

'ARMENIAN UNITY' REVISITED

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✘ **Avedis Kevorkian**, Philadelphia, PA, 24 August 2015



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(As an aside, I would appreciate someone translating it into English. Big words scare me, which is

why I try to avoid using them, and even if Dr. Demirdjian has decided that I am a nut-case, I must confess that I am flattered that someone has taken out of his busy life, some time to tell the world what he thinks of me.

(At least, that is what I think he was saying. Perhaps, it had something to do with what I have written. If it is about the latter, perhaps, I will be permitted to say something further.)

Dr. Demirdjian refers to an essay that appeared in another publication. I must say that what appeared was not what I submitted. For instance, its submitted headline read: "It Is Time For The Armenians To Unite. Oh, hum!" The "Oh, hum!" was omitted, and it got worse from there on. Thus, what I said did not appear and it would have been better if the essay were rejected. But, that is now the color of another horse.

Dr. Demirdjian obviously feels that all the Armenians should be united and should speak with one voice, since he keeps attacking a/the "Lone Ranger." As I recall that worthy fighter for justice in the Old West, he resolved the problems that the townsfolk, though their Sheriff or their Marshall and their posses, could not. In other words, one man (or, two, since he had a cohort in his faithful Indian friend Tonto) accomplished what a group could not.

If I read correctly his comments about me and my shortcomings, were he to have been the producer of the program, he would have seen to it that the scripts were always changed to read, "Sheriff (to the Masked Man) '**who gave you the authority to butt into our local affairs?**'" And then the townspeople would have met in the Church and would have elected representatives who would have met and would have discussed the issue and would have decided how to deal with the problem, and. . . .

But. . .ah. . .eh. . .uh. . .um. Wasn't that why the Lone Ranger was needed in the first place?

Dr. Demirdjian (and others who are legion) seem to think that I am against "unity" of the Armenians. No, that is not quite my position, since I know that that there never will be "unity" until the total Armenian population in the world is reduced to one person. The major question is WHY the Armenians SHOULD be "united," when no other ethnic group is "united" and WHY Armenians should waste their time trying to unite the Armenians. But, that is not going to be discussed here.

My problem is that all the talk of establishing yet-another organization that professes to speak for the Armenians is as useless as teats on a bull. Does he--and the other advocates of a new organization "unifying" the Armenians--really think that the dozens of existing Armenian organizations are going to stand still and allow a rival to take over what they see as their (admittedly self-assigned) role as the representatives of the Armenians?

In the early 1970s, a group of Armenians decided to form a "lobby" in Washington and invited to join, among others, *representatives* of the existing Armenian so-called "political" parties. I declined the invitation to join, saying that by inviting "organizations" to be founders, the new group was sowing the seeds of its own destruction--and that only individuals be invited.

First, one so-called "political" party tried to take over the new organization and failed, so it set up a rival group. Then, another so-called "political" party tried to take over the new group and failed so it, too, set up a rival. At one time, the pip-squeak Armenian Community in America had three, 3, count 'em 3, three "lobby" groups in Washington! Now, only two organizations compete with each other, in keeping with Armenian belief that "If one is good, two is better."

Does he really think that what happened in the early 1970s won't be repeated; that the so-called "political" parties won't try to run the new group? If one of them succeeds, the others will withdraw and reform their disbanded organization, or will form a new one to compete. If none of them succeed, . . . They are Armenians, after all.

Actually, the Armenians are unified, and they show it when a new organization is formed which they see as a rival. They unite to kill it.

What Dr. Demirdjian fails to say in his "attack" (is that too strong a word?) on me is that I indicated in the essay that I have no intention of reading the book in question. It turns out that it is his book and he is its author!

So, let me propose a deal. I will apologize for all my shortcomings (real or imagined) if the book in question includes (for instance):

--a statement: "Therefore, all existing so-called "political" parties--and their associated organizations--must disband and throw their entire efforts and resources behind this new organization."

--a statement: "Therefore, a good place--and the easiest--to begin is the unification of the Armenian Church. There never was a good reason for the division; there isn't now a good reason for its continued division."

--a statement: "In elections for offices in the new organization--whether local, national, international--there will be no slate of officers, only individuals."

--a statement: "This organization will not dictate to Yerevan but will serve as its instrument in the various host countries of the Diaspora to implement the policies and programs of the Yerevan government."

If these passages do exist in the book, please accept my apologies, Doctor, and "Bravo" for your courage. I am glad that you agree that a good place to start a unifying process would be with the Church? Now, that is novel! Why should the Armenians be proud of a Church that has been described as "One Church with Two Heads"! In my medical dictionary, a creature with one body and two heads is a monster (that's right, a "monster") and it is called *diprosopus tetrotus*.

In striving for "unity," let us not forget that the vast majority of Diaspora Armenians don't belong to any Armenian organization. It is estimated that there are seven-million Armenians in the Diaspora. Would it be a safe guess that possibly only 7000 of them belong to and support--and are dues-paying card-carrying members of--the so-called "political" parties, for instance? Could it be that the Diaspora knows something that our so-called (self-appointed) "leaders" don't?

But, enough.

It is because over the years a few Armenians have seen the stupidity of what passes for the Armenian Diaspora's love and support for rival and redundant organizations, that these individuals have taken it upon themselves to do what has to be done "without authority" from the existing organizations. In many of my writings, I have referred to my father's failed attempts until he, too, reached a point to live with what existed. So, too, my mother's attempts in her own right. (Yes, she, too, was a dreamer.)

