AVİM Commentary • No: 2018 / 5 •

A SHAMEFUL U TURN FROM THE AUTHOR OF "ARARAT ILLUSION"

Hazel ÇAĞAN ELBİR

Analyst

In December 2017, we published an analysis on the book entitled "Ararat Illusion". The book is on an Armenian assassin who was inspired by the murder of the two Turkish diplomats, Consul General Mehmet Baydar and Consul Bahadır Demir, by an elderly Armenian Gourgen Yanikian, in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, in 1973. The Armenian assassin in the book appears under the cover of Antranik, a terrorist organization. The novel is about the actions and the murders of an Armenian terrorist against the federal government and its employees. In the novel, it is mentioned that the history repeats itself and that the Armenian terrorists wage a feud and revenge against Turks and Turkey.

The author of the novel is David Minier, the District Attorney for the Yanikian case, the murderer of two Turkish diplomats in Santa Barbara. It is understood that the author is very much affected by the murder of two Turkish diplomats, and that these murders constitute a trauma for him.

The author, Minier, expresses his regrets in an article which appears in the bulletin *Armenian News Network / Groong*. He is regretful that he did not let a number of genocide victim Armenians to testify as witnesses after Yanikians statements because his main aim at the time was to convict murderer Yanikian whereas if he let the Armenians testify it would have been a foregone conclusion to acquit Yanikian just as Tehlirian, the murderer of Talat Paşa acquitted by the jury in 1921. Now he expresses that he is deeply saddened by that very decision that he made.

Mr. Minier notes that if he acted in the opposite way, the Turkish governments argument that "there is no court decision on the so-called genocide therefore the 1915 events could not be assumed as genocide would have collapsed. Minier states that he regrets his decision and that he cannot forget the demands of Yanikian's lawyers to let those Armenian witnesses testify. Minier, in his article, claims that despite Turkey's denialist stance, there is historical evidence that there was a genocide committed against the Armenians. He continues that 48 US states and at least 25 countries in the world recognized and condemned it.

It seems that the former attorney Minier has changed his attitude and now he is upset by his healthy and lawful stance during the trial in Santa Barbara. It is difficult to fathom the motives behind his newly adopted attitude. There is the danger that he will bring into

disrepute the brilliant background that he had as a respectable jurist. And no doubt he is making a great mistake.

At least, the following two issues must be answered in a legal and impartial manner:

In the Berlin court,

- After Tehlirian's statement, while the jury decided to acquit Tehlirian in less than two hours, the jury in California did not acquit Yanikian even when the members of the jury were in tears. Could it be that the understanding and practice of law in the world has advanced and developed over the past 52 years?
- Minier seems to regret not to let a "witnesses parade" during the trial. What if Yanikian was acquitted after the statements of witnesses prejudices, hatred and grudge, how would Minier feel? Would he have to write the exact opposite of what he writes presently?

In our opinion, Minier, should seek answers to these questions in his conscience and should not be upset just because he did not participate in the "genocide bandwagon". As a result, he has fulfilled his duties honestly as Attorney of the Yanikian case. As a matter of fact, the book titled "Ararat Illusion" which reveals not only his lawyer identity but also his righteousness is a reflection of Miniers true stand. David Minier, who is now retired, would be consistent in avoiding such statements, which cast doubt on his bright legal career.

Photo courtesy: (from left to right) Prosecutor James Lindsay, accused Gourgen Yanikian, District Attorney David Minier, Prosecutor Vasken Minasian, 1972. (fresnobee.com)

About the Author :

Hazel Çağan-Elbir is an analyst in AVİM. Çağan-Elbir continues her studies in Political Economy doctorate program at Atılım University.

To cite this article: ELBİR, Hazel ÇAĞAN. 2026. "A SHAMEFUL U TURN FROM THE AUTHOR OF "ARARAT ILLUSION"." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2018 / 5. February 07. Accessed November 21, 2026. https://avimbulten.org/en/Yorum/A-SHAMEFUL-U-TURN-FROM-THE-AUTHOR-OF-ARARAT-ILLUSION-1

AVİM
AVRASYA İNCELEMELERİ MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES

Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
Tel: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26

@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi
E-Mail: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

© 2009-2025 Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) All Rights Reserved