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A generation was murdered, scattered and somehow this same generation survived, flourished and birthed a new generation. They vowed to always remember and instilled this debt in their kin, who in turn passed it down along with names, folk songs and traditions. And every number of years, the wheel turns and another generation takes its place- passing down stories, recipes and remembrance.

The passage of time makes none of this any easier, and we are in a constant collective dialogue- shuttling between two worlds: either holding on tight to every shred we can or breaking free from the chains of history.

And so the wheel turns, and time passes. We speak frequently about reinventing ourselves and getting past our survivor mentality, our dark past, but we have yet to earn that right. A common refrain that has been featured recently has been the need to clearly choose our enemy, a challenge to separate the current Turkish population from their governments of today and yesteryear. We are quick to beatify the handful of Turkish intelligentsia that echo the truth in their narrative when perhaps we must err on the side of elusiveness with the knowledge that we have truth on our side and that is the only thing that will set us all free. Our western neighbours of the past one hundred years did their part and we owe it to our lineage to push with every last breathe and not look for a handful of soft places to land within that community.

Redemption has been agreed upon as a measured and civilized process for ending the consequences of genocide. In this process there is a guilty party, and a party that has been wronged. This near century later, it is important not to fall back upon reconciliation as a way to cope with an outcome that begs for justice to be served. We would be well served to cast a look back and follow the revolutionary response of brave compatriots from all those years ago: to insist on a real solution, not an artificial one and not agree to a cover-up or meet the perpetrators “half way”. We must measure our optimism with our pragmatism and concur that though our ultimate redemptive goals may not be accomplished immediately, but with our constant and common determination it will be accomplished nonetheless.
Սիրելի Արծիւ,
Թղթատելով Արծիւի եռալեզու էջերը՝ տպաւորություն ունեմ և յուսալի նոր հասած սերունդի նոր ապրումներուն համար:

Տարիներ առաջ, իմ կարգիս լումաս դրած եմ Վանքուվրի Արշավիր Շիրակեան ուխտին: Տեսած եմ յուսախաբութեամբ լռութեան մատնուիլը: Եւ յանկարծ, տարիներ ետք, ահավասիկ խաւարին մէջ նշոյլ մը: Կը կարդամ անոր էջերէն որ վերակենդանացած է Արշավիր Շիրակեան ուխտը:

Կը մաղթեմ ձեր անձնակազմին երկարամեայ աւիշ, բազում հաւատ, արգասաբեր գործունէութիւն, խիտ շարքեր եւ նոյնքան խիզախ ծրագիրներ:

Տեղին է վերջել Ալիշանի նշանաւոր խօսքերը՝

Կ անգնէ հայ հանճար
Փ այլէ բիւր բոցեր
Ի մանան ազգեր
Թ է Հայք չեն անցեր:

Բարի երթ ձեր բոլոր անձնակազմին:

Յարութ Մարտիրոսեան, Թորոնթօ

Ardziv magazine welcomes mail from our readers. Please feel free to send your comments, ideas, suggestions or concerns to ardziv@ayfcanada.org /Ardziv magazine - 45 Hallcrown Place, Toronto, Ontario M2J 4Y4
In Mikael Varantian’s classic biography of Simon Zavarian, he asks how it came to be that a people who were as downtrodden, divided and passive as Armenians ended up creating a movement as revolutionary as the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF).

His answer: remember the founding generation. Varantian implores his readers to get to know Zavarian, Kristapor Mikayelian, Stepan Zorian (Rosdom) and others who built the organization.

So, just who were the founders exactly? What were their philosophies and backgrounds? What brought them to form and propel the ARF the way they did?

These are complex questions with no single answer. But over the years, I’ve found that there is a glaring, overwhelmingly important factor that’s rarely discussed.

Namely, all three founders were active in Russian revolutionary circles prior to their involvement in Armenian affairs. They were members of Narodnaya Volya (People’s Will), a Russian revolutionary group that shook the world with its assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. They were followers of the federalist, non-Marxist wing of the socialist movement. This involvement had a major impact on every aspect of what would later become the ARF.

Let’s start first with the initial mission of the ARF, which was to organize all groups concerned with Armenian liberation and channel their energies into a unified force. This was essentially the same mission of the Russian revolutionaries who, as propagated by people like Mikhail Bakunin, sought to unify fragmented peasant uprisings in the countryside into a single calculated popular revolution. The founders clearly took inspiration from this strategy and transferred its core tenets to the Armenian plane.

The decentralized organizational structure of the ARF is an even more telling example. At a time when most revolutionary movements operated in a top down hierarchy, the founders emphasized local autonomy and initiative from below. They adhered to the socialist model of free and independent organization “from below upward”, “not by the orders of any authority … but as a result of the natural development of all the varied demands put forth by life itself.” This was the prerequisite for revolution espoused by Bakunin, Alexander Herzen, Peter Kropotkin, and other influential Russian revolutionaries. And it was this decentralization that made the ARF stand out and attract members throughout the Armenian world.

Even the name Dashnaksutsyun (Federation) itself is emblematic of where the founders drew their influence. The Russian socialist movement was known the world over for its emphasis on federation as a principle — as opposed to the statist, top-down approach of the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat. They envisioned a new society where agricultural cooperatives, workers’ associations, voluntary communities, and provinces would be federated up into nations and then, in the more distant future, joined together under international brotherhood.

The ARF adopted this principle of federation not only for its internal structure, but also for its external policy. The founders called for local autonomy and democratic federation within the Ottoman Empire and Transcaucasia. They did not define independence as forming a separate state. They advocated for an autonomous Armenia federated together with other nations under a constitutional, democratic order. In fact, national independence did not even officially enter the platform of the ARF until 1919—one year after the First Republic had already been established.

What about the ARF’s famous call to go “depi yerkir” (toward the homeland)? Again, this was an appropriation of the Russian Khozhdeni v narod (going to the people) movement. In the summer of 1874, thousands of Russian youth left their homes, schools, and universities and went to the countryside to make direct contact with the peasantry. They lived among the people, studied their problems, integrated into their lifestyle, and tried to foment revolt. The movement ultimately failed, but it had a major demonstration effect. Nearly all of those who later founded Narodnaya Volya came from this movement.

Its philosophy also affected Mikayelian, Zavarian and other founders who went back to their villages and communities after graduating school in Russia. They worked with the Armenian peasantry, served in schools and organized revolutionary groups. The concept later carried over to the fedayee movement in Western Armenia and has resurfaced in more recent times, with the Artsakh movement and re-independence of Armenia.

Another important concept that influenced the activities of the ARF was “propaganda by the deed.” This was the idea that daring revolutionary actions are important not only onto themselves but also for awakening consciousness. In a closed authoritarian society, getting your message across is a difficult task. Events such as the assassination of the Tsar proved that direct action could do more for inspiring resistance than thousands of pamphlets. Such acts were
This was the idea that *daring revolutionary actions* are important not only onto themselves but also for *awakening consciousness.*

seen as important supplements to oral and written propaganda in order to bring about transformation in society.

The early years of the ARF were characterized by such actions, including the attempted assassination of Sultan Abdul Hamid, the takeover of the Ottoman Bank, and the Khanasor Expedition, to name a few. ARF leaders regularly referred to the importance of action in waking up the masses and the concept carried on into later activities such as Operation Nemesis and Zinyal Baykar (Armed Struggle).

The parallels are countless (too many, in fact, to cover in such a short space). From its structure, to its political program, to its actions, and even its slogans, the ARF was heavily shaped by Russian radical currents. In the words of the prominent ARF figure Vahan Navasartian, "There is no denying that our organization has on it the stamp of the Russian liberation movement."

More important than the actual similarities, however, is the point that the founders were not afraid to draw from outside experiences to deepen their own people's struggle. Their involvement in non-Armenian activism helped inform their worldview and led them to make pivotal contributions to their nation. In fact, even after forming the ARF, they stayed engaged with other revolutionary movements their entire lives.

It is worth asking how relevant these roots of the ARF are for us today. Over a century later, as we grapple with similar problems of oppression, division, and passivity, we should ask ourselves what we can learn from the example and principles set forth by that revolutionary founding generation.

