DELUDED, DUPED, DISINGENUOUS ARMENIANS

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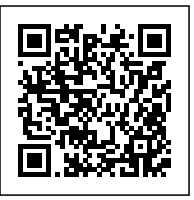

Editorial, 26 June 2014

A few days after April 24 of this year a U.S.-based Armenian newspaper ran the headline: "Ethnic Armenian Elected Chairman of Turkish-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry" (TACCI). It's difficult to believe that Armenians, who sometimes take inordinate pride in the success of other Armenians, were too ecstatic to learn that Aret Tashciyan was to lead the TACCI, the brainchild of the Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce. One of Tashciyan's marine insurance firm's clients is Burak, the 34-year-old son of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan Jr. has six ocean-going vessels. He must have been given a big piggy-bank when he was five.

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Mr. Tashciyan's election destined to be another exhibit in the Turkish propaganda campaign to firm up Ankara's claim that Armenians and Turkey are working together as they merrily ride into the sunset. Ankara would like to convince the US and the EU that Armenians and Turkey are patching up their differences in secret. Why in secret? Because these friendly Armenians are "afraid of Armenian extremists."

As Armenians know, these secret rapprochements are part of Turkey's delaying and obfuscating tactics. Whenever the heat is on (in this instance the Genocide centennial), Turkey blares progress is being made between its representatives and "prominent Diaspora Armenians". Turkey's fabulist Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu, who takes back seat to no one when it comes to chutzpah, stated several months ago: "These are our people…These are people whose culture and language resemble ours…." It must come as news to Davutoglu, who has a PhD in political science and international relation, that although the Anglo-Saxons came from Germany, the two people fought two world wars in the past century.

This is how Ankara's low-IQ cunning tries to insult Armenians: Armenians and Turks like dolma; Armenians and Turks like lahmajun; Armenians and Turks like shish kebab. Ergo, Armenians and Turks can become friends were it not for those pesky terrorist Tashnags. Perhaps Ankara should call its gimmick ''the Dolma Imperative'.

A cultural apostle of Davutoglu is Prof. Artin H. Arslanian of New York's Marist College. The good

professor, sharing his deep thoughts with "Today's Zaman" (June 3, 2012), said: "Turks remind us of ourselves. Our English accents are the same. We look alike. We have the same manners. We eat the same kind of food." Is there a whiff of shish kebab in the air? Shouldn't Arslanian be teaching genealogy?

The ivory tower denizen went on to expound: "Some people are more rational, more open-minded, more willing to sit down and talk, and see commonalities among the Turkish and Armenian people." Commonalities such as sarma, etc.?

"They look at this issue dispassionately… but such people are not in powerful position in the Armenian Diaspora," added the professor. Hint, hint…fascist Tashnags are busy deciding Diaspora's Turkey policies.

"My issue has been that some people have used the genocide as a platform for the leadership and for their career…It is a job. That is the 'genocide' industry," opined the professor from his ivied perch.

So it comes as no surprise that Arslanian's inane statements have procured him in an invitation to the Turkish Historical Society shindig (June 13, 14) in Cambridge, England, along with the Genocide-denying rancid regiment of Edward Erickson, Justin McCarthy, Christopher Gunn, Gul Tokay, Hasan Kaylan, and one Hakan Yavuz. The latter suspiciously close to the Turkish Military Intelligence.

Near the end of the interview Arslanian made another brazen somersault in logic, which would have confused Descartes. "The issue of the Armenian Genocide is not our problem…it is Turkey's problem. Let the Turks come to terms with their history," said he. He probably gave an A+ to himself for the outrageous escape-artist routine. Arslanian concluded that a major lesson he had taken from the Genocide was to "be kind." Now, isn't that peachy, hunky-dory, and plain decent of the humanist professor? And shouldn't Armenians learn from him and walk away from their rights and their 4,000-year-old homeland, and pray that in 2,999 a Turkish PM would admit that during an unnamed war long, long ago certain things went wrong (as they are apt to) and some insubordinate Ottoman sergeant, probably a Mountain Turk, inadvertently killed some Armenians.

Who are these Armenians who talk to Turkish agents in camera? How many are they? Who do you represent? What's their agenda? What are their qualifications? Who gave them permission to talk on our behalf? What are they whispering to Ankara?

Vahan Kololian is a public-spirited Torontonian whose family has a long philanthropic history. Over the years he has tried to act as modem between his pal--the Turkish consul--and the Armenian community. He supported the notorious TARC and the protocols. His Mosaic Institute has hosted the Turkish Armenian Business Development Council, and on at least two occasions he has involved himself (on the Turkish consul's behalf?) in the Kessab protests and the Toronto Alevi/Armenian campaign to stop the erection of a phony Turkish monument in a Brantford, Ontario cemetery. Mr. Kololian doesn't represent anyone except himself, yet Turkey's diplomats surely include him when they claim they are in contact with "prominent Diaspora Armenians".

