Անհայտ

Պուրե 7, 1988 թ. խորհրդանշում օգու- մանից սկսվել է Հայ ժողովրդի պատ- ամենամենք էր խորհրդանշող Հայաստանին մեկ տարի տևելով Պուրե 7-ի ան- հայտնի օգտությունը տարած է։ Այն տարածած զարգացած է՝ պատահանում են օգտագործվող կազմակերպություններ, որոնցով է ապահովվում պատահանում տեղեկատվություն, անել շինություններ, ստանալ միջոցառումներ։

Խորհրդանշումը Պուրե 7-ի օգտագործման տարածումը որպես կազմակերպություն, որի անակնորումները կազմակերպվում են ամբողջությամբ պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։ Պուրե 7-ի անհայտնությունը տարածած է միջոցառումներ, որոնք կազմակերպվում են պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։

Պուրե 7 կազմակերպվում է որպես կազմակերպություն՝ զարգացած պատահանումների մեջ, որոնք կազմակերպվում են անհայտ պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։

Պուրե 7-ի անհայտնությունը տարածվում է մեծ տարածքներում տարածված պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։

Պուրե 7-ի անհայտնությունը տարածվում է մեծ տարածքներում տարածված պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։ Պուրե 7-ի անհայտնությունը տարածվում է մեծ տարածքներում տարածված պատահանող կազմակերպություններ։
A Sign Of Retreat

December 7, 1988 marked a tragic day in the history of the Armenian people. The earthquake that struck the Soviet Republic of Armenia wiped out tens and thousands of lives and leveled scores of cities and towns. December 10, 1988 also marked a tragic day in Soviet history, for it was on this day that glasnost and perestroika and their promises of reform and democratization were effectively denied to the Armenians with the arrest of the members of the Karabakh Committee.

On this day, the day before President Mikhail Gorbachev ended his visit to quake-devastated Armenia, the Karabakh Committee was meeting to discuss the coordination of earthquake relief measures; the meeting was halted by Soviet military authorities who entered the building and ordered those present to disperse. As the volunteers were leaving, the authorities seized six members of the Committee. The remainder of the Committee members were arrested several weeks later in the apartment of one of the movement's supporters. The Committee members remained in prison for a period of six months before they were released on May 31, 1989.

Their charges were the "organization of group actions to disrupt public order" and each of them faced the possibility of years in hard labor. In addition, three of the members were charged with violating the anti-demonstration law proclaimed by Soviet authorities last July. One member was also absurdly charged with "violating the equality of rights of nationalities and races." Following an investigation of the charges, the reputable human rights organization, Amnesty International, concluded that the members of Karabakh Committee were "imprisoned for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association in a non-violent way." The human rights organization adopted all the Committee members as "prisoners of conscience" and called for their immediate release by Soviet authorities.

The Karabakh Committee was formed by a group of intellectuals in February 1988 during the first mass demonstrations in Yerevan. These demonstrations were unprecedented in their size and orderliness. The influence of the Committee quickly spread and it was able to establish affiliates throughout the Armenian republic. The Committee's members and affiliates initially were fervent supporters of Gorbachev's progressive policies. Indeed, during the mass demonstrations many of the participants held placards with Gorbachev's image on them, while many others paraded placards with statements imploiring the Soviet government to adhere to its policies of glasnost and perestroika. The Committee's objective was the implementation of the will of the people of Karabakh through the lawful transfer of its administration from Azerbaijan to Armenia. These demands were in keeping with the fundamentals of Lenin's principles of self-determination for nationalities. The Karabakh issue was the primary cause for which the Committee sought justice. Among the others were social equality, economic reforms, and rectification of potentially catastrophic environmental concerns.

The unwarranted arrests of the Karabakh Committee was a direct and brutal violation of their basic rights to the freedoms of expression and assembly, and a clear retreat from the policies of perestroika and glasnost. One of the most ironic characteristics of these arrests was the fact that the members of the Committee considered themselves strong supporters of Gorbachev's policies and acted in their spirit. They initiated non-violent orderly activities which pursued the improvement of the environmental, social, economic and political conditions of Armenia and the neighboring Armenian populated region of Karabakh. It seemed that their sincere faith in the authenticity of perestroika and glasnost led to their imprisonment by the reformist system. As one of the imprisoned supporters of the Committee stated in his letter to Gorbachev "at one time I trusted you and I rejoiced at your triumphs over the opponents of perestroika and now I part from these illusions bitterly..."

The arrests of the Committee members occurred at such a time that it affected the political future of Armenia. The Committee was arrested immediately after the December 7 earthquake, a time when public attention was centered on helping the survivors and not the arrests. Furthermore, the arrests were orchestrated such that the potential candidacy of any of the Committee members was nullified in the upcoming election. This left only the Party favorites in the running. And thus, the voice and conscience of the Armenian people were conveniently stifled.

Despite the fact that the Karabakh Committee members were released on May 31, 1989, the credibility and genuineness of Gorbachev's platform are still being put to test in Armenia, and only their full application will restore the confidence in the aspirations of glasnost and perestroika. The people of the Soviet Union have welcomed the progressive policies of Gorbachev, however, if a just solution is not found for the Karabakh issue, then we can conclude that glasnost and perestroika are at best selective, and at worst, devoid of any real meaning as they apply to the welfare of the Soviet peoples. We would like to see these policies as authentic and genuine, and believe that they can benefit all the peoples of the Soviet Union. Until then, we will remain ever vigilant in bringing to light all actions of the Soviet government that stand in contradiction to the stated principles of glasnost and perestroika.