*This article is reprinted from our sister publication, Haytoug (AYF- Western Region, USA)*

"This was the idea that *daring revolutionary actions* are important not only onto themselves but also for *awakening consciousness.*"
ՀԱՐՑԱԶՐՈՅՑ՝ պատմաբան և «Յուշամատեան» -
Արեւմտեան Հայաստանի և յարակից հայաբնակ
տարածքներու վերաբերեալ գիտելիքներու
շտեմարանի խմբագիր՝ Վահէ Թաշճեանի հետ
Հարցազրոյցը վարեց՝ Լիւսի Տիշոյեանը
Ի՞նչ էր պատճառը որ «Յուշամատեան» կայքէջը
ստեղծեցիք և տեղեկութիւնները ինչպ՞էս համադրեցիք:

Յուշամատեան ծրագիրը երբ սկիզբ առավ, առաջին
հերթին պատմագիտական դժուարութիւններ են, որոն
վճռում մարդիկ ստեղծելու այսպիսի ընդարձակ
բովանդակութեամբ ու ծավալով կայքէջ մը։
Այսպէս, օսմանագիտութեան մէջ շատ յաճախ
գիտաշխատողներ դէմ յանդիման կը գտնուին
աղբիւրներու օգտագործման լուրջ դժուարութիւններ
առջեւ։ Ասոր բուն պատճառը նախ եւ առաջ
Օսմանեան կայսրութեան բազմաէթնիք բնոյթն է, ուր
բաղկացուցիչ ժողովուրդներ օգտագործած են մէկէ
ավելի լեզուներ (օսմաներէն-թրքերէն, արաբերէն,
հայերէն, յունարէն, պուլկարերէն, լատինօ, ևայլն)։
Այս կը նշանակէ անշուշտ, որ օսմանեան
պատմութեան վերաբերող նիւթերը նոյնպէս
բազմալեզու են ու անոնց ուսումնասիրութիւնը կը
պահանջէ բազմակրթանք աշխատանք։ Իսկ զանազան
թեմաներու հետազօտման ընթացքին երբ
կ՚անտեսուին այս կամ այն
ժողովուրդին օգտագործած
լեզուն եւ այս
ճամբով նաեւ
երբեմն շատ
հարուստ
աղբիւրա-
գիտութիւն մը,
այն ատեն
պարզ է որ
տուեալ ուսումնասիրութիւնը պակասաւոր կ՚ըլլայ ու չի կրնար
գիտական պահանջքներուն լաւապէս գոհացում տալ։
Այս իմաստով հայկական աղբիւրագիտութիւնը երկար
ժամանակէ ի վեր օսմանագիտութեան պակասաւոր
օղակը հանդիսացած է։ Գոյութիւն ունին գիտական
բնոյթի բազմաթիւ գիրքեր ու յօդուածներ, որոնք
երբեմն ուղղակի օսմանեան հայերուն կը վերաբերին,
բայց եւ այնպէս անոնք մեծաւ մասամբ հիմնուած են
օսմաներէն-թրքերէնով գրուած նիւթերու վրայ։ Այս
բնոյթի աշխատանքներ այնքան յաճախակի են, որ
ժամանակի ընթացքին օսմանագիտութեան մէջ
հայկական աղբիւրներուն անտեսումը սովորական եւ
մինչեւ իսկ «ընդունելի» երեւոյթի մը վերածած են։
Հետեւանքը այն կ՚ըլլայ որ գիտական աշխատանքներ
մէջ հայը կը ներկայացուի լոկ օսմանեան պետական
արխիւներու հայթայթած տեղեկութիւններուն և
որակումներուն ընդմէջէն։ Բան մը որ պակասավոր է
և՝ ըստ ամենայնի անհանդուրժելի։
Արդարեւ կը պակսի հայ տարրին հայեացքը իր իսկ
հարցերուն վրայ, իր իսկ առօրեայ կեանքին վրայ։ Այս
առումով հայատառ նիւթերը բազմազան են և
մեծապէս հարուստ։ Անոնք մեզ կ՚առաջնորդեն
օսմանեան նոր աշխարհ մը, որուն զանազան
երեսներուն հետքն անգամ անգտանելի է ոչ-հայախօս
հասարակութեան։ Անոնք մեզ կը նկարագրեն
գաւառային կեանքի այնպիսի պատկերներ, որոնք
շատ յաճախ նորութիւններ են օսմանագիտութեան
մէջ։ Այս իմաստով մեր նպատակն է նոր արժէք մը
tալ օսմանեան հայերուն վերաբերող հայատառ
նիւթերուն ու զանոնք մատչելի դարձնել ոչ-հայախօս
հասարակութեան։ Այս բոլորը կը կարծենք որ բնական
անհրաժեշտութիւն մըն է օսմանագիտութեան համար։
Արդ, Յուշամատեան կայքէջին ճամբով մենք կը
dզգտինք ներկայացնել օսմանեան հայերու կեանքը՝
հիմնուած հայատառ սկզբնաղբիւրներու վրայ։
Համոզուած ենք որ մեր այս նախաձեռնութիւնը պիտի
նպաստէ Օսմանեան պատմութիւնը բազմակրթանք
ուսումնասիրութեան ենթարկելու ընդհանուր ճիգերուն։
Ինչ՞ու կը կարծէք այսպիսի գործեր քաջալերելը
անհրաժեշտ է:
Կապեք նոր ժամանակներում.
Համապատասխան ժամանակում պատմությունը «պատմական ճշմարտությունը» դադարեց մենաշնորհը սնվելու մեկ պետության, մեկ վարչակարգի, մեկ գեր-պետության, մեկ կրոնի, մեկ քաղաքական կազմակերպության:

Համապատասխան հաղորդակցական արհեստագիտությունը այսօր կարելիություններ ստեղծած են գաղափարական անցարգելներ, պատնէշներ շրջանցելու, մատչելու և մատչելի ընդլայնելու աշխարհի չորս ծագերուն գտնող մեկուն:

Մշակութային և արհեստագիտական այս փոփոխությունները կարելիություններ ստեղծած են նոր տարածքների ստեղծման (յաճախ virtual տարածքներ), որոնք դարձած են իրայատուկ վայրեր, հրապարակ նոր գաղափարներ և նորարար ձեւերով պատմություն և անցեալը դիտելու և ուսումնասիրելու:

Յուշամատեան կայքէջի ծրագիրը նոյնպես այս նոր ժամանակներին է ծննդում: Եթե 1920-ականները սկսեցին Սփիւռքի առաջին սերունդը տպագիր գիրքը իբրեր միջոցով չէր իր ժառանգության և անցեալը ուրիշների հետ բաժնեկցելու, զանում փոխանցելու, ապա այսօր մենք ունինք համապատասխանը և իր հետ նաեւ հաղորդակցական արհեստագիտության անծայրածիր կարելիություններ:

Պատմությունը կը փորձենք ներկայացնել առարկայական ձեւով, հեռու մնալով գաղափարական ազդեցությունները, որոնք այնպիսի բարձր և ուղղակի հայ-թրքական դարավոր յարաբերությունները առնչում են պարագայի:

Սեքսը կը դնենք 1915-ին առաջ գոյություն ունեցած կեանքին վրայ: Մեր նպատակն է ցոյց տալ Օսմանեան Կայսրության հայերի բազմաշերթ, հարուստ և խայտաբղետ երեսները: Մեր նպատակն է նոր արժեք տալ գիւղերի և քաղաքների հայերի տեղական պատմության, մանրապատմության:

Երբ նրանց է հերթական եկել այս պատմությունները, երբ կարելի կ'ընլված գրություններով, պատկերներով նվագաղթելու սկզբանեությունները ստեղծելու համար զանգվիթները ու տեղական զարգացման հետազոտությունները, այսպիսի կեանքի բազմաշերթ, հարուստ և խայտաբղետ երեսները:

Ուշաձայն ենք իրենց կեանքին միացնել տարածքների վրա: Մեր ուսումնասիրության արդյունքները դասավանդման համար կիրառվում են հայերի համար, ինչպես նաև այլ հայերի համար:

Նկատեցի որ երեք լեզուներով կարելի է ուսումնասիրել կայքէջը: ի՞նչ էր պատճառը որ Թրքերը ավելոցուցիչ էին:

