# WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF POKR MHER

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**Category:** Opinions

By Ara Papian, 5 May 2010

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# Strategy Paper on the Armenian Cause

There was a custom in ancient times, of beheading the bearer of ill tidings. When I was a child, I could not understand why people would take on the fatal mission of a messenger with bad news. It came to me later. From the perspective of the interests of nation and society, nothing is higher than the truth. The simple, sometimes bitter truth is of vital significance, for, without viewing reality with open eyes, it would be impossible to discover the path to salvation. After all, can the blind lead the blind? It is our turn now to view reality with open eyes.

The existence of the Armenian people has never been in greater danger in the course of her five-thousand-year history than it is at present. This is due to the threatening demographics that have been formed in Armenia: a falling birth rate, an ageing population, the increasing death rate, not to mention incessant emigration. The reasons are many, but they will not come under discussion now. According to data from the UN, the population of Armenia will decrease up to 25% by 2025. During

that same time, the population of Azerbaijan will increase 31%, while that of Turkey, by 43%. Fifty years from now,
half the current population of Armenia will remain in the country. In order to guarantee the basic sustenance of any society, it is necessary to maintain a minimal birth rate of 2.11. The peoples with a birth rate of 1.3 are condemned to destruction. In 2007, Armenia's birth rate was 1.348.

The situation was not as tragic even during the years of the Armenian Genocide. It was clear that some amount of Armenians would be saved, that they would re-create their homes on one part of the Homeland, and that the Homeland would be built up of their children. It was a question of time; if many were saved,it would take less time to for the nation to recover, if few were saved, it would take longer. The child of eternity – time – was on our side. Now, time is our enemy. In five to ten years, for the first time in Armenia in years of peace, there are to be fewer children coming into the world than those who are to depart from this world. That is to say, we are to begin to end, as the water in the brook upon the drying of the spring, as the light in sky upon the sun's setting. The bright, twenty-first century, might be our last. The beginning of the end is already in place.

Of course, the destruction of a nation does not imply the destruction of the individuals of a nation. For a century or two yet, there might be some communities left, some individuals would come up with programmes for saving the nation, some political parties would take up collections to save the nation. Perhaps there would even be some sort of administrative unit, an "Армянский форпост" (armyanskiy forpost – "Armenian outpost", in Russian), or an "Ermenistan vilayeti" ("Armenia province", in Turkish). Perhaps the leader of such a place would be referred to as a "president", with a security detail to boot. That would not be Armenia, however, but a sacrificial lamb of somebody else's flock, ready to be lain on the altar at any moment for the well-being of that somebody else's child. Do you remember how they sacrificed us once already, en route to the victorious global revolution?

Let us now take up an obvious question: what to do, then? The answer is simple: having many children must be encouraged. For every child born in Armenia, each family should receive a monthly sum until he or she comes of age, a hundred dollars for the first child – or its equivalent in Armenian drams, if you will – two hundred for the second, three for the third, and so on. An extra two to three billion dollars a year would be necessary for this. That would also be the amount needed to renovate infrastructure, to improve healthcare and education, in a word, to have a worthwhile country. Of course, the annual expenditure of five to six billion dollars in Armenia would go a long way to boost the economy, create more employment while, naturally, generating new income as taxes, customs, duties and other payments. At first glance, seven to eight billion dollars worth of expenditure a year might seem enormous as compared to the current budget of the Republic of Armenia (2.7 billion dollars), but in reality that is merely, for example, barely half the 2008 expenditure of a not-so-rich European country with similar demographics, Lithuania.

And now let us turn to the most important question: where and how to acquire this money? It is evident that, in terms of collecting taxes or of guaranteeing human rights, Armenia is never going to

be a Switzerland or a Sweden. Let's say it does. Then what? Well, then, best case scenario, Armenia's budget would double, and we would be the equivalent of Albania. Is our goal the creation of an Armenian Albania? Of course not. Even with a budget twice of what we have now, we could not allow ourselves to spend two to three billion dollars on the preservation of the nation, or, to put it more simply, on programmes of population maintenance.

It is clear that our circumstances today are the dull echoes of the Armenian Genocide and the dispossession of our Homeland. If there hadn't been a genocide, we would be more in number, within the frontiers of a larger and more prosperous homeland. The axe of the genocidal culprit which was raised almost a century ago has struck its final blow in our time today. The tree of life of our people is no longer capable of healing its own wounds. And so, the two greatest tragedies of the existence of our nation – the Armenian Genocide and the dispossession of our Homeland – will serve as the two main
sources for a new serum of our national survival. We have no other choice.

Dear reader, please refer to a more detailed and professional treatment of this issue in the "Strategy Paper on the Armenian Cause" below. One thing must be clear to all of us, that a resolution to the Armenian Question is not a thought experiment or a theoretical riddle. It is the only way for the survival of the Armenian people. We would commence with the coming decade by receiving three to five billion dollars annually from Turkey as material reparations as well as rent for use of Armenian territory and property, and then, perhaps, we would create conditions for a secure existence and economic development.
If we cannot do these things, then we will go on to join our old neighbours, the Babylonians, Sumerians, and others.

The proposed strategy paper is realistic, in that it has strong legal bases and also interested political powers. However, we will not be able to accomplish anything as long as the re-establishment of our rights and the reparations in return for our losses are not rendered pan-national goals and state policy. Minor successes blown out of proportion will not save the country. It is impossible to keep a country with political shamanism.

It is time for practical solutions.

The protagonist of the final part of our national epic – Pokr Mher – emerged victorious over his own father, the undefeated Sassountsi Davit (David of Sassoun), after which, very unlike a son, he went away, ceasing to exist, into the den of the Agravakar ("the Crow-Stone"). Will the Armenian people, defeating itself, be confined, childless, in the Agravakar of history?

Ara Papian, Yerevan, Armenia, 2 July 2009