

# HAYTOUG

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION WESTERN UNITED STATES  
SPRING 2005



**MARCH FOR  
HUMANITY**

FRESNO | SACRAMENTO  
MAY 14 - 15, 2005  
A MARCH FOR HUMANITY EVENT IN  
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

**GENOCIDE...  
NEVER AGAIN!  
WHAT ABOUT  
SUDAN**

**WHAT DOES  
THE 90TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
MEAN  
TO YOU?**

**TOP 10  
THINGS YOU  
SHOULD BE  
DOING AS AN  
ACTIVIST**

**INTERVIEW  
SPOTLIGHT:  
ZAREH**



*Haytoug Committee:*  
Myrna Douzjian  
Caroon Gharakhanian  
Siamanto Maronian  
Krikor Mugerian  
Tamar Yardemian

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





02 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR  
 04 90TH ANNIVERSARY  
 05 TOP 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD DO  
 06 ZAREH: INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST  
 08 ONE CITY AT A TIME  
 10 NEVER AGAIN?  
 12 TURKEY'S FIST FULL OF EUROS  
 14 1600 YEARS OF EXISTENCE  
 16 BY WORD OF MOUTH  
 15 MARCH FOR HUMANITY  
 18 DENIAL AND FREE SPEECH  
 19 WHEN IT REALLY HITS CLOSE  
 20 IT'S TIME TO KICK IT UP A KNOTCH  
 22 PATRIOTISM  
 23 THE OTHER SIDE  
 24 WINDS  
 25 THE MYTHS DISMISSED  
 26 SEMINAR IN REVIEW

# LEARNING TO BE BEYOND CONVENTIONAL

Each April, the issue of *Haytoug* presents its readership a carefully crafted editorial communicating a message regarding the Armenian Genocide and our struggle for justice. What has changed in these 90 years since the Armenian Genocide? The definition of justice has remained the same; however, the methods of achieving this justice have significantly altered. In spite of this change, we are still working under the shadow of denial.

This editorial is meant to be an encouraging voice, a voice that every reader should hear and understand. So, what is this year's message? What could be said that has not been said before? What is left to say after 90 years of muted rebellion against an injustice that still lurks among us today in regions like Sudan? If the world had heard our cries in 1915 and our protests since then, the recurrence of a crime against humanity as cruel as genocide would not be a possibility. The cycle of

genocide is vicious and daunting, yet it is somehow a recurring phenomenon in the human reality.

The message of this issue of *Haytoug* is awareness. The world needs to be aware of the magnitude of such a crime, genocide and denial; and the world needs to know that this crime was first perpetrated in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire. Bringing about awareness is not only a task that politicians can undertake; it is a task that any and every individual can assume through such mediums as art, music, education, business, film and television, as well as through political activism. So the message is clear and straightforward. Bring about awareness by any means possible. Use any avenue that is accessible and utilize any resource that is available to help what is not only the Armenian Cause, but the Human Cause as well. The cycle of genocide must be stopped, and the Armenian people must receive a much belated justice.



In solidarity with the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide


# Rally For Humanity

Thursday, April 21, 2005 11am

State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814

Please call 818.507.1933 for details and transportation

**215 Miles - 19 Days - 1 Mission**



**Fresno to Sacramento  
April 2-21**

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

# WHAT DOES THE 90<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MEAN TO ME?

*By Sanan Shirinian*

If this question were posed to Talaat Pasha or Soghomon Tehlirian, their answers surely would have been broadcast around the world. Many people may think that asking me, a 16 year-old, average, Armenian-American girl, this same question has no significance at all. So, before I begin, I would like to remind you all of what Unger Karekin Njdeh once said, "If you want to predict, and see the future of a people, look at its youth." That is what I am, one of the youth. My thoughts and opinions and those of my fellow youth will determine the future of our nation.

The 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide brings up many questions in my head. We say it as if it is a fact, that sooner or later we are going to get our lands back. But after so many years of telling ourselves that, can we really be sure of it? How late is "later" going to be? The truth is I'm scared. I really am terrified of what will happen after we do get what we have been fighting for our whole

lives. My generation has been trained to constantly demand justice, and we have been taught the means to achieve it, but never discussed the next steps. Will we know what to do after our demands have been met? Are we prepared enough for a change like that? I mean, after Armenia got its independence in 1991, the country was stricken with poverty and crime. Sudden changes for us have not been entirely smooth.

And let's say Turkey admits to the crime of Genocide, I doubt they will give up land without bloodshed. If we are so determined, will it result in a war?

Last year in my Hai Tad class I made a statement saying that when I grow up, I am prepared to move back home to Armenia. Most of the class laughed, and one boy said, "Who are you kidding Sanan, no one's actually going to go back." I was furious. What right did he have telling me I'm not going to do something I was so passionate about? There was truth in his statement

though, which was a huge reality check for me. My hopes of moving back have not changed, but I don't want to be alone on the journey.

Unger Miko once told me, "It is simple. If someone uprooted you out of your own home, and made it their own, you would go back and claim what was once yours." But after so many years of that someone living in my home, can I go back and really make it my own again? Can I kick out the grandchildren of that someone, who have now settled down in my home? Can I live with them in unity? After living in the Diaspora for so long, will my Armenian neighbors accept me as a fellow Armenian?

My questions are endless, and they do not allow me to state what the 90th anniversary means to me, because there truly is no limited answer for that question. It is not as important to be able to clarify what it means, as it is to know what we will continue to do once the 90th has become the 91st.



# TOP 10

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# THINGS YOU SHOULD DO TO BECOME AN ACTIVIST



**VOICE YOUR OPINION:** Write to your local newspapers to let them know about upcoming Genocide related events. Write letters to the editor expressing your concern if and when stories about the Genocide are not printed in the month of April.



**WEAR IT:** Wear Genocide t-shirts and buttons, this will make others curious and bring up an opportunity for you to discuss the Genocide.



**GIVE IT UP:** Donate genocide related books to your library so that information about the Armenian Genocide and others is available to anyone seeking it.



**TALK IT UP:** Discuss the Genocide with your friends, bring it up as a discussion topic in relevant lectures and discussions.



**PLAY IT:** Host a viewing of Ararat free at your school and pass out information pamphlets with a more detailed account of the Genocide and ways in which people can get involved in our cause.



**GET IN TOUCH:** Contact your local and state Representatives and urge them to support Genocide recognition efforts in Congress. Go to [www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org) and send web-faxes to Congress members and other officials.



**BRIDGE THE GAP:** Network with other human rights groups, without being limited to ones of campuses, and create coalitions with them.



**BRING 'EM OUT:** Organize genocide related events on campus, both in the month of April and through out the year. Use connections with other student organizations on campus to spread the word about these events.



**BE POLITICAL:** Get the Genocide recognized by the local City Council if they have not already done so. Contact the ANCA or local ANC offices to find out how to accomplish this.



**KNOW THE FACTS:** Research the genocide and be prepared to discuss the particulars of our cause with others.



# ZAREH INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST

*Why do you make art about the  
Armenian Genocide?*

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Genocide is an inhumane act, which very much exists in our world. My works are a response to these injustices, a response which comes directly from within. I am an Armenian, and my family has been affected by the Genocide. Due to my background, there is an influence of sympathy which I have never been able to ignore. My artwork is an extended expression of all which I believe and have been influenced by.