Երբ ավելի քան երեք տարի առաջ Յուշամատեան ծրագիրն էին ձեռնարկվում, մեր նպատակն էր ստեղծել եռալեզու կայքէջ մի. անգլերեն, հայերեն և թրքերեն. Առայժայք անցկացվեց միջնադարում. Այս միջնադարում անցկացված էին այս գործընթացները, բայց այս պատմությունները ոչ միայն այս պատմությունները երեսի բնակչության համար, այլև այս տարածքների համար, որոնք այսպիսի զանգվածային կեանքի բազմաշերթ ունեն, այս պատմությունները համարվում են տարածված և մշակութային կեանքեր խոսակցության միջոցերով: Այս պատմությունները տեղի ունեն նաև համապատասխան գիտակցության մեջ, ինչպես նաև մշակութային դասավանդման համար: Մեր ուսումնասիրության արդյունքները դասավանդման համար կիրառվում են, որպեսզի մշակութային այսպիսի համակարգի վրա համագործակցություն կատարվի:
գիտությունների մասնագետներն, որոնցից շատերը օսմանագետներն են ու պատմագետներն են, ու ճանաչելով որ երբեք հայերի պատմությունը խոչորացնող է ճանաչված չէ նախպատմության կազմակերպություն։ Երեք եղանակներ են, որ օսմանական տարածքներում կիրառված երկրային կարգավորումները պատմության և անհատության մեջ արտահայտվում են։ Ինչպես նաև մասնագետները համարել են, որ օսմանական տարածքները անհատության և անօրինակության հետ կապված են։ Այս պատճառով, եթե մեր ժամանակները չեն եղեն անհատության հետ, ապա այդ պատճառները կարող են երկրորդ այն ժամանակում ճիշտ լինել։

Այսպես, տե՛սմի եթե եթե մեր զարկհարությունը ճիշտ է, ապա մեր ժամանակները կարող են շարունակ ուղղվել այդ վերջին պատճառների կարճացման հետ։

Անձամբ այցելության դեպքում, որ այս վայրերը քիչ են այցելվողներին, դժևանության ամեն տեղակալ այս վայրը պետք է նվաճվի և պահպանվի իր կենտրոնական և անհատական տեսքներով ։

Այսպիսով, եթե եթե մեր տեսակետները ճիշտ են, ապա հանդիպման հիման վրա երկրորդ համակարգի պատմության և անհատության համար կարող են դիմանկարներ լինել։

Բայց այս փաստից շատ դեպի այս ժամանակ է, եթե այս ժամանակի մեջ երկրորդ համակարգի պատմության և անհատության համար կարող են դիմանկարներ լինել։
բացատրել, բայց հեռուէն դիտելն ու ուսումնասիրելը կարծեմ ավելի դիվան է։ Ի վերջոյ հայկական խումբին կը պատկանի և հայկական փորձառութեան կրողն եմ։ Կարծեմ այս ժառանգութիւնը կրողներէն բոլորն այս կամ այն ձևով արտասովոր յարաբերութիւն մը ունին այս տարածքներուն հետ, այստեղ ապրած հայերու պատմութեան հետ, Ցեղասպանութեան հետ։ Իմ պարագայիս այս մէկը ներկայ հանգրուանին կ՚արտայայտուի այս տարածքներուն հայկական պատմութիւնը հեռուէն ուսումնասիրելու երեւոյթով, առանց նոյն այս վայրերը այցելելու մեծ փափաք մը ունենալու։

Նպատակ ուն՞իք ապագային ուրիշ նման ծրագիրներ ներկայացնելու:

Մեր ուսումնասիրած նիւթը շատ ընդարձակ է։ Օսմանեան կայսրութեան գրեթէ ամբողջ տարածքին հայեր կ՚ապրէին և հայերէն սկզբնաղբիւրները օսմանեան հայերուն մասին շատ հարուստ են։ Մեր կայքէջին մէջ տեղ գտած նիւթերը մինչեւ այսօր հազիւ 10 տոկոսը կը լրացնեն այս ընդարձակ վերնագիրին որ կը կոչուի «Օսմանեան կայսրութեան հայերու պատմութիւն և առօրեայ կեանք»։ Այլուր, 3 տարիներու ընթացքին մեր հրատարակութիւնները կ՚առնչուին Օսմանեան կայսրութեան մէջ հայերու ընդհանուր կեանքին և ընկերային միջավայրին։ Գիրքը կրնաք գնել այցելելով՝


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Այս ծրագիրը քառակուսի ձևով է։ Օսմանեան կայսրութեան գրեթէ ամբողջ տարածքին հայեր կ՚ապրէին և հայերէն սկզբնաղբիւրները օսմանեան հայերուն մասին շատ հարուստ են։ Մեր կայքէջին մէջ տեղ գտած նիւթերը մինչեւ այսօր հազիւ 10 տոկոսը կը լրացնեն այս ընդարձակ վերնագիրին որ կը կոչուի «Օսմանեան կայսրութեան հայերու պատմութիւն և առօրեայ կեանք»։ Այլուր, 3 տարիներու ընթացքին մեր հրատարակութիւնները կ՚առնչուին Օսմանեան կայսրութեան մէջ հայերու ընդհանուր կեանքին և ընկերային միջավայրին։ Գիրքը կը լրացնեն այսօր հազիւ 10 տոկոսը կը լրացնեն այս ընդարձակ վերնագիրին որ կը կոչուի «Օսմանեան կայսրութեան հայերու պատմութիւն և առօրեայ կեանք»։ Այլուր, 3 տարիներու ընթացքին մեր իրագործածը թէեւ մեծ կ՚երեւի, բայց և այնպէս նիւթին նկատմամբ վիթխարի բան մը չէ։ Այլ խօսքով, կարելի է ըսել ծրագիրը երկար է և այնքան ատեն որ միջոցները կան՝ պիտի շարունակենք մեր աշխատանքները այս ուղղութեամբ։

Ասոր կողքին, արդէն սկսած ենք մեր հրատարակութիւններուն։ Այս տարուայ սկիզբին լոյս ընծայեցինք Յուշամատեանի առաջին գիրք-ալպոմը՝ Ottoman Armenians: Life , Culture, Society (Vol 1)։ Այստեղ տեղ գտած են հինգ գիտական Յօդուածներ։ Նոյն գիրքին մէջ տպած ենք նաեւ հարիւրավոր հին լուսանկարներ՝ Օսմանեան կայսրութեան վերաբերեալ։ Պատկերները բաժնուած են երեք մասերու. ընտանեկան պատկերներ, արհեստներու պատկերներ և դպրոցական պատկերներ: Յոյս ունինք երկրորդ հատոր մըն ալ տպել գալ տարի, այս ձեւով ամէն տարի մէկ հատոր լոյս ընծայելու աւանդութիւն մը պահպանել։
Q: Approaching the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, what are some of the goals that the ANCA has outlined?

A: I would say that the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide represents an opportunity for much greater international attention to this crime. If you think about the genocide in broad terms, ours is a cause in which we seek justice; we have the facts on our side and a moral case to be made, but there are political obstacles. The Turkish side doesn't have the facts, doesn't have the morality, but they do have power and time on their side. Their effort is to drag this out and see the will of the Armenians dissipate, so they can consolidate what they stole. Our goal is to use this opportunity; ultimately the power balance doesn't change in 100 years. What does change is that the world is now watching more than ever. We have to use that opportunity to frame the issue properly. The battle is fought on many fronts but the war is a battle in which the Turkish side wants to consolidate its gains and put this issue behind them. They want the Armenian Genocide or what they call “the events of 1915” to be understood as a conflict or a dispute that can be resolved through dialogue, debate or discussion. There is a whole discipline in academia called conflict resolution. They see the problem as conflict and the remedy is conflict resolution. We see that this is a crime, it took place some time ago but it is still a crime. The consequences were real in 1915 but they’re just as real today. The viability challenges that Armenia faces are largely derived from 1915; the loss of demographics, the loss of people, loss of cultural resources, economic resources, water resources, defensible resources, access to the sea….all these elements of viability were denied to us and they will be restored not through a conflict resolution model but through a reparations model. I think that this is a long struggle. It will not begin or end with the 100th anniversary. 2015 is an important year and it represents a milestone in terms of public attention. We have to use this attention to put Turkey on the defensive and to frame the issue as a justice matter. The world will struggle mightily against us. Turkey has its interests in keeping what it stole. To give you a sense of that, Daron, think about where the world would be today had this not occurred. The Ottoman Empire losing a lot of territory as World War One approached, losing the war, losing the Arabian Peninsula, lost euro holdings. They feared that they could not hold Anatolia with the Armenians there so they wiped them out. If they hadn’t done so, there may have been twenty-odd million Armenians: generally prosperous, very well connected, very intellectual, living in that part of the world. They destroyed that future and they don’t want that to reemerge. They’re willing to work very hard on that. They have enough geopolitical leverage that they can enlist many other countries in their efforts. It is an asymmetrical struggle for us; the 100th anniversary will be an asset in this struggle. It represents a new tool, which is international public attention. Some politics and some clauses are done in the shadows and others done in sunlight. In our issues, when it’s done during the day, we benefit. When deals are done in the shadows we tend to suffer. The denial of the Armenian Genocide does not stand up to scrutiny very well. The 100th anniversary is a special opportunity for public scrutiny.

