

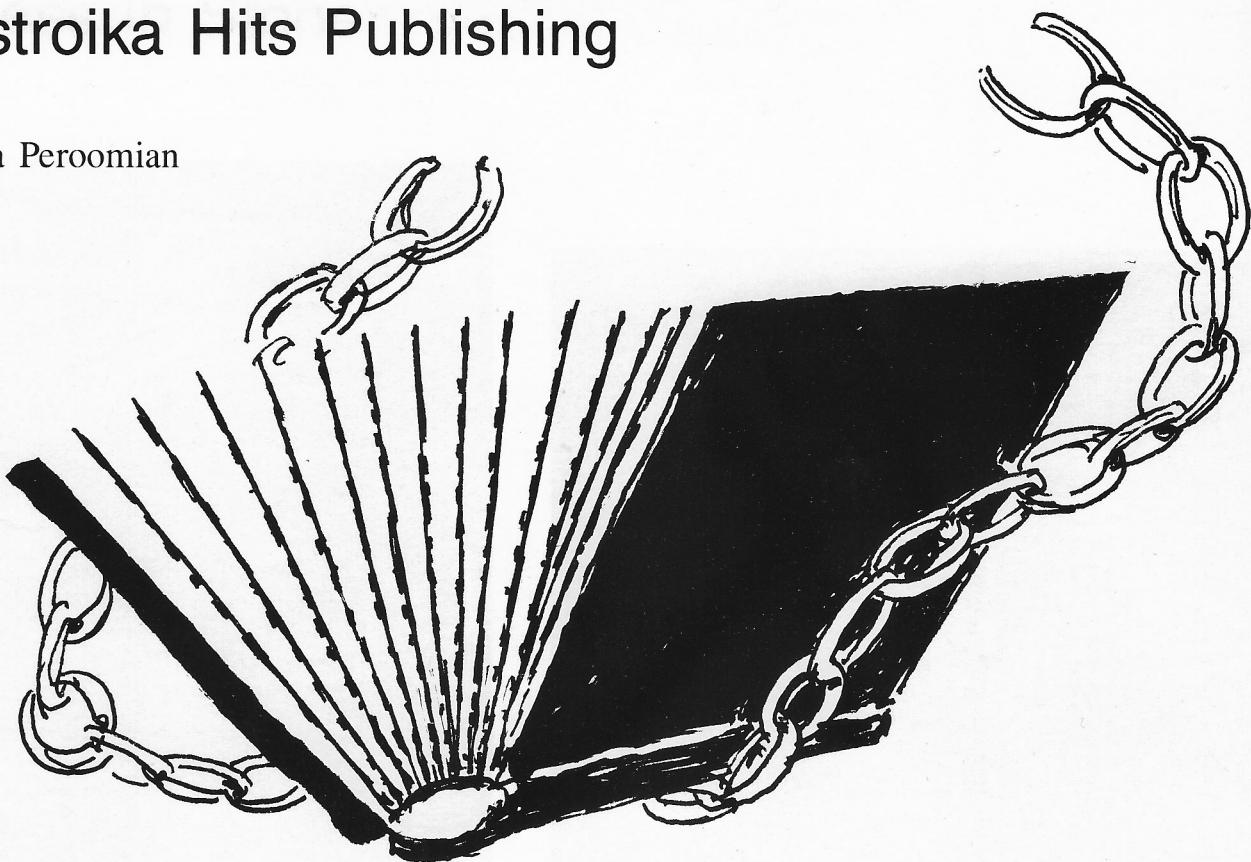
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# Perestroika Hits Publishing

by Rubina Peroomian



Every civilized nation today has its national encyclopedia which, while covering all areas of knowledge, emphasizes the history, culture and religion of its people. The *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia* (Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran) is one such source of knowledge and information, the outcome of an intensive collective effort by Armenian scholars, authors, researchers, and editors. The first volume appeared in 1974 and the twelfth in 1986. A specialized encyclopedia, *Soviet Armenia* (Sovetakan Hayastan), was published the next year to complete the series.

Though the *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia* is rich and universal in content and offers comprehensive information on all places and events in the entire history of mankind, it had to faithfully reflect the narrow frame of mind and world view that dominated the Soviet mentality for decades. The explanations of certain issues—especially those pertaining to modern Armenian history and culture, the interpretation of historiopolitical and ideological growth of the Armenian intellect in the last century, and finally the evaluation of the sociopolitical structure of the Armenian Diasporan communities—bore the impact of the rigid and unyielding Soviet prescript. The *Encyclopedia* closely followed the criteria laid down in the preface to the first volume: “The Marxist-Leninist teachings constitute the ideological

basis of the *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia*. In elucidating issues and topics in social science and biology, the *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia* follows the directive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in putting the scientific achievements to work to educate and elevate the intellect of the masses of workers.”

