

KARDASHIAN SISTERS--THE SURPRISE NATIONALISTS

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By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 19 April 2015

Moral indignation is in most cases 2% moral, 48% indignation, and 50% envy.

Vittorio de Sica.

Moral indignation is jealousy with halo.

H.G. Wells

When you have a lemon, make lemonade.

Anonymous

Some Diaspora Armenians were in a tizzy when reality show star Kim Kardashian, her rapper husband Kanye West, daughter North, sister Khloe, and two cousins made a Hollywood-style splash in Armenia. Donning their industrial-class hair shirts certain Armenians wrung their hands and assumed an experienced "woe is us" posture: they were concerned, worried, pained, and upset that the visit would damage the image of Armenia, Armenians and perhaps even their own image as solid, middle-class, law-abiding citizens. "God! What would odars think of us?" they moaned. The sky was definitely falling. Some sought shelter in the exegesis that the Kardashians weren't really Armenian.

Were these Armenian unhappy because the Kardashian sisters lack "talent"? No. After all, there are half-a-dozen interchangeable Hollywood Jessicas who are as untalented. The problem was Kim's propensity for showing her anatomy sans clothing. Why, the woman gamboled in her nudity.

Welcome to 2015. Actually... to 1953. It was at the earlier date that Marilyn Monroe appeared nude for the 'Playboy' magazine calendar. She then married one of America's most successful playwrights and became a public "friend" of President John Kennedy. Millions of people are still mourning her death more than 50 years later. Collectively fewer books have been written about the giants of the entertainment world (Marlon Brando, Sir Laurence Olivier, Meryl Streep, and Vanessa Redgrave) than have been written about Monroe. This is the anything goes pop culture-fuelled society we live in. Like it or not, Toto, we are not in Kansas anymore. We have play with the cards we have been dealt.

The Kardashian visit gave a tremendous boost to Armenia, Armenians, and recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Armenian PM Hovik Abrahamian pragmatically praised the sisters' contribution to the "international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide." Parliamentary Speaker Kaloust Sahagian said the visit "can only be a good thing. Kim Kardashian is a lady who's known world-wide. We should be happy she came here." Viken Hagobyan, a 'political technologist' said that the reality show star "has become the best promotional event for the 'Armenia brand'." He went on to explain—somewhat awkwardly: "We have to take into account things in the world, which show that some persons, regardless of our approaches to moral principles, score more than 70 million subscribers in social networks and this is a powerful propaganda instrument." A middle-aged

Yerevan resident put it more succinctly: "Millions of people follow her. If they get informed about the Genocide, what and who we are, what happened to us, I think it will have a powerful impact." Kim has 31 million subscribers in Twitter, 24 million in Facebook, and 30 million in Instagram.

Thanks to the Kardashians, millions of people who hadn't heard of Armenians and Armenia now know the basic facts. And it has been achieved without Armenians spending a dime.

Armenians should be grateful to the controversial sisters. They could have gone to any of the 190 countries around the globe. They chose to go to their homeland and identified it as such. The trip must have been stressful: crossing continents and ocean with a large entourage isn't a picnic, especially when the burning focus of the international media recorded their every move and word. The latter talked about the tourist attractions of Armenia and even mentioned the average price of air ticket from Europe. MailOnline of Britain said "The majority of the main sights are free...there's plenty of live music, clubs."

Khloe boosted Armenia's progressive image when she Twitted to millions: "The Mother Armenia statue can remind viewers of the prominent female figures in Armenian history who took up arms to help their husbands in their clashes with Turkish troops and Kurdish irregulars. I am a woman hear me roar! It's blessed to be here!" Her sister said: "I love how powerful women are respected in our culture." They were exaggerating... but they're in the hype business.

Where do the Kardashian thrashers get the right to deny them a visit to the homeland or to mourn the Genocide? How do these critics presume the sisters to be "bad"? If the sisters built a nursing home in Glendale, would they be considered "good"?

History is replete with incidents where a nation accepted assistance from a "dubious" source. American Jewish gangsters helped ship illegal weapons to Palestine in 1948. Mafia capo Meyer Lansky killed an arms exporter to the Arab countries. Two famous Jewish gangsters—Bugsy Siegel and Mickey Cohen-- raised money for the Hagannah militia and terrorist IRGUN in Palestine. When crooked publisher Robert Maxwell died, he was buried on Mount of Olives in Jerusalem because he had been a Zionist secret agent.

Some believe 5th century holy man St. Jerome is the originator of the adage "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth". He was advising Christians not to over-analyze a favor or a gift...that they should appreciate them for the thought and the spirit behind it.

People are free to criticize the sexual morality of the Kardashians, but they can't criticize the sisters' devotion to their people and their sincere effort to promote Hye Tadd. It would be ungrateful, churlish and rash to ask for more. The Kardashian Sisters have done more for us than a hundred well-intentioned Armenian committees, thousands of articles and hundreds of books.

Armenians who are concerned that Armenians would be forever linked to the Kardashians should consider the following fact: while a newspaper reader will forget, after a few days, the editorial

cartoon which poked fun on a misbehaving politician, his impression of the politician will last indefinitely. One day the Kardashians will be forgotten but the knowledge odars culled about the Armenians will be long-lasting.

Now turn on that dial and let's watch what Milan stiletto shoes the K Sisters are fawning over.