Q: Do you believe that there is a distinct difference between the government and the average citizen in Turkey? For example, after Hrant Dink’s death there were over 80,000 people protesting in the streets of Istanbul. The majority of the people were Turks or Kurds, and they admired Hrant as a symbol for freedom of speech and press. How do we react recognizing the impact he made on modern Turkish society, seeing as his ideology was to always work within the society there itself? Do you believe it was a government-initiated act or that it was organized on behalf of the Turkish ultra-nationalist citizens?

A: I think they’re tied very close together. For example, Africans were enslaved during the colonial period. I don’t think you could say that that was the government policy but the people were against it. Even after the policy was gone it took a hundred years to get over it.
Maybe we’re not even there yet, as discrimination still persists. I think that the government has a really bad policy but I wouldn’t give a free pass to society, since it is often a reflection of society. Think about the Native Americans being treated brutally, and then the cultural narrative of those same people as savages. How were they savages? They were the ones being killed. Only in the last few decades have we seen a retreat from this demonization of Native Americans. We built a whole art form largely around the idea that Natives were the bad guys. It’s not just movie makers or governments. There was a societal blindside. I don’t think it’s accurate to say that it was only government policy. It reflects the population in some ways. Much needs to be done in regards to education in Turkey.

Q: Recently the ANCA has voiced its concern over the recent controversial pension reform in Armenia. Do you think the ANCA should have a larger role with raising awareness about social issues in Armenia?

A: The ANCA was organized as a vehicle for Armenians of any given country to petition their governments. We exercise our rights under our nation. That is our primary mission. There is a school of thought that says our resources should also lobby Washington. We look for those opportunities where we can stay true to our mission in terms of lobbying Washington, but also show a concern for what’s happening in Armenia. And one of those issues where there was common ground was the pension issue. It wasn’t simply that Yerevan was pursuing a policy on pension reform. Ultimately, pension reforms and other domestic issues are the concerns of Armenian citizens. Here’s a case where the US surprised us by taking sides in a domestic Armenian debate in a way that we thought was not wise and certainly isn’t popular. Armenia’s two previous presidents don’t like it, and the people don’t either. The reform had very low political backing and public approval. Only five other countries have this same system, including Nigeria and El Salvador.

If it was the judgment of the Armenian government to move in this direction and the US wasn’t as actively involved, we might have not been as active. But when the US government took a partisan stand on a non-domestic issue, we said, “you’re on the wrong side of this.” In my opinion, the question is, “should diasporans be a force for good in terms of reform and development in Armenia?” I think the answer is yes. Diasporans should assert a more forceful role. They have the power. Their voices inspire the people in Armenia. The people from outside can encourage and strengthen, but the ANCA is not the vehicle for that. Our concern is when it intersects with US policy.

Q: Recently in New York City Azerbaijani groups put a lot of effort into advertising a campaign on Khojaly. What was the ANCA’s response?

A: That’s a good question. We get asked that a lot. The conflict between the Azeris, Turks and the Armenians has always been very asymmetrical. The Aliyev lobby has really picked up in the last five years or so. The first temptation is to counter those ads with our own. But considering their large budgets, it may not be such a good strategy. In Avarayr, Vartan saw that the Persians had elephants and he might have said, “well I need elephants too.” Well, he didn’t have that option. So you fight with the army you have in the best way that you can. We don’t have a million dollars sitting in our bank account for ads and if we did we would invest it very differently; in our community, our youth, our activism. We have a different approach. I’ll give an example, they’ve done this campaign for several years now. They’ve done a White House petition asking the president to condemn Khojaly. Clearly a foreign lead campaign, because in our view, there aren’t 100,000 Azeri Americans signing a petition. We thought it was a pay for play. We thought it was false and misleading. We talked to the White House about this issue and asked them not to fall into the trap of foreigners influencing American politics. And when the White House did respond, they didn’t mention Khojaly and called on both sides to resolve the issue. We thought this was a big repudiation. It’s never as satisfying to punch back a punch. That may be a first instinct, but we owe it to our cause to always act ethically.
My name is Alexandre Sismanian Choquet and I am a survivor. I will tell you the story of my grandfather, Nisan Sismanoglu. Nisan is the son of Oskihan Bicakciyan who lived in Sivas (Sepastia). Oskihan had a good life: he had 3 sons, a daughter, a wife, a home and sizeable wealth. All was taken away from him in the Genocide. We don’t know how Oskihan was spared as he never talked about it; all we know is that he lived. Several years later, the people of the village asked him to marry Aghavni, a widow with 2 children who was from Bayburt. She too had lost her entire family to the Genocide and had escaped to Sivas. From this marriage was born my grandfather Nisan and my uncle Vahan. Oskihan passed away when my grandfather was only 5 years old, so my great grandmother Aghavni raised her 4 children by herself. At the age of 14, Nisan attended a trade school where he trained and then worked as a machinist before serving in the Turkish army for 3 years.

Upon his return from the army, Nisan moved his sisters and mother to Istanbul. He spent 13 years working in Istanbul as a machinist, gradually working his way up to become a Foreman. Despite his success, in 1961, he decided to leave Turkey as he didn’t want his future children to suffer the same persecution and discrimination he felt as an Armenian living in Turkey. After living and working several years in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, he came to Toronto in 1967, without knowing a word of English. He worked hard as a machinist and later opened up his own Machine Shop which he owned and operated for 25 years. My grandfather taught himself how to read and write Armenian so that he could send letters to his fiancé Archalous whom he was introduced to in Montreal by a mutual friend.

My name is Mathieu Sismanian Choquet and I am a survivor. I will tell you the story of my grandmother Archalous. She is the daughter of Kourken Gostanian who was born in Kharpert. Kourken’s father was a tradesman who exported dried fruits and nuts. One day, while he was helping his father at the shop, the Turkish gendarmes came to their store. Kourken’s father gave his son the store key and told him to go home and that he would be back soon… That was the last time Kourken would see his father. His mother died shortly afterwards and his sisters were forced to marry Turks. He lived with one of his sisters and her husband for several years and worked on their farm. His sister’s husband was a kind man and took good care of Kourken, but Kourken saw that his being there was making life difficult for the family, so he asked his sister’s husband to help him leave Turkey. His sister’s husband took him all the way to an Armenian Church in Syria where Kourken lived and apprenticed as a Barber. He then moved to Alexandria, Egypt where he married Mannig and had 4 children; the first born was my grandmother Archalous. Kourken eventually opened up his own Barber Shop and worked long hours to provide for his family. Archalous attended the local French school, but at the age of 13, she had to leave school to help her mother take care of her sister and brother as her mom had fallen ill and couldn’t manage on her own.

In the 1960s, when Nasr started his nationalization program, the family knew it was time for them to leave and sent my grandmother to Montreal, Canada to get established and bring over the rest of the family. She came to Canada at the age of 23 and took up a bachelor flat in the popular (then Armenian) immigrant neighbourhood of Parc-Extension and worked as a seamstress in Montreal’s prospering garment industry. Her parents and siblings joined her in Montreal a few years later.

