

L'Arménie (occidentale) c'est aussi en Turquie : les Arméniens ont des droits sur ces territoires

Once, while walking through the streets, I bought a compact disc with the music of great Armenian composer Komitas. I noticed that Komitas pictured on the disc looked like me. I was amazed – why do I look so much like an Armenian if I am a Turk?” singer Yaşar Kurt said.

This thought and an inexplicable feeling of comfort in Armenia did not give the rock singer peace of mind even after returning to Turkey. Yaşar had previously noticed that his parents were hiding something very important from the history of his ancestors. Now, he knew for sure that something was wrong there.

Demanding from his father to tell the whole truth about the descent of the family, Kurt discovered for himself the most important secret of his life – he is an Armenian.

It turned out that the ancestors of Yaşar had lived in Van Province, in the Armenian village of Andzer. In 1915, their large family was massacred. Only a 9-year-old boy survived who would later become known as Ismail. He reached the Black Sea coast on foot where he would be sheltered by good people. This boy was Yaşar's great-grandfather.

Finding out after 40 years that he was not a Turk but an Armenian turned out to be a difficult psychological test for Yaşar. As he himself admits, it took him about two years to recover. But the musician has adequately passed the test.

The decision to become baptized by the Armenian Church was made by Yaşar without much thought. Having received a new name after baptism – Arşak – Yaşar began to study the history of Armenia and learn the Armenian language.

Among Yaşar's friends, many disappeared from his life forever after finding out about his Armenian descent.

“After declaring aloud that I was an Armenian, I gained many enemies. Even some of those whom I considered friends turned away from me.

Some people said: ‘Well, since you are an Armenian, then begone to Armenia!’ It's hard for me to explain that if I am an Armenian, then I am at home here. The homeland of my ancestors did not become part of this country at their own free will. But, despite this, the Armenians have done so much good for this country that I can safely be proud of my descent,” says Yaşar.

In 2009, Yaşar Kurt met musician Arto Tunçboyacıyan. Together, they created the YaşAr project dedicated to the memory of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink assassinated in Turkey in 2007.

“I owe much to Great Komitas. If not for him, I probably would not have known that I was an Armenian.

Thanks to Komitas, I found myself, found harmony, and restored faith,” says Yaşar.

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— correspondance de Hourig Baghdassarian & Sella Tenjoukian