IMAGINARY BUT TIMELY EXCHANGE

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Category: Opinions

By Jirair Tutunjan, Toronto, 27 August 2025

A recent electronic give-and-take between two Armenian acquaintances, Alex in Yerevan and Vahram in the Diaspora. Following the usual niceties, the two got down to brass tacks.

Vahram: Considering his checkered journalistic record, inexperience, emotional immaturity, Messianic tendencies, and his inept management of the Artsakh conflict, why did the citizens of Armenia twice vote for this abominable man?

Alex: Tell me which *odar* electorate has made the right choice in recent years. The Americans elected an oleaginous felon who, for forty years, had led a scandalous life. Macron's popularity is tittering at 7 percent. The British prime minister is also unpopular. There are others.

Vahram: You are evading the issue. You make it sound as if incompetence is a requirement for a PM's position. Besides, America, France, et al can afford an incompetent leader. Armenia can't.

Alex: Right or wrong, his election was legal, and unlike previous elections, no money exchanged hands to elect him.

Vahram: I am having difficulty processing that information. What about George Soros' financial support for the so-called color revolution?

Alex: Bribery takes place even in developed countries.

Vahram: A minute ago, you said Pashinyan was elected without money exchanging hands, but now you're justifying bribery by saying it also occurs in developed countries.

Alex: Citizens of Armenia have had a terrible time in the past two-three hundred years. They are just coming out of the dark and learning about democracy, elections, and the rule of law. We suffered Turco-Persian occupation, tsarist dictatorship, Soviet oppression, and several corrupt governments since independence. The people of Armenia are just beginning to understand democracy.

Vahram: Many Soviet republics became independent at the same time Armenia did. Long ago, most of them cleared the deck and are democratic.

Alex: I don't understand Diaspora Armenians: sitting in their comfortable homes in Marseilles, New York, Toronto, Beirut, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, and Sydney, they tell us how we should run Armenia…

Vahram: I know where you're going. I have heard that argument many times. Next, you will tell me that since we don't pay taxes in Armenia, we don't send our sons to the Armenian army…where do we get the gumption to tell citizens of Armenia how to run their country.

Are we less Armenian for living in the Diaspora? Do you know the sacrifices we have made to stay Armenian? As poet Vahram Mavian wrote, "Everywhere there are Armenians." We have remained

Armenian despite oppression, discrimination, and living many thousands of miles from Armenia.

Alex: Some 300,000 Armenians were killed in WWII to protect the Soviet Union and Armenia. As many as 6,000 Armenian soldiers were killed in 2020 when Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, and ISIS jihadists attacked us.

Vahram: I am glad you mentioned our victims during WWII. As a result of the war, Armenia's population severely shrank. Uncle Joe was planning to diminish our political status by taking away our "republic" as a republic. It was the Diaspora that prevented the disaster by responding to the call of "Return to Hayrenik." And when they arrived in Armenia, they found it grey, drab, impoverished, and constricted. Anyone criticizing the system could be shipped to Siberia.

Alex: Diasporans who care for Armenia should move here. Our population is below three million.

Vahram: Many Diasporans did just that and were disappointed. People who opened businesses in Armenia were harassed by the locals, especially by organized crime elements. Syrian Armenians are now subjected to discrimination, although they raised Armenia's cuisine from the boring *khorovadz.*

Please consider this: Diasporans have been away from *Mayr Hayasdan* for nearly one thousand years. Armenians began to leave their homeland in big numbers upon the Seljuk Turk invasion. They miraculously established a 300-year kingdom in Cilicia. Due to the Genocide, they were driven to the far shores of the globe. Yet, most of them have retained their Armenian identity. I don't want to delve into the millions of dollars, expertise, and construction projects (highways, schools, clinics, etc.) that the Diaspora has provided to Armenia and Artsakh.

Please don't say if I am a true Armenian, I should move to Armenia. The fact that dunderhead Pashinyan is threatening the existence of Armenia by reducing it into a Turkish vassal eliminates the possibility of Diasporans settling in Armenia. Acceding to the so-called Zangezur Corridor is the beginning of Armenia's end.

Comments

Jirair – 2025-09-20 17:58:43
Although a high percentage of Glendale's population is Armenian, the city is American with most of its Armenians considered American citizens.. That's there legal status. There have been other cities (Tbilisi, Lvov, Beirut) where Armenians were dominant or strong. Eventually, the Armenian presence dissipated for a variety of reasons. Gyumri Armenians can express their thoughts about Armenians of Glendale and elsewhere just as Diaspora Armenians can express their thoughts about Armenia, Pashinyan, the Corridor, the Artsakh prisoners of war..

Avo Tchaparian – 2025-09-19 15:53:45
It follows that the people living in Gyumri (Armenia) will be concerned and directly interfere in the elections in the city of Glendale (California), as both are the descendents of Haig...

Tsakoug – 2025-09-16 10:29:09
Very accurate description of the two sides of the same coin.

Vahe H Apelian – 2025-09-15 18:58:24
I rather read what Ahmed in Turkey and what Mehmed in the Diaspora, yes there is also a Turkish Diaspora, debating about Erdogan.



Keith Garebian – 2025-09-15 07:48:42
Very interesting exchange of two opposed points of view. Of course, as one who is only half Armenian and a Canadian, I believe the Diaspora side has more weight and validity.