Our grandparents and great grandparents Survived, persevered, worked hard, and sacrificed and yet they never complained and always gave thanks for what they did have. We can learn so much from their stories and this is an invaluable gift that has been passed down to us. We are Survivors.
In 1979, renowned Armenian author Antranig Dzarougian penned a follow-up to his famed memoir Mangutiun Chunetsogh Martig (Men Without a Childhood), entitled Yerazayin Halebuh (Ethereal Aleppo), in which he reminisced about his beloved Aleppo.

Unlike Dzarougian’s childhood, the years of my youth were spent thousands of kilometers away. Aleppo, or Haleb as we knew it, was an exotic, distant world; a place where Armenian children’s books and Armenian teachers came from. I vividly remember how its name was often accompanied by the word yerazayin (ethereal or dreamy). I would realize only later how fitting that adjective actually was.

I also often heard about Kessab in Syria, one of the only two remaining Armenian villages in the diaspora. In my mind, Kessab was the bastard half-brother of my father’s village Anjar, in Lebanon, since the dialects spoken in both were eerily similar and equally bizarre to my ears. I didn’t know much about Kessab other than what my older cousin told me about his summers there: simple village life, quaint fields, and that strange-sounding dialect.

In 2010, during a trek through the Middle East with my close friends, I was lucky enough to visit Aleppo. After visiting Lebanon for a week we figured it would be a shame not to see the city whose name and significance was often spoken by so many.

Aleppo was more vibrant than I could have ever imagined. The Armenian community was so well organized, active, and dynamic—in a country that my TV often referred to as a “tyrannical dictatorship.” We were lucky to have visited, as less than a year later events would begin to unfold that would change the fate of the country forever.

Aleppo is a very different place today from the dreamy city described in Dzarougian’s book. For just over three years now, the armed conflict in Syria—between forces loyal to the Ba’ath government and those looking to oust it—has made the country unrecognizable.

The conflict had miraculously left Kessab virtually unscathed. Until March 21, 2014, that is.

After years of anticipating the worst but hoping for the opposite, e-mails and social media posts bearing headlines of Kessab’s ill fate began to rush in. While the helpless cries for Kessab’s salvation from Armenians around the world have been overwhelming, the mainstream media has largely been silent on the issue. Almost all of the information available about the situation in Kessab continues to be from Armenian sources.

What is clear, however, is that in about three days, Kessab transformed from a safe haven to a city fully immersed in the Syrian conflict. Cross-border attacks from Turkey by al-Qaeda-affiliated bands have forced the civilian population to flee to neighbouring cities and villages.

Just like that, one of the two remaining Armenian villages of the diaspora became devoid of its native Armenian population.

We never got to visit Kessab during our trip to Syria; time was limited and the village seemed too far away from Aleppo. We figured we’d save it for a later visit.

Nearly four years have passed and Kessab is still a figment of my imagination. I can only wish for the best from far away. Wish that Kessab becomes the quaint, boring village it once was, so that I can see and appreciate what was so uninteresting to me years ago. So that in my head, Kessab stops being a mere dream and takes on the ever-deserving “yerazayin” designation that Dzarougian once bestowed on Aleppo.
Revisiting Krikor Zohrab’s Istanbul Home

By: Garen Kazanc

As I approached the Cercle d’Orient amidst the hustle and bustle of the Beyoglu district of today’s Istanbul, I could not help but remind myself what happened there the night of May 21, 1915. It was in this building where Krikor Zohrab was playing cards with Talat Pasha while bargaining the latter to set free those Armenian notables who were apprehended just a month ago and sent to unknown destinations in Anatolia.

That night, Zohrab came to the table with his own cards to play. A skilled negotiator, he sincerely believed that he could haggle his way with Talat and save as many lives as he could, even if that meant his own. After all, there appeared to be a glimmer of hope. Just a week before, Gomidas and others were set free and returned to Constantinople. Zohrab felt that this was a giant breakthrough which he could take advantage of.

After the tense atmosphere subsided, the card session ended unusually early that night. Upon saying their farewells, Talat stood up and unhesitatingly gave Zohrab a kiss on the cheek. “Why such affection?” Zohrab asked. “Oh,” Talat responded with a smile, “I just felt like doing it.”

I started the walk from Cercle d’Orient down Rue de Pera (now Istiklal Avenue) to Zohrab’s residence, the same walk he took home that night. I walked slower than usual. My feet were becoming weary and shaking, as though they were weeping in some strange way. I thought about what Zohrab was thinking while walking back home that night, through these streets alone, with the burden of millions of people on his shoulders. Was he confident? Was he confused? No one will ever know. But we know of one thing, the walk home that night, was to be his last.

After walking down the winding road that leads up to the Zohrab family residence, I had a sensation of just running away. I knew that in front of this eloquent building, built by an Italian architect through the commission of Zohrab himself, were guards waiting to arrest him. I had the pleasant opportunity of entering the house. Zohrab, on the other hand, did not.

I took the long flight of stairs leading up to the top floor of the building, and to my surprise, it has now become a hotel. “How may I help you?” asked the receptionist upon seeing me. “I came to see this building,” I responded hesitantly, “it used to be a residence owned by a distant relative of mine.”

Almost instantaneously, the entire staff turned their heads towards me and listened to every word I had to say. Like some sort of magician, I felt as though I was going to unravel a show. I was to talk about a past, much more distant than it actually seemed.

A member of the staff broke the ice, “let us show you around and please, tell us more about your relative,” he said out of sincere curiosity. “Please,” I said, “just take me to the balcony.”

This was the balcony where Zohrab wrote much of his writings. Here, Zohrab would return from his tumultuous daily activities, and concentrate on what he loved most: writing. The Bosphorus, with all its beauty, laid out in front of him, encouraging him, inspiring him.

It was this very balcony, which his daughter Dolores yearned for so much, as she wrote in her memoirs, thousands of miles away in exile. With her father killed and her entire family exiled, she wanted nothing else in this world, but to sit on this balcony, next to her father, while he wrote his next short story, and as she enjoys the scenic view.

“Who was he? What’s his name?”

“His name was Krikor Zohrab,” I responded, while gazing fixedly at the scenery.

“What did he do?”

Turning towards him I replied, “He was an engineer, lawyer, professor, journalist, politician, short story writer, philanthropist, husband, and a father of four.”

After much silence, the man appeared to think I was exaggerating. “That’s impressive,” he simply remarked.

“You’re not here to reclaim this property are you?” he asked in a rather serious tone. Amused by his question, “No, heavens no,” I assured him, “this was private property that was sold right before the family fled to Europe.”

“Yes,” I responded briskly, not being in the mood to explain.

The balcony used to be one long stretch, but it is now divided into separate rooms, each having their own piece of the magnificent view. The designers of the hotel did a remarkable job of keeping the original framework of the structure intact. Much of the additions to the building can be easily removed since they aren’t fixated on the walls. Their intentions were to retain as much of the original
structural characteristics as possible. I especially thanked them for their attentive efforts.

After taking a few photographs of the view and the balcony, the man invited me to have a cup of tea. I agreed. The rest of the staff also arrived. It happened to be their tea break.

I showed pictures of Krikor Zohrab on my phone and answered their questions about his life and works. Then they asked, “When did he die?” “1915,” I responded. They stood silent, almost ashamed.

I began to wonder, was this the first time that the dreadful year of 1915 was uttered in this building since that very year? I felt like this was an interrogation of some sort. A scene of a murder, where in some odd twist of fate, the murderers were interviewing me.

But no, that was not the case. These were human beings, much like myself, who were curious, curious the same way I was when I first started reading and learning about Zohrab myself. After much discussion, it was time for me to go. I thanked all those that gave me the wonderful tour and provided their delightful hospitality. As I was leaving, I was still awe-inspired by the magnificence of the structure, with its scenic views and elegant design.

Right when I was about to step out of the building, an older man abruptly came over to see me. It was the owner of the hotel, who just so happened to overhear the conversation of the tea session. He looked straight into my eyes, with his hand on my shoulder and said, “I will hang his portrait in the entrance of the hotel with a brief biography.”

When I heard this, I was in complete shock as it was entirely unexpected. Almost automatically I begged, “No, no, you don’t need to.” “Please,” he responded, “it really is the least I can do.” I stood there, with tears in my eyes, and said, “Thank you” and left.

Have they put the portrait up? I don’t know, and quite frankly, I don’t care. Another visitor of the hotel can provide those updates. But this personal experience was neither about the portrait, nor the scenic views. This was about a man, whose influence and power still resonates with us today.