The suspension of the basic human rights of the Karabakh Committee members was a clear retreat from these policies.

Self-determination for the people of Karabakh!
Դեմքել ամենամստական Հ.Հ. Շամը, իսկ հասարակականի կարգերի հետ համագումարից արագավիճակ է փոխել, որը սակայն միաձգեշ է և հակառակորդներ: Շամի հայրապետությունը իր պահից իրամանացրել է հաղորդական խոսքը, որը հարևանության համար և հանդիպումների հատկություններ է վերացնում փոխարինելու հանդիպումներին կատարողությունը: Շամի հայրապետությունը իր պահից իրամանացրել է հաղորդական խոսքը, որը հարևանության համար և հանդիպումների հատկություններ է վերացնում փոխարինելու հանդիպումներին կատարողությունը: Շամի հայրապետության կարգավորումները վերանայական են և ուսումնասիրելու համար միայն այն համախառնումը, որը բացատրում է հաղորդական խոսքի վերացման համար և հանդիպումների կատարված պահից իրամանացրելու համար:

Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

Raffi Elbekian
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Բխումությունից էլ հայ ժողովրդի պատմականության պատմական երևույթ է: Հուշա- նշին զգացող, ինչ էլ այսօր աշխատակեցություն է Հայ ժողովրդի պատմության համար պատմական տեղեկագրություններ տեղի ունենում տարբեր համակարգերով, որոնք մասնակցում են Հայկական գրականության համատեղ գրականության պատմության ոլորտի սկզբնամասին, որոնք զարգացած են համատեղ գրականության համար պատմության մեջ: Բխումությունից էլ հայ ժողովրդի պատմության տեղեկագրություններ տեղի ունենում տարբեր համակարգերով, որոնք զարգացած են համատեղ գրականության համար պատմության մեջ:
Գրանցվել է, որ պատահույսով երկու հայկական պատկերազետ տեղափոխվեց որպես նախամասային գրականության և տարածաշրջանային հիմնախորհրդանիշ Արմանյանի ու Լուկասի համար։ Այս գործողությունները պատմական դեպքերը իրականացնել են սահմանափակ և անկողմետ ռեժիմների ուսումնասիրման հրապարակում։

1. Նախագահը պետք է զարգացնի աշխատանքի ծրագրերը նրանց համար, որոնք երկրի տարածաշրջանների տարածաշրջաններից պատկերազետներն են և պապսեր, ինչպես նախագահը, որոնք կարողանում են դատապարտել հայկական պատմության անկյունները և հայկական պատմական գրականությունները。

2. Նախագահը պետք է զարգացնի աշխատանքի ծրագրերը նրանց համար, որոնք երկրի տարածաշրջանների տարածաշրջաններից պատկերազետներն են և պապսեր, ինչպես նախագահը, որոնք կարողանում են դատապարտել հայկական պատմության անկյունները և հայկական պատմական գրականությունները。

3. Նախագահը պետք է զարգացնի աշխատանքի ծրագրերը նրանց համար, որոնք երկրի տարածաշրջանների տարածաշրջաններից պատկերազետներն են և պապսեր, ինչպես նախագահը, որոնք կարողանում են դատապարտել հայկական պատմության անկյունները և հայկական պատմական գրականությունները。

4. Նախագահը պետք է զարգացնի աշխատանքի ծրագրերը նրանց համար, որոնք երկրի տարածաշրջանների տարածաշրջաններից պատկերազետներն են և պապսեր, ինչպես նախագահը, որոնք կարողանում են դատապարտել հայկական պատմության անկյունները և հայկական պատմական գրականությունները。

Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

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From Karabakh To Kosovo

By Haig Baghdassarian

From across the world, we heard, our brothers' outcries, and some of us stood up and made feeble efforts to protest with them. Why did we stand up? Why did we shout? What is it that creates a bond between us? After all, we are three generations removed and 10,000 miles apart from them.

For a moment, let us pretend as though we act out of a sense of right and wrong, or for the preservation of justice. In that case, we will find that as a community we have become too egocentric in our activism. If we wish to be regarded as a people who struggle in order to bring about justice, then we had better open the curtain and take a look outside to see what else is going on throughout the world. Because as difficult as it may be for us to believe, the world does not revolve around Yerevan, Bourj Hamoud, Glendale, or even Spitak. The Armenians as a whole represent slightly more than one tenth of one percent of the total world population. The world can get along very well without the Armenians; unfortunately, we cannot say that the Armenians would manage without the rest of the world. The Armenians need as many friends in this world as they can get, so it may be wise to channel some of the resources available into gaining friends.

Were we aware that a world existed outside of Spitak or Karabakh last fall? For instance, did we hear the cries of the Albanians coming from Kosovo last year? Kosovo is an autonomous region in Yugoslavia, but although more than 77% of its population is ethnically Albanian, it is in fact under control of a group which constitutes a plurality within Yugoslavia, namely the Serbs. There have been claims that the Albanians have mistreated the Serbs within the region. There exists a tradition of anti-Serbian sentiment and Albanian nationalism within Kosovo. But the resurgence of Serbian nationalism and calls to place Kosovo under direct rule from Belgrade in a highly centralized Yugoslavian government only serves to create more tension and to further frustrate the situation. Obviously, it cannot be disputed whether Serbs as well as other minorities in the region of Kosovo should have a right to live without the fear of discrimination or persecution at the hands of the Albanians. Is it justifiable, however, for this region (and its predominantly Albanian population) to be governed by a centralized Serb government from Belgrade?

