

CACOPHONY AND EUPHONY

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Harut Der-Tavitian, Los Angeles, November - December 2020

Խփեցէք Աղմուկ եւ Անդորր ընթերցելու համար հայերէն բնագիրը: Խմբ.

Do you remember the press conference of President Levon Ter-Petrosyan on Sept. 26, 1997, particularly the section dedicated to Artsakh where he offered mutual concessions? What did the president expect when he addressed the people in his own words, "have a serious debate in the press and in public meetings about Armenians' most pressing problem, the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh and possible ways of resolving it." What happened? Again, in his own words: "The reaction of the opposition did not come out of the confines of swearing, labelling, and distorting the issue. No sensible suggestions were made, no alternative programs were presented, and no substantial counter arguments were offered." In other words, when the president asked for a serious debate, the answer was to make noise and muddy the waters so as to seize power.

It is very painful that today we witness the same opposition resorting to similar tactics to regain power rather than promote peace and participate in serious debate to find the most appropriate solutions to the problems we face.

It is important to emphasize the following parallel:

In the parliamentary elections (May 30, 1999), the alliance led by Vazgen Sargsyan and Karen Demirjyan, won a crushing victory. In light of the democratic victory, the Armenians in Armenia and the Diaspora got excited about the bright future that awaited us. Unfortunately, less than five months later, both were assassinated during the Oct. 27 massacre. Our statehood crumbled, and autocratic rule followed for the next 20 years.

As a result of the Velvet Revolution and the Dec. 9, 2018 parliamentary special elections, democracy and popular enthusiasm were restored. But the old regime, having kept the judiciary under its hold and with its vast financial and propaganda resources, hampered all attempts of systemic reform. The 20 years of devastation could not be reversed in the short term and on Nov. 10, 2020 we suffered the disaster that our first president predicted back on Jan. 8, 1998. "I have a painful premonition that it presents a terrible danger with regards to the existence of both Karabakh and Armenia. Similar to the time preceding Batum and Alexandropol, we are missing the last chance for a favorable solution of the Karabagh conflict and for the prosperity of Armenia."

Today, as after Oct. 27, we are on the eve of being deprived of democracy and only with a tranquil mindset can we overcome this danger, and not with noisy demonstrations and proclamations.

Analyzing the current situation, we come to the following conclusions, guided solely by Armenia's national interests.

1. When a country experiences a shock similar to the one we suffered, the authorities bear responsibility for what happened, resign, and prepare for special elections to gauge and abide

by the decision of the voters.

2. It is also typical for these specials elections to be carried out in stable and democratic conditions, according to the country's constitutional order. Otherwise, the country may go from one extreme to another, intensifying the shock and resulting in terrible damage to the country's statehood.
3. A clear plan must be developed that will provide for democratic, transparent and fair elections. This should give the political forces a chance to present their plans to the people and he who succeeds in gaining the trust of the majority will be able to decide which way to steer the country.
4. Failing to do so and conducting immediate and patchy elections would be tantamount to taking an adventurous path, especially at a time when the Corona virus continues to reap lives. Therefore, the cacophony of public gatherings should not divert our attention from exploring suitable solutions from this anxiety with tranquil minds. To give in to the noise of the square will mean to expect devastating consequences, as it happened in the recent past.

Since Nov. 10 we've been amazed to hear astonishing expressions from political leaders, unworthy of the responsibility they have shouldered. It is also puzzling to surmise that when these politicians use vulgar expressions to express their thoughts, they do not realize they are devaluing their message. Don't they realize that when their words do not match their deeds, they can't expect the populace to believe them? Don't they realize that by expressing contradictory statements they are simply discrediting themselves?

Rather than cite examples of the statements made by the noise-makers, we prefer to present basic facts to inform readers and enable them to make their conclusions based on those facts.

- It was revealed that during the negotiations related to the resolution of the Karabagh conflict, the international community demanded that we withdraw from the seven districts that we controlled.
- According to the Key West negotiations (2001), the region of Meghri was to be handed over to Azerbaijan and in return Nagorno Karabakh would be annexed to Armenia. Thus we would have lost our border with Iran and fallen into further blockade. The agreement was ready to be signed. Heydar Aliyev surprisingly rejected it after returning to Azerbaijan.
- According to the Madrid Principles (2007), the population of Karabagh would have the same ratio as it did in 1988--meaning 90% of the population of Shushi would be Azeris.
- Armenia had agreed during the 2011 Kazan talks to hand over the seven regions, but it was rejected by Azerbaijan which put forward additional demands.

It is now apparent the type of conditions that were being imposed on us. During these negotiations we witnessed Azerbaijan acquire billions of dollars in armament. Meanwhile, Armenia's leaders failed to invest in the military, left the army with the outdated weapons of the '80s, and instead built

palaces for themselves by plundering the country. And today the vessels of these people give patriotic sermons that they gave us triple holiday. No, gentlemen. It was your predecessors who gave us those holidays. You gave us October 27, March 1, and banditry.

It is worth quoting one of the creators of the Triple Holiday, Commander Vazgen Sargsyan: "Everything is mixed up. An outcast with third-grade education can with one machine gun and four knives play games with the fate of the nation... Monstrous suspicion and intolerance in our hearts, how will we support each other tomorrow? We are tired of talking about unity and quoting Nzhdeh. Nothing came out... We have no right to procrastinate. Let's hurry as long as the dark forces have not pitted us against each other, as long as the people still believe in us."

We were putting the finishing touches to this article when we read an important statement made by the president of the Artsakh parliament, Arthur Tovmasyan. "All the documents put on the negotiating table at all times: Key West, Paris Principles, Madrid Principles, the Kazan document, Lavrov's plan, have never expressed the core interests of not only the population of Artsakh but also of all Armenians. In April 2016, the third president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, and former president of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan met 22 deputies. Sargsyan urged us to agree to hand over the seven districts. We said that the Madrid principles do not reflect the Armenian people's interests. He replied that should we decline, similar to the song "Kars, Kars" we will one day hear the song "Stepanakert, Stepanakert."

Having in mind the above information and not ruling out new revelations, we ask: "What is this cacophony? Why do certain factions incite passions with extremist expressions instead of weighing the facts with a tranquil mind and drawing relevant decisions? We cannot forget that the massacre of Oct. 27 was perpetrated by such noisemakers. When will we learn from experience not to repeat the same mistakes?"

There are no comments yet.