

ARMENIAN VOICE

Summer 2006
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CAIA NEWS

EDITORIAL



For 20 years the CAIA has been the first point of call for a multitude of people for information and advice. For 20 years anyone looking for independent and free information about Armenia and Armenians has been able to contact the CAIA. For 20 years the CAIA has helped 1000's of newly arrived Armenians to make the difficult transition from asylum seekers to refugee

status to eventually gaining British citizenship. For 20 years the CAIA has helped Armenian men, women and children newly arrived from various troubled parts of the world, of different ages and backgrounds to find housing, register with doctors, schools, obtain legal advice and services from local councils, helped them to apply for benefits, find employment, training and volunteering opportunities. Simply put, to address their most immediate physiological needs.

In addition for 20 years the CAIA has spoken out for the many social and cultural needs faced by Armenians living in London to statutory decision makers. This is because the CAIA from day one has recognised the difficulties people coming from abroad to settle in UK face in accessing benefits, health services, housing, language classes, find training, employment. We also recognised that despite Armenians in London sharing a common language, culture, faith and history of persecution they have the need to socialise and bond in order to become a community because for a long time they existed as a dysfunctional set of "communities". Simply put, we have tried to help them to integrate both internally and externally.

For 20 years we have tried to address their isolation by trying to reach every Armenian home through "Armenian Voice" and by trying to provide quality services such as a playgroup, an elderly club, transport, library and other projects.

For 20 years, from the humblest beginnings with one typewriter and tons of energy, determination and infinite patience we have tried utmost to improve the quality of life of our fellow Armenians as equals in society. To empower and enable them individually and collectively to establish, flourish, achieve their potential and integrate on their terms. This has not always been easy when faced with discrimination, ignorance, lack of resources and limited influence on decision makers. Nevertheless today we can look back to see how far we have progressed in overcoming these obstacles with the help of many generous people and organisations who have given their precious time and money. They are too many to mention but they know who they

are. We can also conclude that despite our many achievements, there is still a great deal to do in further overcoming the internal and external obstacles we face as an organisation and as a community. There is still a great deal to do in helping those more disadvantaged than us as well as to strengthening the Armenian identity in this country, especially for the new generation born in Britain who now have a dual identity. We need to ensure that they take pride in their dual culture and heritage and become involved in both societies so that they value both equally and not suffer from the insecurities and inferiority complexes of the previous generation.

As we look to the future, we are confident in their strength and abilities as well as that of our members and wider community to address the critical issues we face as an organisation and a community. In this respect we are grateful to all those who have worked tirelessly and supported the CAIA through this 20 year journey and look forward to being alongside you for another 20 years.

MISSION

The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice seeks to enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged members of the Armenian community in London, specifically those in poverty and isolation. The Centre supports their diverse needs through the provision of welfare, educational and cultural services at a welcoming Centre for all Armenians.

GOALS

- To support the welfare needs of the disadvantaged members of the Armenian community through counselling, translation and information services, which help integration into society.
- To meet the needs of refugees from reception to help with immigration, housing, health, and welfare rights.
- To satisfy the special needs of the unemployed, senior citizens, youth and children with practical training, housing, advice, social, educational and cultural activities.
- To be responsible partner with local councils, voluntary services and health and government agencies in the provision of advice, information & support.
- To be an efficient organisation with effective accountability to our members, funders and users of our services for customer care, financial management and quality control.
- To develop and maintain a competent and well-motivated staff team and team of volunteers.
- To maintain the facilities to support the organisation's services.
- To maintain links between Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora and the London community and to organise such aid as is practicable to Armenia.
- To promote understanding of the Armenian heritage and to increase the networking among the Armenian community.
- To promote understanding of Armenian history and culture among the wider public.

CAIA HOLDS CONSTRUCTIVE AGM



The CAIA held a very productive and successful Annual General Meeting on Saturday 12th November 2005.

The proceedings at the AGM included the approval of the accuracy of last AGM and EGM minutes, a summary of the achievements of the organisation and the challenges faced by the CAIA in the coming year. Members also received and approved the Financial Statements of the company for the year ending 31 March 2005 including the Auditors Report. Dominic Hill Associates were reappointed unanimously by members as CAIA's auditors for the ensuing year.

Members also unanimously approved the decision of the Board to increase CAIA's membership fee to £10 for single members and £15 for couples, as there had not been an increase for almost 15 years.

There then followed the election of 4 new Directors in accordance with the regulations within CAIA's governing document. The four candidates elected were Mrs I Aghabegian, Mr S Grigorian, Mrs K Alexanian and Mr A Grigorian. They joined the five existing members of the Board. The new Board wishes to thank all members who took part in the AGM either in person or by proxy as well as the united effort of all members to help rebuild the CAIA so that it continues serving the Armenian community.

