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An Overview Of The Role Of The Diaspora In The Lights Of Recent Changes In Armenia

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The following is the first installment of the full text of an address Dr. Gerard Libaridian delivered at the second Congress of the Pan American National Movement held in Yerevan. With deletions and adjustments due to time constraints, it was presented on November 25, 1990, the third and final day of the Congress. Dr. Libaridian was invited and spoke in a personal capacity.

The popular and democratic movement in Armenia has introduced profound changes in the relations between Armenia and the Diaspora relations. In its own way, the Diaspora must now face the challenge which Armenia has already confronted over the past three years. My comments are personal and will refer largely to the situation in North American communities, although they seem to be relevant to other segments of the Diaspora as well.

Initially, there was much in the movement that inspired the Diaspora. The movement was sparked by the goal of reunification of Artsakh with Armenia, based on right of self-determination and of nationalities. Largely a product of survivors of a depopulated region of historic Armenia, the Diaspora could not have remained indifferent to the plight of brethren in Artsakh who asked for no more than the right to live as a community and in dignity in their own land--and the right to choose the path of achieving that dignity.

Secondly, a Diaspora frightened by the direction of Armenian history saw in the Karabagh movement a turning point: The possibility of reversing three millennium old process of depopulation of the historic homeland, a process epitomized by the Genocide in Western Armenia and continued in Nakhichevan.

It was also the Karabagh movement that forced the government of Armenia in 1989 to recognize formally the Genocide of 1915. The Genocide is not the problem of the Diaspora alone, of course. But it represent the core of the political, territorial, cultural and psychological issues the Diaspora faced.

In a brief period of time, the movement became more than an accounting of the past and the present. Soon it became obvious that Armenians saw in Artsakh the symbol for the political, cultural, spiritual and economic revival of our nation; and it saw in the movement a vehicle for the generation of the popular will to determine their own future. The Karabagh movement

became the national movement as it became clear that neither the Karabagh issue nor the other questions on the agenda could be resolved within the existing structures.

FIRST NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The national movement was the first in long decades that gave us a sense that Armenians were for an idea, for a right as part of a realistic agenda; a sense that we could participate in history in a positive manner and that history was more than the hatred of the "Communist" or of the "Turk." For too long history had become a spectator sport we watched from the sidelines. The political arena provided us merely a pulpit whence we issued moral condemnations of diplomats who "betrayed" us.

The combination of an honest accounting of the past and a vision of the future inspired by the universal rights of democracy and freedom did more to overcome the walls separating Armenia from the Diaspora than decades of formal relations and exchanges. That which the movement, anchored in the people's most basic needs and aspirations, gave the Diaspora may be impossible for the Diaspora to repay. As a result of the movement, we have whole generations of Armenians born in different countries that no longer need to ask "What is an Armenian?" Because Armenians live and act as a nation, we no longer need to define them and, by so doing, limit its identity or treat it as a relic of the past.

the Genocide has paralyzed us; it denied us the normal processes of growth and maturation. At times it seems that there was nothing left to define and distinguish us from others, other than our being the first victims of genocide in this century. The Genocide has become a negative form of self-definition. To paraphrase a friend, our death certificate has become our flag.

We were angry at the "Turk," for what he had done to us, and at the world, for

wanting to forget what the Turk had done. So we reduced politics to a set of angry reactions. We were unable to develop frameworks of real participation in the affairs of the states in which we lived other than as supplicants. As the worthy inheritors of the "millet" mentality, we strove to remain "good" citizens and tend to our schools, churches, and clubs. Increasingly, politics consisted of securing a little recognition, a little safety.

At the beginning of the post-Genocide Diaspora we sought community life, cultural identity, and collective memory. This was a noble undertaking and heroic effort for the surviving orphans in the early decades of Diaspora formation. But this search was institutionalized and perpetuated in more recent decades as the fear and hatred of the Turk, the fear of assimilation. The memory of collective death became the fear of the future, of one's neighbors: "Turkey is there to massacre Armenians any chance it gets" became the only political orthodoxy, and "odars are there to assimilate our young" was the cultural manifestation of the same debilitating notion. And since the Diaspora was caused by the Genocide, somehow all our problems could be traced to the Turks, and we could absolve ourselves of any responsibility. After all, who among us would dare absolve the Turk of any guilt?

