

OPPORTUNITY FOR A RAG REVIVAL

Posted on April 10, 2023 by Keghart



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Editorial, 10 April 2023

For more than two decades the Ramgavar Party (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party), one of the three major diaspora political parties, has been adrift because of a disagreement about its choice of leadership following the passing of the old guard (Kersam Aharonian, Prof. Parounag Tovmassian and Maitre Hrachia Setragian). This has resulted in a fissure in the traditional party and has diminished its activities, effectiveness, its past allure to attract competent editors and overall stature. At this late date, we don't want to delve into the reasons why the split took place except to suggest that the decisions as to who would lead the party played a major role in its fissure.

As much as we mourn the recent passing of long-time RAG leader Edmond Azadian, we maintain his departure provides the leaders and the executives of the two factions a unique opportunity to get together, iron out their differences, hold a conference and elect a new leader and executive. As his recent descriptive makes it clear, Dr. Arshavir Geunjian, who has been appointed RAG leader (Azadian faction), is a caretaker until elections are held to determine Mr. Azadian's successor.

We understand one of the factions of the party (Mike Kharabian's) will hold a gathering of delegates in Yerevan in May. Kharabian would be fatally remiss in his duties if he doesn't invite Dr. Geunjian and his executive to the Yerevan gathering.

Since the fissure of RAG, the party—that is the two factions—have lost the public's confidence and respect. Their standing has diminished. Some people have even begun to make jokes about the party(ies). In some communities, such as in Lebanon, people in general and even some party members do not know who is who in the party and to which faction they belong.

One hundred years ago (1923), Hovhanness Kachaznuni, the first prime minister of the Republic of Armenia, declared *Dashnaksutyun Has Nothing More to Do*. Times proved otherwise. Along Kachaznuni's lines we are tempted to ask, *Does Ramgavar party have a role* given the present state of affairs? Yes, or no? We state yes, provided it regains the confidence and respect of the Armenian public—whether members of RAG or not—the venerable party should unite at the earliest. At this critical juncture of our history, we need all our energies.

Ignoring this rare chance to unite and revive would be an unforgivable dereliction of duty to the nation. Some might even suggest it would be treachery.

It's high time for RAG to make peace and move forward. The enemy has entered our threshold: it's the 11th hour to bury the hatchet and focus on what matters -- the welfare of the Armenian people. The Ramgavar Party has, for more than a century, played an important role in our public life. It's high time it assumed once again that vital role.

Comments



Garabed – 2023-04-17 20:09:49

My father was one of the leaders in the Ramgavar Party in the 1940s to the 1950s in the US.. By the year 2000 I didn't know what the Party stood for. It had a top down approach. Such an approach alienated me from all US Armenian Parties. As for Parties in Armenia , it has been a sad situation.



Boghos – 2023-04-10 17:31:43

Well said, Garo Boyadjian. Division, false leadership (sometimes both) can be seen everywhere. The current ARF has perhaps 3 factions at this point. I used to think Armenians were smart. If we do have any smart ones left, they are not visible in the traditional organizations, political parties, churches or even government. Someone once said, "if you cannot keep your own country, then you don't deserve to have one."



H – 2023-04-10 16:23:34

A leader brings together members with different ideas, beliefs, and philosophies to help reset the goal of the the party as a whole. The late Mr. Azadian, unfortunately, seemed to have widened the division. A division which exists for a while now, but more so since 2018, has become so wide and hostile that it may take a miracle to bring about a positive change. Does the goal of the party have the wellness of the Nation or leading individuals at heart? May be it's an apt question to ask in the current environment.



Garo Boyadjian – 2023-04-10 06:44:10

People make a party what it is. If the failings continue it does mean 'the leadership' is ineffective and has no long term future apart from in their little kingdoms. Division is everywhere both in our nation and the diaspora. Where is the will to make us a United Nation in this time of crisis? As the first Christian nation in the world we have failed in the second of the two most important commandments. The first is 'Love your God with all your mind, body and spirit', but just as important is 'Love thy neighbour as you love yourself'. We live in hope.