### Why have you chosen art as your method of expression?

When I was growing up, I realized that Armenians around me would talk about the Genocide amongst themselves. Non-Armenians would rarely hear or learn about the Genocide. I began to search for a means of educating others about our experiences. I wanted them not only to learn about it, but somehow be emotionally affected, just as we are, because it is an injustice to all of humanity. Not only that, but I somehow wanted to make this issue a part of their daily lives, just as it is a part of ours. After much contemplation, I came up with the idea of public performance art. Through this process, I was

NO ONE WILL HAND YOU SOMETHING WITHOUT YOU DEMANDING IT FIRST. THE MORE WE DISCUSS THE GENOCIDE, AND THE MORE WE STRUGGLE TOWARDS ITS RECOGNITION, THE CLOSER WE COME TO OUR GOALS.

able to incorporate ideas about the Genocide into the daily lives and common activities of people in our society.

So, in 1998, I came up with the idea of "Turkish Soup." At the time, I had noticed a strong indifference on the part of others, and I was hurt by it. I wanted to create something that would evoke emotions. I represented massacred Armenian bones and blood used as ingredients for Turkish Soup. In 2001, I worked on my "Red Trees" piece. This time around, I was seeking a more peaceful method of representation. Trees generally represent life and longevity. In this piece, the tree branches are brutally cut and soaked in red. I presented them in pain, because they were real witnesses of the Genocide and proof against Turkish denials. They have suffered by witnessing tragedy, and are soaked red with Armenian blood. Again, this was a public performance, with a group of people walking around the city streets, holding up these damaged branches as homage to the genocide. I have made videos of both pieces and have already distributed 4000 copies. A lot have gone out to government officials, including 26 to the White House, senators, human rights activists, and other non-Armenian organizations.

### How do you feel your work benefits the recognition of the Armenian Genocide?

In this world, people have to fight for the rights they deserve. No one will hand you something without you demanding it first. The more we discuss the Genocide, and the more we struggle towards its recognition, the closer we come to our goals. I believe that education and public awareness should be our top priority. People are only ready to fight for a cause after they are educated about it.

I also believe it is important to keep the fire burning within the Armenian people. We need to respectfully have memorials, creatively work at raising awareness, and continue to ask for recognition. The more often we work, the faster we will reach our goals.

### In many ways you are considered a political activist. How do you think, if at all, you can increase your activism?

My approach is humanitarian. First and foremost, I am a humanitarian, fighting for human rights and struggling against human injustice. But it becomes

a political issue, because politicians make these decisions. I am an artist and have never had the ambition to be a political activist, but I believe that the two inevitably come hand in hand. In our world, I believe in power and in the struggle for power. I have never been the person to stay quiet and surrender. My art is my expression and my power. This is the way I have expressed myself and the way I have been active.

### How can the readers help you in your efforts?

Mere interest in my work is highly appreciated. In my previous project titled "Red Trees," AYF members directly helped me by believing in my work and participating in the performance. In the future, Armenian youth can remain informed about my projects through my website at [www.artistzareh.com](http://www.artistzareh.com). If people want to contact me, they can do so through my website; I am always interested in people's ideas and responses.

### What message do you have for the youth of today?

Speaking from my experiences, there are a few things that can make this life simpler. Socrates said, "Know Thyself," because it makes every other aspect of life clearer, more concrete, and all challenges easier to face. Who are we? What are we? Where do we belong? If you know the answers to these questions, your surroundings and your relationship with your environment will be clear.

Have determination. Believe in something and follow it.

Be sincere. Have a good soul, because if you are a good person then you will have inner peace in all that you pursue.



# ONE CITY AT A TIME

*By Saro Shirinian*

On February 24, 2005 the city of Galveston, TX approved a proclamation stating that April 24, 2005 would be commemorated as Armenian Martyrs Day. Why Galveston? Where is

Galveston? Are there any Armenians living there? The city of Galveston is located about 50 miles south of

Houston. There are approximately ZERO Armenians living there. The city recognized the Armenian Genocide because of a few good men and women working at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston. A few years ago the University employees wanted to assist a third world country with medical supplies. They called Washington DC to see what countries had signed up for such a project. As a result, they were introduced to Armenia, which they looked up on a map. They decided to visit the country and, in so doing, were moved to the point that they decided to adopt the city of Armavir as a sister city. Now, a city by the name of Galveston in Texas has adopted the city of Armavir through the initiative of the University. In Armavir, The University worked on healthcare and disaster preparedness projects through a collaboration of the American

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY ZERO ARMENIANS LIVING THERE. THE CITY RECOGNIZED THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE BECAUSE OF A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY...

International Health Alliance (AIHA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

But they did not stop there. After adopting the city and doing more research, they found out what happened to the Armenians in 1915. The news got to the ANC and ARF of Houston and action was taken. Many meetings and visits took place. The ANC, using UTMB as its connection, urged the city of Galveston, a city with no Armenian residents, to recognize the Genocide.

On February 24, 2005 the ANC, ARS, ARF, and AYF of Houston piled into three cars and drove one hour to the City Hall of Galveston. During the meeting, the mayor presented a proclamation and Unger Vatche Hovspeian gave an emotional thank you to the Council and the Mayor. He explained that "we are now one step closer to closure." This proclamation serves to show that people are interested in our history and our country. No matter where we live and how many Armenians there are, our struggle

will never die. It is not about the quantity of Armenians, but the quality in dedication that can make a difference.



*City of Galveston  
Commemorating the Armenian Genocide*

**PROCLAMATION**

We the Mayor and City Council, by virtue of the authority vested by the City of Galveston, Texas, do proclaim

April 24, 2005 as  
**ARMENIAN MARTYRS DAY**  
in the City of Galveston

WHEREAS, City of Galveston and Armavir region in Armenia have been sister cities since September 2001 through the University of Texas Medical Branch healthcare and disaster preparedness collaboration funded by AIHA-USAID; and

WHEREAS, On April 24th, 2005 Armenians around the world will commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide; during the First World War, the Turkish Empire in an effort of general extermination and elimination of all traces of a thriving and noble civilization over 3,000 years old; of the Armenian population in Eastern Turkey, massacred approximately 1.5 million men, women, and children in the twentieth century's first genocides; and

WHEREAS, The survivors and descendents of this genocide which drove them from their homeland, recall and commemorate April 24, 1915 as Armenian Martyr's Day, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council for the City of Galveston, Texas does urge each and every citizen to join our sister city and commemorate this tragic event in world history and to strengthen our commitment to the cause of liberty and justice in this and all other nations of the world.

# Never Again

By Serouj Aprahamian

On April 6, 2004, an op-ed appeared in the *Washington Post* titled "Learn from Rwanda," written by former President Bill Clinton on the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide. In it, Clinton regrets that the international community did not take action quickly enough to stop the premeditated slaughter of over 800,000 innocent human beings. Other leaders, such as UN Secretary-General Koffi Annan, similarly reflected upon the world's failure to stop the Rwandan Genocide and insisted that we should never again allow such crimes to take place. We heard the same cries of "never again" this past January during the commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

While these so-called leaders were going around attending various commemorative ceremonies

and assuring us that they would "never again" allow genocide to take place, the people in the Darfur region of Sudan were becoming the latest victims of a government's campaign to destroy an ethnic group.

In response to a rebellion that developed in Darfur in early 2003, the central government of Sudan,

dominated by the National Islamic Front, began carrying out a deliberate policy of extermination against the African tribal peoples of the region. A large Arab militia known as the Janjaweed (warriors on horseback) has been the main group employed by the government to implement this policy. They are sent into various African

villages where they proceed to kill civilians of all ages, burn down houses, destroy crops and livestock, carry out mass executions, target vital infrastructure, and commit wide-scale rape. Reports coming out of the region speak regularly of such brutal acts as men being chained together and thrown into burning huts, women being raped in front of their loved ones, and children being kidnapped from their families. To date, over 400,000 people have died as a result of this campaign and 2.5 million have been internally displaced.