Here we see how the institutional values of the Diaspora evolved parallel to those of Armenia and made possible the ultimate compromise the Diaspora made with the former regime. In Armenia too it was the fear of the Turk that led to the consolidation of the power of the Communist Party. The Communist Party of Armenia was the intermediary between Armenian, the potential victim - the only way Armenians could see themselves in the international arena - and Russia or the USSR, the only possible protector. Democracy, human rights, and independence could not be on the agenda and leaders could not be blamed for not placing

them on the agenda, as long as fear dominated our relations with the rest of the world.

Both in Armenia and the Diaspora participation in that fear and hatred came to replace participation in collective thinking and decision-making processes. Reactions were confused as principles; promoters of fear and hatred became the strategists and perpetuated the collective paralysis. What was there to participate in, after all? If the question facing our nation is how to keep bloodthirsty irrational Turkey and Turks from killing more of us, then the answer would be to seek a protector. The price of that protection is the loss of all other rights, including the right to question authority.

One cannot but understand the need of wandering diasporans to find some stability, the need to build a life with some sense of permanency, a sense of the future which their forefathers were denied and which they could build only for their geographically.

Statehood, along with the problems and promises it holds - is the only category that could have transcended the important - and sometimes not so important - differences between Armenians with varying partisan, religious, clannish, or even aesthetic allegiances. Even where we have been involved in state affairs, it has always been as a religious or ethnic minority, as a lobby, not as a participant in the building of a state, the making of history.

The Diaspora is destabilized because it spent seventy years to come to terms with the former regime of Armenia, to find ways of compromising its own ideals. Mirroring our own lack of a sense of statehood, we learned to accept the regime by reducing the nation into an abstraction: Armenia for us became a museum that attested to our past, that fueled our need for cultural identity. Armenians in Armenia were the museum keepers. We asserted, almost with a sense of relief, that the Armenians or Armenia had no role to play in the making of history. We no longer recognized you when you acted as a living nation.

REFLECTIONS OF DIASPORA ASPIRATIONS

We thought we recognized ourselves in you when you raised the question of the reunification of Karabagh with Armenia. We too had been making demands for "Western Armenia" for decades. To equate

the two, however, we had to reduce your cause to a "demand" like ours: A demand from others and dependent on others, at best as an act of history based justice, at worst an act of territorial expansion, always an act of mercy, not of democracy and self-determination; an act of master-vassal relations, not of the struggle of a sovereign nation. Just as a hundred years ago in the Ottoman Empire, or now in the Diaspora, we elevated the fear of offending our masters to the level of principle. After all, how could we, if our survival depended on others?

Individual bravery came to replace collective political imagination as the stuff from which history was made. What we ended up seeing in history was patterns of conformity, opposition to change.

We thought we recognized ourselves in you when you insisted on a formal recognition of the Genocide. We failed to see that you wanted to set history in order to learn from it and build on it. As for us,

The movement gave the Diaspora what it has been unable to achieve through an extensive chain of dedicated organizations and institutions in the Diaspora. In this respect, the people of Armenia and the movement they created did more to the Diaspora than seventy years of defensive battling or decades of occasionally successful but often embarrassing efforts at recognition by the international community.

DESTABILIZING IMPACT ON DIASPORA

And yet, the national movement in Armenia and Artsakh had a profoundly destabilizing impact on Diaspora institutions and values. And it is not at all certain that we have appreciated all dimensions of the movement or that our Diaspora leadership has articulated fully the depth of support for the national and political regeneration which Armenia has undertaken.

Armenians in Armenia tend to see the Diaspora as a monolithic entity, an undifferentiated structure that has internalized the best the West has to offer. Yet the Diaspora is heterogeneous. And it changes, just as Armenia did during the past 70 years. Diaspora Armenians represent a spectrum of opinions, beliefs, and relations more varied and less amenable to rational organization than is the case in Armenia.

The Diaspora has become very complex and fluid, even if one compares it with twenty years ago. For seventy years communities and their dominant organizations have adjusted, sometimes imperceptibly, to host societies. Gradually, they have brought their agendas closer to the agenda of governments under which they live. Organizations and generations within each community have adjusted in their own way. These adjustments have been compounded by the disrupting, even if occasionally beneficial, efforts of continuing waves of emigration and immigration that make the accumulation and transmission of experience from generation to generation or community to community difficult, if not impossible.

Underlying these differences is a characteristic which all diasporans share and which is the critical difference with Armenia. The Diaspora, by definition, is the denial of nationhood, the absence of statehood, whether nationhood and statehood are defined politically or

children. But one must also understand the ability of intellectually clever and enterprising leaders who exploited those natural needs to make Armenians feel comfortable in their weariness of political life, those who equated participation with the writing of checks and ended guiding them to the margins of history.