He was a man full of wonder, to say the least, who saw the world not only as a writer, but as a lawyer, politician, professor, and more. I happened to live just one day of his life, but it felt like a lifetime, which reminded me that he is someone we can still learn from, whose skills and talents still amaze us until this day.

Today, his bones remain lost and yet to be found: unfitting for a man of such stature. But that should not matter. He is so awe-inspiring that his influence will be everlasting, much like his short stories, speeches, and residence, with all of its magnificence and splendor as well. □
Domestic violence against women in Armenia is a very serious issue that does not get discussed as much as it should. The problem must be accepted in order for a solution to be presented. There is no perfect country in existence; every nation faces issues. However, because Armenia is ours, it is our obligation to see that we make it a better place for our countrymen and a better place for our future. Women in Armenia face a challenge when it comes to their rights. A lot of progress has been made in regards to this topic, but these women deserve more. In a survey carried out by the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, over 40% stated that they believe domestic violence is widespread across the nation (Domestic Violence Survey in the Republic of Armenia, Chart 10). It is also important to take into consideration that only 14.3% of the participants think that psychological violence is also a form of domestic violence. Imagine how much higher the percentage would be if the citizens knew that abuse was not just limited to the physical factor. In his article entitled “The Never Ending Rape,” Dr. Henry Theriault from Worcester State College stated, “[Violence] takes the form of brute physical force, beating, sexual torture (including being forced to engage in sexual activity against one’s will) authoritarian control (imprisoning the victim in the home), controlling contacts with others including family members, controlling all finances including access to food and clothing, etc.) and psychological abuse (constant degrading, insulting comments, threats, sadistic or controlling manipulation of the victims’ fears and vulnerabilities, “cat-and-mouse” toying with needs and expectations, threats against the children, etc.” Unfortunately, that statement would not be easily accepted in Armenia.

In an article entitled En-gendering Civil Society and Democracy-Building: The Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign in Armenia, Armine Iskanian states, “The situation in Armenia and the other Soviet states only began to change in 1999 when increased funding was made available by international donors for local NGOs to begin addressing the problem of domestic violence throughout the former Soviet Union.” For countless decades, absolutely nothing was done about domestic violence. The problem is that not enough people want to do something about it. When police officers are contacted about domestic violence issues, they say that it is a “family matter” and should be dealt with inside the household. Women are shunned from their circles if they report an assault from their husbands. Over 61% of the survey-participants said they were a victim of domestic violence at the hands of their spouse. (Domestic Violence Survey in the Republic of Armenia, Chart 18)

The issue is obvious. Domestic violence is a clear dilemma. Enough time has been wasted by individuals who just stand idly by and allow this vicious cycle to continue. The time has come to step out of the shadow of ignorance and to make a difference. In the beginning of 2013, a law was drafted against domestic violence but was rejected by the government. The law would define domestic violence and set out steps in order to punish the violators of the law. Armenia’s deputy labor minister, Filaret Belikyan, commented, “All the institutions involved with justice say the justice system is not suited to this new law. We don’t have the kind of justice system that can implement the law in this form.” Since domestic violence is a part of the culture in Armenia, immediately implementing a law would not be extremely effective. There is a lack of general education regarding the issue. Having a law that no one understands or respects is not useful. Although it is extremely frustrating to activists that the law was not passed, it is important to focus on the core of the issue. Creating a law will not end domestic violence against women in Armenia if the citizens do not understand that what they are doing is wrong. Education and prevention are the most important things that need to be focused on.

Out of all the post-Soviet states, Armenia has the most severe case of domestic violence and the least aid towards a solution because of the lack of support from the people. In an article that compared post-Soviet states, the author mentioned “While service-oriented domestic violence organizations had proliferated more recently in Moldova, such organizations remained rare in Armenia.” (Johnson, Janet Elise. Domestic Violence Politics in Post-Soviet States.) As previously mentioned, the government does not do much to put a stop to this issue. Individuals in Armenia who have seen the light have set up hotlines so these abused women at least have someone to talk to about this. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the ones who do the entire field work for these women. There are a few shelters that house abused women and their children to give them an opportunity to physically step away from the abuse. However, these safe houses are only temporary and do not solve the issue. They merely “aid with the symptoms.” Education is where it all comes to play. Every individual needs to learn that domestic violence is not a way of life. Slowly but surely, the women of Armenia are waking up. “Our children have been growing up in an atmosphere of beatings and fights,” commented 67-year-old Karine Galstian, a mother of four. “Only now we realize how wrong it is to keep silent, because we should at least teach our daughters that the husband has to respect his wife, should not beat her, and should not humiliate her in front of the children.”

Perhaps the most successful NGO that has offered a light at the end of the tunnel for these victims is the Women’s Resource Center of Armenia. The WRCA was originally founded on a university campus but moved to the heart of the capital city as the demand grew. The NGO’s main goal is to empower the women of Armenia. Because women are treated like second class citizens, they must come together to support one another. The WRCA is where the journey to a better life begins. Similar to other NGOs, there are hotlines available for the victims at WRCA. There are many workshops held at the center that educate the women and also prepare them to support themselves. A specific workshop is dedicated to women’s rights and outlines steps on how to identify abuse and also how to stop the cycle. The importance for the WRCA and the stop to domestic violence against women in Armenia goes beyond words. These women, young and old, are either going to be the future leaders of the prospering country or will raise the future leaders. The country cannot afford ignorance.

The time is now to educate the men and women of Armenia. No longer will the citizens live in the dark ages where violence is a way of life. The education needs to flourish so that a law can be successfully implemented in the future. Women must fight for their rights and learn to value themselves. In a survey done by the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, over 45% of victims reported doing nothing after being subjected to domestic violence (OSCE.org/Yerevan. Chart 25). These women need all the help they can get and it is an international fight that needs to be fought. □
You want substance? You want the truth? I’ll speak it to you from a stage and tell you how to live your life; to believe in your ability to make a difference; to validate your existence. I will have my associates help as well.

We will tell you that you are special and that you are all capable of being heroes. That far away in a distant land, a forest needs you to survive. That villagers need heroes and you are they. We will tell you the fairytale story that you want to hear. We’ll create colorful dress for you to wear to identify who you are, with nice symbols of trees, fists, birds, your hopes and your dreams, that you can wear on your sleeve for others to see.

But after we will all go home and go to sleep safely and soundly. Fifteen dollars spent on a t-shirts to say we care; we did something and our lives have meaning. I am compassionate, I am selfless, and I wear the shirt to prove it. We will announce who we are with symbols; symbols of our collective deceit.

So tell yourself what you want. Tell yourself you care. Tell yourself you are selfless - scream it, cover it with layers of philanthropy. But you’re just like me. You live in the lap of luxury. Safety provides knowing you will not be harmed. You will survive with your goat cheese and fine wine, drunken with cowardice and utter self-pity. But don’t look at me and point your finger and say I did this to you. Not me. I’m not the leader of this band of cowards. I’m not the leader of your dreams and hopes or your lack of courage. I simply followed. You made me follow. You want me to follow and you need me to follow behind.

Don’t tell me to change. Don’t ask me to be a leader. Don’t ask me to put my life on the line. I’m a coward. I can’t be what you want me to be. Even if I did, you’d call me a rebel, an adventurer. You would taint my name. You would not let your kids listen to me speak. You would tell them I’m a liar, that I will risk their safety. You would rather let me die by your side then have me be your hope. Not that place. You actually want us to go into the fairytale world. You will be harmed. Evil lurks there: war, danger. The forest is not safe.

We do not go into the forest. We die slowly. That’s what we do. We die in our homes, in the safety of our collective lies and our collective fear, driving around town with luxury cars smoking fat cigars, our mothers becoming self-destructive desperate housewives, and our daughter one step away from Jersey Shore scores.

Don’t lie to me. Tell me you know. Tell me you see what I see. Don’t just look at me with your cold eyes and tell me that it’s OK, that we’re OK. We died in the deserts 100 years ago out of fear, and now we die on the 405 freeways in our shiny tombstones to the soundtracks of our choice.

