

# HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES  
SPRING 2007

**PARLIAMENTARY  
ELECTION ISSUE**

## **DECIDING ARMENIA'S FATE...**

ՍՏԵՂԾԵԼ  
ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԴԱԿԱՐ  
ԱՊԱԳԱՅ

**CREATING  
A  
DEMOCRATIC  
FUTURE**



**INSIDE:**  
\*REVIEW  
OF ARMENIA'S  
POLITICAL PARTIES  
\*READ ABOUT THE  
ROLE OF WOMEN  
IN ARMENIA



#### **HAYTOUG STAFF**

*Contributors:*

Serouj Aprahamian  
Jules Boyadjian  
Goriin  
Sanan Haroun  
Hovig Kandilian  
Taleen Mardirossian  
Vatche Soghomonian  
Shant Taslakian

*Editor:*

Vache Thomassian

*Layout design:*

Krikor Mugerian

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

The opinions expressed in the Haytoug publication are not solely and necessarily opinions of the Armenian Youth Federation. Haytoug encourages all Armenian youth to express their thoughts and opinions in this publication. *Submissions for publication in Haytoug may be sent to the following address.*

#### **Armenian Youth Federation**

104 North Belmont Street, Suite 206  
Glendale, California 91206



[12]



[26]



[03]



[10]



[22]



[16]

02 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR  
 03 WOMEN & DEMOCRACY  
 07 ՄԵՐ ԹԱՅԼԵՐԳԸ  
 08 ONE NATION, TWO CITIZENSHIPS  
 10 ՄԱՌՈՎԱՅԻՆ-ԱՌԵՏՈՒՐԻ ԼՈՒՐՑ ՏԱԳՆԱՊԸ  
 12 THE CHALLENGE OF CHOOSING A PARLIAMENT  
 14 THE POLITICAL SCENE IN ARMENIA  
 16 ՄԵԿ ԱԶԳ. ՄԵԿ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ  
 18 A LAW FOR PEACE  
 20 AMBASSADOR OF SHAME  
 21 ՇՈՎ ՀԻՆԳՇԱԲԹԻ  
 22 BADANEGAN SEMINAR IN REVIEW  
 25 ԱՊՐԵԼ  
 26 FAST FOR REMEMBRANCE  
 30 BOOK REVIEW: FORMING A MODERN NATION  
 ON THE SHOULDERS OF HISTORY

# DECISIONS OF TODAY SHAPE THE ARMENIA OF TOMORROW

With the upcoming election for a new Parliament in May and, subsequently, a new President in early 2008, Armenia is approaching an important juncture in its fledgling democracy. These milestone events will serve as key indicators of Armenia's ability to sustain democratic progress and development. Based on new Constitutional reforms, the National Assembly will obtain a more significant role within the Armenian government relative to the President; thereby making the upcoming elections that much more crucial.

Relations with the United States – via the Millennium Challenge Account- and the European Union – via the European Neighborhood policy – are contingent on Armenia's ability to assert its commitment to real democratic progress through open and fair elections.

Having to already contend with closed borders to the west and east and exclusion from regional development projects, Armenia must continue and strengthen its integration with the rest of the world. More than the desire for financial and political benefits attainable through foreign assistance, Armenia's need for embracing democracy remains in its own development and maturing. The

capacity for the leaders of society to meet the needs of the citizenry and remain responsive to the public's preferences and interests will lead to a progressive decline in corruption and abuse of law. The basic rights of each individual are at stake; as well as the future of the nation as a collective.

The task of the Armenian Diaspora in this process of democratization was recently reaffirmed and fortified with the adoption of legislation allowing the opportunity for dual citizenship to all Armenians worldwide. As much as this new law serves to reconnect a people with their homeland and seeks to repatriate the immense Diaspora, it is also a symbolic gesture of the Republic's recognition of the potential contributions of its resourceful brethren abroad. Work must be undertaken to restore the sense of the fatherland and the preservation of Armenian identity. The greatest resource of Armenia is its impassioned and conscientious individuals worldwide, who are concerned with its progress. Following the Genocide and decades under Soviet rule, the time has come to properly and fundamentally connect all Armenians to their homeland and to a shared vision of a democratic future.

# WOMEN & DEMOCRACY

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ARMENIA TODAY



The Armenian Youth Federation had the opportunity to interview Maria Titzian. From a young age Maria has been active in the Youth Organization of the ARF. Currently, Maria has been active in promoting women's issues in the party,

as well as representing it in the SIW (Socialist International Women). Since 2004, she has been the president of the Women's Committee of the ARF Dashnaktsutyun Party in Armenia. The ARF Women's Committee is active in formulating the party's policies on women's issues, as well as empowering women party members to be more active within the party by providing training and advocacy building skills. Maria is also a founding member of the Women's Coalition of Armenia and Board Member of the Women's Forum of the National Democratic Institute.

**HAYTOUG:** *How important do you feel the particular role of women is in the consolidation of democracy and economic development in Armenia?*

**MARIA:** The role of women in the consolidation of democracy and economic development in Armenia is not only important, it is crucial at this particular point in time. A woman involved in the political,

social and economic life of the country is more likely to add dimensions which impact women's and children's lives such as employment, economy, social security, education and health. Beyond the quest for justice and fairness for women, the purpose of increasing women's participation in politics is not simply to increase numbers but to support the creation of a new democratic agenda in politics and to implement change that will benefit society. It is important to stress that when we advocate for greater participation of women in all sectors of Armenian life, it should be clear that we are not talking about the exclusion of men but rather the inclusion of women: their talents, perspectives, energy, priorities and views. Democracy is representation of the people by the people and it cannot be real democracy when the largest proportion of the population – women - has little or no representation. The laws in Armenia do not discriminate against women however there are hidden systematic and institutional barriers to women's advancement in almost every aspect of public life. Unless these barriers are removed, women do not in reality have equal opportunities.

If we continue to ignore the gender disparity in Armenia, it will come at a great cost to our society's ability to sustain growth, to govern effectively, increase productivity and eventually reduce poverty. Women in Armenia continue to

have inferior command over a range of productive resources i.e. land, information, and financial resources. Women are often limited to certain occupations in developing countries and this holds true in Armenia's case. Women in Armenia are primarily employed in the health and education sectors yet do not hold management positions in these primarily feminized sectors. Limited access to resources and weaker ability to generate income – whether in self-employed activities or in wage employment – restrict women's power to influence the allocation of resources and investment decisions in the home. This unequal access and poor socioeconomic status relative to men continues to hamper their ability to influence decisions not only in the home, but also in their communities and at the national level.

Finally, I have come to believe that the majority of women in Armenia want to have a role in the development and empowerment of our nation not only to advance women's rights or 'interests' but because they want to have a stake in public policy development and in the implementation of economic strategies that will contribute to equitable growth.

**HAYTOUG:** *What do you see as some of the most critical problems or barriers facing women in Armenia today? What do you see as some practical solutions for overcoming these problems?*

**MARIA:** Women were affected most by the transition period in Armenia and their place in society was further aggravated as a result of the earthquake, the NKR conflict, the collapse of the USSR and the ensuing energy crisis that literally shut the country down. Women were not able to capitalize on the new opportunities created by the transition. On the contrary, they felt its adverse effects even more acutely. Among the critical problems facing women today are poverty, the issue of reproductive health, (including increasing

incidences of STD's, continued use of multiple abortions as a means of fertility regulation, increase in the number of cases of cervical cancer), unemployment or underemployment (66% of the unemployed in Armenia are women, the highest percentage of female unemployment in the region), limited access to resources, domestic violence, and trafficking. According to recent statistics 53% of all the poor in Armenia are women. While women more often times find themselves in poverty, they are not at a greater risk than men in general. However this risk factor changes for women led households, which are at 33% increased risk of extreme poverty. The out migration of men in search of employment, or desertion of their families, has led to an increase in female led households which are an extremely vulnerable segment of Armenian society. Today female led households constitute over 30% of all households in Armenia.

One practical solution toward overcoming these problems would be to strengthen institutional mechanisms. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, has a Department for Family, Women and Children whose primary focus is on social, health and employment issues but does not address equal rights or equal opportunities for women. Even now, this department lacks the financial resources to implement any meaningful change. A separate department for women with appropriate financing could possibly change the current status quo. Another potential solution would be gender mainstreaming in education and in all educational textbooks/resources which could highlight the Armenian woman's role in the social and political formation of the country - girls and young women do not have positive female role models. It is critical that civil society take a proactive role by organizing more public discourse in the form of round tables, debates, information campaigns via public service announcements, etc. Unfortunately civil society in Armenia is weak at best, and the large numbers of NGO's, even those that are fully

operational, have not been able to successfully lobby and advocate for change. I personally believe that greater participation of women in politics, both at the executive and legislative branches could begin to address these issues; however societal norms have always tended to veer women away from political involvement. To change the current public perception of women, to attract women to politics and to increase the representation of women in the decision-making process in Armenia there must be collaboration between the government, the private sector and the NGO community to create a greater capacity to develop strategies to empower women, build lobbying networks and promote women's leadership. This approach to capacity building for women can see positive results.

**HAYTOUG:** *With parliamentary elections coming up, what do you think is required to improve the level of representation of women in the National Assembly? The ARF has announced that it will maintain a 25% quota for female candidates in its party list. Are quotas sufficient? If not, what else can be done?*

**MARIA:** I don't believe that we will see a significant increase of women in the National Assembly after the elections on May 12, 2007. Although of late most political parties are vying for women's votes by incorporating women's issues in their pre-campaign activities and or campaign platforms. However, I am skeptical that there exists a genuine desire on the part of the 'old boy's network' to see the gender disparity begin to diminish in Armenia. Meaningful change cannot be achieved when it is artificial in nature. There has not been enough work done either in theory or practice to believe that public awareness or perception of women's role in society has had any

consequential change of heart. It has merely become politically fashionable to talk about gender issues. Having said that, any political willingness however it is couched, expressed or articulated is better than none. The women's movement in Armenia has not yet been able to develop the necessary mechanisms or lobbying networks which are necessary to anticipate significant results.



Are quotas sufficient? Several international bodies have passed resolutions to support the use of quotas. A variety of different quota systems has been used around the world and at least 122 political parties globally use some form of the quota for women when selecting their candidates for elections.

