INVESTING IN WESTERN ARMENIA

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Category: Opinions

A PASSAGE TO ARARAT

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard". Gaylord Anton Nelson

Prof Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Ph.D., Los Angeles, 18 May 2020

Paleontologists, who study ecologies of past life forms using fossils, have charted the evolution of early man in a fascinating progression. Humanlike creatures called "southern apes" lived in Africa nearly four million years ago. About two millions later, a kind of human that we call "handy man" (Homo habilis) began to use stone tools, oldest of which were recently found in Armenia. Hundreds of thousands of years after that, "upright man" (Homo erectus) found out how to use fire. That is why Armenians have always liked Khorovadz!

Next in line came the Neanderthal man who evolved about 250,000 years ago, and died out about 30,000 years ago. By this time, another human being was around. This was "modern man," or Homo sapiens, which means "wise man." On account of favorable ecological conditions, a number of scientists believe he first lived in Armenia and then moved to Europe.

It has been determined that climate and landscape play a crucial role in the formation of every civilization. In many places societies seem to have arisen because of natural advantages which made the area ideal for permanent settlement. In Armenia, for example, crops could be cultivated in abundance in the fertile soil deposited by the life-giving Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers that defined Mesopotamia. These river valleys sustained life better than the nomadic life style, hopping around from place to place to hunt large animals such as mammoths, and gather fruits, berries, and nuts to eat.

According to archeologists of milestone discoveries at Chayonu, Nevali Cori, Tille Hoyuk and others located in Western Armenia (present-day Turkey), modern man developed farming, kept animals and made cave paintings, formed organized religion, all of the settled life began in Western Armenia as the birthplace of civilization. Contrary to the false concept of the Fertile Crescent, dubbed as the cradle of civilization, the triangle of Mesopotamia begins with Armenia, then goes down to Assyria, Babylonia, and Sumer. The vast stretch of land between Assyria and the Mediterranean Sea was a barn land, not suitable for cultivation and nor for habitation. The American historian who first mentioned the term Fertile Crescent never meant it to be the cradle of civilization. To include Israel in the cradle of civilization, most historical books by Jewish writers, refer to the Fertile Crescent as the cradle of civilization and never mention Armenia as the beginning of the glorious triangle formed by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, known as Mesopotamia. Read more in The Triangle of Trade in

the Cradle of Civilization in which Western Armenia is a significant member of the major nations of Mesopotamia.

Settled life gave rise to patriotism, love of country. If Armenia is the site of the first human settlement based on archeological evidence, then patriotism must have emerged from there too and has become part and parcel of the Armenian heritage. That is why the average Armenian always dreams of Western Armenia --that is why the Armenian Diaspora feels nostalgic about the homeland. Therefore, we must take action to realize the persistent dream no matter how difficult it would be.

In the 19th century, nationalism gripped the civilized world, a feeling of national superiority. Moderate level of nationalism was healthy, but super nationalism made a nation prone to ethnic cleansing, massacres, and genocides as it happened during the Ottoman Empire and during the so-called Turkish War of Independence. For most European nations, super nationalism gave them the impetus and the excuse to colonization and subjugation of other people.

All throughout the evolutionary period, early man fought to defend territories which provided plants and animals to be gathered and hunted. With stone weaponry, fierce battles were waged to the end. Now as then, nations engage in wars with canons and tanks to defend their territories.

As you well know, The Republic of Armenia cannot wage war to regain lost territories to Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Iran. However, the Armenian Diaspora is an independent force to reckon with. It is estimated to be well over 12 million strong. The concept of patriotism began in Armenia. Most Armenians around the world want somehow to regain their homeland but feel helpless against the strength of the two formidable enemies of Turkish origin. So, let us unleash the power of the Diaspora to begin the ball rolling on finding a creative way(s) to get to Western Armenia. At least, let us plant the seeds for future germinations.

In a previous article, a safe suggestion was made to resort to the law of the Right of Return clause to become also citizens of Turkey. Another approach would be to buy our way to Western Armenia. Let us explore this idea further for possible implementation. Don't shake your head that this is a wild idea. It is. In brainstorming, we have to come up with as wild ideas as we possibly could think of. It was wild idea(s) that took us to the moon.

Another idea to get Diaspora's foot in door of its ancestral homeland would be by buying land in Turkey. Anyone can buy real estate in Turkey. One Web site states "Turkish citizenship with real estate investment program, or bank deposit option". Here is an interesting URL for you to explore real estate investment opportunities in Turkey: Turkish Citizenship - by Investment. All legal work would be done by the company selling lands. There are also fertile farm lands in the Western Armenia (so-called Eastern Anatolia).