A point man between Ankara and the "prominent Diaspora Armenians" is one Kaan Soyak, co-chair, along with Arsen Ghazarian, of the Turkish Armenian Business Development Council. The TABDC is nothing if not modest. It describes itself as the "international leader in promoting improved Turkish/Armenian relations". Its goal is peace through culture and trade. The culture part is a sop. The agenda driving TABDC is business. Peace not through justice, but peace through business. The TABDC aspires to subdue and subsume discussion of the Genocide through lucre. It's the globalist, neo-con ideology of "better living through materialism". Soyak and his ilk must be students of the General Motors CEO, who back in the early '50s, said: "What's good for the General Motors is good for America." Busy-body Soyak has said that he wants "the economic dimension of the ties come to the surface in shaping the relations between the two countries." Evet, Mr. Soyak, evet.

Armenia has little to sell Turkey. According to the most recent statistics, Armenia imports (indirectly) from Turkey goods worth $300 million and exports about $3 million of raw tobacco and leather. Open trade with Turkey would flood Armenia with cheap and subsidized Turkish consumer goods and ravage the little industry that exists in Armenia. Through investments, Turkey could de facto "own" Armenia. What Ottoman Turkey couldn't achieve by killing 1.5 million Armenians, Turkey would do so through the sale of purple shampoo, Ulker biscuits, and dried apricots probably harvested from Armenian-owned orchards.

Journalist Garen Yegparian has nicknamed TADBC "TARC-lite". He has written: "Those involved are the type who can't see beyond their commercial noses…" Yegparian called Armenians who meet Turkey's representatives "Turmens". Turmens are people who have 'ian' in their surname but are "frequently indistinguishable from the highest functionaries of the Turkish government," explained Yegparian. Some Turmens attended a 'closed-door dialogue' at the recent Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation pow-wow at the University of California in Irvine.

Soyak is an avid student of "let's first study what really happened until the cows come home" school: You have your history books; we have our history books. You have your historians; we have our historians…arguing ad infinitum until boredom sets in or the Armenian Diaspora assimilates and melts away.

Are these Armenians who make individual contacts with Turkey's agents dupes and well-meaning people who don't realize they are playing into the hands of the Turkish strategy? Don't they realize the Ankara conspiracy to derail all efforts vis-à-vis the Genocide, to scuttle Hye Tadd? Do they have personal agendas? Do they realize that today's Turkey was created on wealth expropriated from Armenians, as historian Taner Akcam has written? Do they care that Turkey's Cankaya Kosku presidential palace was confiscated from Ohannes Kasabian and the US Incirlik Base near Adana belongs to the Mahdessian, Bakalian and Haroutunian families? Don't they comprehend Ankara's divide and conquer policy? Don't they understand that their secret meetings with the Turkish representatives are blown up a hundred fold by Ankara into something which damages our nation? Don't they understand that an insidious Turkey is inserting itself into our communities as a

stakeholder? Haven't these Armenians heard Davutoglu's claim that Diaspora Armenians are actually Turkey's Diaspora? We belong to them! Who knew?

For starters, Armenians eager for business deals with Turkish businesses should ask their Turkish colleagues whether they know what happened to the 30,000 kilos of gold confiscated from Armenian individuals that the Ottoman government deposited, in 1916, at the Reichsbank in Berlin. But then again, why ruin a good business reception, a hearty meal with such an insensitive question?

Can these clueless business people tell us what have they achieved in the past two decades (the TADBC was founded in 1997) through their talks with Turkish agents? Rather than witnessing their promised positive influence on Ankara, we have watched Turkey's hand in the invasion of Armenian Kessab. And it can't be an accident that it's the Armenian "Nor Keugh" which has been the target of recent attacks in Aleppo. As a number of Aleppo Armenian leaders have said what's happening there is the continuation of the Genocide.

We have to talk with the Turks. However, the talks should be with Turks such as Ragip Zarakolu, Serkan Engin, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak, Orhan Kemal Cengiz, Taner Akcam, Ayse Gunaysu, Ali Ertem, Selim Deringil, Engin Deniz Akarli, Halil Bertkay, Yavuz Baydar, Ugur Ungor… righteous Turks who acknowledge the Genocide. When the talk is with Turkish authorities, it should be conducted by organizations which represent us. Ottoman Turkey established a school for diplomats more than two-hundred years ago. Turkey's representatives are old hands at diplomatic fancy footwork. They are savvy silver foxes. Our well-meaning amateurs are innocent lambs.

Armenians who enjoy basking in the attention of slick Turkish diplomats, in having meetings in camera, and in meals with Ankara agents should remember that they are breaking bread with people who broke our backs, made us exiles and deny doing so to this day.