Despite the denial of involvement with such crimes by the Sudanese government, the facts show that high ranking officials are coordinating the genocide in Darfur. Sudanese intelligence forces are known to be in close communication with the militias, and air force planes regularly conduct bombing raids on villages and fleeing civilians prior to Janjaweed invasions. In July of 2004, Human Rights Watch released a report revealing internal government documents showing that the central government both armed and coordinated the Janjaweed. In addition, the government has gone to great lengths to make sure that no news reporters or humanitarian personnel are allowed into the villages being targeted in Darfur.

All of this has gone on and continues to occur, as the western democracies stand by idly. This inaction has been characterized, first and foremost, by international failure to properly classify what is going on in Darfur as genocide. Although the UN early on referred to Darfur as the world's worst humanitarian crisis and described

the events there as "crimes against humanity," a recent report from the UN-appointed International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur refused to use the term "genocide." Doing so would require swift action to prevent and punish the crime under the terms of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, something many member nations are clearly reluctant to



do. For its part, the United States has officially used the word genocide to describe what is going on, but, due to the war in Iraq and fear of giving any legitimacy to the International Criminal Court (ICC), it has failed to live up to the subsequent obligations acknowledging genocide requires. Other countries such as China and Pakistan have opposed action as a result of economic and strategic ties to Sudan.

So, once again, as we enter the twenty-first century, despite the impressive sound-bites and claims of regret over failures in the past, the leading powers of the world are doing nothing as an entire people is being destroyed. As an Armenian, I know this story all too well. The stories of rape, mass killing, ethnic fanaticism, village evacuation, and child abduction coming out of Darfur are quite familiar to me. As are the accounts of refugees crying over the loss of their families and vowing revenge against the perpetrators.

I am also used to hearing about how those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. One needs no further

proof than to look at Darfur today to realize how true that saying is. We who are concerned with the Armenian struggle call for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide so that its lessons are learned from and so that similar crimes against humanity are never again repeated. The events in Darfur show that we have not done a good enough job. It's time we stepped up our level of activism and put an end to this cycle of genocide.



# TURKEY'S FIST FULL OF EUROS?

By: Ani Garibyan

Recently, there has been buzz about Turkey in Europe. On Thursday, December 16, 2004, the European Union decided to grant Turkey a date to begin discussions on its admission as a member nation. The target date is October 3, 2005.

Since 1923, beginning with the rule of Kemal Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey, the nation has looked to the West, towards modernity. Today, Turkey is trying to join Western civilization by becoming a member of the European Union. The country has tried to join many times before, but has been rejected largely because of its past and present human rights violations: its illegal occupation of Northern Cyprus and its continued denial of the Armenian Genocide.

Why would the European Union want Turkey to be a part of its family? Is it because they share the same values? Is it because the EU is trying to be politically correct by including a Muslim country in its Christian community? Is it because Turkey is a "Western" country? Or, perhaps, it's none of the above.

The government of Turkey is well known for its disregard for human rights. The government is also known to condone the torture of children under police interrogation (<http://www.hrw.org>), and electro-shocking pre-teen detainees for stealing bread (<http://www.amnesty.org>). The government is known to condone and cover up the

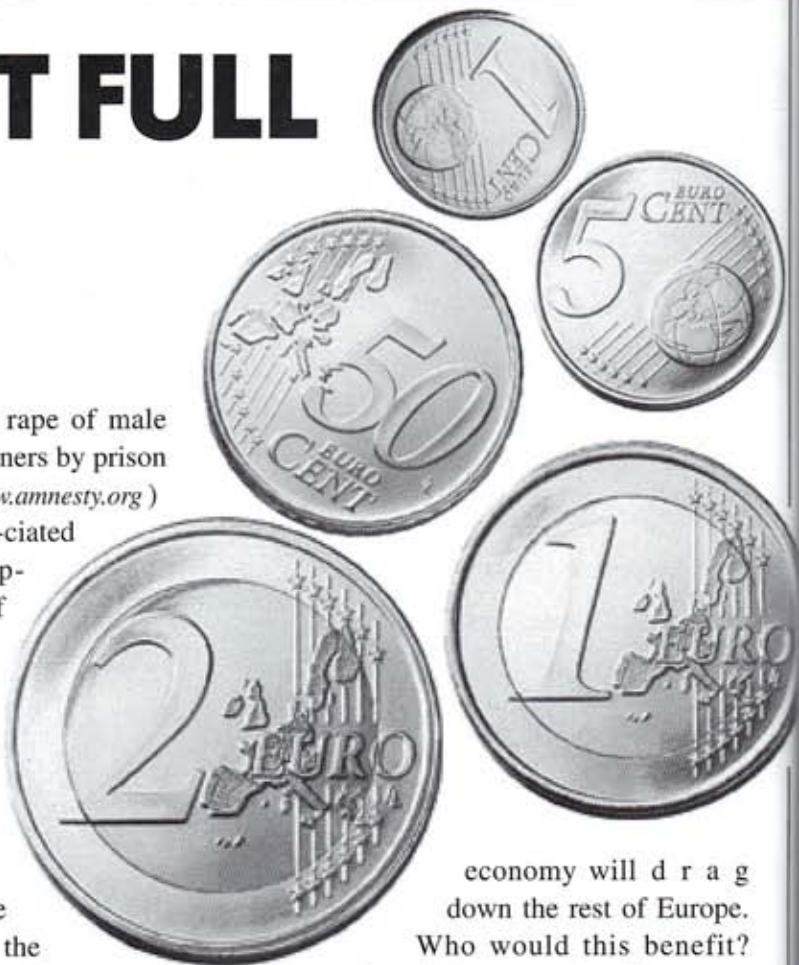
harassment and rape of male and female prisoners by prison guards (<http://www.amnesty.org>) or for being associated

with the "disappearances" of citizens who speak against their government. (<http://www.amnesty.org>)

Some of these human rights violations are documented in the Oscar winning film *Midnight Express*, which is based on a true story about an American held in a Turkish prison. Why would any country in the EU want to associate itself with the likes of such an oppressive government as that of Turkey?

But putting moral and ethical issues aside, it is easy to understand why the EU is considering Turkey as a future member. Their motive comes down to two words: cheap labor. The majority of people in Turkey are not doing very well financially and a large portion of Turkey's population is deeply impoverished. The overall economy is performing poorly as well. The wealthy EU members can take advantage of Turkey's poverty by outsourcing jobs to Turkey at far lower wages.

It is likely that Turkey's entrance into the European Union will devalue the Euro because Turkey's poor



economy will drag down the rest of Europe.

Who would this benefit?

Certainly, not the European countries. It will benefit America and the U.S. greenback. It is in the greater interest of the United States to push for Turkey's membership because undermining the European Union and the value of their currency will put the currently lagging U.S. Dollar back in the lead.

So what it really comes down to is money, power, and political leverage. Turkey's membership is not being considered because the Turkish government is such a progressive democracy, nor is it because the EU believes that Turkey deserves to be apart of its white Christian family. It is because Turkey is an oasis of cheap labor and has the political backing of the US. And what of morality, dignity and truth? They disappear in Turkey's fist full of Euros.