In Armenia, the prevailing attitudes toward the quota system are mixed. Some argue that quotas are demeaning to women and that if a woman is competent then she will succeed on her own merit. This argument is put forward by women as well as men. If this were true, why aren't there many more women in the legislative and executive branches of government? Quotas are needed as a temporary measure, not because women are unable to succeed in politics on merit, but because all too often, they

are rarely given the opportunity to try. Nonetheless there were several women's organizations in Armenia who had been actively campaigning to increase the existing 15% quota to 25% for women on party lists in the electoral code. This campaign unfortunately was not successful. The ARF will indeed maintain a 25% quota for the upcoming parliamentary elections. Setting a percentage for the quota is not enough because political parties invariably place their women candidates on the bottom of the lists, thereby once again excluding women's presence in the National Assembly. To ensure that the quota system results in gender balance, the zipper system must also be utilized. Under the zipper system the names of men and women alternate equally in the critical top position of party lists.

Utilizing the quota system is not a panacea, but it can help change the mindset of the public when they see political parties like the ARF including women in winnable positions on their party lists.

**HAYTOUG:** *In March 2006, the ARF's Women's Committee organized a conference titled "The Role of Women in the Establishment of Civil Society." What is the main goal of organizing such conferences and what do you think the results of them have been so far? Aside from these conferences, can you explain what other work the Women's Committee of the ARF carries out in Armenia?*

**MARIA:** Conferences such as the one organized by the ARF Women's Committee are critical as they serve as a forum for public and political discourse. The more we talk, argue, debate, analyze the current situation of women in the

country, the more we begin to shape and perhaps change public perception and attitudes toward women in the country. The conference also provided us the opportunity to gauge the real extent of women's frustration.

This year is a particularly critical one for the Women's Committee with the upcoming parliamentary elections. We have been meeting with NGO's involved in the field of gender relations, we have organized a series of round tables with student associations and youth groups, we are meeting with women voters in the different electoral districts in Yerevan, and we are actively working with the

women in our own party by providing them with English language and computer training. We have organized sub-committees whose responsibility will be to study problems in the health and educational sectors, legal rights and



public relations. In the next several months we will be visiting different regions throughout the country to meet with women, to raise public awareness about women's issues but most importantly to provide information regarding their legal rights. This year in March we also have the honor of hosting the Socialist International Women's (SIW) Executive and Regional Meeting in Yerevan. The theme of the meeting is *Gender Dimensions of International Migration*. Approximately 25 women from all over the world will be coming to Armenia to participate in this meeting. The SIW meeting in Yerevan will undoubtedly raise the profile of ARF women and provide us with the opportunity to interact with women from different countries and learn from their own experiences.

# Մեր Քայերգը

Հայաստան, անկախ պետականություն ունի այսօր, եւ ան կը պարտի այն ազգասէր սերունդներուն որոնք ապրեցան եւ տանջուեցան դարէ դար երգելով հայրենիքի քայերգը: Երազեցին եւ կերտեցին այս օրուայ ազատ անկախ Հայաստանը, իրենց յաջորդող սերունդներուն համար: 1918-ին Հայաստանի առաջին անկախութեան ժամանակ «Մեր Հայրենիք»ը, որուն հեղինակն էր Միքայէլ Նալպանտեան, պաշտօնապէս ընդունուեցաւ որպէս Հայաստանի քայերգ: Առաջին անկախութիւնը կորսնցնելէն ետք, Հայաստանը դարձաւ Ռուսիո հպատակ: Երգուեցաւ Արամ Խաչատուրեանի քայերգ մը որուն առաջին կը բացատրեր եղելութիւնը «Սովետական ազատ աշխարհի Հայաստան»: Կարգ մը հայրենասէրներ գաղտնի կերպով պահեցին եւ երգեցին, իրենց պատկանող քայերգը, սակայն սփիւռքի տարածքին, հայկական կառույցներէն ներս եւ դուրս, ազատօրէն երգուեցաւ «Մեր Հայրենիք»ը:

Ժամանակի ընթացքին, Հայ ժողովուրդի կամքով եւ աշխատանքով մենք տիրացանք երկրորդ անկախութեան: 1991 թուին կերտուեցաւ նոր պետական վարչակազմ, որուն նախագահն էր՝ Լեւոն Տէր Պետրոսեան: Այդ օրունէ վերստին կոչուեցաւ «Մեր Հայրենիք»ը քայերգ: Վերջերս, դժբախտաբար կարգ մը կազմակերպութիւններ եւ անհատներ աշխատանք կը տանին Հայաստանի քայերգը փոփոխութեան ենթարկելու: Սահմանադրութեան համաձայն, շատեր կը կարծեն թէ նոր քայերգի մը ժամանակը եկած է: Նոյնիսկ նախագահ Րոպերտ Գոշարեանը իր կարծիքը փոխանցեց ըսելով թէ «Մեր Հայրենիք»-ին երաժշտութիւնը եւ բառերը շատ պարզ կը հնչեն բաղդատմամբ ուրիշ քայերգներու: Այս հարցին շուրջ 22 անդամներով յանձնախումբ մը կազմուեցաւ: Յանձնախումբը Որոշեց մրցանակի մը առիթը տալ նոր ազգային քայերգ գտնելու համար: Մրցակցութենէն ետք

յանձնախումբին մեծամասնութիւնը իրենց փափաքը յայտնեցին թէ Սովետական քայերգը փոխարինէ «Մեր Հայրենիք»ին: Հին Սովետական քայերգը երգելով մենք Հայերս ի՞նչ պիտի յիշենք, ազատութեան կաշկանդումը թէ՛ մեր ժողովուրդին ականատես եղած զանազան չարչարանքները:

Այս հարցով Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցութիւնը տքնաշան աշխատանք կը տանի քայերգը փոփոխութեան չենթարկուելու, մանաւանդ մրցանակի դրութեամբ մեր հարցերը չեն լուծուիր, վերջապէս քայերգ մը մէկ օրուայ մէջ չի գրուիր եւ մէկ գիշերուայ մէջ իմաստալի չի դառնար: Հ.Յ.Դ-ը չի տեսներ տարբեր իմաստալի բառերով եւ երաժշտութիւնով ներկայացուելիք քայերգ մը, ուր կրնայ ընդգրկել մեր ժողովուրդին ազատութիւնը եւ հաւատարմութիւնը երագուն դրօշին հանդէպ:

Մինչեւ այս օրս պայմանաւոր բացատրութիւն չէ տրուած թէ ինչո՞ւ մեր քայերգը փոփոխութեան պիտի ենթարկուի: Մեր դիմաց մեծ խնդիր ունինք, Հայաստանը մնացած է առանց ազգային քայերգի: Սակայն սահմանադրութեան համաձայն, Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցութիւնը աշխատանք կը տանի օրէնք ստեղծելու որ «Մեր Հայրենիք»ը օրինաւոր կերպով մնայ Հայաստանի քայերգը:

Երբ մեր աշ ձեռքը կը մեր սրտերուն վրայ կը յիշենք մեր օրերը բայց նաեւ յաղթանակները: Յոյսով կ'երգենք, յիշելով որ երբէք մեր Հայ ազգը չէ մոռցուած եւ մինչեւ այսօր մենք կը պայքարինք այդ նպատակին համար: Նոյնպէս ալ տարիներու ընթացքին «Մեր Հայրենիք»ը չի մոռցուեցաւ եւ պիտի պայքարինք որ երբէք չի մոռցուի: Թանկարժէք մեր քայերգին հպարտութեամբ կանգնինք, յիշելով մեր քաջասիրտ հայորդիները, որոնք ցուրտի եւ անձրեւներու տարաբին կուուեցան այդ հաւատքով թէ «ամենայն տեղ մահը մի է մարդ մի անգամ պիտ մտնի, բայց երանի որ իր ազգի ազատութեան կը զոհուի»:

*Թալին Մարտիրոսեան*

# ONE NATION, TWO CITIZENSHIPS

*By Serouj Aprahamian*

The Armenian nation is approaching a critical juncture in its historical development. For perhaps the first time in modern history, the relationship between the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia has entered a period marked more by cooperation than division or crisis. Spurred by relatively high levels of economic growth and political stability, the last several years have seen unprecedented levels of Diasporan development projects, investments, tourism, conferences, cultural gatherings, and even some repatriation to Armenia. On February 26, 2007 the National Assembly of Armenia passed legislation creating the opportunity for Armenians worldwide to become dual citizens. The enactment of this law has the potential to be a landmark development for Armenia as it moves into the 21st century. As such, its adoption deserves careful consideration among those Armenians it will likely affect, both in the homeland and in the Diaspora.

The concept of expanding the opportunity for citizenship to all Armenians is not a new one. As far back as June 1920, the parliament of the First Republic of Armenia had formally agreed to grant citizenship to all persons of Armenian origin, even if they lived outside of the Republic. This

position was reaffirmed in 1990, with the adoption of the Third Republic's Declaration of Independence. In clause four of that Declaration, it clearly states that "Armenians of the Diaspora have the right to Armenian citizenship." Despite all of this, the Constitution adopted by the Armenian government in 1995 explicitly blocked Armenians from enjoying dual citizenship and effectively rejected the notion of incorporating the Diaspora into the fabric of Armenian life. Thus, for the first 15 years of the new Republic, those who did not renounce their outside citizenship were prevented from becoming full-fledged citizens of Armenia.

However, with the passage of constitutional reforms in 2005, the ban on dual citizenship was finally lifted from the Constitution, leaving the matter to a law formulating the rights and obligations of dual citizens. Some of the most contentious issues requiring deliberation included taxation duties, military service requirements, the right to vote, the right to hold office and residency obligations. Like the more than 90 countries around the world that have successfully implemented dual citizenship, these matters were formulated in accordance with the realities of Armenia before being adopted as national legislation.