Since the establishment of the modern state of Yugoslavia in 1918, Kosovo has had the status of "Autonomous Region" along with Vojvodina and Macedonia, and the five republics of Montenegro, Bosnia-Hersegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. Yugoslavia has several nationalities and ethnicities, and this has always posed a problem, but the Serbs constitute a plurality; they have enjoyed considerable influence as such, and under the authoritarian rule of Marshal Tito, all groups were kept in line. Following his death in 1980, a collective rotating presidency, designed to avoid clashes among the nationalities, was implemented. But demonstrations on the part of the Albanians began in March 1981, and have continued since in an attempt for Kosovo's secession from the Union. Over the years, the number of Albanians in Kosovo has increased somewhat disproportionately, and Serbian nationalists argue that this has been done intentionally on the part of the Albanians in order to eliminate the presence of the Serbs from the region. This is a highly controversial issue, but the fact remains that the

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Albanians have an overwhelming majority presently, and as such they deserve the right for self-determination.

This situation may be compared with that of Karabakh, whereby Serbia and Azerbaijan, and Kosovo and Karabakh are subjects of comparison. The call of the Serbs for Kosovo to be placed under Serbian control in a more centralized government in Belgrade, would be equivalent to the Azerbaijanis' insistence that Karabakh be kept under their control by being governed from Baku. Such a situation did exist, of course, until this year when Karabakh was put under direct control from Moscow. The analogy is an imperfect one because of the differences in political system and structure between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Yet enough similarities exist to make the comparison a legitimate one. Kosovo and Karabakh have a comparable proportion of Albanians and Armenians, respectively, yet there is an attempt by their surrounding region to exert control upon them. What should be the stance of the Armenian communities on such eventualities? In the case of Karabakh, it has generally been agreed to support and lend voice to the struggling Soviet Armenians in their quest for autonomy and quasi-self-determination. Shouldn't our response be similar for the people of Kosovo?

"Let us not continue living in our egocentric world, for we may someday find that we are being alienated by it..."

The question is a relevant one: What is it that ties the Armenians of the diaspora to those of the Soviet Union? We can claim that religion is the bonding factor, as we often take pride in the fact that Armenia was the first Christian state; but who are we fooling? When was the last time that we attended church services when there wasn't a wedding, funeral, or one of our parents wasn't dragging us? We can claim that culture binds us, and it is true that we have much in common, but it could be argued that we have more differences than similarities. Many of us have to a large extent Americanized, Europeanized, Middle Easternized, while our brothers in Soviet Armenia have Russified. Language is a commonality, but does it make the Chinese and the Taiwanese, or the Syrians and Egyptians brothers? A combination of these factors would indicate that there are legitimate historical and cultural ties between all Armenians, but an additional reason for this sense of cohesiveness is a common feeling of having been wronged which instills a desire to achieve justice.

As a persecuted people, a people subjected to extermination, a people deprived of the right to live freely in our rightful homeland, we must be more sympathetic towards others who have been similarly persecuted. Although, there may be more in common between the Armenians and the Serbs, culturally and religiously, the circumstances dictate that it is with the Albanians that the Armenians' sympathy should lie. Although, they may be Muslims or atheists, their predicament in Kosovo is similar to the one faced by the Armenians of Karabakh.

Armenians must recognize the universalities of realities such as persecution, subjugation, and cultural repression. We are not the first to be faced with such obstacles and injustices, nor, unfortunately will we be the last. Let us open ourselves and lend a hand to those equally unfortunate, as others have done for us. Let us not continue living in our egocentric world, for we may someday find that we are being alienated by it. Let it be heard that the Armenians sympathize with the Albanians of Kosovo and all those who are oppressed.

"...it is the undeniable right of all nations to overthrow and destroy completely all forms of tyranny whatever their political, social and economic labels, through national liberation struggles or by all other means appropriate for that purpose..."

ARF Program, 1982
The Lost Armenians?

By Silva Berberian

A true Armenian—does there exist such a person? Should one view the Armenian who is immersed within an Armenian community as a truly involved, caring member? Then those Armenians who are not so involved, who are perhaps not used to the Armenian scene fall into another category—the lost Armenians. But in reality, are they “lost”? They may have lost their bonds with other Armenians, save their families, but to what extent and for what reasons? These are certainly questions to consider before judging any Armenian. For many Armenians, being involved in the tightly-knit communities is simply part of life. Armenian schools, social events and church activities all promote the Armenian identity of the “involved” people. And those Armenians who are not accustomed to such a lifestyle are often regarded as apathetic, disinterested or simply assimilated. Yes, and even lost. However, the non-involved have wealth of reasons for their status as Armenians. They possess their own justifications for not participating more actively within the Armenian community; they have created their own excuses for not making the change or commitment to their people. Therefore, it is this topic I set out to discuss and debate when I interviewed the five students on campus of UC Irvine which I chose randomly. Each of the interviewees expressed concerns and problems on topics of Armenian identity and life within the diaspora. Some of the feelings were mutual; some different. After interviewing all of them could I sense the common bond which they all shared, even to the smallest degree? The purpose of this article, then, is not to criticize any Armenian nor to judge behavior but to widen the senses to the variety of Armenians and perhaps learn from the responses.