# PROTEST

## THE DENIAL OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 @ 4PM

@ THE TURKISH CONSULATE  
ON THE CORNER OF WILSHIRE AND JUNE

4801 WILSHIRE BLVD. LOS ANGELES, CA 90010



Organized by: Armenian Youth Federation  
(818) 507-1933 [www.AYFwest.org](http://www.AYFwest.org)

Armenian  
**genocide**  
Anniversary  
1915-2005



# 1600 YEARS OF EXISTENCE



By Tamar Yardemian

How often do you go to church? The last time I found myself there was during a wedding, and before that, maybe at Easter two years ago. We continuously talk about struggling to keep our Armenian identity, but often ignore the fact that Christianity has defined Armenians for a significant portion of our existence. In many ancient history books, Armenians are merely mentioned due to their religious beliefs. If it weren't for Christianity as a distinguishing factor, I believe that Armenians could have easily assimilated into neighboring nationalities, without a trace of existence. Today, we have a history, culture, and language. In 2005, we, as Armenians, will be celebrating the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian alphabet.



In 301AD, Armenians adopted Christianity, without yet having a written language. The first preachers read the Bible in Greek or Syriac and orally translated it for the Armenians. This act left people feeling discouraged, not being able to fully understand and absorb the faith of Christianity. For this reason one of the preachers, Mesrob Mashdots, decided to create an alphabet which would allow for written communication in Armenian. In 405AD it was believed that the creation of the Armenian alphabet was the product of a divine inspiration that served the purpose of spreading the word of God. The first text in Armenian was Mesrob Mashdots's translation of the Bible. Armenians now had a written language to record their history, culture, and religion.

This year, we have survived 1600 years since Saint Mesrob Mashdots paved the path to our culture's existence. Our alphabet, language, religion, culture, and cause are all tied together to create the Armenian identity, which exists within every single one of us. Let us stay close to all aspects of our heritage and continue to fight for our survival as our ancestors did before us.



# MARCH FOR HUMANITY



## March in Solidarity of the 1.5 million Victims of the Armenian Genocide

215 miles in 19 days.  
Fresno to Sacramento.

One goal... Armenian Genocide recognition.

A group of youth will march from Fresno to Sacramento in 19 days. It will take 15 miles a day of marching to accomplish this goal. The marchers will include Armenian youth, public officials, artists, musicians, priests and other citizens. On the 19th day, April 21, 2005 a rally will be held at the steps of California's Capitol building. There, the organizing committee of this event will conduct a meeting with Governor Schwarzenegger. The committee

members will express the voice of the Armenian youth and the Armenian Community; this group of the Governor's constituents will ask him to speak with President Bush about the Armenian Genocide and demand that he recognize it as genocide and nothing else.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of this horrific event. It has been 90 years, and the Turkish government has yet to take responsibility for and stop denying its history and the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians. Visit [www.marchforhumanity.org](http://www.marchforhumanity.org) to learn more about this march and how to support the marchers.

## PRESS RELEASE

State Capitol Rally to Conclude 215 Mile March  
Rally for Humanity expected to attract California Civic Leaders

Fresno, CA February 24, 2005 - Thousands of Californians will gather at the State Capitol Building on April 21, 2005 at 11 a.m. for a rally thanking the California State Legislature and 36 other states legislatures for officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

The Rally for Humanity will also promote public involvement in securing justice not only for the Armenian Genocide, but also for all unpunished crimes against humanity.

Prominent civic leaders and participants in the March for Humanity will turn to the U.S. federal government asking that our leadership in the White House officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and urge Turkey to come to terms with its history.

"Over the years, the State of California has remained steadfast in its efforts to bring peace to the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide," said Ani Garibyan a rally organizer. "We are going to Sacramento to thank our legislators for their past support and to encourage further activism on the part of those concerned."

Now, 90 years after the first genocide of the 20th century, the Turkish government does not accept responsibility for the annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. In an effort to avoid paying out reparations and returning historically Armenian lands, the Turkish government consistently works to deny the Genocide and distort its historical occurrence.

Buses to Sacramento from Fresno, San Francisco and Los Angeles will be available.

For more information about the March for Humanity, please call (818) 507-1933 or visit [www.marchforhumanity.org](http://www.marchforhumanity.org).



# [ BY WORD OF MOUTH ]

By Nare Garibyan

Before periodicals and newspapers, before computers and the internet, people of the world communicated life lessons, epic stories, customs, hopes, and dreams through storytelling and speech. Each generation, young and old, by word of mouth, shared their stories in family circles and strengthened their ties. Historians have come to call this tradition oral history.

In the Oxford English Dictionary "oral" is defined as "spoken rather than written." While "history" is defined as "the past events connected with someone or something." Oral history, however, means far more than the definitions of the individual words that make up this phrase. Oral history is the essence of a people, interweaving

struggles and triumphs, traditions and customs. Oral history is an authentic, dynamic representation of the human spirit. This tradition of speaking and storytelling not only allows the present generation to understand contemporary life, it also serves to preserve the memory of ancestors.

\*\*\*\*

*Being a member of the younger generation I try each day to pay attention to the stories my grandparents share when I am at their house. My grandparents are not direct survivors of the Armenian Genocide, but they remember the stories their parents have told them. Besides the memories of the Genocide, through their stories I get a better idea of how they lived and how far-reaching the effects of the Genocide are. I also understand their*

*personalities by looking at their eyes and hand gestures, while they tell their stories. I feel proud to listen to them and when I put their stories on paper, I feel a soothing sense of spiritual calm.*

\*\*\*\*

The people of the world, in their respective histories have experienced war, genocide, corruption,

disease, poverty, and other evils. I think it is direly significant that within their oral histories, people should remember their tragic experiences along with their joyful ones. Concentrating on my oral history, which is the oral history of the Armenians, I aim to point out steps on how to preserve stories and encourage not only the Armenians, but the people of the world to consciously consider the importance of oral history and take their own steps to cultivate their own.

The oral history of Armenians is vast and by looking at the Armenian Genocide of 1915, I can understand the many facets that encompassed Armenian life before the Genocide, during the Genocide, and after the Genocide. This information encompasses Armenian village life, the Ottoman laws, the gory, graphic details

## [STEP 1]

**Find people to interview.**  
You can start by researching names of family members or members of the community that have survived the Genocide. Or you can approach children of survivors, grandchildren of survivors, and neighbors and ask them what stories they have heard and what they know about the Genocide survivor(s) in their family or community.

## [STEP 2]

**Contact the interviewee.**  
When you get into contact with the interviewee introduce yourself and ask if s/he would like to be interviewed. Do not push any one into being interviewed. Once the interviewee agrees, pick a day, time and a place. Preferably, conduct the interview at the interviewee's residence or where they will feel most comfortable.

## [STEP 3]

**Make a list of questions.**  
Ask open-ended questions that require a full, detailed answer. Do not ask too many yes or no questions. Ask about their emotions and feelings. During the interview do not look at the paper. The questions are there just in case the interview stalls. Usually, during the interview the interviewee will answer the questions you meant to ask. Don't be afraid to ask the tough, painful questions.

## [STEP 4]

**Check and secure the equipment that you are using.**  
Make sure the tapes are already in the tape recorder, ready to go. Or make sure your video camera is in order. The worst thing is to fumble with equipment in front of the interviewee. Also consider taking a picture with the survivor.



of the Genocide, and the struggles involved in the lives of the survivors. All this information can be found through resources such as the Internet, books, memoirs, and such. But by interviewing family members, neighbors, and survivors, one gets a better idea of the history as the interviewees share their information by showing their emotions, facial expressions, body language, and changes in their tone of voice.

