

# LIVING WITH CANCER

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✘ Berge Minassian MD FRCP(C), Toronto, 19 April 2011

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This negative stance is a quintessential Armenian posture and behaviour. Quintessential, not because of our genes, but because of our historic experience. There are other people with similar cultural baggage; the two main ones coming to mind--the Natives and Blacks of North America. In our case, the negative attitude is the root of the demise of the Diaspora. In recent years the same destructive virus has infected our homeland, providing the impetus to the mass migration from the country.

To be fair, our fatalism of the Ottoman days served us well--to a certain extent. We survived half a millennium under the Ottoman yoke but remained convinced that someday we would free ourselves. When the First World War started, some of us prematurely became enthusiastic about conflict, believing that it would have positive repercussions for our nation. Some say our enthusiasm triggered our Genocide (I attach NO BLAME to the revolutionary movement; it is easy to criticize in retrospect.)

But this feeling is a cancer, a slow killer. Are we to choose between risking a speedy demise, as we did in 1915 or should we accept a slow death, hoping that somehow things will turn all right some day? Some Armenians seem to believe tolerating the cancer of RoA kleptocracy is OK...or there will always be a sufficient number of Armenians in Armenia when, by some miracle, the governance changes.

Meanwhile, should we stay silent in the presence of the spreading cancer?

NO. A resounding NO.

As for fixing the cancer in the Diaspora, these days I am overcome by the feeling that the battle is already lost.