The following Armenians were interviewed separately on the Campus of UC Irvine. None of them have personal links with the Armenian community surrounding them. They shared their thoughts and news on their ‘non-involvement’ and their basic feelings on Armenianism.

Haytoug—In term of "Armenianness,” how would you categorize yourself? a) Not interested, simply an Armenian-American. b) Interested in the side-benefits of being Armenian—the cultural, traditional activities. c) Interested with deeper conviction and with stronger feelings towards Armenian people and the struggle.

David—I can identify with a little of each description. However, I think Armenians [in general] tend to keep that flame burning. It's an honor to keep that Armenian feeling whole and to not lose it.

Vivian—I could be interested to the deepest level, but I'm just not much into Armenianism because I don't know a lot of Armenian people. I feel bad that I'm not more involved with Armenian activities.

Caroline—in general, it's very important to me that I'm an Armenian. I would never deny it. The past Genocide and the present cause are relevant to me.

Richard—I’m interested to a higher level than the side-benefits. I want to keep my history alive.

Laura—in high school and my first few years of college I was very into being Armenian. Demonstrations, educational and more in the Detroit AYF. Being Armenian was a big part of who I was and I was so committed. Now that I'm far removed from all that; it seems strange that I was ever involved. But I still care, a lot.

Haytoug—What reasons and factors make you feel and think the way you do? Justify your degree of involvement as an Armenian.

David—My family had made me maintain my Armenian identity in a place like Orange County where I don't really have outside Armenian links. All the stories passed down from my grandparents made me interested, and also made me feel the obligation to keep my “Armenianness.” I never forgot about being Armenian.

Silva Berberian was born in Mexico City. She has lived in England, and for the past six years she has resided in Orange County. Silva graduated from Capistrano Valley High in 1988 and now attends the University of California, Irvine where she plans to major in Journalism. She is a member of the Orange County AYF Arboi Yergai Chapter.
"I would gladly join ARF, but how can I if I don't speak the language? ...I would not fit in. I'd... not feel very useful. I don't need that from my own people..."

—Laura Kasarian

Caroline—My mom and dad are very strong Armenians and they have told me all they know, and [I] have learned. Even though I've always lived apart from Armenian communities, I still felt I was a strong Armenian.

Vivian—It's mainly my family that helped me stay Armenian. But, it's so easy to fall into a habit of picking up on the things that surround and interest you. I guess I'm guilty of being caught up in my own life, and not trying hard enough to know of the Armenian opportunities.

Richard—The things brought up within my family are the only things that kept me involved in the Armenianess. In high school I was the typical American kid. it was not until college that I changed and became involved in the Armenian Students Association at UCI.

Laura—In Detroit my involvement was a large part of who I was, my identity. Plus my family was very involved in the community. When I moved to Orange County fifteen years ago, it was hard to get involved. It was more difficult to drive long distances to hear lectures, see people.

Haytoug—What has held you back the most from becoming more involved with the Armenian community closest to you?

David—Time. I go to school every day and barely have time for any social life. It's hard to go to college, study something and be committed. Occasionally on weekends I've gone with my parents to Triple X functions. It's basically hard for me to be involved now. It would be hard for me to just jump into it.

Vivian—So far, nothing's interested me in the Armenian Community. Besides my everyday routines and all my involvement on campus (UC) I just don't have the gut feeling to do it, to go out of my way to do something else.

The background on the students:

David Bodourian was born in the City of Orange and has lived in Southern California all his life. He graduated from Luther High in 1984 and now attends UC Irvine. Currently he is a fourth-year pre-med student.

Vivian Bedrossian was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She lived on the East Coast for seven years. The family then moved to Orange County. Vivian graduated from Saddleback High. Now she is a junior at UC Irvine and plans to major in English.

Caroline Ourfallan was born in Beirut, Lebanon and lived there for eleven years. In 1978 the family moved to Irvine where Caroline graduated from University High.

Now she attends UC Irvine as a fourth year student majoring in French.

Richard Aharonian was born in Tulane, near Fresno and graduated from high school there. Now he attends UC Irvine and is a social ecology junior with plans to major in criminal law.

Laura Kasarian was born and raised in Pontiac, Michigan. She was a member of the Detroit AYF in 1973-1978. She completed undergraduate studies at UC Irvine and received her Masters' degree in criminal justice. She is now a PhD candidate in the same field.
"Even though I've always lived apart from Armenian communities, I still felt I was a strong Armenian."

—Caroline Ourfalian

It's just easier to fall back and enjoy life as it is, although I should make the extra effort.

Caroline—Part of it is simply not knowing anyone. I've never had a close Armenian friend to know what I'm missing, not being involved. In terms of involvement with the Armenian church, I wanted to go because Christianity is very important to me. However, the gossip that goes through the community is something I don't want to be part of.

Richard—A group like Triple X I wouldn't join, period. The meetings don't get anywhere, and there's too much arguing at every meeting. I've tried to get involved but it's part of the way the community is. It's based too much, maybe, on traditions. But if that changed, the whole aspect of the Armenian community could change.

Laura—When I moved to Orange County, a change was taking place in the community, AYF, etc. What used to be more American-Armenian was becoming less and less American when the strong immigration of Armenians came in. American-Armenians felt like odars. The way we speak the language was made fun of. You generally felt bad about yourself.

Haytoug—Is the fact that you do not speak Armenian fluently, or at all, or that you cannot read or write Armenian discouraging you from involvement?