As the foremost champion of dual citizenship in Armenia, the ARF inarguably took the lead in initiating the passage of this legislation. They put the issue on the top of their domestic agenda; organized open hearings discussing the matter, and circulated



their preliminary proposals of the draft law to the public (see [www.yerkir.am](http://www.yerkir.am) for the ARF concept paper on dual citizenship). Their declared aim was to base the establishment of dual citizenship on international norms and to properly balance both the rights and obligations afforded to dual citizens. By doing so, they hoped to genuinely make Armenia the homeland of all Armenians and deepen the engagement of the Diaspora in Armenia's development.

Of course, the basic idea of allowing Armenians to become citizens of more than one country has not gone without controversy.

Some have raised fears of Armenia's sovereignty being handed over to people living outside of the country, while others suggest that many governments will look negatively upon Armenians holding dual loyalties. However, these fears are often overstated and can be easily alleviated when taking a balanced and practical approach to the law on dual citizenship. For instance, citizenship will not be granted to individuals who do not fulfill stringent obligations to the state and certain offices—such as the presidency, National Assembly, and the Constitutional Court—will be off limits to dual citizens. Furthermore, Armenia simply cannot afford to base its future on the approval of other governments, especially if its actions are in conformity with international regulations and practices

Strengthening Armenian unity through the adoption of dual citizenship makes particular sense

for Armenia when considering that it is one of only a few countries in the world today where residents are outnumbered by their brethren living abroad—only about one-third of all Armenians actually live in Armenia. Armenia's Foreign Minister, Vartan Oskanian, stressed this point during his speech at the Third Armenia-Diaspora Conference held in Yerevan this past September. Referring to the adoption of a law on dual citizenship, the Minister stated, "This is essential for the people and future of Armenia. Armenians should number not 3 but 5 million, 10 million, or 15 to 20 million in terms of our potential for cooperation. This is necessary for us to really confront our challenges effectively."

Indeed, in addition to being an added incentive for repatriation, dual citizenship may prove to be a catalyst for Armenia's growing economic and political advancement.

Economically, the Diaspora can play a more dynamic role in spurring investment opportunities in Armenia, facilitating integration into the world economy, and increasing both production and consumption within the country. Politically, dual citizenship can assist Armenia in maintaining good relations with countries containing large Armenian populations and, by closely linking state authorities to Diasporan constituents, increasing the pressure for adherence to democratic norms. In turn, for the Diaspora, accelerating direct relations with the Republic of Armenia can help reinforce national identity and provide an impetus for the preservation of poorly organized communities.

On a more symbolic level, dual citizenship will help somewhat right the wrongs of history by 1) restoring the sense of homeland snatched away from most by the Genocide and 2) overcoming the limitations and stereotypes imposed on Armenians by 70 years of separation behind the Soviet "Iron Curtain." Similarly, dual citizenship can help tighten the thread connecting all Armenians throughout the world by affirming their shared commitment to mobilizing on behalf of the homeland. As a historically subjected people, Armenians have long comprehended the need for collective strength. Dual citizenship will serve as a tangible path for taking concrete steps in this needed direction.



*Vartan Oskanian, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking at the 2006 Armenia-Diaspora Conference.*

# Մարդկային-Առեւտրի Լուրջ Տագնապը

As unimaginable as it seems, slavery and bondage still persist in the early 21st century. Millions of people around the world still suffer in silence in slave-like situations of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation from which they cannot free themselves. Trafficking in persons is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time.

*“Armenia is a major source and, to a lesser extent, a transit and destination country for women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation largely to the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) and Turkey. Traffickers, many of them women, route victims directly into Dubai or through Moscow. Traffickers also route victims to Turkey through Georgia via bus. Profits derived from the trafficking of Armenian victims reportedly increased dramatically from the previous year.”*

- U.S. State Dept Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2006  
([www.gvnnet.com/humantrafficking/Armenia-2.htm](http://www.gvnnet.com/humantrafficking/Armenia-2.htm))

Մարդկային-առեւտրի (Human Trafficking) երեւոյթը համաշխարհային արդի ախտի մը վերածուած է: Մարդկային առեւտրի գործողութիւնը կը նշանակէ՝ ապօրինի կերպով կամ խաբէբայութեամբ՝ տղամարդոց, կիներու ու երեխաներու ուշադրութիւնը գրաւել, զանոնք օտար երկիրներ փոխադրելով «ծախելու» իբրեւ պոռնիկ, ստրուկ եւ կամ շահագործուած աշխատաւոր, որ օրը 18 ժամ աշխատելով միայն 1 տոլար կ'ստանայ. նոյնիսկ կացութիւններ եղած են, ուր ամիսներով աշխատաւորները իրենց աշխատանքին շահը չեն գանձած: Երեխաներու պարագային, զիրենք կը ստիպեն փոքր տարիքէն ամուսնանալու, երկրին զինուորական ծառայութեան մասնակցելու կամ իբրեւ աշխատաւոր, ստրուկի պէս աշխատելու:

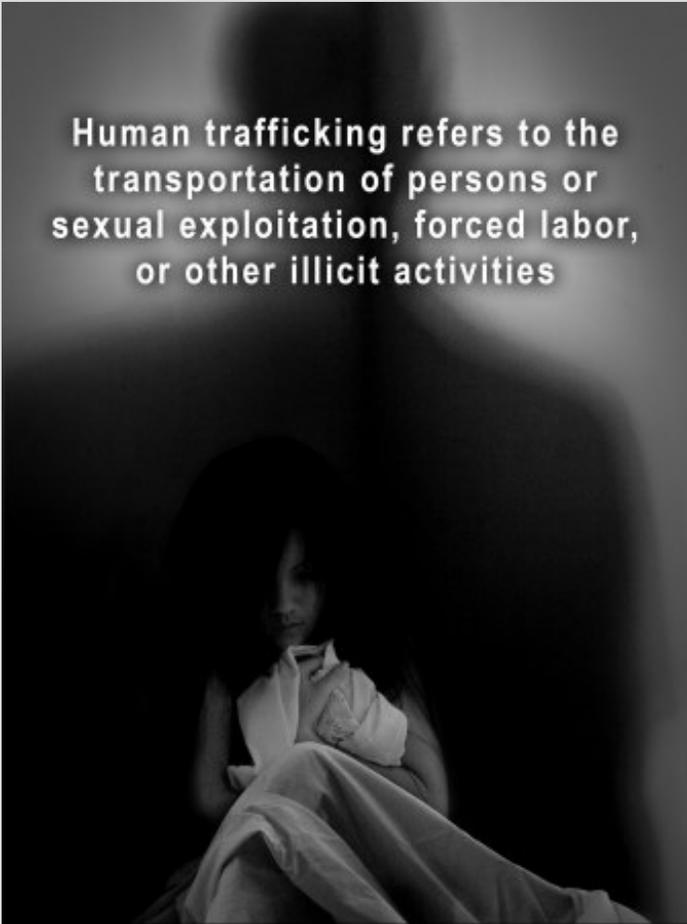
Ամերիկայի State Department-ը յայտարարած է թէ՛ ամէն տարի մօտաւորապէս 600,000-էն մինչեւ 820,000 տղամարդ, կին ու երեխայ մարդկային-առեւտրի գործողութեան կ'ենթարկուին: Այս երեւոյթին 80 տոկոսը կիներ ու աղջիկներ են: Կիները կը խաբուին կարդալով, տեսնելով կամ լսելով սուտ ծանուցումներ, յուսալով թէ կեանքի աւելի լաւ պայմաններու պիտի հանդիպին ու կը պատասխանեն այս ծանուցումներուն:

Այս տագնապի զոհերուն մեծամասնութիւնը 15-32 տարեկան երիտասարդուհիներ են, որոնք կը բնակին աղքատ երկիրներու մէջ եւ միշտ պէտքը կը զգան աւելի բարձր վճարում ունեցող գործերու տիրանալու: Հայաստանի պարագային, մարդկային-առեւտրի զոհերու մեծամասնութիւնը կը գտնուին Հայաստանի հարաւային շրջանները, ուր

մարդիկ ընտանիքի անդամներու կողմէ՝ բարոյական անհար ճնշումի տակ կը գտնուին տիրանալու՝ աւելի բարձր վճարող գործի մը: Յայտնաբերուած է թէ հայ գիւղացի կիները, որոնք զոհ կ'երթան այս տագնապին, կամովին կ'ենթարկուին, կամ մօտիկ ընտանիքի անդամի կողմէ, կամ ալ մտերիմ ընկերոջ մը կողմէ, որոնք կը խոստանան աւելի բարեբեր կենցաղ:

Մարդկային-առեւտուրի հարցը նաեւ Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան կառավարութեան ուշադրութիւնը գրաւած է: Ամերիկայի State Department-ը յօդուած մը հրատարակեց արտայայտելով թէ՛ Հայաստանը հիմնական աղբիւր մըն է մարդկային առեւտուրը կատարելու եւ անհատներ փոխադրելու ու ծախելու Թուրքիոյ, Ռուսիոյ, Յունաստանի եւ Եւրոպական երկիրներու մէջ: Նաեւ հարցեր

ներկայացած են, ուր կիներ Ուզպէքիստանէն դէպի Հայաստան փոխադրուած են մարդկային-առեւտուրի համար: Թէեւ Հայաստանի կառավարութիւնը, Հայաստանէն ներս բոլորովին չէզոքացնելու գործողութիւնը չէ ստանցնած՝ սակայն նկատելի է բաւական աշխատանք՝ պակսեցնելու մարդկային-առեւտուրի թիւը: 2002-ին Intergovernmental Commission on Anti-Trafficking



Issues տեղեկագիրը լոյս տեսած է, ուր Միացեալ Ազգերու Կազմակերպութեան (United Nations) աջակցութեամբ մինչեւ այսօր կը գործակցին մարդկային-առեւտուրի հարցերով: Նաեւ UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) կազմակերպութիւնը կայ, որ 2004-էն սկսեալ

օգնութիւն ցուցաբերած է մարդկային-առեւտուրի ենթարկուած անհատներու: UMCOR-ը կ'օգնէ անհատներուն կրկին մարդկային օրինաւոր ընկերութեան մէջ մտնելու, յարմար ու պատշաճ գործ գտնելու եւ բժշկական հարցերը հոգալու: UMCOR-ը նաեւ կը մարզէ մարդոց երկրի սահմանները պահպանելով՝ երեւան հանելու մարդկային-առեւտուրի գործունէութեան մաս կազմող խմբակներ, որպէսզի իրենց արդար պատիժը ստանան:

Մարդկային-առեւտուրի ապօրինի գործողութիւնը հազարաւոր զոհեր կը խլէ ամէն տարի, որոնք խաբէբայութեամբ կամ կամովին կը մտնեն այս աղաւաղուած աշխարհին մէջ կարծելով թէ արդիւնաւետ պիտի ըլլայ սակայն հետաքային կը սորվին թէ անկէ ելքը շատ դժուար է:

*Սանան Հարուն*

# THE CHALLENGE OF CHOOSING A NEW PARLIAMENT

*Staffwriter*

Democratization is not a process that ends with the adoption of a constitution or the establishment of a parliament. It is not an item that you assemble and then sit back to watch it work. Rather, the struggle for people to have a meaningful voice in the decisions that shape their lives is an ongoing process that requires constant vigilance and engagement on the part of the citizenry. Even in longstanding democracies such as the United States, there is always room for improving the quality of democracy and preventing the very real possibility of democratic deterioration.

