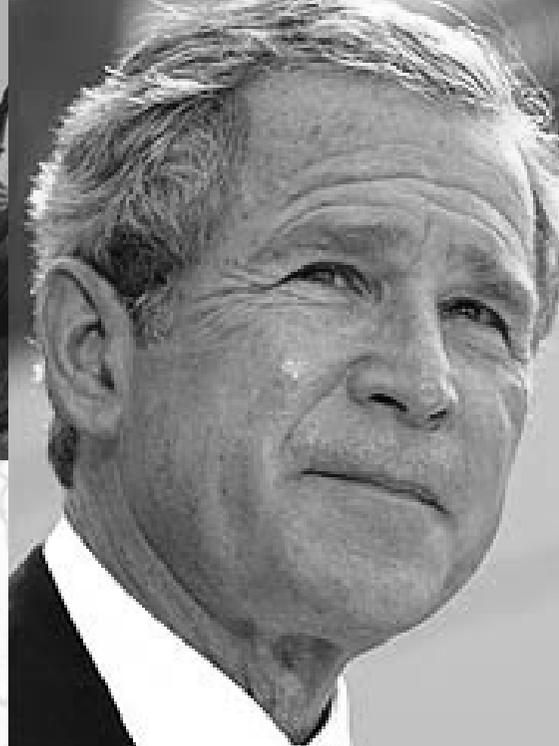
Operation Iraqi Freedom is no exception to this rule; Armenian soldiers, in the US Army, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, and others, served America bravely. One of these troops, a Marine from the First Battalion, Fourth Marines, First Marine division, was a member of the AYPF; he served in

Iraq and in other parts of the world, both in peacetime and in combat, for five years. He saw action while fighting in the uniform of an American Marine; he did not, however, forget the Tricolor that waved within

**“EVERY PERSON IN LIFE HAS  
A VOICE, AND THAT VOICE  
SHOULD BE HEARD.”**

his heart. His name is Shant Postoyan.

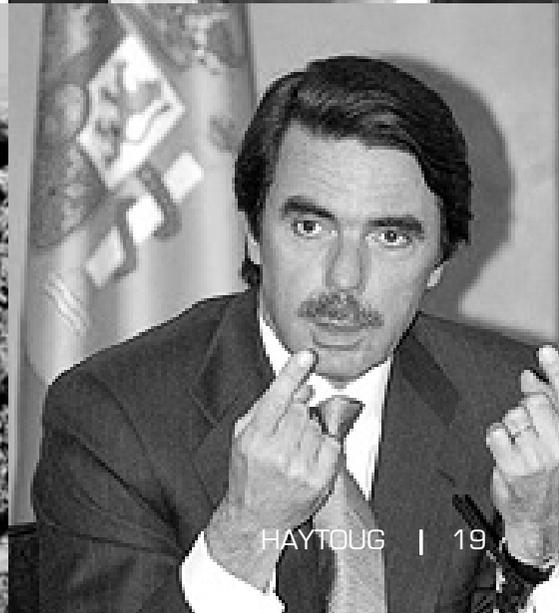
“I wanted to live a tough life,” Shant said, in an interview with *Haytoug*, “go out there, learn to fight.” He found his tough life very soon, first and foremost in the horror of discipline that is known to Marines everywhere as Boot Camp. As the only Armenian there, Shant soon discovered that his culture wasn't a barrier between him and the other Marines, but rather an inspiration to drive him on. “When I was going up the Reaper (the final hill that Marines must climb in Boot Camp), before we got the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (the Marine Corps symbol), I was singing ‘Asbedakan Sev Sadanan’ in my head.” Being Armenian, then, and having been a member of the AYPF, became almost an advantage—a shield he could use to protect himself against the psychological fatigues of armed service.



“I’ve been an AYPF member since I was twelve, I believe,” Shant explained, when asked if the AYPF’s beliefs and teachings aided him during his time as a Marine, “...so my whole life, I’ve grown up hearing about the Genocide and the Armenian Martyrs and the Fedayis, and singing the songs, you know, the Tashnag songs.” Indeed, the Armenian people, and the ARF, have produced soldiers and heroes who achieved deeds decades ago that modern technology can hardly match. “I grew up hearing about these war stories and Armenian heroes,” he continued, “and that gave me the spirit to keep fighting.. I knew that people before me, Armenian people, had been through this.. so I didn’t give up.”