20 YEARS OF CAIA

Next time you are browsing the internet, make sure to visit CAIA's website at www.caia.org.uk where you will be able to read about some of the key highlights and achievements from the past 20 years of the CAIA. The special sections was kindly produced by one of CAIA's many dedicated members and volunteers Miss Lucine Shahbazian. We wish to thank her as well as Mr Andranik Balasian for kindly producing the special 20th anniversary logo.

Later in the year the CAIA is planning to organise a major cultural event to celebrate this important milestone. If you wish to receive details about this event or any other information about CAIA's forthcoming activities, please send us an e-mail: info@caia.org.uk

ARMENIANS: AN INVISIBLE ETHNICITY?

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of CAIA's establishment, we reproduce below an article first published in Feminist Review No. 73, 2003.

The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA) is the principal focus for the welfare and educational needs of over 18,000 Armenians scattered across London. It seeks to enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged members of the Armenian community in London, specifically those in poverty and isolation, and supports their diverse needs through the provision of welfare, educational and cultural services at a welcoming Centre for all Armenians. It is a refugee-led organization, funded by a combination of charitable, local authority and, more recently, central government money. The impetus of its founding comes from the long history of persecution and struggle for survival Armenians have experienced over the centuries. We have no specific funding for women's work, but the majority of our service users are women.

Established in 1986, CAIA's services include information, advice and casework, an award-winning playgroup, day-care for frail senior citizens,

training, reference materials, translations, various publication initiatives such as researches, community directories and a free, bi-lingual newsletter which reaches 3,000 Armenian homes four times a year. In 1994/95 it successfully fund-raised to purchase and establish the Hayashen Community Centre owing to the enthusiastic support of the Armenian community and major donations from Trusts such as the City Parochial Foundation, Tudor Trust, Barings Foundation, St. Sarkis Trust and others. The Hayashen Project won a Commendation award from the prestigious 'The Times/Touche Ross Community Enterprise Awards in 1995/96'. In 1998 CAIA was given Trust for London award for 'committed service to the community and in acknowledgement of outstanding achievement'. CAIA has a subscription-paying membership of over 350 members, which annually elects a seven-member Management Committee to administer its affairs. The organization presently employs five full-time and one part-time staff member, as well as several sessional staff, and relies on many volunteers who all contribute towards the various services.

CAIA lists its top three aims as: supporting the welfare needs of the disadvantaged members of the Armenian community through counselling, translation and information services, which help integration into society; meeting the needs of refugees from reception to help with immigration, housing, health and welfare rights; and satisfying the special needs of the unemployed, senior citizens, women, youth and children with practical training, housing, advice, social, educational and cultural activities. It also seeks to promote understanding of the Armenian heritage amongst the Armenian community and to promote understanding of Armenian history and culture among the wider public.

Armenians are one of Britain's oldest refugee communities. They have sought asylum in Britain since 1915, when the Ottoman government wiped out half the Armenian race. Today, Armenian people are still fleeing from persecution in Turkey, the former Soviet Union and other troubled parts of the Middle East such as Iran, Iraq, and Jerusalem. The problems of newly arrived refugees are still the same: arriving alone, homeless and penniless, they are isolated and so have little or no opportunity to prepare for their new lives. They have often suffered the loss of family and friends and face an uncertain future in a foreign land, with an unfamiliar language.

All Armenians living outside Armenia and considering themselves Armenian, (irrespective of their present national status or years of residence in a particular country, such as Britain, Iran, Lebanon, Cyprus, Iraq, etc.) share the common heritage of being displaced or in exile. This is because Armenian history is one of endless persecution, massacres, invasions, emigration and as such they carry with them their family suffering, and the personal insecurities of being foreigners with the problems of adjusting to different societies. Present-day Armenian asylum seekers fleeing from the former Soviet Union or from the Middle East face a variety of complex problems including reception, settlement and integration in Britain. Specifically, they often do not have the information or the language skills to access basic statutory services.

Armenians live and work in the same economic, political, cultural and social climate as other refugee and small ethnic minority communities in Britain. This means that our community is not immune to the various challenges, insecurities and problems facing these communities such as social exclusion, struggles for equal access to public services, economic integration – without loss of cultural/ national identity. However, one specific problem Armenians face in comparison with other minority ethnic communities is that they are 'invisible'. This is because Armenians as an ethnic group are not identified

under OPCS census information because they arrive from different countries, such as the former Soviet Union or the Middle East (similar to Kurds or Roma people). Therefore local authorities, hospitals and GPs often record their nationalities as either British (for those taking British nationality) or from their country of birth. Consequently, their specific social and cultural needs are not generally recognized or addressed by the statutory or voluntary sector. This can intensify their isolation, anxiety or mental anguish, lead to deteriorations in health, a lack of self-esteem and confidence and, in the case of one Armenian woman refugee, suicide.

