

'UNITY' YES, BUT MY UNITY

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 **Avedis Kevorkian**, Philadelphia, PA USA, 30 August 2015

About seventy-five years ago, I accompanied my father on his annual tour through New England, and, as we entered Boston, I saw a poster on which there was an advertisement on behalf of an Armenian who was a candidate for City Council.



I was impressed and I said to my father something to the effect of how wonderful it was (obviously, at that young age, I assumed that candidacy was equivalent to election) and I asked why there were no Armenians in Philadelphia's City Council.

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Not wanting to corrupt my innocent and young mind (I am sure) my father said, simply that Boston had more Armenians than Philadelphia.

That evening, at a dinner in someone's home, I was seated next to a young lad about my age, and I said that it was wonderful that there was an Armenian running for City Council in Boston. I will never forget his reply should I live seventy-five times seventy-five years: "We are not going to vote for him, because his father belongs to the " Note the "we," which means that he was present as the adults discussed the matter. And, Note, further, that it was the father who was identified with that "party," not the candidate.

I was dumbfounded for (as I look back) two reasons. First, the idea of an Armenian not voting for an Armenian was ridiculous and, second, what in the world was the party?

At the hotel, that evening, I asked my father about it, and again he must have felt that I was too young to learn how stupid Armenians can be, because his answer has been forgotten. That learning process about the stupidity of the Armenians was to start a bit later and continues to this day.

I am reminded of that day because of the news that has come out of [Montreal](#). Basically, the news says that the Armenians have learned nothing, have not advanced one inch in seventy-five-plus years.

By now, all know what happened, thanks to the excellent--and restrained--report, "Montreal Armenian Disunity the Big Winner," by Berdge Manoukian, August 23.

To sum up, several months ago Viken Attarian announced his candidacy for nomination to the Ahuntsic-Cartierville constituency in Montreal. Another Armenian decided to enter the selection process. His effort got nowhere, so he and his followers turned toward and supported another candidate. Came the selection process, Mr. Attarian did not win. It is not being claimed--by him, by his supporters, or, even, here, that he would have won. But, and it is a very important and telling "but," that is not the point.

What is the point?

Nowhere in any of the discussions is it being said that the other Armenians asked Mr. Attarian his views on Canada, its relations with the United States, its relations with the world, its treatment of the First Nations, or the mess in the Middle East. For, they did not.

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Nowhere in any of the discussions is it being said that the other Armenians asked Mr. Attarian about his views of the Armenians, their place in Montreal, their place in Canada, a "unified" Diaspora, the divided Armenian Church. For, they did not.

You see, they already **knew** all that they needed to know about Mr. Attarian. He did not belong to their backward, ignorant, irrelevant so-called Armenian "political" party. He had acted without its authority! How is that for (what passes for) thinking in the 21st century?

Raffi, looking into his crystal ball, almost 140 years ago, called up Montreal and saw what was to happen and said, in "The Fool": "An Armenian is the greater danger to Armenians than any outsider."

What is so sad and, Yes, hypocritical, is that the other Armenian belongs to one of the so-called "political" parties that is the loudest and most insistent caller for "unity" of the Armenians. Of course, what that party means is: "The Armenians must unify behind us, and must permit us to speak for the Armenians and know we are authorized to do so." Ask their leaders and they will confirm that their

party owns Armenia, owns the Armenians, owns the Diaspora, and it is only the backward, ignorant, and uninformed Armenians who do not know it.

If the so-called "party" was serious about unity, it and the candidate and his supporters would have gone to Mr. Attarian and said, "We are behind you and will support you." And would have asked, "How can we help and where?" Now, **that** is unity!

I cannot speak for Mr. Attarian, but I would wager that had he won the selection process and went on to win in the national election, in his "Thank you" message, he would have thanked his fellow Armenians for their support.

And, think of the message that would have gone out to the Armenians in the rest of Montreal and the rest of Canada--and, Yes, to the rest of the Diaspora: "It can be done. In this corner of Montreal we have shown how to unite and the benefit of unity."

By the way. That candidate in Boston didn't win either.

To this day, I regret that I never wrote to Walt Kelly to ask if he was thinking about the Armenians when he put into the mouth of his creation Pogo (the greatest philosopher of the 20th century): "We have met the enemy and he is us."