\*\*\*\*

*One day my grandpa passed on a memory of the Genocide his father had shared with him. Before he even began to speak, I could tell from his fidgety fingers and somber tone that what he wanted to say required my attention. He said that when the survivors reached Aleppo, Syria, his father, the barber of the town, recalled the condition of the victims: The women were naked with chapped, red skin; there were a few men left; the children's eyes looked hollow; and instead of resembling humans possessing a human spirit, the victims looked like people awakened from the dead.*

\*\*\*\*

In Professor Richard Hovanessian's Armenian Oral History Class at UCLA we used the text *Survivors: An Oral History of the*

*Armenian Genocide*, written by Donald E. Miller, who is a professor of religion at USC and his wife, Lorna Touryan Miller, who is the Director of the Office for Creative Connections at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena. Throughout the years Dr. Hovanessian and his students have interviewed more than 800 survivors, documenting their stories on cassette tape. However, as the number of survivors remaining alive dwindles, students now concentrate on listening to the tapes of survivors from different regions and transferring them onto multi-media CDs. They also attempt to draw conclusions by comparing survivor stories. In addition, they work to transcribe the taped information.

I used the following steps, based on the book and the class, in order to find interviewees, figure out what questions to ask, how to behave during an interview, and what equipment to use. The steps are straight-forward, but it takes time to accomplish them. The steps can also be altered depending on how familiar you are with the interviewee and whether or not s/he is a survivor of the Genocide.

\*\*\*\*

For Lorna Touryan Miller she did the interviews because *"It was a way of understanding her father: a man of*

*deep moral commitment and a man whose tears flowed easily."*

Donald E. Miller, Lorna's husband, conducted the interviews because he was *"trying to understand [his] Armenian wife."* Donald E. Miller also continued the interviews because *"the struggle of survivors with death- and the meaning of life in the face of death- provided a model for pondering the meaning of [his] own life."*

\*\*\*\*

*As for me, I choose to record my grandparents' stories because by doing so I learn about my heritage and myself. Keeping the stories of horror, Genocide, joy, and celebration in mind, I try to live a better life. Plus I just love to go to my grandparents' house and be the grandchild, eating their food, laughing, and just being with them.*

\*\*\*\*

NOW it is your turn to go out there, gather your stories by word of mouth, and do your part for yourself and your community.

## HOW TO CONDUCT YOUR OWN INTERVIEWS

### [STEP 5]

#### **Start the interview.**

Do not immediately rush into the interview. Introduce yourself, drink coffee if they offer, talk about their day, talk about how they are feeling. The important thing is to make the interviewee feel comfortable in the interview atmosphere and safe speaking to you about their experiences, emotions and feelings.

### [STEP 6]

#### **Start the interview by asking questions about the survivor's life before the Genocide.**

Ask questions about their childhood, their village, their family and so on. If the interviewee is not a direct survivor, the questions can be altered by asking what they remember being told about the Genocide, the family village, and the family life.

### [STEP 7]

#### **Listen to the interviewee.**

Do not interrupt the interviewee. Let them finish their thoughts and comments. Do not concentrate on finishing all the questions on your sheet, just look at the interviewee and listen intently, looking for things that they want to discuss or feel are important.

### [STEP 8]

After the interview, thank the interviewee and stay and chat with them, because sometimes the best answers come after the recording has stopped. Return home, label the tape and perhaps a few days later, listen to the tape, write down conclusions, and feel proud to have preserved a part of your oral history. Keep in mind that the interview is not just about the Genocide, but also about the life before and after the Genocide for a human being.



# GENOCIDE DENIAL AND FREE SPEECH

By Shant Taslakian

On February 10, 2005 a UCLA exchange student from Turkey submitted an article entitled "Armenian Propaganda against Turkey Untrue, Divisive" to the "Viewpoint" section of the University's newspaper, the *Daily Bruin*. The Armenian-American students, along with the rest of the UCLA and Los Angeles community were outraged as to why the *Daily Bruin* would give legitimacy to such a baseless opinion. The author accused the Armenian community of promoting Turkish hatred in addition to misinforming those

uneducated about Armeno-Turkish history with their lobby-driven propaganda. She writes, "This hatred is really shocking, unbelievable and saddening when I know the Turks and Armenians are now living in harmony in Turkey and Armenia. I can see no hatred in Turkey, no hatred in Armenia, so why is there hatred in the United States?"

There lies a deeper issue beyond the author's sheer misconception and misinformation about Armeno-Turkish relations. The journalistic discourse on the Armenian Genocide has constantly allowed deniers and historical revisionists a forum to spread the seeds of skepticism. By ignoring the enormous historical evidence on the issue, Genocide deniers are able to vocalize their unsound opinion, essentially misshaping the public's view of the truth. Denialist articles are given legitimacy when published in widely read papers. Editors should promote articles which confront the complex problems

associated with genocide. I do not advocate censorship; freedom of speech is an important aspect of a liberal, transparent society, but freedom of speech should foster healthy dialogue. Dialogue should promote growth and not further frustrate the Armenian community. The constant double standard is alarming: Holocaust deniers exist, yet no credible publication will print such a piece. Why is it that the same standards do not apply to the Armenian Genocide?

If we don't demand the proper presentation of the Armenian Genocide, then we will continue to fight revisionism rather than deal with the more important issue of resolution. UCLA's students articulated the ethical problems involved in giving revisionists a forum to speak, and, as a result, the *Daily Bruin* must now deal with fostering freedom of speech more responsibly. If it were not for all our immediate informed responses, the *Daily Bruin* would not have understood the problems associated with publishing such an article.

The *Daily Bruin* example serves to show that being aware of the various tools used to undermine the Armenian Genocide and responding to them immediately and effectively really does make a difference.



# WHEN IT REALLY HITS CLOSE TO HOME

By Talar Derderian

The war against Iraq has hit closer to home than expected. As Armenian-Americans, we have all somehow felt involved in this horrific war, especially those of us who have family members in Iraq, living in fear everyday. We eagerly await the latest updates from the media, whether it is through the news on our local channels or even Al-Jazeera. As residents of this country, the war has already hit close to home, but can it get close to our homeland?

On January 18, 2005 Armenia sent troops to Iraq. Some sources find it ironic that most countries recently pulled out their troops, while Armenia just sent theirs in. To date, Armenia did not have plans to send their troops to war, but the government recently changed its position. Prime Minister Andranik Margarian, told the newspapers, "Armenia's presence is primarily symbolic and for political purposes." Defense Minister Serzh Sargssian believes sending troops to Iraq can help Armenia create a better military relationship with the United States. The Parliament also feels this will

flaunt Armenia's "humanitarian" nature. Armenia has sent 46 servicemen to the Shiite city of Karbal to drive military trucks in a multinational combat effort led by Poland.

On December 24, 2004 Armenia's parliamentary vote was 91 to 23 in favor of sending troops to Iraq. The opposing 23 votes were cast by members of the ARF party. Some members of Parliament

believe it is pointless to fight for another country's independence and interest. Defense minister Khachadorov and the public are concerned with the 30,000 Armenians in Iraq today. They fear this type of involvement in the war by Armenia can put Iraqi-Armenians in great danger. The Armenian community of Iraq has tried to warn the Armenian government that sending troops to Iraq can trigger Iraqis to attack the Iraqi-



Armenian population. On the other hand, security analyst Richard Giragossian of Washington argues that this operation does not expose any new or severe risk to the Armenians of Iraq. Giragossian also believes that the deployment of troops to Iraq is not a large enough issue to create such turmoil in Iraq.