David—As a child I looked at Armenian as a foreign language, something strange. Now that I'm older I wish I knew how to speak it, but it has not discouraged me. There seems to be a lot of young Armenians who cannot speak the language. This is unfortunate because how then can we keep the Armenian tradition going?

Vivian—I speak Armenian but don't speak it that well. Whenever I talk to someone, I get embarrassed, and I think that they're going to laugh at me!

Caroline—No, because I speak Armenian fairly fluently.

Laura—I would gladly join ARF, but how can I if I don't speak the language. If there was an opportunity for me to join the Orange County chapter [ARF] I wouldn't because I don't speak, and because I would not fit in. I'd sit there and not feel very useful. I don't need that from my own people.

Haytoug—Do you think that becoming involved in the Armenian community is a 'waste of time,' an additional concern that would give you nothing in return as far as your lifestyle is concerned?

David—I'm set in my lifestyle, but being more involved would be a definite plus, enhancing my life in many ways. I'm envious of people who do participate, like you for example, doing this interview.

Vivian—It's easy to think of the Armenian community as an addition to my life, rather than a part of it. If I think of it like that, I feel bad. I always feel different than the others [odars] in everything I do, but it's a good 'different.' I mean, I don't feel very American.

Caroline—Involvement is by no means a waste of time. Basically it's hard for me, a challenge. I have always felt like I don't fit in the Armenian community. I don't know that I'd be accepted just as I am. The fact is, I've always had a hard time to assimilate with other Armenians.

Richard—I may not be physically involved, but you can always absorb things, pick up the culture. Going to Armenian events makes you feel proud, from the community unto yourself. I keep up with the problems of Armenians and it is not an additional concern or too much out of my life.

Laura—I believe in all the principles of the Dashnak political philosophy. However, looking at it now, I'm not sure how realistic it is. But at some point it could be. Look at Armenia now and its resurgence of political activity. It proves that we can bring about changes.

Haytoug—to increase your involvement and energy within the Armenian community, how do you hope to achieve this change in your life?

David—I know that I could make a difference socially, making apathetic Armenians stronger. I have tried in other
ways to be a “useful Armenian” like being a counselor at an Armenian summer camp where that Armenian feeling becomes so strong.

Vivian—I’m a pretty energetic person. I could get lots done with some guidance and direction. If my environment I grew up in had more Armenians, I would probably be more involved now. I’ve tried to go to the Orange County church but I feel that there’s lots of people who base too much importance on money. I feel that the community, in reality, does push away certain kinds of Armenians—this is discouraging.

Caroline—Having been so distant from the Armenian community, I can’t relate exactly what to do. But I’ve run into lots of people who are interested to know about [the] Genocide, so I tell them all about what happened to my family during that time.

“We’re never going to die out—as long as we pass Armenian values on down to the children.”

—Richard Aharonian

Richard—There’s not much an individual can do except educate the children and the people... I won’t force this subject but I will tell a person everything I can about the subject. And they take an interest viewing it as a major historical event.

Laura—Right now, I don’t know how to get involved. I could help from an educational standpoint, using the ‘talent’ I have. But it really depends on what your interests are, and what you know you can bring back to the community.

Haytouk—As an American do you care about human suffering? With greater exposure to the extent of Armenian suffering, past and present, how do you feel Armenians should be justified?

David—Being a good Christian, you don’t like to see suffering. I hold a strong sorrow for any suffering. A lot of Armenian people my age feel that the Armenian political fighters are giving Armenians a bad name. I think a lot of people were ashamed by these acts [of terrorism], but still I feel proud. I can see all the hatred Armenians still have for Turks, but the line must be drawn somewhere. What I find hard to believe is that we can’t know in our hearts that the Genocide is true and documented—Why can’t that be enough? I don’t understand.

Vivian—I don’t have a lot of knowledge about Armenian suffering, past and present. If I did, there would be more that I would want to do, more I would feel about this suffering. I really don’t know what the best way is to have our Genocide recognized. On the one hand I think that Turkish people now should not have to pay for the wrongs of their people in the past. But then I think, why don’t they acknowledge the wrongs of their ancestors?

Caroline—I do not believe in the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth idea of justice. Our hatred for the Turks is very natural because we have not received any justice... I don’t like to have hatred in my heart because I know it’s not going to produce anything good. Armenian freedom fighters are fine so long as they don’t hurt the name of the Armenians. Peaceful marching and parading are good to get attention. It’s not necessarily a hopeless situation. The truth can’t be hidden for long, not something as big as this.

Richard—Having April 24 as a remembrance day is something I don’t see as unrealistic. Recognition of the Genocide is not something they can deny much longer, with my own personal feeling. There is no cause for terrorism. It’s one of he most disgusting things on earth. It’s too barbaric—not good for this age and not justified. I think with time Turkey will admit to it.

Haytouk—Looking at the Armenian community as an odar, and outsider, what do you find most appealing and most compelling?

David—The closeness, generosity and warmth you find in other Armenians. My Armenian friends and their parents are so warm. You can just recognize the difference in an Armenian home.

“All the stories passed down from my grandparents made me... feel the obligation to keep my ‘Armenianness.’ I never forget about being Armenian...”

—David Bodourian

Vivian—Appealing? My family and relatives are the best part of Armenianism and community. We are so different compared to odars and their attitudes towards family. I look forward to seeing my relatives, while they often dread it. My parents especially have kept me Armenian.