Funny. In all the conversations and writings about my father, I never thought of him as a Lone Ranger. And Mom his Tonto.

It Is Time For The Armenians To Unite. Oh, hum!

Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA, 7 July 2015

For sometime, the June 18 edition of the **Courier** has been shifted from one side to the other on the small table beside my easy chair where I do the bulk of my reading, because I had told myself that I must respond to a yet-another Keghart editorial, "[A Blueprint for the Future](#)," which was touting a book that was promoting (how novel!) the creation of a new organization for the uniting the Diaspora.

The reason the publication was being shifted around was that although I knew I had to respond, I just couldn't get a handle on the response, I couldn't find the peg on which to hang the reply.

Then, the old hoary story came to mind of the three young Christian boys who came upon and began pummeling a Rabbi. He asked why they were picking on him, and they replied "You killed Christ." Defending himself, he said that he had nothing to do with it and that it was two-thousand years ago, and one of them replied, "Yes, but we learned about it yesterday,"

Throughout my life, I have been hearing the plea that it is time the Armenians unite (or variations of it). It comes in cycles as, it would appear, someone new recognizes what he sees as a problem. Indeed, if truth to tell, I, too, asked that about Armenian unity.

After my father stopped laughing--and, no doubt, wondered if he, indeed, had sired such a stupid son--he explained the facts (of Armenian) life.

He explained that the one thing that will unite the Armenians is the opposition by all existing organizations to the emergence of a new organization that might challenge what each sees as its claim to be the only worthy group to represent the Armenians.

He explained that back in the late 1920s he had started an organization called the Armenian American Civic Association which was well received at its first meeting. One day, he met a friend on the street and, as they started speaking, the friend said that there was no need to spend time talking "now, because I will see you this evening." My father said he asked what was going on in the evening, and he was told that it was another meeting of the Civic Association.

My father said that he knew nothing about a meeting, and was puzzled since he had been the founder. He learned that the speaker was to be the (out of town) editor of one of the Armenian newspapers (which was the organ of one of the so-called "political" parties). My father said since he knew nothing about it he didn't go, because he suspected what would happen. He was right. The organization had no third meeting and it died.

About ten years later, in the late 1930s, undaunted and thinking that the Armenians had progressed mentally as well as physically out of Anatolia, he started a new organization, the Armenian American Professionals Association, because, by then he said, there were many dentists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc.

Yes, it never reached the third meeting because at the (unknown to him) second meeting the main speaker was the (out of town) editor of another Armenian newspaper (which was the organ of one of the so-called "political" parties).

Both ("rival") editors had the same message--though about ten years apart--there was no need for a

new organization, because "his" party represented all the Armenians.

Both of these stories were new to me, and became part of my education about the Armenians.

Late in 1945, some veterans of the War came to my father's office and said that they were going to set up an Armenian Veterans organization and would my father support them. I was present and I still remember my father's joy. With tears in his eyes he said that he would and said, in effect, "At last, the new generation has taken over as the voice of the Armenians." He supported it fully in Armenian in his newspaper, and I in English.

The first meeting drew more than 1500 Armenians that more than filled the largest ballroom in Philadelphia--so much so that tables were set up outside in the Ballroom's reception area and two tables were set up in the area off the elevators.

Within five years it was dead. One of the so-called "political" parties managed to get its slate of candidates elected, and the organization was disbanded. (It was disbanded in such a hurry that it left money in its bank account, which I managed to rescue from the Commonwealth. But, that is another story!)

Let us take a pause, here.

Just think. If the idea of that Philadelphia veterans group had spread to other cities and had those groups united into one massive national Armenian Veterans of America organization, today it would be a formidable force--presidents and candidates for the presidency would speak before its meetings in search for support; Congress would listen as a representative pleaded for an Armenian cause. But, enough. Your imagination can fill in all the possibilities and ramifications.

Suffice it to say--and to repeat--that the one thing that will unite the Armenians is the united attack by existing groups on a new organization that seeks to unite the Armenians. "Of course, I want a uniting organization, as long as it is mine."

There are other examples I can cite, including my mother's failed attempts. Yes, she, too, was a dreamer.

So, now, here we are in the 21st century, and the Armenians--with the help of the Turks--have physically left Anatolia, but their minds are still back there. They--or at least those who purport to be thinking for them--still live in (and apparently support) a divided Diaspora, still accept (and apparently support) a *diprosopus tetrotus* church, yet still think that the Armenians are ready for unity.

No, I have not read the book touted by Keghart, nor do I intend to since I am sure that it will not reveal that (and how) the Armenians have progressed in their thinking.

While I am in this nasty mood, let me say that any organization arguing for the "return" to Yerevan (of which it was never a part!) of so-called "Western Armenia" by the Turks is one that is doomed to failure. Why? Unless this author has a better case and can answer the one question I ask of anyone who so advocates, he is--let us be kind--foolish. And, that question is: "What are you going to do with the millions of Kurds and Turks now living there?"

In all these talks about "unity," I never seem to hear anyone saying: "Let us start by unifying the Church." Now, wouldn't that be some sort of proof that the Armenians are now living in the 21st century?

Or, putting it another way: "What are you going to do with the 19th-century mentality of the Armenians?"