# IT'S TIME TO KICK IT UP A KNOTCH

## MANY SEEM TO BE NEGLECTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTIVISM. ARE YOU?

By: Serouj Abrahamian

Over the years in which I have been active in the AYF, I've had the pleasure to meet various ungers and ungerouhis from around the world. The vast majority of these individuals are extremely passionate about Hai Tad and genuinely interested in doing what they can to move our cause forward. Yet, in my opinion, if there is one thing that the AYF currently lacks, it's that there aren't enough of us (yes, I'm including myself) who are sufficiently skilled in channeling that passion into creative and revolutionary forms of activism. This assessment is mostly based on my experiences in the United States, but I believe it holds true for many of our chapters abroad as well.

When I ask AYF members what their reasons were for joining the organization, I always come across a variety of different answers. Many say that they initially joined to stay close to their Armenian roots and stave off assimilation. Others joined as a result of being compelled to do so by friends or family. Some, although they might not admit it immediately, are members for the social gatherings and interaction with the youth. In addition, a good number actually join simply because they want to be active politically on Armenian issues. Given the wide assortment of reasons people have for being in the

AYF, it should come as no surprise that the focus of the organization is not solely on political activism—nor should it be. However, unlike other groups which fulfill some of these same needs, the AYF has a specific responsibility to serve the interests of the Armenian people and constantly fight for justice on their behalf. I believe that this focus should take priority over all others in our organization, and it should be of particular concern for us as youth.

I'm sure many of my fellow ungers would agree with this position. As stated earlier, I don't think that our problem is lack of enthusiasm or interest in Hai Tad-related work. Rather, all too often, we just don't



know the best ways to go about expressing such interests. Many chapters get caught up in a cycle of taking the same approach and organizing the same activities year after year. Others are not sure as to what exactly they can do to make significant advancements for our cause. In our worst moments, these chapters seem to be incapable of organizing anything aside from dances and social get-togethers. Indeed, sometimes I wonder whether certain ungers misunderstand the socialist ideology of the ARF as meaning the need to be "social" with one another.

To be sure, there are many AYF members who are very active when it comes to Hai Tad work and who are developing innovative ways of advancing the Armenian cause. This is especially true of the centralized activities organized both in the Western and Eastern regions of the United States. Two examples that come to mind are the hunger strike in front of the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance in 2003 and the setting up of a booth at the 2004 National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference in Baltimore, MA, to promote the teaching of the Genocide in public schools. Yet, I'm sure most will agree that even these activities can always be improved. Furthermore, on the chapter level, there seems to be a very big void when it comes to political activity.

One way to eliminate this void is to train AYF members to become skilled organizers and community activists. This doesn't mean people who simply respond to

ANCA action alerts and put together events on April 24th, although these are certainly two very important aspects of our overall activism. No, what this means is that we need more people investigating new ways of effectively targeting the centers of power which are working against our interests; people who are skilled in the art of building alliances and coalitions with other groups which share similar values and interests; and it means we need people to know the basics of carrying out such things as letter writing and petition campaigns, consumer boycotts,

IF THERE IS ONE THING THAT THE AYF CURRENTLY LACKS, IT'S THAT THERE AREN'T ENOUGH OF US WHO ARE SUFFICIENTLY SKILLED IN CHANNELING OUR PASSION INTO CREATIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY FORMS OF ACTIVISM.

leafleting, voter registration drives, and other common tools utilized by successful community activists. Finally, we should do a lot more to preserve and tap into our own rich history of AYF activism over the last forty years.

By having more activists who are trained in the skills of grassroots organizing, we will be better equipped to carry out successful campaigns and come up with new ways of advancing our cause in the future. Perhaps we can begin organizing workshops, seminars, and educational lectures aimed at teaching some of the skills involved in effective community-based activism. Of course, each of

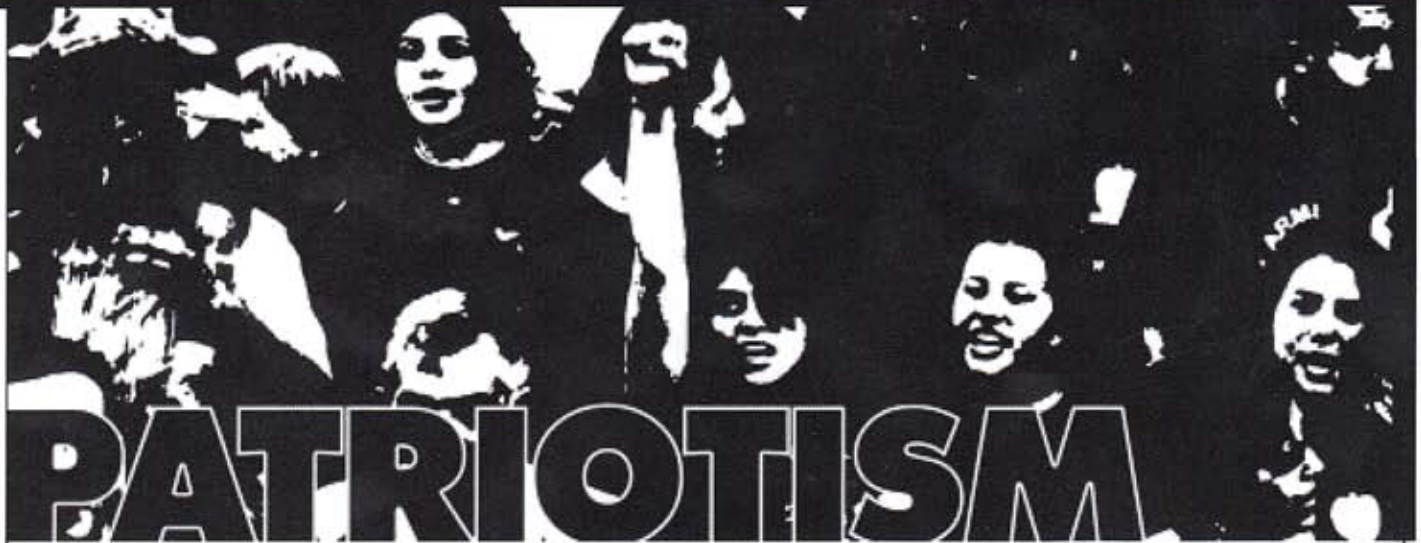
us can always take it upon ourselves to seek out ways to learn such skills on our own as well. Another idea might be to launch a project aimed at researching and thoroughly documenting the history of AYF activism over the years, which we can use to learn from both the successes and failures of past generations.

The social, cultural, and educational aspects of the AYF are very important and I certainly wouldn't like to see the organization made up of nothing but politically-minded folks who devalue social interactions and don't know how to have a good time.

To quote the well known American feminist and radical labor activist, Emma Goldman, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

There are a whole host of dedicated and talented activists in the AYF already. Indeed, one of the main reasons for my interest and involvement in the AYF is the inspiration I receive from such ungers and ungerouhis. My message is mainly directed towards such people who are concerned about developing ways of improving the level of activism within our organization. It is up to us to shape the course of our future. With the right skills, knowledge, and dedication, there is no limit to what we can achieve.





*By Armen Taslakian*

Patriotism is a motivational factor that acts as a catalyst in serving the homeland. It is certainly not the only dynamic that drives one to perform, but it may be considered one of the major factors. Patriotism leads to different routes, such as volunteering for a political campaign, taking part in a demonstration, or in extreme cases, dying in battle.