Caroline—In general I have found it intimidating rather than appealing, and like I’ve said before I’ve found it hard to fit in with other Armenians.

Richard—Southern California is a lot more into the culture.
The sense of community, being with other Armenians and feeling you have something in common, having a community to fall back on, and that can be very supportive.

Laura—I would love to get involved with an Armenian group where there is a strong cooperation and communication among all of us. The Armenian dancing and singing is very moving—it provides me with a strong emotional bond.

Haytoug—Does assimilation of the Armenian culture seem inevitable? Why must Armenians cling to their heritage stronger than other nationalities in a diaspora?

David—We young Armenians really don't know the extent of what happened to our ancestors in the Genocide. As time goes on, we're going to lose a lot of it. It's inevitable because of the way the US influences us. I don't think it will all go down to zero, but the feelings will change. We should be concerned in keeping traditions in our hearts and families. Then we retain our Armenianness and keep the Armenian flame burning. In this way, we're not just giving up.

"I feel that the [Armenian] community... does push away certain kinds of Armenians—this is discouraging..."

—Vivian Bedrosian

Vivian—I don't think we'll fully assimilate because of groups like AYF, but I am one of the worst people, I am making it 'diffuse' because I'm not getting involved. I will always say I'm Armenian—I like to say it.

Caroline—It's scary. You wonder at what point the assimilation will stop. It's hard to say. But throughout history we've been under the rule of conquerors and stuck through it, so... Assimilation is up to the individual, a personal choice. [Also] if parents never tell you anything, how can you not help but assimilate?

Richard—We're never going to die out—as long as we pass the Armenian values on down to the children.

Laura—Knowing Armenian is very important for our culture to survive. If no one knows it, we're going to die out. It's a double-edged sword. On one hand there are the political, very involved, caring Armenians—but who don't speak. But that doesn't give people who can speak the right to look down on them. You're saying this person doesn't count if they can't speak Armenian.

Haytoug—How would you define a "good," involved Armenian?

David—Reading and writing are not important to help out although the "true" Armenian should make the effort to be truly involved. Also, it's important to know English to fight the cause and express yourself and feelings to the world. How can you categorize a person for being more or less Armenian?

Vivian—Should there be a difference between a good person and a good Armenian? People should be approachable, willing to help and not selfish. I'm Armenian at the same time!

Caroline—it's the name you feel within your heart. It's the kind of person who at the drop of a hat will not deny being Armenian. Be involved for what you feel in your heart, not because you're asked to.

Richard—Everyone has a different perception.

Laura—There are two kinds of involved Armenians. Those involved politically and in various groups, and those who participate in the humanitarian aspect, teaching children and passing on, the feeling of pride to the children.

Perhaps the readers of this article see non-involved Armenians now with fresh perspectives. The Armenian links, for the interviewees, certainly have been breaking; the binding grasp of the Armenian community loosening; the division in the diaspora increasing. In fact, they may be looked upon as outsiders—odars—to their Armenian brothers and sisters. In a way, these people have brought this upon themselves, for a large part of any involvement is up to the individual himself. The individual Armenian must desire the change and continue with commitment whether it is learning the language, meeting new Armenian people or attending lectures. However, responsibility also lies within the palms of the Armenian communities throughout the diaspora. If the involved Armenians know that they may intimidate or alienate other Armenians, adjustments should be made to include everyone who desires to "be part of it." This is where the line must be drawn, for no matter how different Armenians are, there is still the common bond of being Armenian. Even within the "lost" Armenians a spark dwells, a spark can ignite into a flame and eventually a raging fire. With time and patience a passionate fire can begin to burn in the Armenian heart, and anything is then possible. The only way, though, to spread this fire evenly is with special attention and determination on the part of all Armenians.

Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

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The reason Czech playwright Vaclav Havel along with other activists was imprisoned this January goes back twenty-one years. In 1968, Czech student Jan Palach set fire to himself as a form of protest against the intervention of Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia. Playwright Havel and fourteen other dissidents were arrested on the anniversary of Palach’s self-immolation, as they tried to pay tribute to the young student’s memory.

Havel was sentenced to nine months in prison for this jail term, which is not his first. He was first jailed in 1977 for being one of the signatories of “Charter 77,” a human rights document, and then again in 1979. During his 1979-83 incarceration, the author of such politically motivated satires as “Largo Desolato,” “Protest,” and “Audience” was allowed to write nothing more than a single letter a week and that only to a family member. These letters were recently published in “Letters to Olga,” as a series of literary and philosophical meditations.

The imprisonment of this modern playwright, judged as one of the masters of modern drama, warrants a look at his works and the profound ideas they convey. Behind the witty remarks, the sly exchanges, the absurd repetitions, lie criticisms and a call for change.

“Largo Desolato” stands as a representative play for his ideas. As one of his more recent plays, it revolves around Leopold Nettles and his fears that agents of the state (“they”) will at any time storm into his house and take him to prison (“there”) for one of his written works that the State deems unacceptable. The feeble character does face the choice of refuting his work which would relieve him of any threat of incarceration. The bulk of the play deals with his confusion about a choice which is resolved in an unexpected twist, when the agents of the State inform Nettles that he will not have to refute his writing nor will he be imprisoned, because he simply is no longer himself.