The latest developments and turn of events in the Soviet Union and in Armenia in the past two years offered the editors, scholars and researchers of the Armenian encyclopedia the opportunity to unveil their true and honest convictions and to remedy the unscholarly wrongs of the past. Now two challenging projects are underway: the *Armenian Brief Encyclopedia* (Haykakan Hamarot Hanragitaran) in four volumes and *The Armenian Question: The Genocide of Armenians* (Haykakan Harts. Hayeri Tseghaspanutiu), both to be printed in 150,000 copies.

“Many things have changed: approaches, interpretations, and evaluations regarding persons and events. We have the opportunity to make necessary corrections to adapt the Armenian Encyclopedia to our outlook today,” says Konstantin Khoodaverdian, professor of history and editor-in-chief of the *Armenian Brief Encyclopedia*.

The *Armenian Brief Encyclopedia* will contain approximately 13,000 entries, providing information on the

## Two Poems

by Gregory Djanikian

Armenian people from ancient times to the present. It will include information on countries, states, institutions and individuals associated in any way with the Armenian people. The Encyclopedia will also treat extensively the Diasporan communities and provide information on their host countries. The first volume of the *Armenian Brief Encyclopedia* was scheduled to be published in 1989, but the economic blockade of Soviet Armenia had its impact in every domain and a shortage of paper delayed the printing. The first volume of this encyclopedia appeared last year, and the publication of all four volumes will be completed by 1992. There are also plans to publish the *Armenian Brief Encyclopedia* in Russian, in three volumes, and in English in one or two volumes.

The most exciting of all these projects, the most commendable and at the same time the most challenging of all is the encyclopedia titled *The Armenian Question: The Genocide of Armenians*, slated to be published this year in Russian. "The language," Prof. Khodaverdian explained, "will facilitate the visibility of the Armenian Question and the dissemination of knowledge and information on the Armenian Genocide." The Armenian version of this encyclopedia will be published in 1991, and the Institution is hoping to publish the English version with the help of Diasporan Armenians, utilizing a publishing house abroad.

There are approximately 1,100 entries in *The Armenian Question: The Genocide of Armenians*, some of which have been contributed by Armenian Diasporan scholars and institutions. The Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide, the two major themes constituting the encyclopedia, are treated not only in their historical context, but also as contemporary issues that motivate action and become the *raison d'être* of many institutions and organizations.

The Armenian Encyclopedia plans to publish sometime in the 1990s *Christianity in Armenia*, an encyclopedia with Armenian, Russian and English versions covering the history of Armenian Christianity, religious and denominational questions, the role of Armenian Christianity in the history of world civilization. Also planned for publication are specialized encyclopedias on Armenian literature, popular medicine, philosophy, geography and other fields of popular interest.

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*Note: The project to translate the encyclopedia into English has encountered serious obstacles. Although everything is in place, there are no funds to pay for the cost of printing, distributing, and publicizing this important work. The editors hope that there are individuals or organizations who can help to underwrite this project.*

### WHEN I AM AWAY FROM MY CHILDREN

But what dolorous music I must hear!  
And my hair seems as grey as the sheeted sky.

Old one, I say to the mirror,  
when will you make a final reckoning?  
And my wife who must now be tending to them  
in all their slipperiness  
is getting younger by the beautiful minute!

Pistachios, I say to the waiter  
(how my children love them)  
ice-cream with sauces, seconds  
on everything, let me wake  
to those other, bountiful days.

And when I'm strolling downtown  
in a strange city,  
or lost in the room  
with an open window

a child's wild cries may spring from the street  
and I will abandon everything to it,  
notebooks and music, the finest syllable,  
could it be my daughter's, I'll think, or my son's?

Just the possibility of it!  
The sheer, momentary desire  
of seeing a face, before not seeing it.

### UNCLE KAREKIN

It was not the pock-marked face,  
the deep nicks we would finger and count,

or the gold incisor that gleamed  
like a small sun in his mouth.

It was not the dancing, hey-hey!  
the fingers clicking like insects,

it was not the tumbles, the widening smile,  
the drink still held aloft like a beacon,

or the quick winks he gave to the wives  
under the starchy scowls of our fathers,

but it was the way he cupped his hands  
over half his face and slowly blew out

the long, low, mournful *hoooo*  
of a steamship moving out to sea

that caught us up, made us say,  
*Take us, Uncle, take us to that place.*