To move from a state of despair to the politics of symbolism and rituals did not require much imagination or intelligence in a Diaspora still obsessed with recognition from the outside. To induce an abdication of history, a denial of a future from a strategy of fear and hatred seemed almost a natural progression to an nation turned refugees and denied its past.

Promising to resolve all the problems we face, our leaders reduced the national agenda to problems which could not possibly be resolved: the Genocide cannot be undone, Turkey will not disappear from the face of the earth, and assimilation in the Diaspora is a matter of degree

and time only. But we are witnessing the politics of symbols, rituals, and mystifications. The grander the mystery, the more successful the politician.

We should have anticipated, perhaps, that the national movement's positive and realistic agenda would not only challenge the former regime in Armenia but also destabilize the Diaspora's dominant value system, many of its institutions and leaders.

We should not have been surprised, probably, that a democratic movement would produce an instinctive antagonism which many of our leaders developed very early toward the movement. Isn't democracy, after all, the right to know, to debate, to critique and to challenge and, if need be, change government or leadership?

The questioning of authority and orthodoxy in Armenia could have inspired sufficient confidence to diasporans to ask some pertinent questions of their own: Has the much-heralded strategy of cultural preservation based on fear of the neighbors and on isolation produced results? Did a strategy of liberation based on anti-Turkism and anti-communism, on fear of Pan-Turkism and hatred of the Turk cause the return of an inch of Western Armenian territory or bring us any closer to Turkish recognition of the Genocide? Did conditions in a Soviet Armenia lead to the resolution of the outstanding issues on the national agenda? Did culture--the culture which we claimed to be preserving in the Diaspora or recreating in Armenia - help or stymie political thinking, debate on strategies, development of sovereign assessment of national interests, the use of our faculty of judgement?

Are not these, ultimately, the questions that must decide what

worked and how to decide them? And have we not seen the repression of criticism in the name of imagined national interests, in the name of pseudo-strategies so fragile that could not survive a little exposure, a little scrutiny?

It is one of the paradoxes of diasporan development that, of all the adjustments our institutions made to host societies in their quest for survival and self-preservation, democratization was not one of them. Respect and tolerance of rational discourse and others' opinions on the major issues confronting our people were not internalized and institutionalized in our community life. As a result, we have lost what capacity we had to accept criticism; debate on goals and strategies, on successes and failures is characterized as weakening the fiber of our culture.

One cannot but juxtapose the secret politics of diasporan groups with the live television broadcasting of the proceedings of this congress. Here, under the most trying of circumstances, the shaping belief seems to be that information and debate are the bases of good government. Our political parties and organizations that currently define priorities and policies continue to prefer secrecy. In the Diaspora, interests and positions are proclaimed rather than discussed; the right to speak on behalf of Armenians continues to be claimed as an entitlement rather than being won democratically. The by-now counterproductive ideology of cultural self-preservation has degenerated into the self-preservation of an elite whose mandate is far from being clear, and into the perpetuation of mechanisms that might have been appropriate, at most, during the struggle against the Ottoman regime.

WHY TO PURSUE A FAILED POLICY?

We may still understand, perhaps, why political parties, whose policies with regard to Turkey have failed, now demand that the democratic movement and the freely elected government of Armenia adopt the same policies. Diasporan political leaders do not feel they have a price to pay when they confuse organizational reflex with nation building, when they identify the fate of the nation with its representation in the media, when they equate anachronistic rhetoric with strategic accomplishment.

We could take pains to explain, perhaps, why diasporan political parties would latch onto the Genocide issue as the ultimate weapon against the democratic movement in Armenia. We can understand why the diasporan parties have misrepresented and misconstrued the position of the Armenian National Movement.

The experience of the Diaspora could have taught us that building a cultural identity and political activities around the Genocide can only lead to dead ends. And dead ends we have reached, otherwise how could we explain the mad rush of diasporan political parties to Armenia, when the account books on their diasporan strategies have not been closed yet. Yet rush they did, most of all to denounce the government for its assessment that the future and the foreign policy of Armenia cannot be built around the Genocide, that recognition of the Genocide cannot constitute the sine qua non of Armenia's outlook on its neighbors, that nation-building requires different rules than the building of clubs, that a government - especially a democratically elected government - has different responsibilities than a school board, that a state is not just another community institution to be controlled.