In an atmosphere such as the US, where another dominant culture prevails, emotions of patriotism are greatly diverted. The youth, in particular, being susceptible to internalizing certain aspects of the dominant culture, are indirectly guided in another direction. Intentionally or unintentionally, this is done through different mediums such as television, radio, and magazines. Therefore, it's essential that the youth are constantly engaged in cultural activism on all levels.

Just as a car is deemed useless if it simply sits in the driveway, patriotism cannot be considered an asset if it doesn't inspire participation in activism.

Patriotism without action is merely a self-fulfilling prophecy. One may feel content that he or she is working for the homeland, but in reality, no concrete work is being done. In other words, the fuel that will drive the car is certainly there, but it is not being used to drive the car. At this point, an outlet is needed to provide the grounds to unleash the patriotism.

The organizations play a role in providing this outlet for patriotism. Through an organization such as the AYF, the youth may take part in political campaigns, donation drives, educational presentations, and other such activities. Being exposed in this manner, the youth will not only have an opportunity to serve the homeland, but also learn about the cultural aspect of their identity. In the American Diaspora today, there are an abundance of organizations, so one should not have any problem in joining one.

Naturally, the more one is exposed to cultural activities the more feelings of patriotism will grow stronger. Therefore, an increase in activism results in an increase in patriotism and vice versa. In this symbiotic manner, the cycle will continue. This system works

efficiently, but careful attention must be given to keep it going. An absence in the cycle breaks the chain and results in a culturally failed youth.

There are different levels of patriotism. It would be unfair to place people in specific categories, because everyone's abilities vary. One may not have the time to dedicate his or her efforts to organizational activities, but he or she may donate \$20 a year to the Armenia fund. In another case, one may volunteer 40 hours a week to a political campaign. Both of these cases involve some patriotism, but one cannot be considered to be on a higher level than the other. As the saying goes, "to each his own."

Patriotism is an important motivational factor in advancing the Armenian cause. Patriotic youth do not only benefit the homeland, but also contribute to a community that is conscious of its cultural identity. Conscious patriotism and not merely a blind one produces responsible Armenians and, more importantly, productive human beings. Hence, finding a balanced state of patriotism, not fanaticism, is a great asset to the progress of the Armenian community in the Diaspora.



# THE OTHER SIDE

By Taline Helwani

*So many dollars. So many scholars. So many liars.  
So many deniers.*

Every April, we as Armenians commemorate the atrocities faced by our ancestors. We recall a tragic part of history which has shaped our present lives. If not in any other month, but in April, we feel an innate force which compels us to remember not only the unfortunate events of 1915, but to demand justice for them as well. We, as Armenian youth, organize vigils, pass out flyers, send out action alerts, attend church, and protest. We do all that we can to honor the 1.5 million victims of genocide. We do this, not because we are expected to, but because we feel it is the least we can do. We feel that those Armenian martyrs and survivors suffered tremendously, and therefore, we make it our responsibility to seek justice for them.

However, just like any coin, every story has two sides. What do Turkish youth do during April?

When I was in high school, a Turkish student who was in my class told me he and his friends would drive by the Armenian protest in front of the Turkish Consulate and "blast" Turkish music. Just yesterday, when I was doing my research on Turkish youth organizations, I came across a forum where an individual had warned his fellow Turks of the approaching "Armenian Tsunami" which would take place during the April commemoration of the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. However, it's not as important to me what

Turkish youth do in their anti-Armenian efforts, but rather what the Turkish government does and has done in the past to prevent the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In one such recent unsuccessful instance, which most probably recall, the Turkish government offered UCLA \$1 million for a chair in Turkish and Ottoman Studies. This nicely summed gift required the new professor to "maintain close and cordial relations with academic circles in Turkey." Turkish officials who offered to fund the professorship had tried to do so at six other universities. Aside from compromising academic integrity and manipulating American universities, "buying a chair" would have assisted in spreading Turkish propaganda of genocide denial, as it has at other American universities.

More recently, however, in Bradenburg, Germany, pressure from Turkey led to the removal of a reference to the Armenian Genocide from curriculum after a Turkish diplomat complained to state Prime Minister Matthias Platzeck. In a textbook for ninth and tenth graders, the chapter titled "War, Technology and Civilian Populations" had the words "for example, the genocide of the Armenian population of Anatolia," which have now been removed. The Prime Minister who was interviewed by the newspaper *Die Welt* said he met regularly with Turkish diplomats and was "stepped" against their influence. The Prime Minister added that genocide was too important an issue to be dealt with in just half a sentence. In this case, Turkey successfully exerted its influence to literally erase a part of history.

This year marks the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. What does this mean? This means that the Turkish government will spend millions of dollars on lobbyists, schools, and committees to prevent genocide recognition and the teaching of the historical truth. This means that Turkey is planning an offensive strategy rather than a defensive one. This means that we, as Armenians, face a bigger struggle in getting an unfortunate part of our history recognized and accepted as truth. This means that from here on out our efforts have to be stronger and more united. And this means that even if our fight for justice continues for another 90 years, we will not forfeit.



**Winds:** wind harmony into a whirlwind of wonders  
 Working with Spirits old and new:  
 Brewing a brew of sacred tunes  
 To go two and two: music and spirit  
 Marching hand in hand  
 Blemishing sands with their sacred feet.

Beats of drums bombard this existence!

The spirits of the land explode  
 And toss survival into proportion  
 With this musically profound  
 astounding resistance.

Archaic whistles call the Land;  
 A band of bothered men bond their music  
 To their ever-growing collective Soul,  
 The music seeps the sadness from their hearts  
 Together, three, they grow so old  
 By giving life and youth to melodies  
 That ring so new each time, each chord.

Their woodwinds strike as ancient swords  
 Infused with sacred pride,  
 A bloody history rings beneath  
 Glorious airs of heavy breathing  
 Rising from the heath;  
 Flying ever high.

Seethe,  
 Seethe and soothe,  
 Breathe and cease,  
 Strike with music  
 And bring to knees  
 The evils that infringe our peace.

Fires ablaze,  
 The music comes with earthly smells,  
 Their feast brings forth a paradox,  
 A paradox their customs treat  
 To living,  
 Tasting,  
 Always sweet.

The sounds surround and shelter them:  
 A floor beneath their feet,  
 A roof above their heads,  
 And balmy mothers  
 Nightly kisses,  
 And touching hands that tend to beds.

The melodies outdo their dreams  
 As soundtracks for their closing eyes  
 Releasing whimsical nightly feats  
 That overawe their prayers and cries,  
 No silence will find homage there,  
 No scent exists of their demise

When even breathless  
 They will breathe  
 Through woodwinds  
 Far beyond their time.

Past,  
 present,  
 future  
 Now the ever-living  
 Melody sounds  
 Overshadowing the fallen crowns  
 And bantering the rising kings  
 While brief domains conduct their rounds.

The highest art of composition  
 Bleeds to souls in harmony,  
 Empires built of the strongest lexis  
 Lexicons of dynasties,  
 Realms unseen by tyrant eyes  
 Create themselves so gracefully  
 Surrounding  
 Bounding  
 People whole  
 Whose nations have no boundary.

Know it not by name or line,  
 Know it not as prosperous fib  
 The tree of life so often saps  
 And spills across your books and maps.

Know it by the silence  
 That you have not yet begun to hear  
 For the emptiness in woodwinds old  
 Sit still, unused, as latent seers.

