ADEPT AT SELF-SABOTAGE

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The ancient Greeks had a word for it: *akrasia*--acting against one's better judgment.

The latest drama in this suicidal tradition is being enacted in the Montreal suburbs of Ahuntsic-Cartierville and Laval-Les Îles. Viken Attarian, a long-time Federal Liberal Party official, writer, scholar, public speaker, and community activist, is seeking nomination as the Liberal Party candidate in next year's federal elections. . Running against him for the nomination is Norair Serengulian, former president of the local Liberal riding association and a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). In Laval-Les Îles, Liberal Vicken Darakjian is running against several non-Armenians. Ohannes (Hovig) Tufenkjian is campaigning in Vimy.

Some months ago, when Attarian launched his nomination campaign, he made a point to meet the ARF Committee *Hertabah* to explain his political and community priorities, and to solicit the backing of the organization. The ARF *Hertabah* received Attarian with great enthusiasm, told him he was the best candidate and that the ARF would support his nomination. Attarian has, for many years, been a leading light in the Quebec branch of the Liberal Party of Canada and is well known nationally as well where he sits on the federal electoral platform committee of the party. Of the several nomination candidates in his riding, Attarian is the only candidate that has to date put forward any concrete policy proposals, both for the riding and for the country.

Apparently, Serengulian had previously announced to the ARF that he wouldn't be a candidate because the election campaign would be financially onerous. But shortly after, when Serengulian declared that he too was seeking the same nomination as Attarian, the ARF switched its support to him. Serengulian's major experience is with Hye Tadd. It is not clear at this stage whether it is the ARF that pushed Serengulian to run or it is the candidate who dragged the organization behind him. But what is clear is the subsequent situation of two Armenian contenders in the same riding.

In Laval, rather than support Liberal Vicken Darakjian, the ARF is directly and indirectly backing some of the other non-Armenian contestants. Interestingly, the ARF is also aiding a candidate of the New Democratic Party (NDP). Although in previous elections the ARF didn't demonstrate affinity to the NDP, it's now raising money for that party's candidate.

In Vimy, Tufenkjian, who also has ARF's backing, is running against Eva Nassif, a long-time Liberal and close colleague of Attarian in the Policy Commission of the Liberal Party and a supporter of the Armenian community. Tufenkjian is a newcomer with little chance of winning against the entrenched Nassif.

In recent years certain Armenian Diaspora communities have made tangible efforts to put aside their political differences and work together for the common good of their communities and of the Armenian Nation. This maturity and sophistication has been hard-earned, following decades of internecine battles. By playing party politics the Quebec ARF is taking a retrograde step. The organization's decision is especially damaging on the eve of the Genocide Centennial when it's imperative that Armenians become one voice.

It's worthwhile to consider the farce that was played out in a previous Quebec election when, because of vote-splitting, the Armenian candidate lost to a politician who was brazenly backed by the Turkish consul. Will the current divisions precipitate further losses by Armenian hopefuls in Quebec?

What's to explain the ARF strategy?

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Nomination hopefuls in the upcoming Montreal-area elections appeared on "Hay Horizon" television. The below video-clip was provided by nomination candidate Viken L. Attarian.
The presentations of the other candidates will be posted as they become available.