Shant soon had an opportunity to put those beliefs, and that spirit, to the test; soon after the US invaded Iraq, he saw combat in the Iraqi city of al Nasaria. Shant and his fellow Marines were charged with clearing a path for the rest of their battalion to make it through the city safely; as he put it, rather stoically, “What we ended up doing was setting [a secure path] up for them to go through, the whole time taking fire and firing back.” He was soon hurled back into the depth of combat, this time in the much fiercer fighting at al Kut, where US forces were ambushed by Iraqi troops. “It looked like they had all given up, because there were Iraqi supplies and uniforms and weapons and equipment everywhere, so we thought it was abandoned, and advanced,” Shant recalled. “Then we took RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) fire from the buildings, and received a lot of small arms fire from everywhere and... and we had a nice little fight.” These words mask a world of confusion, when everything the Iraqi troops had was suddenly unleashed on the unsuspecting Marines. After clearing the enemies from the ambush zone, Shant was withdrawn from the city and advanced towards Baghdad, being one of the first units to enter the city.

Acts like this filled Shant with faith that democracy in Iraq, although shaky, will ultimately succeed. Casualties may mount, and it may appear that the US troops are unwanted, but Shant was solid in his faith in democracy. “Every person in life has a voice,” Shant declared, “and that voice should be heard.”



# FEBRUARY Rebellion

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR GARO MOUMDJIAN BY RAZMIG HAROUN



SIMON VRATZIAN



ROUPEN DER MINASSIAN

**It cannot be said any better than Abraham Lincoln put it: “Any people anywhere being inclined or having the power have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and force a new one that suits them better.”**

On February 16, 1921, the Armenians had the supreme inclination to seize power in the most effective way – through revolution. It was a time of much difficulty, perplexity, and civil unrest – but it was also a time to stand up for the rights of Armenians under the newly established Soviet power.

Only a few months after the Treaty of Sevres was signed, the area in the Caucasus that Wilson drew out for the Armenians was soon to be taken by the Red Army. Following several months of Armeno-Soviet negotiations, visits to Moscow, victories in Mountainous Armenia by Karekin Njtech, and continuous barbarism toward leaders of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Armenian intelligentsia, the ruling party of the first Armenian Republic faced many trials and tribulations.

“There was also a very strong Turkish offensive that was taking place over Armenia, and the Armenian government, the Dashnak government that was in power at the time was trying to somehow balance the problem on the front, but on the other hand, they knew they were not going to be able to hold for long, because they were practically abandoned by everybody, even their allies of the west,” explained Garabet K. Moumdjian, Adjunct Professor at Glendale Community College.

The Armenian leadership knew that it couldn’t last against two very strong currents: the Turkish advance and the Red Army. It was clear that negotiations would have to be made to ensure the existence of an Armenian nation.

“So they said okay, let’s negotiate and give the power to the Communists, but in doing so, the negotiations were very diplomatically made. General Tro was the one who was conducting those talks, and he put some very strict points, that once the Communists take power, they are not going to create some sort of class structure in the country, that the army would remain intact with its leadership, that the intelligentsia was not going to be abused or tortured, et cetera, et cetera. These were the terms with which the Dashnak government gave power to the Communists,” elaborated Moumdjian.

By November 29, 1920, the Red Army elements invaded the northeastern region of Armenia and proclaimed her a Soviet republic.

“However, after they took power, they relegated on all the agreements that they made in the negotiations with Tro. What happened now was - now a real uprising by the people

themselves against the rule of the communist party, and that's what obliged the ARF leadership to take the initiative and lead the uprising in order to take the country back.”

Of course, the unrest of the Armenian people was a result of their anger toward the atrocities and cruelty of the Soviet regime. However, when the ARF was put under the stress of taking leadership of this uprising, they also took into consideration the following points: 1) In Mountainous Armenia, General Karekin Njtech and his armies were still ruling and had the area completely under their control; 2) They were expecting the aid of western powers (unfortunately, this did not materialize); 3) There was an urgency in taking action considering the pace at which the Soviet atrocities were moving, the risk of the leadership and intelligentsia being wiped out was likely.

“However, it is important to stress the fact that they did not have the aspiration to take control of everything, it was a desperate move as a matter of fact on the side of the populace – it was an impulsive move in defense of the country's leadership that was being butchered by the Soviets,” explained Moundjian.