The music knows the land so well,  
 They know the music, so they tell  
 With words disguised as melodies  
 Their ancient, golden reveries,  
 The lingering wind turned liturgy  
 Brings even sultans to their knees.

The saddest sound in all the world  
 Their woodwinds to the world give  
 But they, their children, and their people  
 Are the happiest who've ever lived.

Fires ablaze,  
 The music comes with earthly smells,  
 Their feast brings forth a paradox,  
 A paradox their customs treat  
 To living,  
 Tasting,  
 Always sweet,  
 Anywhere they seem to be  
 Their music has a tale to tell.

*By Raffi Art Haroutioun*

THE MYTHS DISMISSED



# WHAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE... AND WHY YOU SHOULDN'T

[1]

**MYTH:** There were two reasons for Turkish re-location of the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia: first, to prevent the inter-communal massacres, and, second, to cut the support extended by the Armenian towns to the Russians.

**TRUTH:** Armenians all over Anatolia, even extending all the way to the western borders of the Ottoman Empire, far from the Russian Front, were deported and killed en route by the Ottomans.

[2]

**MYTH:** Armenians committed atrocities against Turks in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and recent terrorism acts in the 1970's and

1980's during which they murdered 42 Turkish diplomats.

**TRUTH:** There is no proof or documentation that Armenians committed atrocities against the Turks in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The militant acts against the Turks in the 1970s and '80s were a response against the Turkish denials of the Genocide and the revision of historical facts.

[3]

**MYTH:** Only 500,000 Armenians died in Anatolia during WWI, not 1.5 million, and Armenians were killing Turks during this time as well.

**TRUTH:** Before 1914, there were approximately 2.1 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire based on the census

figures of the Armenian Patriarchate. After the War, only 100,000 Armenians were left. All of the Armenian acts of violence against the Turks were in self-defense, and it was a limited effort in only a few towns.

[4]

**MYTH:** Armenians had formed several revolutionary committees that were attacking Ottoman villages and massacring Turks, as well as actively assisting the Russians with whom the Ottoman Empire was at war. The government policy was to relocate the Armenians in the eastern provinces where they were close to the Russians.

**TRUTH:** The Armenian revolutionaries were instituted primarily

to protect the peasant Armenian population against the depredation of the Turks and Kurds. After the 1908 deposing of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Armenian parties were even part of the Young Turk government until 1915. No Armenian revolutionaries took any actions against Turks in support of the Russians.

[5]

**MYTH:** Turkish archives have been opened. Turkish archives do not prove there was an Armenian genocide.

**TRUTH:** If Turkish archives have been opened, they have already been purged of incriminating evidence. Other governments' archives have ample documentation proving Turkish genocidal actions and processes.



# EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR IN REVIEW



*By: Shoushan Tavlian*

Revolution. That was the last thing on my mind when I was heading to Camp Big Pines for this year's Educational Seminar. Instead, words like "snow," "friends," "kebab" and "s'mores" were occupying my mind. Being on the Central Educational Council, I was

sure I knew what to expect. I had never been to AYF Seminar before, but I was well aware of the agenda, the activities and educationals that would be taking place.

Among the activities planned was a snow sculpture competition: each



cabin was responsible for using creativity to make a snow sculpture that would represent Armenian culture in the best way possible. A two-hour long game of charades gave the campers a chance to interact, work together and laugh endlessly. Campers also participated in a mock meeting that took place between certain



countries, their delegates and the EU. All very fun. All very educational.

But it wasn't until Sunday morning, before departure, during our fourth and final educational, that I felt something different, something that was not there before.

Unger Miko from the ARF "Shant" Student Association gave a short, yet unforgettable educational, if you could even call it that. In order for us to gain an understanding of "Shant Usanoghagan," he explained their purpose and discussed their goal to "work side by side with the Armenian Student Associations and other Armenian Student organizations to further the Armenian Cause" (arfshant.org). It is at this point where the lecture stopped and something different was heard. Unger Miko started talking about revolutions, mentioning the Chinese

Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Cuban Revolution. He pointed out that professionals, with expertise and skills,

We are familiar to the call of activism. But this was a different call. It was not just a call for activism, for participation, and for support. It was a call for revolution. As students, as the youth, we are responsible for this revolution. Students are the ones who are going to bring about, if any, change. We are it. We are the power, the energy, the burning fire. We know all about other young people, students, bringing about a revolution and change in China, in Russia, in Cuba. Now, it's our turn.

***The Revolution has not yet succeeded. Comrades, you must carry on!***

**-Sun Yat-sen**



were not the ones who brought about these revolutions. On the contrary, the amateurs, novice and inexperienced, were responsible for these historical movements. Students, developing new ideas and concepts, were responsible for the changes in society, history and politics that followed. Amazingly, students were the source of power for various coups, the rise of new governments, and for revolutionary movements that occurred and still take place. And that is why Student Associations are so important.



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## WHO IS THE "DEATH OR FREEDOM" SLOGAN FOR? WHY "DEATH OR FREEDOM" AND NOT "FREEDOM OR DEATH"?

"Death or Freedom" rang for those Armenians living with the threat of death under foreign domination. In order to understand the meaning of the slogan and the reason for the specific order of the words, it is essential to recognize the historical facts that gave birth to it. Near the end of the Ottoman Empire the ruling sultans, who had grown weary of the interventions made by the European powers on behalf of the empire's minorities, decided to settle their internal issues through mass murder. Their policy of ethnic cleansing was conducted with much cruelty especially against the Armenians and eventually culminated into the first genocide of the 20th century that was implemented under the 'beneficial' circumstances of World War I. The rulers of the Empire gave a death sentence to an entire race, believing that was the only way to end the Armenian Question, which they believed was a tool in the hands of the European powers used to pressure the sultans.

It was in those days, when extinction seemed like an impending doom, that the Armenian Revolution was born to realize the will of the Armenian people. Simply put, an Armenian had two choices: death or freedom. As long as the Armenian people were subject to Ottoman oppression, their survival was not guaranteed. Only by liberating themselves would they be able to affirm their right to exist.

It is true that after the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide the slogan conveyed a new understanding. A new threat emerged endangering the future of the Armenian Diaspora. The risk of assimilation grew silently and continued what the Turks began years ago only this time without notice. Again, it was time for a revolution and again the slogan "Death or Freedom" led the new generation of Armenians. However, the slogan was chanted in reverse, "Freedom or Death" rang instead of "Death or Freedom". The Armenian Diaspora faced new challenges and had to choose between national liberation and the loss of national identity. Consequently, the slogan took on a new meaning, but carried with it the revolutionary spirit of the past into the present.

The AYF Youth Corps is open to all youth over the age of 18 who are motivated and enthusiastic about helping Armenia. This is a unique opportunity for dedicated individuals to make a tangible contribution to their homeland. Participants can expect memories that they will cherish forever and experiences that will increase their understanding of themselves.

**Take the challenge.**

**All that is needed is the will to help...**

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





# youth rally

Friday, April 22, 2005

9:30pm-11:30pm

Ararat Homenetmen Center

3347 N. San Fernando Rd.

Los Angeles, CA 90065

*Key Note Speaker:*

**Samantha Powers**

*Musical Sets by:*

Freeway People, HumanVibes.org,  
and Soseh Keshishian

*Master of Ceremonies:*

**Ardashes "Ardy" Kassakhian**

Organized by" ARF Shant Student Association &  
the Armenian Youth Federation



# FIGHT THE gEnOCide dEnIAL mACHInE



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Government uses  
various means to deny,  
distort, and delude its  
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