

MY STATE OF MIND


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By Hrant Dink, Birgün Newspaper (translated by Nazim Dikbas), 1 November 2004

I'm a citizen of Turkey... I'm Armenian... And I'm Anatolian down to my bones. I haven't thought for a single day of deserting my country and building my future in that "paradise of readily present freedoms" called the "West", and to foist myself like a leech on democracies created by others who once paid the price for them. 

But my main concern has been to transform my country into one of those paradises of freedom. I cried along as my country cried for Sivas. I fought as well when my people fought against gangs. I paired my fate with my country's march to create its freedom. And the rights I enjoy or can't enjoy I haven't settled on for free, I paid the price, and still am.

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But now...

I have had enough of some soft-soaping us with their "Our Armenians" discourse, and some others provoking us with their "Traitors within" discourse. And I'm sick of the marginalization which makes me forget I'm a normal or ordinary citizen, and of being embraced to the point of suffocation...

I have never had the chance to march on 24 Aprils or to erect monuments in commemoration of my forefathers. But I neither left them in the past, nor petrified them in the present. I have carried the weight of "living them in my life"... And I have succeeded to the best of my ability. And I have fought without remorse against the "thing"s and "people" who have attempted to impede my carrying this weight.

Of course I know what happened to my forefathers. Some call it "Massacre", some "Genocide", some "Forced Immigration", and others "Tragedy." My forefathers used to call it "Slaughter," the Anatolian word of it... I choose to call it "Destruction." And I know that if it wasn't for these destructions, today my country would have become a far more liveable, far more enviable place.

That's why I curse those who caused the destruction, and those who served it. However, my curse is aimed at the past. Of course I want to know everything that happened in history, but hate, that

peculiar type of disgrace... I leave it in its dark cave in history, and say, "Let it stay where it is, I don't want to know it."

It offends me to see my past history or present problems being made into a capital of some sorts in Europe and America. I sense some form of abuse and desecration beneath all these kissing. I no longer accept the vile refereeing of imperialism which tries to strangle my future in my past.

Those referees are the exact same dictators who in times past had gladiators fight each other in arenas, watched on as they clashed and gave the thumbs down to the winner to finish off the loser. Therefore I don't accept in this age the refereeing neither of a parliament, nor a state.

The true referee is the people and their conscience. And in my conscience the conscience of the power of no state can compete with the conscience of the people. All I want is to talk about our common past with my beloved friends in Turkey in the most comprehensive manner and without raising the slightest animosity.

I believe, from my heart, that one day all Turks and Armenians will be able to talk about this among themselves. I particularly look forward to the day when Turkey and Armenia will be able to talk about and amend everything comfortably, when I will be able to turn to irrelevant third persons and say, "Now you can mind your own business."

The Armenians of the world are preparing to commemorate the 90th year of 1915. May they do so. It's their right.

And the words above are your humble servant's state of mind.

Submitted to your attention.