We can, perhaps, understand why all of this can happen:

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But it is not so polite on the part of these leaders to claim that they speak for all diasporans or, one case, for all Armenians.

DISREGARD FOR DISCOURSE

It is difficult to preach of democracy and disregard the principles of discourse and debate. One must suspend too much disbelief for too long, one must forget too much and too soon to reconcile with the claims of parties that their past failures constitute visions for a future.

Faced with such a radical challenge from Armenia as the national democratic movement, the organizational survival instinct produced in our Diaspora a marriage of convenience between various parties and organizations. The guiding principle in that arrangement was the decision not to rethink issues, and to deny the depth of changes sweeping Armenia and the diaspora. Now we are expected to accept this cohabitation as a sign of maturity, when its most strident product was the infamous statement of the three parties in the fall of 1988 on the Karabagh movement and, more recently, the squabbling over the visit to the US last fall of Armenia's president.

The common interests of dominant elites within and outside Armenia have been obvious since the beginning of the movement but not limited to it. It seemed that the parallel extended to the logic of the now, ousted leaders of Armenia to turn the earthquake and the quest for economic development into tools of depoliticizing Armenians, to deny them the right to set their agenda, and choose their own leaders. Assistance toward earthquake relief and economic development, however well intentioned and supported by the mass of diasporans, performed the role of telling Armenia that it could not help itself, that it must rely on outside help, and that, therefore, it had no right to make decisions. There were many moments when, for Diaspora communities built by refugees of the Genocide, the assistance provided the victims of the earthquake was predicated upon viewing Armenia as a country of refugees. That seemed, for some, a more convenient, less troubling, less demanding relationship than one that required the Diaspora to see Armenians claiming national and democratic rights and acting as a nation.

My purpose here is not to deny or minimize the contributions institutions have made in the past, continue to do so now, or have the potential to do in the future. Our political parties, and diaspora institutions in general, have played a historical role; they have served our people the best they could. Under trying circumstances, they have tried to help diasporan communities and Armenia. In many ways they have succeeded. And we can have nothing but respect and awe toward those who gave more than their share. For the generation that escaped death it required a daring act of imagination to think that there would be other generations, that the other generations deserve to receive from the survivors something more than the memory of death.

We must, nonetheless, continue to scrutinize our situation now and rethink our attitudes. We must reassess our organizations and reorient ourselves.

The first factor regarding the reassessment of our organizations is that they are no longer what they were in 1887 or 1890, 1914 or 1918, 1920 or 1923. Particularly under the circumstances of diasporization, our organizations have changed, and they have changed to the point where their performance before the First World War is no longer an indication of the validity of their current policies. Had age been the only source of experience and wisdom, or had survival been a guarantee for wisdom, one would have to question why political parties were founded at the end of the last century instead of allowing the Church - a much older and more experienced institution - to continue defining the national agenda, policies, and identity. Revolutions become possible and necessary because situations change and yesterday's solutions become today's problems; they become necessary because institutions develop institutional egos to the point where reality is distorted and it is no longer possible to distinguish between problems and solutions.

The second factor is that social institutions, particularly in non-sovereign organisms, seldom define themselves. Their members can state goals and values, they can contribute the maximum of their abilities with those goals and values in mind. Yet their political significance, their impact on society and history are defined largely by the environment within which they are

functioning. Our political parties too, with all their good intentions, have an impact beyond, and occasionally contrary to, their intention and their stated goals.

The third factor is that an organization can have a successful and acceptable policy - at least to its members - in one area or at one level, but that is not an adequate guarantee of its performance in another area or level. Community organization is both a type and a level of activity. Assuming we consider our Diaspora organizations successful in this respect, they would still have no more preparation and experience to run a government, to build a disaster zone, or reform the economy of a state they have not lived in.

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT

History and, one hopes, civilized and open debate, will offer assessments of the role and impact of our organizations as time progresses. My concern is that in thinking of the future and of the participation of the Diaspora in that future, we must take nothing for granted. We must now look at our diasporan values and structures in the context of new realities in the world, in Armenia, and in the environment within which Armenians must live and prosper. We must make sure we are addressing the right questions, we have the right agenda.

WHO REPRESENTS THE DIASPORA?