In many ways, Armenia's upcoming parliamentary elections will demonstrate how far along the country has come in its own democratic development. Scheduled for May 12, the election holds special significance for several reasons, not the least of which is its implications for the functioning of basic democratic procedures. Past elections in Armenia have been marred by numerous irregularities and have fallen short of international standards. The elections in May will be a measure of whether or not the country has made any progress along this front. As the representative of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's (ARF) Supreme Body, Armen Rustamian, stated this past July, "The upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections will be a test to resolve those issues and to find out the country's ability to ensure democratic stability."

Not only will the elections be an opportunity to gauge the fairness of electoral procedures, they will also decide the leadership of the country for the next several years. The recent amendments to the Armenian Constitution extended the term of deputies to the National Assembly from four to five years and granted the parliament considerable power vis-à-vis the president. As a result, these new officials will have much more power and responsibility over such critical matters as the status of Artsakh, fighting corruption, poverty

elimination, national security, and the direction of foreign policy.

In addition, the parliamentary elections will be followed a year later by elections for Armenia's next president. Since President Robert Kocharian is ineligible to run for another term, executive power is expected to be properly handed over to a new figure for the first time in the Republic's young history. The conduct of the vote in May is anticipated to be a precursor for the transition in 2008.

Of course, whether or not the elections will be free and fair depends largely on the willingness of officials to implement the guidelines they have set for themselves. Over recent years, Armenia has made considerable improvements in its electoral rules and regulations, aligning them with internationally accepted standards of democracy. Yet, these reforms have often not translated into consistent changes in state action. Corruption, fraud, and the abuse of power are still present in both the public and private spheres. What is needed are not new institutions but, rather, putting the ones already in place into practice.



*Armenians gathering in Republic Square on Independence Day.*

## **Platforms or Personalities?**

Unfortunately, the majority of Armenian citizens do not place high hopes in the authorities' commitment to the democratic process. In a USAID-funded poll conducted by the Gallup Organization last August, around 70% of Armenians felt the next parliamentary elections would not be free and fair. Similar polls and surveys demonstrate a deep-seated cynicism among Armenians toward their political system and a widespread distrust of political actors. Much of this sentiment stems from the above-mentioned divide between formal political rules and informal practices.

A look at the political landscape in Armenia also sheds light on why so many people hold a negative view toward

the political process. For instance, one of the most glaring flaws in Armenia's democracy is the virtual absence of genuine political parties with actual platforms, principles and means for citizens to participate on a grassroots level. Instead, what we see are a host of parties dominated by specific individuals. Whether it is an oligarch like Gagik Tsarukian and his newly formed Bargavaj Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) Party or an opportunist like Arthur Baghdasarian and his Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) Party, or even a true champion for reform like Raffi Hovannisian and his Heritage Party, almost every political party in Armenia is focused upon one distinct individual who is seen as the "leader" others are simply meant to follow. As a recent OSCE report pointed out, "Political parties in Armenia appear to be based on personalities rather than on platforms or social constituencies."

This lack of platform and agenda on the behalf of political parties is obviously reflected in the campaigning for parliament seats. On the one hand, you have political parties using their wealth and access to power to shore up support, while on the other hand you have the opposition seeking to ride the wave of public discontent to garner votes. Neither side has much to say in the way of policy prescriptions or a vision for the future. They simply come before the people and promise to make things better if only they were put into power. Actual proposals, priorities, and overall content are sorely lacking.

In this regard, the ARF stands out as one of the only significant parties in Armenia that is actually guided, not by a leader or famous individual, but by a political platform and ideology. This platform stands for such things as self-determination for Artsakh, strengthening the domestic rule of law, initiating a serious struggle against corruption, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach the entire society, unification of the Armenian nation, international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. As such, the ARF has consistently championed genuine democratic initiatives while resisting senseless outbursts of anger and attempts to imitate the so-called "color" revolutions of neighboring countries. It has been at the forefront of

efforts to make concrete improvements in the Election Code and reform democratic institutions to meet European standards.

ARF leaders have called on all political forces to contribute to the country's democratic process by strictly adhering to electoral regulations in the upcoming parliamentary elections. This is important not only for the sake of democratic legitimacy in Armenia, but also because the country can only move forward when it has leaders that reflect the will of the population. This sentiment was expressed by ARF Bureau representative, Hrant Markarian, in a 2006 interview with the *Iravounk* newspaper, when he stated, "I would like to see a new

National Assembly elected in 2007 that reflects the will of our people. I would like to see the National Assembly reflecting the true image of the nation. Perhaps that image won't be extremely beautiful, but the truth is what's important."

This consistent stance held by the ARF may be one of the reasons why it is one of the few political parties in Armenia that enjoys widespread respect and appreciation among the populace. Indeed, in the same 2006 Gallup poll mentioned above, the ARF is found to be seen as "trustworthy and patriotic" by the majority of respondents. This is in contrast to other parties such as the opposition People's party and the ruling Hanrapetutyun (Republic) Party which are described in mostly negative terms.

Nevertheless, expressing such views alone will not be enough to guarantee democratic progress in Armenia. The upcoming parliamentary elections will mark an important turning point in the country's future and it is time that people put their votes where their conscience lies. People simply cannot afford to sell their rights to the highest bidder or wait for some leader to guide them to a better future. The public must reject such undemocratic tendencies and mobilize around political forces which share their values and principles. Furthermore, they must hold their leaders accountable and demand that they implement the rules they themselves have crafted and approved. Only when democracy is guaranteed by a mobilized citizenry can it become meaningful in any society. In all of these respects, the upcoming parliamentary elections are sure to test the progress of democracy in Armenia.

“ONE OF THE MOST GLARING FLAWS IN ARMENIA’S DEMOCRACY IS THE VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF GENUINE POLITICAL PARTIES WITH ACTUAL PLATFORMS, PRINCIPLES AND MEANS FOR CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE ON A GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL.”

# THE POLITICAL SCENE

## IN ARMENIA



### Rule of Law Party

*Օրինաց Երկիր*

Founded in 1998 by Arthur Baghdasaryan (pictured above)

Pro-Western, Centrist

It won 12.3% of the vote in the 2003 elections, gaining 19 seats in parliament.

It was made to leave the ruling coalition in 2006 after Baghdasarian diverged repeatedly from the coalition's position on critical foreign and domestic policy issues. The latter is known for his close ties to Western governments such as the U.S. and France.



### Republican Party of Armenia (HHK)

*Հայաստանի Հանրապետական Կուսակցություն*

Founded in 1990

Conservative

Received 23.5% of vote in 2003, winning 31 seats in parliament

Originally, the party proclaimed to follow the nationalist teachings of Karekin Njdeh and had their roots in the anti-Soviet National Unity Party. However, over recent years, they have become the main ruling party and their existence is increasingly dependent on their grip over power. With the recent election of Defense Minister Serge Sargsyan (pictured above) to a senior leadership position in the HHK's board, their reputation as Armenia's "party of power" has only solidified.



### Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)

*Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցություն*

Founded in 1890 by Kristapor Mikaelian, Stepan Zorian, and Simon Zavarian

Nationalist, Socialist, Democratic

It is recognized as a main party in Armenia with a substantial following in both the homeland and diaspora.

It won 11.5% in the 2003 elections, gaining 11 seats in the parliament.

It decided to join the ruling coalition and took responsibility over the Ministry of Agriculture, Labor, and Health. With the departure of Orinats Yerkir from the ruling coalition, the ARF also took over the Ministry of Education.



## National Unity Party (UMB)

Ազգային  
Միասնություն

Founded in 1997 by the former Communist Mayor of Yerevan, Artashes Geghamyan (pictured above)

Conservative

Won 8.8% of the vote in the 2003 elections

It continues to be spearheaded by Artashes Geghamyan.



## Justice Alliance

Արդարություն

A coalition of several opposition parties assembled in the run-up to the 2003 parliamentary elections.

Won 13.6% of vote in 2003, gaining 14 seats in parliament

It is led by Stepan Demrichyan (pictured above), the son of the former Speaker of the Parliament and head of the People's Party of Armenia, who was assassinated in 1999.

They are the largest opposition force in parliament but they are facing internal disagreements and a decline in activities over recent months.

The parties making up the coalition have signaled that they will contest the upcoming elections individually or as part of other alliances.



## Heritage Party

Ժառանգություն  
Կուսակցություն

Founded in 2002

Liberal, Democratic

It did not run in the 2003 parliamentary elections.

Led by the U.S-born former Foreign Minister turned opposition leader, Raffi Hovannisian (pictured above).



## Prosperous Armenia (BH)

Բարգավաճ Հայաստան

Founded in 2006

Pro-government

Led by Armenian tycoon Gagik "Dodi Gago" Tsarukyan (pictured above)

Using his millions in fortune, Tsarukyan has established an extended party network in all regions of the country, with a reported 500 offices and 370,000 members.

Tsarukyan's main method of gathering support has been "charitable activity", criticized by many for early campaigning, bribing and vote-buying.

