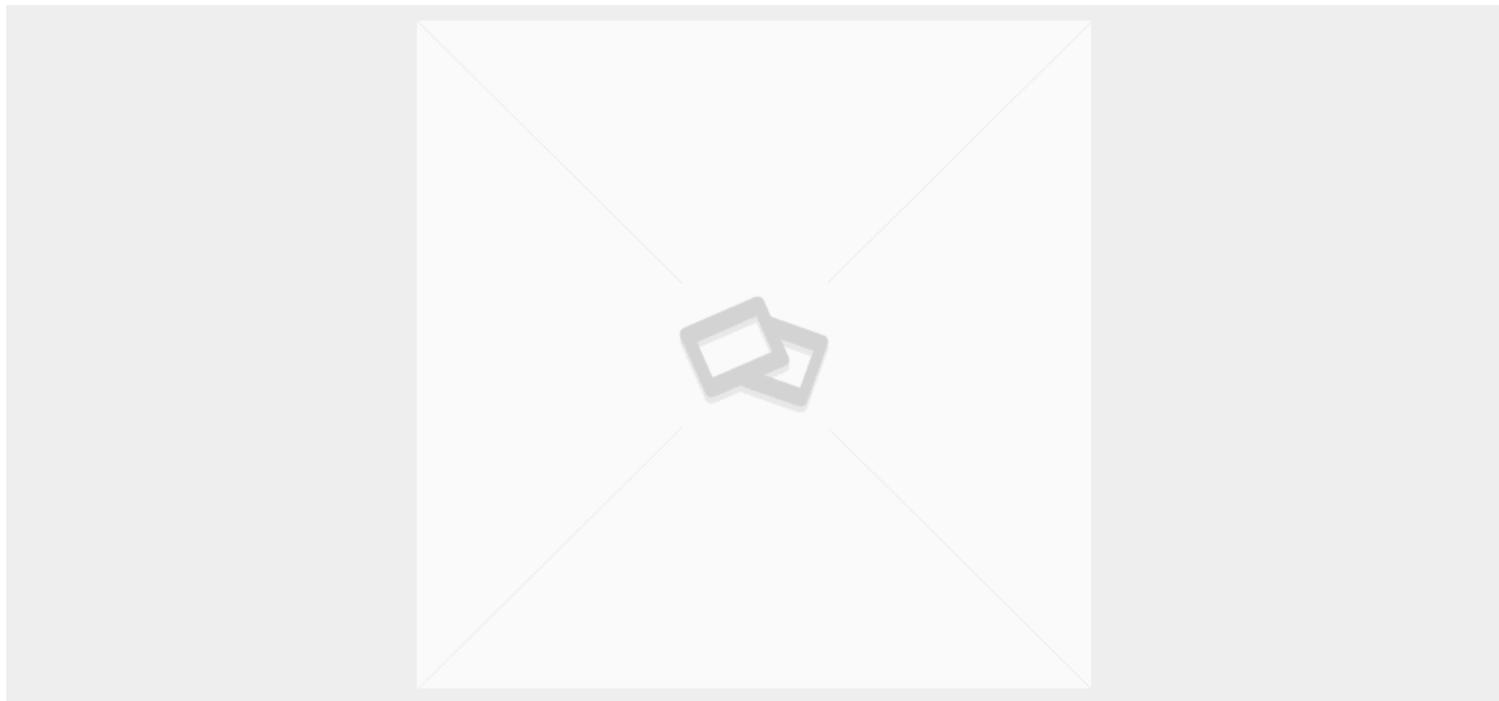


LETTER TO AN ARMENIAN-AMERICAN ACTIVIST

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By Khatchig Mouradian, Editor of Armenian Weekly, Watertown MA, 5 November 2008

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Years from now, you will remember Nov. 4, 2008 as the day on which the final dash to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide began in this country.

Or you will remember it as yet another election day, when yet another president was elected, but despite all hopes, efforts and promises, little changed.

And it won't be President Barack Obama alone who will determine the road taken.

It will also be you.

Do not say, I supported Barack Obama during the elections, I canvassed for him, I made phone calls, I knocked on doors, I voted for him, and now, it is his turn.

"I'm asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change to Washington... I'm asking you to believe in yours," said your President.

And today, before asking him to bring about real change, believe in your ability to do so.

And get to work.

Because the enemies of truth, the adversaries of justice, the masters of the status quo, and those who are on the payroll of denial and falsification will continue working against you in full-force.

But do not forget that the Armenian issue started in Turkey, and that's where it will be resolved. Do not forget that the ashes of the victims, scattered across Anatolia and the deserts of Syria, will not find peace even if all countries recognize their suffering.

Their souls will rest only when Turkey itself recognizes the genocide.

Their souls will rest only when Turkey adorns its cities with memorials for the victims and with statues of Siamanto and Varoujan.

And only when the songs of Komitas echo again in the cities and villages of Anatolia.

Do not forget that all your activism here in the U.S. is just a means to exert pressure on the Turkish state and help educate the public.

It is not an end in itself.

Do not forget that, even when your President acknowledges the Armenian Genocide, you will still have long way to go.

You will still have to struggle and educate. You will still have millions of hearts and mind to win over; the hearts and minds of the people who inherited--willingly or not--the legacy of a genocidal regime.

And, most importantly, do not be discouraged by the pronouncements of those who think they can resolve today or tomorrow the problems between the Turkish state and the Armenians.

The road to truth and justice is a long one.

It did not start with you. And it will not necessarily end in your day.

But it sure requires your dedication.

So roll up your sleeves and get to work.

If you struggle tirelessly, your efforts will bear fruit: Your President, your representatives and your fellow citizens will join hands with you.

And when you succeed in bringing about change in your country, remember that you generation is not the sole victor.

That victory belongs to all the survivors of the Genocide as well as their descendents, who continued to believe in truth and justice.

So when your activism finally brings about the recognition we all would like to see in this country, before the fireworks and celebrations, light a candle in memory of those victims and survivors.

And never forget that you will not have honored the victims of Turkey in 1915, if you do not struggle to end genocides everywhere and at all times.

Now--more than ever before--is your time to effect change.

And, yes, you can.