Clearly, we must ask some simple questions: To what end and in what ways do Diaspora organizations, especially political parties, represent Diaspora Armenians? Do those organizations, as structured now and as they relate to each other today, represent the best mechanisms to channel the Diaspora's contributions to the political and economic development of Armenia? Have these organizations reassessed their own experience and policies in view of the new situation and needs that have arisen?

What can be offered now are tentative answers. I would argue that at this point in our history institutions and organizations have not, by and large, risen to the occasion; they have not been able to articulate the values of an increasing number of diasporan Armenians who are no longer concerned with antiquated arguments; with obsolete disputes; with petty quarrels whose sole function seems to have been to distract attention from strategies too long taken for granted; with internalized aggression characteristic of the

mentality of the colonized; with the politics of rhetoric and fear; with the psychology of the victimized.

The once understandable strategy of cultural self-preservation has now degenerated into the strategy of equating culture with structures of cement and politics with short term tactical advantages, all consecrated by symbols that are by now quite ineffective.

The vitality of Armenians in Armenia, their courage in questioning the premises of seventy years of Soviet thinking, and their acceptance of hardships that will follow the pursuit of a new, democratic agenda have inspired the most active diasporans to seek avenues and methods of participation in the task of building Armenia. The question here is: Will this participation come in the form of emotional outbursts or a well thought out and rationally defensible plan? Have seventy years of cultural strategy and "politicization" in the Diaspora not produced a structure that can accomplish this? Can our dominant institutions stand a little criticism without branding those criticizing as heretics or traitors? Can they contribute to the building of a democratic nation?

LITTLE CONFIDENCE

Many continue to believe that our core institutions are the proper vehicle for this task. Yet what has transpired thus far does not inspire any confidence that this view is based on anything more than faith. For many of the faithful it is difficult to imagine oneself outside the circle created by the tradition an history laden organizations; their identity is intertwined with such an association. In the absence of a state, this was only natural, even necessary for a sense of self-definition and identity.

However, when the people of Armenia produced the new agenda of nation building in Armenia and offered the opportunity to the Diaspora to participate in a meaningful way, the current leadership failed to transcend the limitations of diasporan thinking and behavior and to join forces with the democratic movement of Armenia.

We, in the Diaspora, should have the humility and courage to recognize that our institutions were not built to face the new, and bigger, challenges facing our nation. That in order for the Diaspora to realize its great potential, our institutions must undergo actual transformations. That most of our crises thus far have been existential, dealing with insecure identities rather than

with the strategic uncertainties. Skills, know-how, talent, and capital that could contribute to the development of Armenia abound in the Diaspora, but they abound in individuals. And talent can't be easily mobilized by undemocratic institutions.

Our political thinking has been meandering over the past seventy years, just as we, diasporans, have been moving from country to country. The movement in Armenia has helped many in the Diaspora to reassess the diasporan political processes of the past twenty years. It is not uncommon to hear now the argument that the current diasporan strategy, while producing no territorial gain, has also pushed Turkey into making denial of Genocide an integral part of its foreign relations; accordingly, it has devoted the necessary academic and financial resources to the task, with some success.

TIME TO MAKE REASSESSMENT

The time had come to reassess the issues and policies of the past decades, to understand history and act in a way that makes real participation and real change possible; the time had come to distinguish

between the real and the ritualistic. In the Diaspora, words and claims have no impact on our economic and political survival. For diasporans, success or failures affect our pride, our individual and collective memory, or the dignity attached to our ethnic identity. There we can claim successes and blame the rest of the world--or other Armenians - for our failures.

This may be adequate for the Diaspora, but Armenia is not just another community and a state is more than just another community institution. Words, actions, successes and failures will make a difference in real ways on the real lives of a whole nation, and on the state that houses that nation. It is not possible to transfer the logic, the institutions and, above all, the mentality of a Diaspora into Armenia. It is not possible to apply the principles of non-accountability, non-responsibility to Armenia. That is why the democratic dimension of the movement is essential to Armenia, and must be non-negotiable.

For the Diaspora organizations to participate constructively in the making of Armenia's future they must fully share in the democratic and national values being created by the people of Armenia and its

movement. To have a right to continued leadership in the Diaspora and before they can make a claim to leadership in Armenia, political parties must apply to their own past the same critical review which Armenians in Armenia did toward their own past. Before they rebuild Armenia, they must assess what they built in the Diaspora, how they have used its resources, responded to its needs; where they have succeeded and where they have failed.

Before it can wear its age as a sign of strength, the Hunchakian Party must explain why it was possible to declare for decades that the Sovietization of Armenia represents the realization of all political dreams of Armenians.