# ՄԵԿ ԱԳՁ

# ՄԵԿ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ

## Յովիկ Գանդիլեան

Արդէն 1060 թուականն է եւ դեռ Յոյները իրենց աչքը տնկած են մեր եկեղեցիին վրայ: Անոնք կը ջանան ձեռք ձգել Հայոց հարստութիւնները մանաւանդ Խաչիկ Բ. Անեցի կաթողիկոսի վախճանելէն ետք, Յոյները շատ ճիգ կը թափեն նոր կաթողիկոսի ընտրութեան դէմ ելլելու: Ի՞նչ լաւ օրեր էին, երբ Բագրատունեանց տոհմը կ'իշխէր եկեղեցիներուն եւ վանքերուն: Եկեղեցին պահպանելու միակ ձեւը պիտի ըլլար կաթողիկոսին Էջմիածինէն Սիս կամ Աղթամար փոխադրուիլը, քանի տակաւին քիչ թէ շատ այնտեղ խաղաղութիւն կը տիրէր: Այնտեղ կը գտնուէր Սիսի թագաւոր՝ Գագիկը: Գագիկի միջամտութեամբ Յոյները վերջապէս կ'ընդունին զիջիլ: Նոր կաթողիկոս կ'ընտրուի եւ Գագիկ թագաւորի սահմաններուն մէջ կը մնայ: Քաղաքական այլ ճնշումներու եւ Սիսի թագաւորութեան անկայունութեան պատճառով, Թաթարներուն արշաւանքներէն փախչելով՝ Բարսեղ Կաթողիկոսը կը հաստատուի Ամասնոսի վանքին մէջ, որը շինուած էր Ռուբէնի կողմէ: Ռուբէն Անիի Բագրատունի թագաւորներուն ազգակցութենէն, արդէն իսկ հիմնած էր Կիլիկիոյ Հայ իշխանապետութիւնը: Այսպիսով՝ Հայոց կաթողիկոսը կը մնայ Կիլիկոյ

սահմաններուն մէջ, գլխաւորաբար՝ Մարաշ, 12րդ դարու սկզբնատրութենէն մինչեւ 15րդ դար: Այլ խօսքով՝ կաթողիկոսութիւնը Էջմիածինէն պիտի հեռանար մօտ 540 տարիներ (901-1441):

1375-ին Կիլիկիոյ թագաւորութիւնը վերջապէս ջնջուած էր, Սիս քաղաքը Եգիպտացի իշխանութեանց ներքեւ ինկած էր, Լեւոն Զ. թագաւոր գերի տարուած էր իսկ 1377էն 1432ի միջեւ վեց կաթողիկոսներ Աթոռը



Էջմիածին, Հայաստան

իրարմէ յափշտակած էին՝ իւրաքանչիւրը իր նախորդը սպաննել տալով: Տարբեր միաբանութիւններ այս քսոսը նկատելով կը փորձեն Յոյներու նման հայկական եկեղեցին ձուլել եւ իր գանձերուն տիրանալ: Կարծես թէ Աստուած տեսնելով այս աղետալի վիճակը դրկած էր Յովհաննէս Որոտնեցի, Մաղաքիա Ղրիմեցի եւ Գրիգոր Տաթեւացի

վարդապետները որոնց աշակերտները՝ ականատես ըլլալով ազգային եկեղեցոյ Ողբերբական վիճակին կ'որոշեն դարման մը գտնել: Անոնք կ'որոշեն կաթողիկոսի Աթոռը վերադարձնել Էջմիածին, որովհետեւ Էջմիածինի շրջանը համեմատաբար աւելի խաղաղ վիճակ մը ունէր պարսկական թագաւորութեան ազդեցութեան տակ քան՝ Սիսը եւ Մարաշը

Եզիպտական տիրապետության տակ: Թէեւ կմկմալով, Գրիգոր Մուսաբէգեանց կաթողիկոս 1441-ի Մայիսին կ'ընդունի կաթողիկոսարանի փոխադրութեան գաղափարը: Փառամով կաթողիկոսներու պատճառով Գրիգոր Զալալբէգեան- արտադու արքեպիսկոպոսը ինքզինք կը հռչակէ Էջմիածինի եկեղեցոյ կաթողիկոս, իսկ Զաքարիա Աղթամարայ կաթողիկոսը իր տիտղոսը կը պահէ եւ կը վերադառնայ Վան: Այսպիսով՝ Էջմիածինի մէջ գտնուող Այս նոր շրջանի առաջին կաթողիկոսը կ'ըլլայ՝ Գրիգոր Զալալբէգեան (1443), իսկ առաջին Սիսի-Կիլիկիոյ կաթողիկոսը՝ Կարապետ Եղոկիացի (1446):

Քսաններորդ դարու սկիզբի աղետներուն պատճառով, Կիլիկիոյ թեմը Կիլիկիոյ նոյն ճակատագրին հասաւ: Այս մէկը տեսնելով Սահակ Բ. կաթողիկոս Խապայեան Սուրիոյ մէջ տարագիրներուն հետ կը մնայ եւ զիրենք ապահով կը պահէ: 1929ին ասոր վրայ կը հասնի Երուսաղեմի պատրիարք Եղիշէ Դուրեան Սահակ Բ.ի շնորհելով իր թեմին պատկանող Հալէպը, Դամասկոսը, Պէյրութը, Կիպրոսն ու Անտիոքը իրենց կալուածներով:

1939ին Ֆրանսական զորքերուն քաշուելուն պատճառով, կարգ մը հայաբնակ քաղաքներէն ինչպէս՝ Սանճաք եւ Անտիոք, մեծ թիւով Հայ գաղթականներ լքելով իրենց տունները ստիպուեցան հաստատուիլ Սուրիոյ եւ Լիբանանի մէջ: Կիլիկիոյ կաթողիկոս Սահակ Բ. եւ ետքը Պետրոս Սարատճեան գաղթականներուն իրենց դռները կը բանան եւ կը պատսպարեն զանոնք: Այսպիսով Էջմիածինի եւ Կիլիկիոյ թեմերը կը գոյատեւեն եւ այնուամենայնիւ Հայերը կ'ունենան երկու կաթողիկոսներ:



Անթիլիաս, Լիբանան

Քսաններորդ դարու կիսուն Հայ եկեղեցոյ մասին նոր արձագանք մը սկսաւ տարածուիլ թէ՛ սփիւքի Հայ եկեղեցին քաղաքական հարցերու մաս կը կազմէ եւ թէ կարգ մը եկեղեցականներ կը կողմնակցին եւ կը քաջալերեն կարգ մը կուսակցութիւններ: Այսօր Ամերիկայի տարածքին լոյս տեսնող շատ մը թերթեր այս հարցը ծեծելով իրենց ապրուստը կ'ապահովեն:

Հայկական եկեղեցին ազգային եկեղեցի է եւ հայապահպանման աշխատանքը իր ամենէն առաջնահերթ նպատակներէն մէկն է: Ղեւնդ Երեց եւ Մկրտիչ Խրիմեան որոշ կուսակցական պատկանելիութիւն չունէին՝ ոչ միայն որովհետեւ այն ժամանակ հայկական կուսակցութիւններ գոյութիւն չունէին բայց գոյութիւն ունէր՝ հայրենասիրութիւնը: Այսպիսով Կիլիկիոյ թեմը ամէն միջոց օգտագործեց ցեղասպանութեան հետեւանքով գաղթականներուն օճախներ ապահովելու, նոյնիսկ եթէ պէտք էր գործակցիլ քաղաքական կուսակցութեան մը հետ: Եւ ահա նորէն անդիւն Փանջունիներու

ղեկավարութեամբ կը յառաջանայ տգէտ ամբոխը գոռալով՝ թէ Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցութիւնը Հայոց եկեղեցին երկուքի սղոցած է: Գացէ՛ք եւ կարդացէ՛ք, սորվեցէ՛ք եւ սորվեցուցէ՛ք, որովհետեւ շատերը բան չեն գիտեր: Արդէն իսկ այդ մէկը ի յայտ եկաւ երբ գրադարանէն ձեռքս առի՝ արքեպիսկոպոս Օրմանեանի «Հայոց եկեղեցին» եւ իսկոյն կարծես

խորհրդանիշօրէն գիրքը երկու մասի բաժնուեցաւ, տարիներու ընթացքին իր առանձնութենէն դժգոհելով: Այնքան աստե՛ն որ չենք կարդար մեր ժողովուրդը մեր գիրքերուն պէս բաժան-բաժան պիտի ըլլայ:

Սիրելիներ՛, հայկական եկեղեցին մէկ է ինչպէս Արարատի ստորոտը թէկուզ երկու գագաթ ունենայ:

# A LAW FOR PEACE:

## WHY THE FRENCH LAW AGAINST THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IS SO CRUCIAL

By Jules Boyadjian

*FRA Nor Seround (AYF France)*

On October 12, 2006, the French National Assembly adopted a law proposed by the Socialist party, which would penalize the denial of Armenian Genocide. The legislation was modeled after a similar law dealing with Holocaust Denial, known as the Gaysot Law, adopted in 1990. In the United States, where the first amendment and free speech are considered sacred, this initiative may be considered controversial. In reality, the law is essential to ensuring a fundamental respect for the principles of democracy for all republics.

### **Recognition of Armenian Genocide and Punishment of Denial**

On January 29, 2001, French lawmakers adopted a simple yet powerful law stating: “France publicly recognizes the



Armenian Genocide of 1915.” While officially placing France amongst the leading democracies, which speak clearly regarding this crime against humanity, the law did not address the fundamental issue of Armenian Genocide denial. In other words, French law would still allow for anyone to deny the Armenian Genocide with impunity. A new law would have to be drafted to turn a strictly formal interpretation of historic fact into an effective tool to end Armenian Genocide denial.

The need for such a law became apparent by 2006, when a series of incidents – amazingly violent in nature – threatened to endanger civic peace in France. Armenian Genocide monuments were vandalized in Lyon, Chaville and Marseille. French citizens were attacked as they were participating in peaceful commemorations of the Armenian Genocide. Genocide deniers even held demonstrations – legal and illegal – openly protesting French recognition of this crime against humanity. The French Socialist party, working closely with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the AYF France and its sister organizations, understood the urgency of the situation and refused to tolerate the violence emanating from genocide denial.