In consideration of the fact that stabilizing the situation and taking control of Yerevan, with the aid of Karekin Njtech's army in the areas of Lernahayasdan, along with the expectations of western aid, the leadership of Simon Vratzian – head of the Committee for the Salvation of the Homeland, which was formed to execute the insurrection—and chiefly the might of Roupén Der Minassian and his freedom fighters, the ARF

was able to retake the republic, and the CSM took the role of governing the country.

The Armenian Republic under the CSM lived a short life of only one hundred days. The Red Army mobilization and march into Yerevan meant a fearsome and vengeful opposition; moreover, it meant an infiltration backed by Lenin and the Soviets.



ROUPEN AND HIS FEDAYEES

Although the success of the popular revolt of February 16-18 was short lived, it served as a reaffirmation of the willpower and determination of the strong Armenian people who had remained on what was left of their historic lands after the Genocide.

Once again, it is deemed necessary to quote one of the great revolutionaries of history, Abraham Lincoln: “This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or exercise their revolutionary right to overthrow it.”

## A VICTIM OF BOLSHEVIK ATROCITIES



HAMAZASP SRUANTZYAN  
1873-1921

Born in Van and a jeweler by trade, Hamazasp Sruantzyan moved to Yerevan at a young age. From there, he relocated and settled in Shushi.

He is responsible for defending the villages of Khatchen, Askeran, and Kantsag during several conflicts with the Tatars (Azerbaijanis).

In 1914, Hamazasp was appointed as the General for the third regiment of volunteer soldiers, and took part in countless battles in different areas of the Caucasus with 400 men under his command.

After the independence of Armenia, Hamazasp was assigned as the governor for the Nor Payazid region in the republic. However, his rule of the region was as short lived as the republic. After the sovietization of Armenia, Hamazasp was sent a kind invitation from an Armenian Red Army Commissar with intentions to “work together.” With the hope that this cooperation would be beneficial for his homeland, Hamazasp trusted the summons and met with the Commissar. Upon his arrival, the Commissar greeted Hamazasp with a warm welcome and a benevolent embrace. They spoke for some time before the Commissar excused Hamazasp and ordered his guards to arrest him.

Hamazasp was beheaded in a Yerevan prison by Armenian Bolsheviks only a few days before the revolt on February 18—“a Turkish butchering axe straight to the head,” explained a prisoner who witnessed the beheading.

# JUSTICE IN DEMAND

## A PICTORIAL OVERVIEW OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION

OVER THE LAST  
THREE DECADES





# BOULGARATSI BEDO



## B E D R O S SEREMJIAN'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER (A SEGMENT)

Bedros Seremjian, better known as Boulgaratsi Bedo, was born in 1874 in Bulgaria. Upon the decision of ARF founder, Rosdom, he headed an Armenian-Macedonian platoon to kidnap a Turkish official in an effort to pressure the release of Armenian and Greek political prisoners. The operation failed and Boulgaratsi Bedo was sentenced to death. His sentence was executed when he was only 27.

MY DEAR FATHER, BECAUSE I HAVE ACCEPTED A STATE OF WANDERING, SEPARATED FROM MY PARENTS, I CONSIDER IT A RESPONSIBILITY TO EXPLAIN MYSELF TO YOU.

I would consider myself lucky if the love of my homeland did not, to such an extent, conquer my heart, mind, and all my feelings, turning me into its prisoner. I had stretched out my hand to a bright future, and it, in turn, was greeting me with a smile. However, the love destroyed that smile. By love, I do not mean the love of a woman, which makes all mankind joyous by giving it life. No my dear father; no... Since childhood, I had been imbued with the memories of our ruined and enslaved homeland. But I tried to soften and change those feelings. Bringing into my mind the happy and bright sides of life, I enrolled in military school; but during the time I was a student, the embers of nationalism hidden within me, instead

of dying out, began to raise flames. The various emotions that come with this love, caused me to finally leave my student life, and I signed up as a simple soldier, both to become accustomed to hardship and to fulfill my obligations to the land I was born and raised in. I completed my duty as a soldier. Now I owe no debt to Bulgaria because I have a homeland too. I have a people who suffer in enslavement and wretchedness. Therefore, I can no longer live in this country, especially among a people who faced a fate like ours, but destroyed the chains of slavery by shedding its own blood, and who today is free. Many of us, along with them, were overjoyed. But my heart bled every day. I considered it a shame to live among them, especially when our homeland was not yet free. The memory of bleeding bodies, the voices of orphans and the young girls that shook mountains, fueled a blaze inside me. Unable to put out the fire with only my tears, I embraced the path of serving my homeland with my whole being.