Before it can impatiently demand that the new government of Armenia lay claim to Western Armenian territories, the Ram-

gavar Party must explain why it could live without any such concerns for decades without feeling it was betraying national interests.

Before it can use the issue of Genocide as a stick against the new government, the Dashnaksutiune must explain how the party could be engulfed in the 1950's anti-communism of the Cold War for two decades that it would forget about Turkey.

This most important of Diaspora political parties must explain why it is that in November 1988 its leadership could ask everyone to dedicate themselves solely to issues of economic development of an Armenia governed by the Communist Party, thus help extend the rule of the former regime and delay the coming of democracy. But then, as a democratic government is elected, the party leadership reverses its stand, questions the legitimacy of that government, and seeks to replace it.

SOUL SEARCHING NEEDED

Before Diaspora political parties can equate mere survival and experience, they must explain to themselves and to the nation why it was that their age and experience did not prevent them from becoming the tools of others' policies and led them to kill each other. That they are no longer killing each other now is hardly a sign of maturity, if they still are unwilling to come to terms with the mentality and policies that brought upon such disasters to begin with.

Parties and organizations must explain why, despite all the crises and opportunities of the last three years, there still is a divided church which, if united, could save enough resources to provide for the health needs of the children of Armenia.

Self-critique is essential not only for the elucidation of history but also to achieve a better understanding between Armenia and the Diaspora; and to ensure the openness necessary for mutual trust. Above all, maximum cooperation and efficiency can be achieved when there is sharing of values. For the first time, the Diaspora can

be part of Armenia, because it can share without any reservations in the ideal of nation-building and the process of democracy.

IGNORING DEMOCRACY, OPENNESS

Maximum cooperation and efficiency will remain idle expressions, if the Diaspora's institutions continue to ignore the question of democracy, openness, credibility, and accountability, if they wish to continue to speak in the name of the Diaspora. The example of the new leadership of Armenia, elected by the people, is telling: The new government can propose and discuss ideas and strategies which could not be publicly mentioned before because the people of Armenia have given them a new mandate, a mandate to redefine national interests, and to think and act boldly.

For the first time in a long time we, as a nation, have a positive agenda not based on the hatred and fear of the Turk. In order to contribute to Armenia's rebuilding, the Diaspora organizations must learn to cope with an environment where hatred and fear do not dominate our nation's thinking. Only then can we open up the processes of deliberation and decision-making, instead of closing them as has opened during the past two years.

There are now new groups, smaller groups, that are coming together everywhere to fill the gap that is widening; groups that seek their legitimation in what they can do for the future, not in what they have done in the past; groups for whom the past is not a burden, a locked prison but a key--sometimes a painful one--to the future, and that can imagine new bases of association with the process taking place in Armenia. History has a way of differentiating between those who survive and those who contribute;

between those who can occupy space in the media and those who perform a constructive role for the future. A revamping of Diaspora thinking is necessary not only to ensure that all organizations perform according to their rhetoric as far as

Armenia is concerned, but also to make sure that the problems of the Diaspora as a Diaspora are not forgotten.

The Armenian nation faced a challenge in 1988. Armenia answered that challenge by democratizing and by setting up a national agenda. The Diaspora has yet to take up that challenge. Our organizations, including political parties, that have done much in the past, have an opportunity to play a major role in the new age as well. For that to happen, they must take up the challenge in the spirit that gave them their greatness many decades ago. They must, above all, transcend the limitations of diasporan life.

Our organizations and institutions count among them some of the most dedicated individuals of the community, people who have spent a vast amount of their personal resources to make these institutions work. Institutions must now adjust to their members, actual or potential, as they adjust to the new era.

CHANGING TIMES

Times are changing. It is the issues that determine the kind of resources needed and the form in which these must be organized. "Feeling" Armenian, feeling part of community, and real or symbolic gestures of personal sacrifice are no longer the criteria of measurement. When there is an agenda as large as nation-building, what matters are the actual results of the individual and collective actions we take, measures against the larger agenda.

We, diasporans, must grow with history or history will crush us. We must change even if change means having to rethink the compromises we have made with history by force of events, by force of diasporization. We must not, we can no longer afford to allow the Genocide and diasporization to dictate our thinking and agenda, as if we had no collective capability to use our reason and act on another basis than reflex, other than merely reacting to our past. We must rethink not only for the sake of Armenia but also for a healthy Diaspora.