In May, 2006, the French Socialist party introduced legislation which would make Armenian genocide denial a

punishable offense. Turkish Government officials immediately began threatening French government officials, enlisting the assistance of French President Jacques Chirac, Foreign Minister Phillipe Douste-Blazy and National Assembly Chairman Jean-Louis Debre in derailing the measure. Despite nationwide advocacy by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and community members across France, the measure was temporarily tabled. By Fall of 2006, the French Armenian activists and the Socialist Party were successful in placing the anti-genocide denial legislation back on the National Assembly agenda, and on October 12th the bill was adopted by an overwhelming margin, with support from all political parties.

To become law, the legislation must next be considered by the French Senate and signed by the President. The Socialist party is prepared to present the resolution in the Senate, although the timing will depend on a combination of factors, including French Presidential elections in May, 2007 and the subsequent parliamentary election in June. Turkish Government pressure will continue throughout the process.

### **Free Speech and Genocide Denial**

The French law against Armenian Genocide denial is contested by some who consider it a violation of free speech. Freedom of speech is guaranteed under French law. However, the French constitution clearly states that

“THE LAW WAS CREATED TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IN SOCIETY CAN LIVE PEACEFULLY, WITH THEIR RIGHTS RESPECTED.”

all laws must uphold fundamental human dignity and equality. As such, antisemitism, racist speech and homophobia – each curtailing some aspect of free speech, if taken literally – are punishable under French law. Laws against Holocaust and Armenian Genocide denial are adopted for the same reasons.

Certain freedoms need to be limited to protect society and for efficiency. The law was created to ensure that everyone in society can live peacefully, with

their rights respected. Democracy doesn't guarantee total freedom if ones actions infringe upon the rights of others. Hatred and intolerance are the foundations of prejudice in society – a sickness which can spread and escalate if hate speech is not checked.

Genocide is a legal concept as defined by the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide in 1948. Denial is the final stage of genocide, which perpetuates this act through its refusal to acknowledge historical truth, by introducing an “artificial amnesia” about this crime. As such, denial cannot simply be classified as an opinion about one historical event or another. It contributes to the ongoing development of the genocide by intentionally minimizing the magnitude of the genocidal act, and as such cannot be considered a benign opinion. Denial of a confirmed genocide, by definition, should be penalized like any other crime – otherwise, the genocide continues.

The anti-Armenian Genocide denial law is designed to protect human dignity, not restrict free speech, The Gayssot Law against Holocaust denial is proof of this. Since its adoption in 1990, the Gayssot law has not restricted Holocaust research, as opponents predicted. It did however, limit hate speech by the extreme right attempting to foment intolerance in French society. The anti-Armenian Genocide denial law must do the same.

# AMBASSADOR OF SHAME

*By Shant Taslakian*

As the crowd looked at him with utter disbelief, he confidently repeated again, "I will today call it the Armenian Genocide."

As the now former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John M. Evans, met with Armenian-American community, civic, and student organizations in February, 2005, he repeated this same message, no longer playing what leading genocide scholar Samantha Powers has called the "G-word jig": the U.S. Department of State's constant struggle to avoid properly characterizing one of the most horrific crimes against humanity as genocide.

Evans, who is both a seasoned Foreign Service officer and accomplished scholar, had done his own research and concluded that the events of 1914-1923 should be characterized as genocide. He went on to explain that he had also consulted with a State Department lawyer who confirmed that the events of 1915 were "genocide by definition."

Many wondered if this statement marked the welcome beginnings of a change in the

Department of State's morally bankrupt policy. However, just days after the end of his U.S. tour, these courageous words of honesty—properly respecting the history of the Armenian nation—would illustrate the extent to which the White House and the State Department are willing to go to appease Ankara.

Later that year, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), decided to honor Ambassador Evans with the "Christian A. Herter Award" for his intelligent and creative diplomatic efforts. According to the AFSA, the purpose of the award is to "encourage Foreign Service career employees to speak out frankly and honestly." Sadly, AFSA withdrew its award following pressure from "very serious people from the State Department" just days before Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan traveled to Washington, D.C., according to Washington Post staff writer Glenn Kessler. To add further insult to injury, the Ambassador's efforts to speak the truth about this crime against humanity would not only lead to his removal from his post,

but also end his career in the Foreign Service.

Despite repeated inquiries and requests by Senate and House Members, the media (*Los Angeles Times* included) and the Armenian American community, questions surrounding the firing of Amb. Evans remained unanswered. Further, the Bush Administration nominated Richard Hoagland not once, but twice as the next U.S. ambassador to Armenia, despite vehement opposition from both the Armenian-American community and members of Congress. This opposition emerged due to Hoagland's blatant denial of the Armenian Genocide and his characterization of it as simply an "allegation."

On September 8, 2006 ANCA Chairman Ken Hachikian stated that "Very simply, a genocide denier cannot effectively promote U.S. interests or American values in Armenia - a country that rose from the ashes of



Turkey's genocidal campaign." He added that, "confirming an Ambassador to Armenia who denies the Armenian Genocide would dramatically undermine U.S. diplomacy in Armenia and mark a major retreat from our nation's noble commitment to genocide prevention." Imagine for a moment that the U.S. Ambassador to Israel did not properly characterize the Holocaust. If the Bush Administration continues this brash display of disrespect towards Armenia's history, it will no doubt be a step backwards in U.S.-Armenia relations. It is for this reason that Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) has placed a "hold" — effectively blocking the Hoagland nomination.

When a Senator places a "hold" on an ambassadorial nominee, a confirmation vote can take place only if the "hold" is removed. Senator Menendez's "hold" was a clear statement to the White House and State Department that our country's continued involvement in genocide denial is a cause of great alarm and will no longer be tolerated.

The Armenian-American community's principled stance against the nomination of Richard Hoagland, led by the efforts of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), has been an effective roadblock to the Bush administration's political agenda of capitulating to Turkish genocide denial. We currently face a unique opportunity to influence the proper development of U.S.-Armenia relations and ensure that the U.S. speaks with moral clarity when it comes to condemning all genocides, including the Armenian Genocide.

Armenian Americans have a pivotal role to play in this process. A simple letter, phone call, or web-fax to your Senators and Representative — in support of pending Armenian Genocide legislation (H.Res.106) and against the Hoagland nomination will fuel the effort to continue this battle and create positive change, in the effort to reclaim the moral high-ground against genocide. Visit [www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org) for more information.

## Շոգ Հինգզարթի

Պիտի գնայիր,  
Բայց ինչո՞ւ այժմ,  
Ինչո՞ւ այժմ երբ ամուսն շոգը  
Վառում է ինձ իր հուր կրակում,  
Երբ խօստացել էիր որ չես լքելու  
Դու քեզ առանց քեզ...  
Չէ որ գիտէիր որ Արմէնները  
Չե՛ն լքում էդպէս  
Թողնելով տունը այլ օտարներից,  
Չե՛ն լքում էդպէս  
Թողնելով հողը որում լեզուի են եկել  
Հողը որ ամրացրել է բամբակից փափուկ ոսկորներն իրենց:  
Հիմի որ չկաս,  
Երազում եմ ես,  
Երազում ե՛մ ես այն երազանքով,  
Որ պիտ պարծենաս:  
Թէ որ տենչում ես,  
Բժիշկ դառնալով բուժել Արմէններ,  
Մի ճա՛ր գտիր այս տարածութեան:  
Կարծես թէ մեզ ջոկող այս ծովերի ալիքները  
Հոսում են սառ ու կապույտ երանգներովս:  
Աստուած իմ Տէր,  
Ինչո՞ւ պիտի Արմէն բուժելու այդ երազանքը  
Այսքան բարդ լինէր.  
Բայց խօստանում եմ քեզ,  
Սրբազան իմ լեռ,  
Խօստանում եմ քեզ Արմէնների կողմից,  
Չեմ լքի ես քեզ արցունք թափելով  
Կարօտս չառած քո Խոր Վիրապից:  
Դու լաւ գիտէիր,  
Որ վաղուց արդէն,  
Թանաք չի հոսել իմ սառ գրիչից,  
Իսկ այս գրելիս, էլ չեմ համբերում  
Էլ չեմ համբերում այս լուռ սեռեակի տխուր Հինգզարթին  
Էլ չեմ համբերում չափել անկիւններ,  
Անկիւնները որ պատմում են ինձ մեր կոփուներից:  
Բայց քանի որ սա՛ է ճանապարհին ի վեր  
Քեզ խօստանում եմ Սրբազան իմ լեռ,  
Ես պիտ քայլեմ այդ վառ Գագաթիդ:

# BADANEGAN

# SEMINAR

# IN REVIEW



Փետրուար ամսուն, առաջին շաբաթավերջը, ես Պատանեկանի ձմեռուայ բանակումին մասնակցեցայ: Այդ երեք օրերու ընթացքին, մենք սորուեցանք Հայ Դատի մասին: Նաեւ նոր ընկերներու ծանօթացայ եւ շատ ուրախ ժամանակ անցուցի: Ամէն օր տարբեր բաներ ըրինք: Երկրորդ Օրը ամենէն ուրախ օրս էր որովհետեւ բոլորս լեռ մագլցեցանք: Այդ իրիկուն, մենք խրախճանք ունեցանք: Վերջին օրը, ես շատ յուզուեցայ, որովհետեւ շատ պիտի կարօտնայի նոր ընկերներուս, եւ այս հայկական մթնոլորտին: Այս բանակումը կեանքիս մէջ յատուկ տեղ Մը պիտի գրաւէ:

*Ընկերունի Լիսի Տիշոյեան  
Սերոբ Աղբիւր ուխտ*

Finally! We got to camp! My mom had always told me coming to A.Y.F. Camp is like coming home, I finally understood what she had meant. The familiar camp grounds were calling my name. We got split into our cabins and settled for the night. The next morning it was time for our exercises. Ungers Hrag and Hrach lead the exercises. After our “ganches” and breakfast, we had our first educational about Hye Tad. Hiking and dinner were followed by the talent show. Then it was time for my favorite part of camp, singing revolutionary songs. Some of our A.Y.F. Ungers came up to join us. That night it was hard for me to go to sleep. I had learned so much, met new friends, and experienced another amazing weekend at camp. It means so much to me to be a badanee, to learn about my country, our fedayees and now our Hye Tad. I hope that

one day when I’m older I can be a director like Unger Garo and to give back and teach the next generation.