You scream to my face. Monte Melkonian was an outcast. He was an adventurer. He went into the fairytale and he died. He’s dead. He is no more. We do not go into the fairytale. We do not go into the forest. We do not. We do not. We do not. Monte Melkonian did not die. He is every bit alive. He is alive in me. He is Arabo. He is Antranik. He is Kevork Chavoosh. He is every bit of me that I hold onto in my desperate attempt to fight this coward that wants to not go into the forest and I chant.

The forest will protect me; the forest protected the ones that came before me. The forest cares for her own. The Sons of nature always slept in the freedom of the forest.

But you’re not me. You’re not me. You’re not me and you don’t control me. I will fight.

Arabon engel er grvoom kach ari…Gnank hayer, gnank…

-VREJ, VREJ, VREJ
Այսօր Մերի Հայաստանը
Սպանինքներին Ճանապարհից

Օրեիշտային Հ.Օ.Մ.-ի Երկրորդական Վարժարանի 10-րդ կազմակերպման 24 աշխատանքային սեմինարները
Ֆեռաիբա 25-րդ Իւարի 13, 2014, աշակերտների հայտարարություն ու մարդությունը կրոնական ճշգրիտության անկումը:
Այսօր Մերի հերոսներն անցնում են այս պատմության էջին: Արծիվ այսպիսի մանրանասնութեամբ ևեկեղեցիներ կառուցած են դարեր առաջ և փորագրութիւնները և խաչքարերը: Ամէն եկեղեցիները ունէին իրենց Հայաստանի եկեղեցիները շատ աղուոր էին:

Մերի պատմությունը դարեր է աշխատանքի հետ, որպես քինիկում: Մերի Կարանտինին մի փոքր, որ հայրենիքը ձեր հայրենիքի հերոսները այցելեցին այսօր:

Հայաստանը մեր հայ երիտասարդուհի միրության հետ, որպեսզի հայրենիքը հայրենիքների պատմությունը կրում է: Հայաստանը մեր հայ երիտասարդուհի միրության հետ, որպեսզի հայրենիքը հայրենիքների պատմությունը կրում է:
Իսկ իմ ամենասիրած թանգարանը
Դաշնակցութեան թանգարանն էր.
Դաշնակցական ընտանիքէ եկած ըլլալով՝
իմ լսած եւ սորված ամէն պատմութիւններ
շատ կ’օգնէին, որ ավելի լավ ժամանակ
անցընեմ եւ ավելի հետաքրքրութիւն
ունենամ այս թանգարանին մէջ:
Ալիք Պարսամեան
Առաջին բանը, որ կրնամ ըսել մեր
հայրենիքի մասին այն է, որ շատ քարոտ
երկիր մըն է: Ճամբաները կ’անցնէին
քարերու եւ ժայռերու միջով: Ինծի համար
ամենագեղեցիկ շրջանները Շուշիի սարերն
են ու Սեվանայ լիճը: Հետաքրքրական էին
նաեւ Խնձորեսկի քարանձաւները:
Առաջինօրերուն մենք այցելեցինք
Պանթէոնը, ուր մեր ազգի գրագէտներէն
շատերն էին թաղուած: Իրենց շիրիմները
յուզիչ էին, բայց ասկէ աւելի յուզիչ էր այն,
որ մեր ոտքերու տակ կը հանգչէին անոնք,
այդ հսկայ անունները, որ մենք լսած էինք
մեր դասագիրքերէն:
Արեգ Նազարեան
Այս պտոյտը հայրենիքիս մէջ
սքանչելի փորձառութիւն մըն էր:
Հայաստանը տարիներով երազի պէս
եղած էր ինծի համար, եւ վերջապէս
կրցայ անձամբ տեսնել ու ծանօթանալ
հայրենիքիս: Անմիջապէս
հրապուրուեցայ անոր
գեղեցկութեամբ:
Առաջինօրը
շատ պայծառ
էր, եւ
կրցանք
տեսնել
Արարատ
լեռը:
Առաջին
արձանը,
որ մենք
այցելեցինք, Մայր Հայաստանն էր: Շատ
խոշոր արձան մըն էր, որ կարծես
հպարտութեամբ կը կենար ու կը
պաշտպանէր մեր հայրենիքը:
Ճնճաճաշպատի շաքարի, որ շատ մարդ
է: 24-25 տարիների վաղաշարավի գրական
գրի և աջակցություն Հայաստանիկների
գիտություն: Հայկական եկեղեցիները շատ գեղեցիկ էին
և բծախնդրութեամբ կառուցած:
Հայաստանը տարածաշրջանի կանաչ մեջ
այցելեց Մայր Հայաստանը: Շատ
խոշոր արձան մըն էր, որ կարծես
հպարտութեամբ կը կենար ու կը
պաշտպանէր մեր հայրենիքը:
Առաջինօրը
շատ պայծառ
էր, եւ
կրցանք
տեսնել
Արարատ
լեռը:
Առաջին
արձանը,
որ մենք
այցելեցինք, Մայր Հայաստանն էր: Շատ
խոշոր արձան մըն էր, որ կարծես
հպարտութեամբ կը կենար ու կը
պաշտպանէր մեր հայրենիքը:
Ճնճաճաշպատի շաքարի, որ շատ մարդ
է: 24-25 տարիների վաղաշարավի գրական
գրի և աջակցություն Հայաստանիկների
գիտություն: Հայկական եկեղեցիները շատ գեղեցիկ էին
և բծախնդրութեամբ կառուցած:
Հայաստանը տարածաշրջանի կանաչ մեջ
այցելեց Մայր Հայաստանը: Շատ
խոշոր արձան մըն էր, որ կարծես
հպարտութեամբ կը կենար ու կը
պաշտպանէր մեր հայրենիքը:
REFLECTIONS OF PAIN

The content displayed on the following pages share the same ugly similarities: genocide is the nasty muse.

Writing about pain can be cathartic, both for the author and its audience. Poetry is real; it provides a voice. That voice can be sodden with denial, hatred, vengeance and the longing for closure.

The Rwandan Genocide, the Holocaust, the Genocide of the American First Nations and the Armenian Genocide are the motivation for the following collection of words.

MY COUNTRY ‘TIS OF THY PEOPLE YOU’RE DYING (EXCERPT)

Buffy Saint Marie

Now that the longhouses breed superstition
You force us to send our toddlers away
To your schools where they’re taught to despise their traditions.

You forbid them their languages, then further say
That American history really began
When Columbus set sail out of Europe, then stress
That the nation of leeches that conquered this land
Are the biggest and bravest and boldest and best.
And yet where in your history books is the tale
Of the genocide basic to this country’s birth,
Of the preachers who lied, how the Bill of Rights failed,
How a nation of patriots returned to their earth?

RALLY FOR DARFUR

Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon

In the Armenian genocide it was written and in Darfur it is being sealed:
How many shall join the hundreds of thousands who have already perished, and how many shall be born into a horrible life, who shall live and who shall die,

In the Shoah genocide it was written and in Darfur it is being sealed:
who shall be raped and who shall be tortured,
who shall perish by sword and who by bullets,
which village shall be burned and which well shall be poisoned,

In the Cambodian genocide it was written and in Darfur it is being sealed:
who will make it to the refugee camp and who will die on the way,
who will die by hunger and who by thirst,
who by disease and who by plague,

In the Bosnian genocide it was written and in Darfur it is being sealed:
Who will have their food rations cut and who will get enough food for another day,
Whose child will die and whose will survive,

In the Rwandan genocide it was written and in Darfur it is being sealed:
who will remain silent and who will scream for action
who will be complacent and who will have moral courage
who will cave in to despair and who will be elevated by hope.

But using our voices, exercising our power and demanding action can help save lives NOW.
THE DANCE
Siamanto (Translated by Shant Norashkharian)

And as her tears drowned in her blue eyes,
On a field of ash where Armenian life was still dying;
This is what the witness of our horror, the German woman narrated:
“This story which I tell you and which cannot be told,
I saw with my cruel human eyes,
From the window of my safe house which looked on hell,
Crushing my teeth from my terrible rage...
With my cruelly human eyes I saw...
It was in Garden city, which was turned to a pile of ashes.
The corpses were piled high to the top of the trees,
And from the waters, from the fountains, from the streams, from the roads,
The rebellious murmur of your blood...
Still speaks now its vengeance into my ears.

