

ACTION OR PREDICTABLE WAIT?

Posted on February 1, 2015 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



The following is a response to Vahe by Dr. Abrahamian. Being longer than the confines of a comment it's posted as a stand-alone item. Ed.

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1 February 2015

Dear Vahe,

My comment was strictly about [the flyer](#), but you expanded the scope, touching upon legitimacy without spelling out the word and hence obliging me to respond.



There were moments in our history when individuals acted without so called legitimacy. They did, driven by a necessity with the intent of helping our people or voicing the Armenian nation's demands. That's how the political parties were formed; weren't they? In 1965 people were calling "*Hoghereh, Hoghereh*" ("The Lands, the lands") in the streets of Yerevan with no concern about "who" and "how" of representation. Many considered ASALA an aberration and distanced themselves from this "terrorist" formation, but were content when the international community started questioning why young people sacrificed their lives. The illegitimate Karabagh committee was formed representing only the individuals of the group, but ultimately the movement led to the liberation of Artsakh.

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Our traditional parties, organizations and the clergy have reserved to themselves too much credit regarding the people's outpouring in 1965 in Beirut. At one time you had alluded to 1975 Commemoration in which you took part. I wonder whether you had the opportunity to research the details surrounding the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Genocide which set a precedent for the 60th.

The internecine fratricide had finally subsided in early 60s. The youth had realized what some of the causes were and was determined to turn that tragic page. 1962-1963 was a time of reflection. Within that context a number of young people, leaving aside their ideological differences, banded together.

Dikran Abajian, Serop Apoyan, the Meguerdich Bouldoukian cousins, Yeghishe Hajakian, Marzbed Margossian, Jirair Tanielian and others came together discussing the shortcomings of the community as they perceived. Out of those meetings a blueprint of how to commemorate 1965 as a unified community came about--that's two years ahead of the date. They approached their senior friends, including the late Kevork Ajemian, Hagop Boghossian, Vahe Oshagan, and also lawyer Kasbar Derderian, the eminent leftist of the Diaspora who lives in Beirut. Primarily through members of the various student unions existing then, the idea gained traction throughout the Lebanese Armenian community. Through lobbying, propagating the idea that Armenians should note the commemoration in unison, coaxing, at times threatening to expose the inane stubbornness and narrow-mindedness of some leaders, eventually the so called "legitimate" leaders of the day conceded and executed the commemoration at Camille Chamoon Stadium.

I know, you treat such narratives with a grain of salt, and rightly so. People mentioned above are still around and you may ask them. I have recorded as I recall. The only way to establish the veracity of sequence of events is to open the **minutes** of the Armenian parties to the public, which I doubt they'd do.

Were we representatives? No. Were we elected? No. We did not mind that we were nobody in the public's eye, and we were not even noted or mentioned anywhere, but we acted according to what we believed was *sine qua non*. Similarly today, there is the absolute necessity of a body that can and should represent the legitimate rights of the **descendants of the Ottoman Armenian citizens** who

were butchered or driven away from their homeland. NCWA (National Congress of Western Armenians) is responsibly attempting to meet what's required in a similar fashion as the youth performed in the early 60s leaving aside ideological differences and partisan loyalties.

There aren't that many people left like me or probably also like you who are immediate descendants of individuals who came alive from the massacres or were born during that period. Already we are in the third and fourth generation. When are we going to wake up? Wait for the traditional parties? They have no chance; unless they abrogate and change their constitutions, and relinquish a sizable membership to legally qualify to be claimants. I am not questioning their noble motives at all. I am pointing to a legal parameter. How can you represent a strict contingency when you are all over the globe, also in the Republic of Armenia and your membership includes also non-descendants of Ottoman Armenian citizens? Of course, they can and will play an important political role, but let's not get carried away with slogans, populism and emotions when evaluating legalities.

Harout Sassounian, Dr. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian and others, to my knowledge, since 2009 and possibly much earlier have advocated the creation of a Diasporan entity based on democratic principles, the ballot. I am aware of such attempts in the past too. There were many luminaries like Governor George Deukmejian who were present at the USC conference in 2010 to launch such a body. More than 400 people were present, some from non-north-American Armenian communities. Nobody questioned the intent either during the conference or subsequently. Am I for it? Of course I am, but unfortunately so far it has not materialized for a number of reasons that the media and the forums reflected upon. In France a trial was attempted. Again, regrettably, it failed.

Thus, my question to you is, do we wait for democratic niceties to bear fruits? How long? Please, tell me whether it can be done and how?

Meanwhile there is work to be done in "the garden". Are you willing to pitch in? It's not good enough to raise questions. They beg answers.

Amicably,

Dikran Abrahamian

