

FIVE YEARS OF KEGHART.COM

Posted on September 26, 2012 by Keghart

**Five Years of
Keghart.com
2007- 2012**

Category: [Opinions](#)



Publisher Dikran Abrahamian, 25 September 2012

This week the Keghart.com editorial board launched its first publication--"Five Years of Keghart.com". It's an anthology of articles written by the editors since the inception of the website. In Toronto the book will be available through the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society, the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AGBU, and in Montreal through the AGBU Manuel Keusseyan Armenological Lecture Series. In Vancouver copies will be distributed at St.Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church of British Columbia. In Glendale, California, Abril Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies. Readers in other areas may contact dikran@keghart.com While the book is offered free of charge, Keghart encourages readers to make donations at the above centres in support of the "[Help Armenians in Syria](#)" initiative. The 'Preface', by Keghart publisher and the book's co-author Dikran Abrahamian, provides information about the genesis of the website. The '[Introduction](#)', penned by eminent Canadian-Armenian intellectual Viken L. Attarian, evaluates the book's content and Keghart website's vital role in the Armenian Diaspora.- -Editor

Publisher Dikran Abrahamian, 25 September 2012

This week the Keghart.com editorial board launched its first publication--"Five Years of Keghart.com". It's an anthology of articles written by the editors since the inception of the website. In Toronto the book will be available through the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society, the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AGBU, and in Montreal through the AGBU Manuel Keusseyan Armenological Lecture Series. In Vancouver copies will be distributed at St.Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church of British Columbia. In Glendale, California, Abril Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies. Readers in other areas may contact dikran@keghart.com While the book is offered free of charge, Keghart encourages readers to make donations at the above centres in support of the "[Help Armenians in Syria](#)" initiative. The 'Preface', by Keghart publisher and the book's co-author Dikran Abrahamian, provides information about the genesis of the website. The '[Introduction](#)', penned by eminent Canadian-Armenian intellectual Viken L. Attarian, evaluates the book's content and Keghart website's vital role in the Armenian Diaspora.- -Editor

Preface

In 2004 Paul Martin, the "dithering" prime minister of Canada insulted the Armenian community by his absence at the parliamentary session deliberating the Genocide of Armenians. Meanwhile,

despite the widespread acknowledgment by the international community of the veracity of the genocide, hired guns of the denialist state of Turkey continued to spew their poisonous misinformation in various media outlets, sowing doubt in the minds of people who were unaware of the Genocide's history. Many Armenian intellectuals and activists, unattached to Armenian political parties, were not content with this *status quo* when fabrications in the media, by and large, remained unanswered. *Ad hoc* groups (CanAr, Yerevan) were formed and, in addition to other community concerns, they discussed strategies on how to address the onslaught of misinformation. Several initiatives were launched within this context: the PBS petition by a group calling itself "Tidort" (2006), the successful operation of "Bahag" which sent clarifications and refutations to the media (2006-2007), and the gathering of around two-dozen intellectuals at a workshop devoted to Turkish Genocide denial strategy and counter-strategy in Montreal (2007).

Hrant Dink's assassination in Istanbul (January 2007) shocked human rights activists throughout the world. It was a major blow to democracy, human rights, and the recognition of the Genocide of Armenians. The murder highlighted the interrelation of national concerns with human rights and the struggle for true, unadulterated, progressive democracy. While pondering about these matters, it became clear to us that an independent media, in whatever form, reflecting the rich array of views and opinions was lacking in the Canadian Armenian community: international, national (Canadian) matters were not adequately covered and human rights issues were viewed mostly through the limited Armenocentric prism.

In the months following Mr. Dink's martyrdom, the idea of having a new media outlet geared to *odars* (non-Armenians) crystallized and in September 2007 Keghart.com's first issue was launched. As publisher, my ambition was primarily to establish a medium which would become the *porte-parole* of Armenians in Canada *vis-à-vis* the non-Armenian Canadian **intellectual** community.

It was an uncharted territory. Keghart.com started circulating articles to some six-thousand email addresses, five-thousand of which belonged to academics in the humanities who taught at Canadian universities. Over the past five years a constant cohort of about 3500 professors, from the original group, has followed Keghart. This statistic was probably our most rewarding accomplishment. International, Canadian and national-Armenian concerns raised by Keghart.com or republished from other sources were appreciated by many *odar* readers who trickled their messages over time.



A sharply-focused attention to non-Armenians--unfortunately and unintentionally--dissipated following the tragedy of March 1, 2008 in Armenia. Three months later (June) a roundtable discussion, titled "Policy Directions in Post-Election Armenia & March 1 Tragedy", was held in Montreal. The distinguished panelists brought to front and centre the many facets of life in the third republic of Armenia. As of that date, Armenia, Armenianness and all things Armenian "hijacked" Keghart.com making it more ethnocentric. When your house is on fire, you don't look beyond your backyard.

Along with providing a platform for opinions on Armenia-related issues, Keghart.com offered an opportunity to people to express their views on the many problems Armenians face in the Diaspora. Together with other activists, columnists, historians, legal experts and community leaders Keghart.com lent its support to the notion that lack of democratic practices and unity is destructive to the future well-being of the Diaspora. Parallel to this was an awareness of the necessity of an entity that would represent the descendents of the survivors of the Genocide. To this end, public meetings were held in Toronto and Vancouver, highlighting the importance of creating such a body. The Unity Symposium held in Montreal in March 2011 was the culmination of these efforts, and despite a number of reservations, representatives of Keghart.com attended the founding convention of the National Congress of Western Armenians in Sèvres in December 2011.

Believing that the Hamshens, the Dersim Armenians, their Zaza and Kizilbash friends, Turkified and Kurdified Armenians, now returning to their roots, will be the custodians of our occupied lands on the day of justice, Keghart.com's pages were filled with reports and articles about their history, concerns, expectations and activities. Ultimately, they constitute the real human assets on our historic lands.

Regular readers would have noticed that in late 2009, in addition to op-eds, Keghart.com began to publish editorials. This section was introduced by Jirair J. Tutunjian, an award-winning editor of many Canadian magazines. His involvement was instrumental in preparing editorials, organizing, reviewing and final screening of materials to be published. Taking turns, the editorials were penned by him and me, but always in collaboration and through discussion of the content prior to publication. However, during the past year most of the editorials were written by Mr. Tutunjian.

Another development was the establishment of the board, making the website responsive to a collective rather than to an individual. Needless to say, Vako Nicolian's role as technical manager of the website, right from its birth, and his superb handling of day-to-day technical developments were noticed beyond the confines of the team. He was always there whenever contributors, readers and board members asked for assistance in solving problems or needing additional information. Nayiri Abrahamian, as secretary of the board and circulation assistant, helped team functions run smoothly. Her precise records of Keghart.com board meetings were consulted whenever a specific item needed clarification.

I thank immensely all members of the board; without their dedication the website could not have attained its worthy standard, and could not have lasted this long. The readers of Keghart.com, through their impressive subscription numbers, have inspired the board to continue its work. They and all the contributors who "entertained" the intellect with their articles deserve our special thanks. We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our family members who, at times, endured our idiosyncrasies, and continued to support us in a variety of ways.

This anthology contains articles and editorials written by Keghart.com staff since its inception. The

exception is "The Latest Victim of the Armenian Genocide". It predates the other articles by several months. It is included here because Mr. Dink's assassination was the decisive point which led to the launch of the website. The first section is devoted to editorials. The section titled "Views & Reviews" contains Mr. Tutunjian's writings, while "As I was Saying..." is a collection of my articles.

Thank you.

Dikran Abrahamian

Penetanguishene, Ontario

August 30, 2012