The idea of non-existence (or existence apart from the self) abounds in Havel’s work. Non-existence, at its most basic level, signifies servitude to others, especially to the State. In Havel’s case as a writer, and in a parallel, in the case of his character, non-existence means compromising an idea, a word, an idea expressed by a word, in order to please an authority. Further, it means the denial of the word in order to save the author.
from any danger (i.e. imprisonment). Havel's case argues that the author must be sacrificed for the word and the work. The author may be imprisoned but the ideas will be free and will spread. If the author cannot sacrifice himself for the written word, then he cannot exist in any meaningful way.

The horrifying prospect of non-existence is depicted in a more direct way in the autobiographical work "The Woman Warrior" by Maxine Hong Kingston. She recounts the tale of an aunt who bore an illegitimate child in an extremely conservative setting. The reaction of her surroundings drives her to suicide, yet her death does not comprise the harshest part of her punishment. Her family opts to completely deny her existence. Her story is obliterated from birth and her chapter in Kingston's work is appropriately entitled "No Name Woman."

Leopold Nemcova in "Largo Desolato" faces the threat of non-existence because he is no longer himself. His confusion (and thus the lack of determination to defend every word he has written) proves him to be unworthy of the word he has written. The fear he harbors of "them" or where they will be taking him makes his character credible and casts shadows on the words he has written as well. Can his ideas stand for anything of importance if he does not appear willing to sacrifice himself for them?

This confusion can be interpreted in a positive light for Nemcova. One can argue that at least he is thinking of accepting the terrifying prospect of jail for a piece of written work. He never consents to serving the state. In fact, after he is informed that he no longer exists, he suffers a fit of hysteria and begins "begging" and "beseeching" to be dragged to prison. The wish is an impossible one because the fear and the doubt that abounded within him demonstrate the effect of the state had upon him anyway and doom him to non-existence.

The death of the author's imagination is the first step to his non-existence. Fear of the state functions as the precursory stage to serving the state. Leopold Nemtsev finds himself in the first stage. Arthur Miller, in a tribute to Havel entitled "I Think of You a Great Deal" complements Havel's writings by outlining the death of the imagination. Miller's monologue tells the story of the narrator's writer friend who takes a job in an advertising company. Confined to the limited world of praising the product, he loses his imagination, his plays, his poems, and revels in the jingles he writes for his superiors. "Power loves praise," acknowledges Miller. The writer serving the product echoes the writer serving the state. Both have died in imagination, and a writer whose imagination is dead has no existence.

Amnesty's statement calling for the release of Czechoslovak activists

zchoslovakia: Vaclav Havel, Sasa Vondra, Jana Petrova, Ota Veverka, Stanislav Penc, Petra Placak, David Nemec, Dana Nemcova, Jana Sternova, Josef Zak, Marek Ptacek, Vaclav Kratochvil, Jitka Vavrikova, Jiri Fiala. January 23, 1989. The 14 men and women named above were arrested in Prague on 15 January 1989, during the second consecutive day of demonstrations to mark the 20th anniversary of the self-immolation of a student named Jan Palach. They have been charged with 'obstructing the exercise of the authority of a public agent' under Article 156a of the Penal Code, and face up to six months' imprisonment if convicted.

Amnesty International believes they are imprisoned for the non-violent exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association, and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Jan Palach set fire to himself in Wenceslas Square on 15 January 1969 in protest at the 1968 intervention by Warsaw Pact Forces which ended the period of liberalisation known as the Prague Spring. On 15 January 1989, a Sunday, thousands of people gathered in Prague after five unofficial groups announced they would hold a brief memorial gathering for Palach. The authorities banned the meeting, however, and riot police used water cannons, tear gas and batons to disperse the gathering and thwart the memorial. A number of people were allegedly beaten by police. Ninety-one people were detained, but most were released shortly afterwards.

On the following day around 500 people returned to Wenceslas Square and the 14 people named above, all human rights activists, laid flowers and lit candles at the spot where Palach set fire to himself. Riot police then moved in, detained the 14, and again dispersed the crowd using water cannons, tear gas and batons. The state news agency reported that the 14 were detained 'for their gross repeated breach of public order and for not obeying the appeals of state bodies.'

Many of those detained, including playwright and former prisoner of conscience Vaclav Havel, are signatories to the Czechoslovak human rights movement 'Charter 77.' Dana Nemcova and Sasa Vondra are two of 'Charter 77's three current spokespersons. All 14 are believed to be held in Prague's Ruzyné pre-trial prison.

—Amnesty International
Pass
The Catsup, Please

By Haig Baghdassarian

It was a perfect day for a picnic.
The flowers were in full bloom
Not a cloud in the sky
The kind of spring day one only dreams about.

As the mother spread out the blanket,
The father prepared the charcoal.
The dog playfully chased after the children,
And their innocent giggles filled the air.

The teenage daughter lay basking in the sun
As the older boy listened to the "Motley Crue."
The hot dog started to sizzle
As the grease dripped from the burgers.

The girl turned over onto her back
The boy inserted his "Megadeath" tape
The dog appeared with the frisbee in his mouth
As the children chased after him.

The cheese melted over the burgers
And the feast was ready to be devoured.
And as the children yelled and screamed,
The mother said, "Shh, be quiet kids."

And it was then that the voice was heard
Of the old and withered governor
"It was one hundred years ago today," he said
"That a cloud hung over our people's heads."

Yes it was a beautiful day in Montebello
On the 24th of April, in year 2015.

The Truth

By Ani Boghigian

ately I have been feeling very angry,
If you ask me why
I would simply reply
We are all a bunch of chumps.