O. don’t be shocked when I tell you this story which cannot be told...
Let men understand the crime of man against man,
Under the sun of two days; on the road to the cemetery,
The evil of man against man,
Let all the hearts of the world know...
That morning in death’s shadow was a Sunday,
The first and helpless Sunday which rose over the corpses,
When inside my room, from evening to dawn,
Bending over the agony of a girl slashed with a sword,
I was wetting her death with my tears...
Suddenly from afar a black, beastly mob
Brutally whipping the twenty brides who were with them,
Stood in a vineyard singing songs of debauchery.

Leaving the poor dying girl on her mattress,
I approached the balcony of my window which looked on hell...
In the vineyard the black mob became a forest.
A savage roared to the brides: “You must dance,
You must dance when our drum sounds.”
And the whips started wildly cracking on the bodies
Of the Armenian women who were missing death...
Twenty brides, hand in hand, started their round dance...
The tears flowed from their eyes like wounds.
Ah, how much I envied my wounded neighbor,
Because I heard, that with a peaceful moan,
Cursing the universe, the poor beautiful Armenian girl,
To her young dove spirit gave wings toward the stars...
In vain I moved my fists against the mob
“ You must dance”, roared the furious crowd,
“You must dance until your death, lustfully and lasciviously,
Our eyes are thirsty for your movements and your death...”

The twenty beautiful brides fell to the ground exhausted.
“Stand up”, they shrieked, waving their naked swords like snakes.
Then someone brought to the mob a barrel of oil...
O. human justice, let me spit at your forehead...!
They anointed the twenty brides hastily with that liquid...

“You must dance”, they roared, “here is a perfume for you which even Arabia does not have...”
Then they ignited the naked bodies of the brides with a torch,
And the charcoaled corpses rolled from dance to death...

In my terror I closed the shutters of my window like a storm,
And approaching my lonely dead girl I asked:
“How can I dig my eyes out, how can I dig them out, tell me...?"

SHEMA
Primo Levi
(Translated by Ruth Feldman & Brian Swann)

You who live secure
In your warm houses
Who return at evening to find
Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider whether this is a man,
Who labours in the mud
Who knows no peace
Who fights for a crust of bread
Who dies at a yes or a no.
Consider whether this is a woman,
Without hair or name
With no more strength to remember
Eyes empty and womb cold
As a frog in winter.

Consider that this has been:
I commend these words to you,
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children:
Or may your house crumble,
Disease render you powerless,
Your offspring avert their faces from you.

RWANDA: WHERE TEARS HAVE NO POWER
Haki Madhubuti

Who has the moral high ground?
Fifteen blocks from the whitehouse
on small corners in northwest, d.c.
boys disguised as me rip each other’s hearts out
with weapons made in china.
Across the planet in a land where civilization was born
the boys of d.c. know nothing about their distant relatives
in Rwanda.
They have never heard of the hutu or tutsi people.
Their eyes draw blanks at the mention of kigali, byumba
or butare.
All they know are the streets of d.c., and do not
cry at funerals anymore.
Numbers and frequency have a way
of making murder commonplace and not news
unless it spreads outside of our house, block, territory.

Modern massacres are intraethnic: bosnia, sri lanka, burundi,
nagorno-karabakh, iraq, laos, angola, liberia, and rwanda are
small foreign names on a map made in europe.
When bodies by the tens of thousands float down a river turning the water
the color of blood, as a quarter of a million people flee barefoot
into tanzania and zaire.
Somehow we notice.
We do not smile, we have no more tears.
We hold our thoughts.
In deeply muted silence looking south and thinking that today
nelson mandela seems much larger than he is.
MEAN STREETS

Martin Scorsese, Harvey Keitel, Robert De Niro.
Three worthy enough reasons to commit to watching a film. But there's more. The film's screenplay was co-written by Armenian-American Mardik Martin. Martin fled Iraq to avoid the draft, and arrived in New York to carve out an identity for himself. He had to wash dishes to pay his way through NYU, where he met fellow student Martin Scorsese.

The two formed a close relationship, and collaborated on several early projects. Mean Streets being one of them. Along with Martin, Scorsese penned most of the script driving around little Italy in Martin's Chrysler Valiant. They would park somewhere in the neighbourhood, and start the writing process. All the while absorbing the folklore that would be represented on the screen.

The film was made on a low budget, and from a director who was still polishing his craft. Mean Streets provided a voice for the criminal working class, and by doing so inspired an integral part in any modern gangster movie, showcasing everyday reality.

Robert De Niro shines in the films, and it was Mean Streets that catapulted him into distinction.

Now semi-retired, Martin works as a Senior Lecturer at the prestigious USC film school, having mentored and educated thousands of the brightest young luminaries in the movie business.

We forgot to mention that Martin also co-wrote The Raging Bull, arguably the best film of the 20th century. So, yeah…He’s kind of a big deal.

ONE ARMENIA

Instagram: @onearmenia
Facebook: facebook.com/onearmenia
Twitter: @onearmenia

Following a non-profit platform that strives to enhance environmental, humanitarian and cultural projects in Armenia should make you feel all sorts of good. Armenia has issues, like any other country. Having a platform that actively seeks out to make positive, tangible changes should not only be admired, but supported. One Armenia has made the tag line “you can make a difference” a reality. Projects like bringing sustainable farming to Armenia or helping to provide instruments to a growing Armenian Youth Orchestra are highlighted by means of images waiting to be liked. A lack of selfies or pretty carbohydrates piled on a plate is a refreshing change of pace.
“By going the extra mile,
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NOT INTENDED TO SOLICIT THOSE UNDER CONTRACT WITH ANOTHER REALTOR.

Conratulating Ardziv and wishing it continued success

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June 12th is a big one for me. The Philippines declared independence from Spain in 1898. It's a national holiday back home. Plus, June 12th is my grandma's birthday. It's a tough day to forget.

I had left Russia many years before the Soviet Union crumbled. Around that time, everybody would ask how I felt about the topic. I didn't have an opinion on the issue. My indifference surprised me. I didn't have a dog in the fight.

I'm from Zimbabwe. We achieved independence in 1980. It's a layered topic. People were happy that we separated from the British. At the same time, our president became this evil, psycho path dictator. An African Hitler if you'd like. That's why so many of us were forced to leave the country. They try to have Independence Day celebrations, but it's like... what independence?... We had to leave.

March 1st is an important date for Koreans. It was an early public display of Korean resistance during the occupation by Japan. We remember it as the March 1st Movement.

January 12th will always be a sad day. It's when the earthquake hit Haiti. There were aftershocks for days after, but the 12th is when the phone started ringing.

April showers aren't the only thing that makes Armenians melancholy in spring. The 24th is always remembered as the ultimate commemoration date and it is a chance to pay tribute on a variety of levels. Surely different dates resonate with different memories in this city quilted together from different countries, nationalities and people.
FEATURED ARTIST: KAMEE ABRAHAMIAN

Kamee Abrahamian is a multidisciplinary artist, performer, and producer born in Toronto, Canada. She received her BA in cinema and political science at Concordia University in Montreal and recently graduated with a masters in Expressive Art Therapy from the European Graduate School, with a special focus on an integration of digital media practices. Kamee is mostly nomadic and splits her time on a plethora of work; including a number of film and theatre projects under the umbrella of her production company, Saboteur Productions.

Explosive and tactile images of collective memory. These mixed medium collages are contrived of a fragmented spectrum which kaleidoscope as the viewer is hypnotized by images of intimacy within a life of constant travel. The use of collected textiles on her journeys blended with old photographs found under her late grandmother’s bed illuminate the spirit of the decayed, and manifest them into a work that is enchanted. The two photographs featured are from the artist’s series entitled Mutuality and were captured in Armenia. They reflect the pulse of the emerging country.
AYF Canada’s Youth Corps - Camp Vanadzor is a 2 week free of charge summer camp organized in Vanadzor (Armenia’s third largest city) for children from 8 – 16 years old.

ՀՅԴ ԳԵՄ-ի Վանաձորի ամառնային ճամբարը երկու շաբթուայ անվճար ճամբար մըն է քաղաքի 8-16 տարեկան պատանիկներ համար:

SUPPORT CAMP VANADZOR BY DONATING @ WWW.AYFCANADA.ORG/YC