

Taner Akçam:

Rebel Against My Turkishness

I am a Turk. Hrant was an Armenian. I am a writer at Agos. Hrant was Agos. Hrant had one ambition only which was to end the hatred, malice and grudge between the Armenians and the Turks and both nations to live together in peace, respect and harmony.

Hrant and Agos were like the blossoming flower on the Turkish prairie. They picked that flower and threw it out. Who was shot was not only Hrant, it was at the same time Turkey's reputation. That is so true. But we have to ask ourselves that the attack has an agenda geared towards our domestic politics. The goal is to install feelings of guilt in our collective unconscious. The real victim was not Hrant Dink, it was us, as usual: Our peace, our stability, our happiness, our unity, our integrity, our conscience that has long forgotten disturbance and shame. So they trained the 17 year old well not to miss the target but who killed this target were the ones behind this intention.

Hrant was not killed with one bullet, but was targeted and killed slowly day by day. On January 5, he said "Taner, I am very scared. Their intent is planned well to Agos and myself. They called me over to the Istanbul Governor's Office to threaten me. They told me that they will make me pay for what I have done. All threats to Agos and me started after this incident. 2007 will be a very bad year. They will come onto us. We have been pointed at. We have become easy targets. They left us in the middle to be hunted down as if the hunting season has started. With their politics, press and lawmakers they created this atmosphere and condemned us with it."

Hrant was not killed only by the 17 year old, but was killed by the ones who condemned him as the enemy to the Turks. He was killed by those who made him suffer because of Article 301 in front of the courthouse doors, who did not have the courage to change Article 301, he was killed by the ones who called him to the Governor's Office to threaten him instead of protecting him.

Let's not cry but lower our heads. Look at our own hands. How are we to clean the blood off of those hands. You, the publishers, writers, who are in shock after Hrant's death, open your old newspaper articles, check out what you had written about Hrant, what you had said about Hrant, there you will see the killer, you will see the killer in the court orders relating to Article 301. Decide what you will do to the Governor's deputy who called Hrant and threatened him.

Hrant was targeted as the Armenian who insulted Turkishness and was slain. Hrant was shot because he said Turkey had to face its history. The hands who shot him were the same hands who shot Hrants in 1915, who cut the Armenians' throats in the desert, their message is "Yes, we did it in 1915 we'll do it again in 2007." The ones who shot Hrant think they shot him in the name of the Turks. The same way the ones who shot Hrants in 1915. They think killing is being Turkish. Being Turkish is to see others as enemies and kill them. Instead, those are the ones who are their own enemies. They are the ones who are ruining Turkey's reputation.

This is why we are acting now. We want to recover the Turkish name and take it away from the killers by the slogans of "we are all Hrants" "we are all Armenian" We are the voice of the Turks, the Kurdish, the Alevi, the pure, and the Muslim. We are the voice of Turkey screaming for justice.

Being Turkish or Armenian should be a respected and not dirtied by the hands of killers. We will be proud of being Turkish when we call those killers, killers. Today we are trying to do this. We know that we are good when we say we are all Armenians. We know we will be proud when we call the killers, murderer. We are sending an important message to the world today by saying we are all Hrant's, we are all Armenians. The killer and killers have no involvement with being Turkish and Turkey. The real Turks are the ones who are calling the killers, murderers and shouting the slogan "We are all Armenian." Who are united as one and distant from the killers of Hrant. This is the message to 1915.

We will not accept Hrant's killers as real Turks and we feel the same for the killers of 1915. The ones who worship his killers are the same ones who worship the killers of 1915, namely, Talat, Bahaettin Sakir or Dr. Nazim.

We the Turks, by shouting "We are all Hrant's and we are all Armenians," telling the whole world that we will not abandon Turkey and the Turkish people in the hands of killers, and will not let the Turkish reputation be insulted by murder and hatred towards the Armenians. We should be able to say the catastrophe of 1915 remains to be a crime committed in our name, it remains to be a crime against humanity and human plurality committed in the name of 'Turkishness.'

As we accept Hrant's murder a shame, we should accept the murders of 1915 the same, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. We are condemning this murder as many others have, and there were Turks, Kurds, Alevi and Muslims condemning the murders of 1915. As well as condemning the murders of 1915 of Bogazliyan Mayor Kemal, or the religious leader Abdullahzade Mehmet Efendi, or Talat Pasha, Enver to Bahaettin Sakir, Dr. Nazim, Diyarbakir Mayor Resit, and will not accept them as Turks.

Keep in mind, in 1915, there were Ankara Governor Mazhar, Halep Governor Celal, Kastamonu Governor Resit, Yozgat Governor Deputy Cemal, Kutahya Mayor Ali Faik, Der-Zor Mayor Ali Fuat as well as the soldiers, commanders, 3rd Infantry Commander Vehip Pasha, Trabzon Garnizon Commander Avni Pasha, Miralay Vasfi, Yozgat Commander Salim. Today, Trabzon has one murderer Ogun Samast. But in 1915 Trabzon had murderers such as Governor Cemal Azmi, Ittihatci Nail from Yenibahce as well as Turks against those such as Chief of Police Nuri, businessman Ahmet Ali Bey, Customs Officer Nesim Bey and Trabzon senator Hafiz Mehmet Emin Bey who said he saw Armenians being loaded into boats and slaughtered and drowned but he couldn't do anything about it. Today, Turkey and the Turks have to make a decision and a distinction between the two kinds of Turks that exist and existed in the past.

Today, the world is watching us with respect and the wall of distinction between the real Turks and the barbaric generation of the past and future. We are building the wall between the Turks and the killers and we are able to name the murderers. We have to show this acceptance and courage for 1915 too not only for today's incidents. Hrant wanted this from us. He used to say "I love the Turks and Turkey, I feel lucky to live with the Turks." We need to build the wall between the killers and the Turks. This is how we should face our history. We are calling Hrant's killer, the murderer, not the Turk and as such we are facing our history. We will only face the world with pride if we build the same wall between the Turks and the killers of 1915 and condemn those murderers. My scream is the scream of Turkey itself. It is the scream of a Turk who lost Hrant, his soul brother, his Armenian friend, his brother. Let us take our nation back from the murderers and shout all together "We are all Hrant's, we are all Armenians."

This scream is the only answer to the ones who want to create the hatred between Turks and Armenians.

Written by: Taner Akcam, History Professor at University of Minnesota, Radikal Newspaper January 24, 2007

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