Forty thousand children die of hunger every day.
Why should we care, anyway—
We have our cars
And our Big Macs
While most of us stay hidden
in our shells.

United we pretend to be
Only during Tragedies.
What for, if you ask me—
There is no Trust
No Love
No Truth
Only infidelity.

I cry sometimes and I'm afraid
To see nothing but hypocrisy
Nothing Real
Nothing Changing
Only avarice surrounds us all.

If I am wrong with my perception
Please help me for I am lost
Open the doors and windows with me
Let us escape from this evil force.

I am young, innocent, and confused
Tired of swallowing the truths
Of hypocrisies
Whose grip chokes
My heart and throat.

I am strong, everlasting and beautiful
A survivor of nightmarish severities
Because I hold the future—
Unified, Authentic.
Forever.

Ani Boghigian is an undergraduate student at Glendale City College
majoring in Political Science. She is a member of the Glendale AYF
Roupen Chapter.
To Viken

By Sharistian Melkonian

You are gone
one final pillar demolished
amongst a pile
a pile of forgotten pictures
burned
ashes
vanished

you sit and collect dust
you rot
we let you rot
we don't care
because
you deserve to rot
you were big boys then
you are big boys now
alone

you are gone
the final pillar has fallen
you remain a piece of a pile
a forgotten pile
the thought of your sitting there
doesn't cross our minds
whatever is left of our minds
because
you are right
your lives don't matter
and neither does our power.

Sharistian Melkonian was born in Worcester, Massachusetts and has lived on the West Coast for the past 4 years. She is an undergraduate student at the CSU, Northridge majoring in English. She is a member of the SF Valley AYF Sardarabad Chapter.
Statement
Of The
Armenian
Youth
Federation

April 24, 1989

The Armenian Youth Federation of Western America has
gathered here today with the Armenian community of Los Angeles
to demand the return of the Turkish occupied Armenian
homeland.

74 years ago today the Ittihadist "Young Turk" party of Turkey
began a premeditated organized effort to eradicate the Armenian
people living on the Armenian homeland. On this day the Turkish
government collected the Armenian leadership and arrested them
with no charges. Once the intelligensia was removed the
government continued to forcibly remove all Armenians from
their homes and subject the entire populace to deportation. Nearly
all perished either by execution, hunger or exposure. In all nearly
1.5 million Armenians, from a population of 2 million died. Five
sixth of the Armenian homeland is now devoid of Armenians.

To this day the present Turkish government continues to deny
this genocide and wages an ongoing campaign to rewrite history.
Armenians gather here today to make the following demands:

1. The Turkish government's acceptance of the responsibility
   for the Armenian Genocide.

2. Reparations for the loss of land, lives and personal properties.

3. The immediate return of the Armenian homeland presently
   occupied by the Turkish government.

The Armenian youth is dedicated to continue the struggle of
the Armenian people until these demands are met.

Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

Hampig Sassounian

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Armenian Youth Federation Protests Detention Of Karabakh Committee

Glendale, CA—The Armenian Youth Federation announced today that it will hold a political rally to protest the incarceration of Armenian activists in the Soviet Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Members of the Karabakh Committee and other Armenian activists who had led the mass movement demanding the reannexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to, as well as the struggle for democratization in, Armenia have been arrested and are presently held in Moscow and Yerevan.

Memoranda signed by various American-Armenian community organizations demanding the release of the Armenian political prisoners will be sent to President Gorbachev, Ambassador Dubinin, and Consul General Karmenev.

“We welcome the policies of perestroika and glasnost,” declared Armenian Youth Federation spokesperson Chris Keosian, “however we consider the arrests a major retreat from those policies,” he continued.

“The credibility and genuineness of Gorbachev’s platform is now being tested in Armenia, and only its full application will restore our confidence in its aspirations,” concluded the spokesperson of the Armenian Youth Federation.
Սուրբ Հարություն Սահամի Հույն

Սուրբ Հարություն Սահամի, Հույն գրող, Հայ գրականության նշանավոր ներկայացուցիչը։

Սահամի գրականությունը գրականության տարբեր ոճերով է կազմված։ Նա գրողը մեծ տարիքով մեկնարկեց գրականության ճանաչումները, մասնակցեց Մատեոս Գալուզյանի հետ նորաձևության համար։ Սահամի գրականությունը նկարագրում է Հայաստանի պատմությունը, ճարտարապետությունը, մշակույթը։

Սահամի գրականությունը կենտրոնանում է հայկական ժողովածուի վրա։ Նա միանգամ բազմակին գրողներին ներկայացրել է հայկական գրականության տարբեր ոճերը, որոնք անցկացրել են հայ գրականության ողջ պատմությունը։

Սահամի գրականությունը հայկական գրականության վերջին ժամանակներին անցկացրել է իր գործունեության վերջնական փուլը։ Նա մանուկ էր, հայկական գրականության համար մեծապես նշանակալից, որը նույնիսկ հայ գրականության անսալինները նախագծել են։

Սահամի հայկական գրականության ոլորտում զբաղվել է բազմաթիվ գրական ոճերի միջև։ Նա գրականության տարբեր ոճերի միջև եղել է հանդիպող և անվանական հաշվի ոճ։ Սահամի գրականության տարբեր ոճերը ներկայացված են նրա մի շարք գրական աշխատանքներում։
Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

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PO Box 3607 FCI
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Write to the Armenian Political Prisoners

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