

THE CAUCASIAN ZIMBABWE MAKES IT PERSONAL (ALMOST)

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By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia 24 June 2008

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So, it was that I noted the recent beating of an "activist" and passed on to other matters, with the "So, what else is new?" comment to myself.

Then, three weeks ago, an e-mail from a young American friend, changed my complacent so-what? acceptance of the worst that can happen in Armenia.

He reminded me that prior to his attending a wedding of the daughter of Armenian friends, he had visited Philadelphia and we had had lunch. During the lunch, he had asked for some Armenian words and expressions that he could say to the bride-and-groom and to the proud parents at the reception following the marriage. I passed on a few, with phonetic pronunciations, and then I gave him my favorite, "Daros Chem Oozer," explaining what "daros" means and what my expression means. He thought it funny and fitting (he, too, is a confirmed bachelor), and throughout lunch he kept repeating it so as not to forget it.

About a month or so after returning to Washington where he lives and where the marriage would take place, he sent me an e-mail telling me that his Armenian expressions worked beautifully, and his "Daros Chem Oozer" was a big hit.

I bring this up because of the contents of his recent e-mail.

The young bridegroom was the young man who was brutally beaten in Yerevan, May 28, at 2 in the afternoon, one of the many stories that I skimmed over and ignored. His name is Arsen Kharatian.

According to my friend's message, Arsen had had an MRI examination and that it showed no damage. "Arsen is not the type to alarm his wife, but I'll take him at his word." It seems that the thugs had known that Arsen's young wife had earlier left Yerevan to visit her family in America, before they attacked him from behind (like the cowards they are) and beat him with an iron rod.

Well-known and highly respected, Arsen is one of the leaders of "Hima" youth movement.

It would appear that one of the mistakes that the various "youth movements" made--following that sad excuse for an election--was not to dissolve or go into hiding. Thus, the criminal groups ruling Armenia, intensified the terrorist campaign against the youth leaders. Their aim is to stop the national movements by creating an atmosphere of fear in society.

Those who are following the situation in Zimbabwe, will be able to relate those events with the disgusting situation in Armenia. If the formula works there, why not copy it for Armenia?

But, as I was putting the finishing touches on this essay, I received word that Arsen has fled Armenia. Note the word "fled" and not "left"! Putting it simply, his life was at risk.

The Armenian authorities were closing in on him. The so-called reporter who had set him up for the cowardly beating, with the suggestion of an interview, arrogantly called Arsen again, after he got out of the hospital, and asked whether he had learned his lesson and whether he was going to keep quiet.

There is more to the story, including Arsen's whereabouts, but for the time being, the above should suffice.

Although my friend hadn't told me the name of the young man, last summer, this beating hit home--albeit indirectly. "That's it," I had told myself. "Now, the bastards have gone too far!" I don't know either family, but I took this beating personally as do I the continuing threat on Arsen's life. Not that I can do anything about it.

Except to vent my spleen with this essay.

It is time that all Armenians in the Diaspora put their collective feet down and to say to the foul beings who are destroying Armenia far worse than the most wicked dreams of the Ottoman "Young Turks" and today's denialist Turks: "We no longer will support you financially and politically via the governments in our host countries. We will no longer visit Armenia and give you our hard-earned money to satisfy your corrupt policies. We will no longer invest in your country. We will not only boycott you but also we will encourage others to do so."

"Too drastic," you may be saying. And, if you are so saying, then it is evident that you are part of the problem, and not part of the solution.

Arsen did not deserve the beating. True, he was what the crooks, thieves, and thugs in Armenia view as an "enemy of the State" (remember another "enemy of the State" in Istanbul?)--he was an "activist." I don't know what his particular activism was about, nor do I care. But, if the crooks, thieves, and thugs--and Yes, without any evidence, I hold them responsible--could plan for him to leave his office and go to a purported interview so that he could be waylaid and severely beaten, then he must have been concerned about the well-being of Armenia, unlike the crooks, thieves, and thugs in charge of the country who look on office as a means to make vast sums of money to live the kind of privileged lives they lead.

In any other country--except for Armenia and Zimbabwe--intelligent and young men like Arsen are cultivated and encouraged to "give a damn."

Perhaps, the only criticism of the Turks should be that they didn't kill all the Armenians. Certainly,

the heroes of the victory at Sardarabad (recently commemorated) didn't give their lives for this sort of Armenia.

The Armenians, past and present, who yearned for an independent Armenia didn't dream of the kind of cesspool that is now Armenia.

Not too long ago, America's Secretary of State criticized Azerbaijan for its shortcomings (to put it politely) in the area of democracy. Baku rejected the criticisms with the reply: "Do you want us to be like Armenia?"

I rest my case.

Avedis Kevorkian

Since the above essay was submitted for posting, another young member of the "Hima" movement has been beaten by thugs.

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