The Dersim region, where Armenians are the majority, has two main advantages: it has a paradise-like setting and there are a lot of hidden Armenians there to engage them in such a project. What is more interesting is the fact that real estate prices have plummeted during the last ten years for

Eastern Anatolia is currently experiencing an exodus of population to Europe. Better economic opportunities and gentler government treatment are enticing them over. When the time comes, I personally would be ready to invest a small amount of money in a fund consisting of real estate properties in Western Armenia.

We live in a world where dual, triple, and even more citizenship is possible for a person to have. I know a friend who has four passports.

We need to help farmers of Dersim to stay in their ancestral lands.

Western Armenia is not ancient Armenian province lost many thousands of years ago. Faced with the Ottoman soldiers' swords, the choice was Islam or death. Sometimes, a whole village became Islamized to save their life. It is very difficult for the descendants of the survivors to fathom the life-and-death predicament Armenians of the Ottoman Empire had to endure during the Genocide.

Only 100 years ago, we were there, in Western Armenia. Only 100 years ago, our parents, grandparents were working the soil to eke out a living under the oppressive Ottoman Empire rule. Only 100 years ago, we were executed and expelled from our ancestral lands. We still have many survivors of the Genocide who remember life in those enchanting Armenian Highlands.

Granted, as individuals, we do not have the luxury of time nor the means to buy large tracks of land. However, we are able to form, for example, an investment corporation, a fund, or a syndicate to let the hidden Armenians who come out of the shadows to cultivate the properties for profit to cover expenses and to buy more land as years go by. We do not have to go to Turkey to buy land and manage operations.

All we need is an able banker to establish a special fund based on real estate investments in Turkey. Lately, investment bankers have made the switch from public to private equity funds for institutional and individual investors. A special real estate fund can be set up for the Armenian Diaspora. Details of it are beyond the scope of this article.

In the Dersim region (in the Armenian Province of Daron in the Kharpert Villayat), the hidden Armenians have formed The Union of Dersim Armenian Organization, which could be assigned as the local management of properties invested in that area. Likewise, the Armenian Diaspora can form an organization to deal with our hidden Armenians (e.g., Friends of Dersim Armenians Association). Our salaried representative(s) in Turkey will do all that for the Diaspora. This project should be packaged as purely an investment project. The whole motive is to make money.

Let us put the accent on Western Armenia, while waiting to get a big break in regaining it. This would be a great legacy of the Diaspora to the future generations. The idea of investing in Turkey is not to populate the Western Armenia with the Diaspora Armenians --although that would be great if it were possible. The objective is to create a virtual presence in Western Armenia through property ownership which would also serve as a moral and economic support to our hidden Armenians.

Some skeptics may question the risk. Naturally, there is no venture without any risk. While the risk will not pertain to life and limb, but the Turkish government may decide to expropriate the Armenian Diaspora's purchased lands with the right of eminent domain. We have to be careful not to forget to insure against loss.

The unanimous passage of the U.S. Senate Res. 150 reaffirmation of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide has renewed great interest in and ardent hope toward the possible realization of the Armenian Cause. It will take an eternity for the government of Turkey to accept responsibility for the Genocide of 1915-1923. Turkish officials know full well the dire consequences of such an admission. No sooner they would accept the veracity of the Genocide, Armenians would become irredentist, demanding their lost lands and properties.

Let us learn from the parody of two hungry vultures sitting on a tree, talking to each other. One of them responds to the other: "Patience, my ASS! I am going to k-i-l-l something! The Diaspora will get nowhere without some sort of sacrifice, some sort of entering the Homeland from the backdoor, so to speak. As Aristotle aptly said, "You will never do anything in this world without courage." Let us muster up enough courage to experiment with keeping the fire under our new generations to persevere and to prevail by trying different ideas to liberate our Western Homeland when the opportunity presents itself. We should always remember that true patriotism demands willingness to sacrifice for one's country in action and not in fancy words.

While patience is a virtue, inaction is a dangerous position when facing the acid of time. We should not lapse into wait and hope for the ultimate break to come by. We should create the opportunity in some ways. There is not just one single strategy to win back our Western-Armenian Homeland. Creativity is the avenue to multiple ways toward the realization of our dreams of one day going back to Ararat.



Instead of showing you the usual non-descriptive map of Western Armenia, here is a vivid landscape picture of a slice of our Homeland where many hidden Armenians currently live in the rugged heart of so-called Eastern Anatolia (i.e., The Armenian Highlands). The Dersim region (part of present-day Tunceli Province) is considered to be a geographical gem and Turkey's Switzerland. Michael Benanav of The New York Times, dubbed the area as "Paradise in Turkey's Munzur Valley" (in Puragn-Manzallian Lerner in Kharpert Kavar) and an "Anatolian Shangri-La". Is it worth investing in your Homeland?! You be the judge of it by listening to your own conscience.

There are no comments yet.