*Ungerouhi Alique Cherchian  
10 years old  
OC Aghpiur Serop Chapter*



Winter Seminar was a wonderful experience that I believe every Armenian youth should engage in. All ARF Badanegan Western Region chapters from Southern California met at AYF Camp Big Pines for a great, fun, and educational weekend. It was a time for being with fellow Ungers, meeting new Ungers, learning more about Hye Tad, and just having a good time. We had a couple of great Ungers give educationals; one of them was Unger Ara Mugurditchian who spoke about the Armenian armed struggle (Zeenyal Baykar) and brought up the issue about Hrant Dink. Our second guest speaker was Unger Steve Dedeian who brought up the issue about the Armenian Genocide and the importance of Hye Tad. We also had a discussion where we brought up important issues concerning Badanegan transfers to AYF and why there is a drop in transfer rates and what we should do about it. Hiking to the snow field was a great chance for everyone to get to know one another and make new friends. Personally, my favorite part of camp was the talent show; I was a little nervous at first, but once it was over and we won 1st place I felt glad that I had an amazing cabin full of wonderful girls that I spent a weekend with. The most I learned was that Hye Tad really is the future and we should concentrate more on that and always try our best in working with the major governments of the world while dedicating a lot of our time in helping our Armenian society and cause. Seminar was a great opportunity that brought all Badanegan Ungers together so they may further the Armenian cause in the future and continue the struggle. After all, the youth of a people determines the future of a people.

*Ungerouhi Taleen Badawi  
16 years old  
Montebello "Vahan Cardashian" Chapter*



Անհամբեր կը սպասէի Ուրբաթ օրուայ դպրոցի վերջին զանգը, որովհետեւ նոյն օրը ընկերներով պիտի մէկնէինք Հ.Ե.Դ-ի ձմռան բանակումին: Վերջապէս ժամը հասաւ որ Pasadena-ի ակումբէն ճամբայ ելանք դէպի Wrightwood-ի մեր բանակավայրը: Ծամբուն տետողութեան ընթացքին ընկերներով զրուցեցինք վերջին քանի մը ամիսներու պատահած նորութիւններուն մասին: Երբ իրարու հետ կը խնդայինք եւ կը խօսէինք յանկարծ անակնկալօրէն հանրակառքը խանգարում ունեցաւ եւ կեցաւ: Ժամ մը սպասելէ ետք, հասանք բանակավայր եւ անցանք մեր տնակները: Բոլոր գիշերը անքուն մնալէն ետք, Ծաբաթ առաւօտ կանուխ սկսաւ մեր օրը: Օրուան ընթացքին ունեցանք շատ հետաքրքրական դասախօսութիւններ եւ ձիւնագնդակի խաղեր: Դասախօսներէն ընկեր Արա Մկրտիչեանը շատ լաւ կերպով պատրաստուած էր եւ մեզի խօսեցաւ Հայ Դատի սկզբնական օրերու պայքարին մասին. իսկ Սթիւ Տէտէեանը շատ յստակ կերպով ներկայացուց թէ ինչպէս կրնանք մեր մասնակցութիւնը բերել Հայ Դատի աշխատանքներուն: Անշուշտ, օրուան հաճելի հոգնութիւններէն ետք, եկաւ ամէն պատանիի սիրած մասը՝ խրախճանքը: Խրախճանքի ընթացքին ընկերներով պարեցինք, երգեցինք եւ զուարճացանք: Երբ ժամը եկաւ հանգչելու, այնքան հոգնած էինք որ միայն կ'երազէինք մեր անկողիններուն մասին: Կիրակի առտու նախաճաշելէ ետք եկաւ ամենէն տխուր մասը՝ բաժանումի ժամը: Իրարու ցտեսութիւն ըսելով տուն վերադարձանք, խօստանալով որ ամառը նորէն կը տեսնուինք նոյն բանակավայրէն ներս: Ընկեր Վահէին հսկողութեան տակ, կրնամ ըսել թէ 2007ի Հ.Ե.Դ-ի ձմռան բանակումը իմ կարծիքովս ամենէն հաճելին էր:

*Ընկերուհի Նորա Կուրտիկեան  
Սերոբ Աղբիր ուխտ*



# AYF 2007 SUMMER CAMP

REGISTER EARLY!! SPACE IS LIMITED.  
NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JULY 1, 2007.

<b>WEEK 1</b>	July 8 - 15
<b>WEEK 2</b>	July 15 - 22
<b>WEEK 3</b>	July 22 - 29
<b>WEEK 4</b>	July 29 - August 5
<b>WEEK 5</b>	August 5 - 12
<b>WEEK 6</b>	August 12 - 19



## T-SHIRT CONTEST

### WIN A FREE WEEK AT CAMP

This year, AYF Summer Camp is having a contest to see which camper can design the most creative 2007 AYF Summer Camp t-shirt. The winner of the contest will have their design on all the AYF Summer Camp 2007 t-shirts and receive a free week at AYF Camp during the week of their choice. **The winner will be refunded their payment when the winning design is chosen, so please send your payment with the camper application to ensure registration for your preferred week.**



#### Submission Guidelines:

1. The design must have "AYF Camp 2007" and "Est. 1977".
2. The design must be appropriate for camp.
3. The design must be mailed before May 31, 2007

Please Mail T-Shirt Competition Entries To:  
**AYF SUMMER CAMP**  
 104 N. Belmont, Suite 203  
 Glendale, CA 91206

Visit our website to learn more about being a camper or a counselor at AYF Camp.

**www.AYFCAMP.ORG**  
**(866) 775-AYFC / (818) 242-7494**

# Ապրել

Ապրե՛լ, ապրե՛լ, այնպե՛ս ապրել,  
Որ սուրբ հողդ երբեք չզգայ քո անելորդ ծանրությունը:  
Ապրե՛լ, ապրե՛լ, այնպե՛ս ապրել,  
Որ դու ինքդ էլ երբեք չզգաս քո սեփական մանրությունը:  
Ու թէ լանկարծ անպետքություն քեզ համարես,  
Թէ ինքքդ քեզ արհամարհես  
ու համառես,  
քեզ հետ վիճի՛,  
քեզ չզիջի՛,

համբերատար քեզ հետ խօսի՛,  
հակառակում քեզ համոզի  
իներք... հզօր հանրությունը...  
Ապրե՛լ, ապրե՛լ, այնպե՛ս ապրել,  
Որ ուրիշի խինդով խնդաս,  
Որ ուրիշի ցնծությունով  
Ինքդ էլ ցնծաս, ինքդ էլ թնդաս:  
Լինես, մնաս ամենքի հետ,  
Նրանց կամքին հպատակուես,  
«Ես»-դ խառնես մեծ «մենք»-ի հետ,  
Նրանց ցառով լուռ տապակուես:  
Տրուես նրանց լոյսի նման  
Եւ չխարուես լոյսի նման  
Արշալոյսի նման բացուես  
Նրանց համար,  
Վերջալոյսի նման բացուես  
Նրանց համար:  
Թէ լաց լինես՝ նրանց համար,  
Թէ բաց լինես՝ նրանց համար:  
Եւ հա՛ց լինես նրանց համար՝  
հոգեւոր հա՛ց,  
Քեզ նրանցով կեանքում զինես  
Եւ նրանցով կեանքում լինես  
ոգեւորումա՛ծ:  
Եւ նրանցով կեանքում լինես  
թոյլ կամ ուժեղ,  
Եւ նրանցով կեանքում լինես  
բոլոր կամ մեղ,  
Թշուա՛ռ՝ ինչպէս անապաստան,  
Հարուստ՝ ինչպէս լայն տափաստան...  
Ապրե՛լ, ապրե՛լ, այնպե՛ս ապրել,  
Որ նրանց հետ մթնես- ամպես  
Եւ նրանց հետ շրթարձակուես.  
Մէկտեղ լանկարծ ընդարձակուես,  
Մէկտեղ դառնաս գունդուկծիկ.  
Մէկտե՛ղ բացուես, մէկտե՛ղ փակուես՝  
Ինչպէս նամակ եւ կամ բացիկ...  
Ապրե՛լ, ապրե՛լ, ապրել մէկտե՛ղ,  
Կեանքդ խառնել նրանց կեանքին,  
Տառապանքդ՝ տառապանքին,  
Ջանքդ՝ ջանքին,  
Ցանքդ՝ ցանքին,  
Եւ ենթարկուել նրանց կամքին,  
Նրանց կամքն էլ քեզ քեզ ենթարկել,-  
Դառնալ ե՛ւ շանթ, ե՛ւ շանթարգել...



Պարույր Սեւակ (Ղազարեան) ծնած է 1924-ի Յունուար 26-ին Չանախի գիղին մէջ: 1945-ին Սեւակ կ'աւարտէ Երեւանի Համալսարանի բանասիրական ֆակուլտէտը: Յետագային ան կ'անցնի Մոսկուա ուսանելու, ուր ան կ'աւարտէ Մ. Գորկու անուան գրական ինստիտուտը եւ կ'աշխատի նույն համալսարանին մէջ որպէս աւագ դասախօս: 1967-ին Հայաստանի մէջ «Սպեայթ Նովա» աշխատասիրութեան համար ան դոքտորայի աստիճան կը ստանայ:

Պարույր Սեւակ պաշտամունքի հասնելու աստիճան սեր ուներ գրականութեան հանդէպ: Սեւակ վաղ պատանի տարիքէն սկսած է գրելու՝ երբ հազիւ 11 տարեկան էր:

Կը մահանայ 1971-ի Յունիս 17-ին ինքնաշարժի արկածով:

Պարույր Սեւակ ոչ միայն բանաստեղծ էր, այլ՝ առաջնորդ, նորարար, նոր գլուխ բացող, սերունդ ստեղծող, փիլիսոփայ, գիտնական, խոր ակոս բացած էր Հայ գրականութեան եւ յատկապէս բանաստեղծութեան մէջ: Մէկ խօսքով այն էր՝ ինչ որ ամեն մէկ ազգ 100 տարին մէկ անգամ կ'ունենայ:

Սեւակի բանաստեղծությունները կը կարդացուին մէկ շունչով, չնայած որ ան գրած է առանց լանգի եւ չափի, բայց հոգի ու սպիրտ կայ իր գրածներում մէջ: Խոր ըմբռնելով Հայոց հին ու աւանդական բարքերը, սովորություններն ու ասացուածքները, Սեւակ մեծապէս օգտուած է իր ստեղծագործություններում մէջ, անոնց տալով նոր ուժ ու թափ, նոր համ ու հոտ, նորոգելով եւ թարմացնելով կը հրամցնէ իր ընթերցողներուն:

Պարույր Սեւակ հսկայ ներդրում ունեցած է Հայերէնի գրականութեան ու մշակութիւն եւ դեռեւս շատ անլին կրնար տալ, եթէ վրայ չհասնէր անհեթեթ եւ եղերական մահը...:

Պարույր Սեւակ

# FAST FOR REMEMBERANCE



**fast** [fast, fahst] –verb  
1. to abstain from all food.

**remembrance** [ri-mem-bruhns]–noun  
1. an act of recalling to mind  
2. the ability to remember: memory

By Vatche Soghomonian

The “Fast for Remembrance” was a five-day, water-only fast organized by the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) in coordination with the United Human Rights Council (UHRC). As the idea for the event was made public, it drew its share of skepticism: “Why,” “What’s the point,” “What’s this going to accomplish?” Many people assumed the AYF to be crazy to ask its members to subject themselves to such punishment. The harsh reality of the situation was that these people would completely deprive themselves by refusing the bare necessity of food for five days.

In the beginning, nineteen young activists signed up for the Fast, most of which were college and university students with full or part-time jobs. Besides sacrificing food, they left their work and their school to participate. The Fast began in front of the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles on January 2<sup>nd</sup> with the clear, humble, yet, ambitious purpose of raising awareness to the public to help promote an end to the cycle of genocide. The intent was to educate as many people as possible not only about the Armenian Genocide, but about genocides that have occurred and continue to occur throughout the world (as is the case in the Darfur region of Sudan). It was meant to inform people about the steps they can take to end this vicious cycle.

So why choose to starve in front of a building, filled with people who don’t want us to be there and who despise our message? It would have been just as simple to demonstrate and go home feeling good about ourselves. So why fast?

The answer is simple. How often do you turn down people trying to give you a piece of paper, or stop you on the street trying to talk to you? College students, think about this for a second: in school, almost everyday, in every corner, someone is passing out a piece of paper and when they try to hand it to you, chances are you say “no thank you” or simply pretend like you can’t even see them. It might have been easy to overlook us the first day or even the second day. But once people realized what this group of young activists was doing, they were compelled to hear us out. When people took the time to look down and see a group huddled on the sidewalk in blankets with a small dry-erase board which read, “NO FOOD: Day 3,” they understood our urgency and our determination. This fast was a microphone held up to our faint voices giving us the ability to be heard stronger and louder. This was a means to show the government of Turkey, the Armenian community and, especially, ourselves that the struggle against genocide denial is not a struggle limited to the month of April—rather it is a year-round effort.

Every day on the street in front of the consulate brought its own hardship and adversity. Sometimes it was cold, sometimes wet, sometimes tiresome, but it was never lonely. Our days were spent passing out flyers, talking to passers-by, media and telling stories amongst ourselves. Our nights were spent with selfless individuals who came to support, to provide supplies and to watch over us as we slept. The first day started off strong and drew media coverage from four different news networks (FOX, CBS, ABC, KCAL). In the middle of the night, however, the building security woke us up (presumably to try to break our spirits) and made us move four feet from where we were, further onto the sidewalk. There was the third day, which was forecast to rain. With no shelter we scrambled to build make-shift tents out of trash bags that we had. Later, supporters brought us two large tents to sleep in, in case of rain. The winds that night were so strong they actually blew down one of the tents. Following a rough night, the fourth day brought some welcome sunshine. On this day we carried on our normal flyer distribution and conversations. We also attempted to hand deliver a letter to the Turkish Consul General, only to be thrown out of the building by his State Department attaché.

Later, to our dismay we watched as two people came down and sat 5 feet in front of us, only to begin devouring a hot meal. Once the astonishment wore off we realized they were there maliciously, to mock us. Avoiding any hasty action, a few fasters calmly decided to talk to them. As it turns out, they had a completely misguided conception of what we were doing. Once we began talking to them about the Armenian Genocide and our struggle against its denial, they quickly realized their mistake, packed up their food and apologized sincerely for their mean-spirited actions. They even came to our rally on the next day carrying home-made signs that read, "Honor Armenia's 1.5 Million Dead" and "Turkey, Acknowledge the Armenian Genocide."

In the late hours of the fourth night we got a visit from Nersig Ispirian. He did an amazing job bolstering our weary spirits with some great patriotic songs, taking our minds off the pangs of hunger. That night everyone went to sleep knowing that the coming day would be our last on Wilshire Boulevard. We woke up early the next morning with an extra boost of energy and set up for our press conference. Flanked by various political officials and Ghazaros Kademian, an Armenian Genocide survivor, the AYF once again proclaimed its message to multiple news channels. Later that day we held a rally to mark the end of the Fast. With over 300 supporters who attended we marked not only the end of a long five days, but we also marked Armenian Christmas: a truly symbolic show of our faith against tremendous adversity.

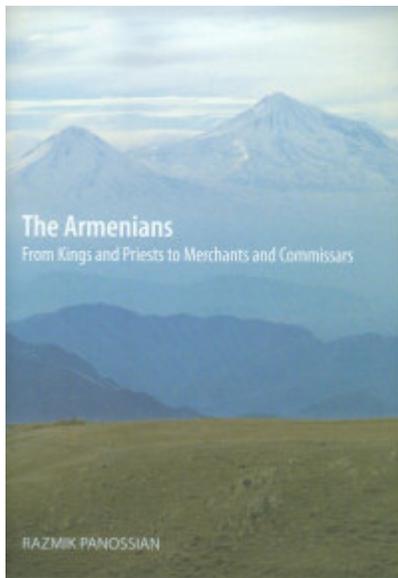
The above was a very elementary description of those five days. It is not so much the description of what transpired that is important, it is the message that was portrayed. Armenian youth and the Armenian community came together to show their collective will to continue the fight against genocide denial and end the global cycle of genocide. Those that supported this mission are the real heroes; whether they visited for one second or came every day, whether they brought us supplies or sent us emails. It is the people who stood behind this action that are truly commendable. As AYF members, this fast was our duty, our obligation. We are sworn to use any available means to furthering our cause. But this was not something that was done or is done by one small group. This is our struggle as Armenians and we must carry it on until its rightful conclusion.



*Armenian activists participating in the "Fast for Rememberance"*

# BOOK REVIEW

## FORMING A MODERN NATION ON THE SHOULDERS OF HISTORY



*The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*  
by Razmik Panossian  
Columbia University Press, \$40  
ISBN# 0231139268

By Serouj Aprahamian

What constitutes the key elements of Armenian identity? How did these elements emerge and how were they affected by larger economic and political developments? Are traditional theories on the origins of nationalism applicable to the Armenian case? Is there a significant relationship between modern Armenian national identity and ancient traditions?

These are some of the questions explored in Razmik Panossian's *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*. In what reads like a concise history of the Armenian nation, Panossian traces the development of Armenian nationalism up to the Arstakh liberation struggle and argues it is a modern political construct with pre-modern socio-

cultural roots. Within his analysis there are several interesting observations and common patterns which seem to emerge throughout Armenian history.

As a diasporan people spread out across the globe, one of the striking themes is that Armenians have, for a long time, lived with differences in geography, culture, and local habits. Yet, despite these differences, they have succeeded in maintaining their national identity through a strong personal sense of belonging to the same ethnic community. For instance, Panossian points out how in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians living under the Ottoman Empire differed in many respects from their Russian-speaking brethren living under the Tsar. However, both sides accepted each other as part of the same commonality, even in the midst of weak contacts and bonds. Similarly, today, we see that despite the differences in dialect, cultural norms, and 70 years of separation behind the "Iron Curtain," Armenians throughout the world accept the notion that they are no more or less Armenian than "hayastanstis" in Armenia.

Another notable thread seen throughout the book is the opposing approaches to nationalism among Armenians. Panossian reveals how there have historically been some Armenians who have identified with the nation on mostly cultural terms and strayed away from making political demands. These conservative Armenians wanted to avoid upsetting neighboring powers and host regimes. They enjoyed Armenian culture and tended to reject political positions which might negatively affect their status in a host society. At the same time, there were those who saw their ethnic identity closely intertwined with the struggle for national rights. Aside from culture, they had territorial and political aspirations and were not afraid to stand up for what they felt they were owed. Panossian refers to the former as being "azgaser" (in love with the nation) while the latter are described as "hayrenaser" (in love with the fatherland).

Finally, although it is not explicitly stated in the book, it is interesting to note the central role played by the ARF in modern Armenian nationalism. From its inception, the ARF instilled a new sense of consciousness among Armenians and solidified links between such instruments as socialism and resistance for the national cause. Through its organization and actions, it injected a new morale in the identity and politics of Armenians. No modern history of the Armenian nation can be complete without reference to the work of the ARF and Panossian's book is no exception. There are several references to its involvement in the revolutionary movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its establishment of the first Armenian Republic, its opposition to the Soviet Union, and its mobilization of the post-Genocide diaspora.

For anyone interested in the evolution of Armenian national-identity, *The Armenians* is a well researched, balanced, and thought-provoking book that deserves attention. Indeed, for the study of nationalism in general, Panossian's work makes a valuable contribution.

**GET  
INVOLVED  
WITH  
AYF**

- become a member
- volunteer
- register as an alumni

MAKE SURE YOU VISIT OUR  
**NEW WEB SITE:**

**WWW.AYFWEST.ORG**

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

# DONATE

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

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

**Armenian Youth Federation**  
104 North Belmont Street, Suite 206  
Glendale, California 91206

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

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



YOUTH CORPS 2007



REBUILDING OUR  
FUTURE

*One Smile  
At a Time*

**SPEND THE SUMMER IN ARMENIA**

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

818 507 1933