A survey of the needs of the Armenian community in London conducted by the CAIA in 1988 revealed linguistic and cultural diversity, diversity regarding the countries they had fled, in their levels of education, living conditions, health, class and economic position, experience of discrimination and in their attitudes, levels of integration and participation in the social/economic or cultural life of Britain. The majority did not access local authority or other statutory services and they had varying expectations of the Armenian community, church and cultural societies and from the host society/indigenous population. It confirmed that Armenians live predominantly in the outer London Boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow and Brent.

It showed that new Armenian refugees continued to arrive, most notably after the break up of the Soviet Union, and because of the continuous tensions in the Middle East. It documented the weakening of traditional forms of social relations and structures as a result of the impact of the assimilation process: for example, breakdown of the extended family, inter-generational tensions, the rise in mixed marriages, the inability of the church and other traditional Armenian organization to operate as before in the Middle East or their country of origin, and the personal/ cultural tension of accommodating dual-identities.

The Armenian community is not helped by the continued denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish government and NATO allies which resulted in the murder of one and half million Armenians in 1915, the occupation of Western Armenia (today's eastern Turkey) and the forced deportation/dispersal of the survivors. The most recent example of this denial was the exclusion of Armenians from the first National Holocaust Remembrance Day events in January 2001. The impact of the establishment of an independent Armenia is too early to be fully assessed as it struggles to overcome years of social, political and economic mismanagement as well as the catastrophic earthquake of 1988. The situation has been further exasperated by the unresolved dispute over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabagh with Azerbaijan and the economic blockade imposed by Turkey soon after Armenia's independence in 1991.

For refugee women, the break-up of the extended family on arriving in Britain puts pressure on them as their traditional support structure no longer functions. This occurs because members of the extended family are actually absent or because houses are generally too small in London, and because of poverty, the vastness of London and related travel problems. Many women are confused by the complexity and lack of information about statutory provisions, such as registering with a GP, putting their children into school, or obtaining welfare benefits. They tend to mistrust 'authorities', which makes approaching or complaining about council/ public or other services very daunting. Not being allowed to work in the first 6 months of their arrival in the UK means they become dependent on welfare and charitable/practical support. They live in very poor accommodation such as hostels, bed & breakfast hotels, flats in high-rise blocks in the most deprived parts of London or outside since the introduction of the 1999

Immigration & Asylum Act. Many feel culturally alienated and isolated. Armenian is only spoken by Armenians and the general ignorance of public workers, such as teachers, council staff, GPs etc. of who Armenians are and why they are in the UK confounds this problem.

Our advisory services deal with problems of poverty, housing, access to public services, debts, immigration, family disputes, etc. and most of our service users are women. We have a Carers Project, funded by the council in Ealing (and the majority of Carers are women who look after aged partners/members of the family), and a Health Advocacy Project that assists isolated elderly women who experience loneliness. The majority of senior citizens attending our 'elderly's club' are women. The users of bus provision are mainly elderly women, frail and disabled who have transport problems. Almost all of our clients have language problems even though many are bilingual (speaking Armenian, as well as the language of the host country they are fleeing to) and our bilingual playgroup was established in July 1987 primarily on the initiative of women and continues to serve their needs.

CAIA serves a primarily female constituency, though it only occasionally actually sets up programmes to focus on female needs. The very nature of CAIA, the way it is set up, already does this and therefore we see no need to have specific women's programmes. Women are at the centre of what we do and their needs are integrated into the whole organization, not a side issue.

Misak Ohanian

HOUSING MEETING



On Friday 18th November. 2005, an informative public meeting took place on the housing needs of the Armenian community organised by CAIA's Advice Officer Mr Rudolf Marku. Guest speakers at the meeting were Mr Nouruz Shariff Deputy Manager of Ealing Housing Advice and Ms. Modesta Anucha, Manager of LOCATA, who spoke about their respective work and took questions from those in attendance.

10 YORK ROAD, ACTON

10 York Road consists of six rooms to rent to single vulnerable Armenian refugees (or former refugees) who have been identified by the CAIA as being in housing need, but are not found to be a priority by the borough. Support is provided to the tenants by Acton Housing Association who will provide permanent move-on accommodation if the tenancy at 10 York Road is maintained to a satisfactory standard during the tenure at the scheme. For further details about please contact the CAIA on 0208 992 4621.

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY



The Friends of Hayashen organised a family dinner and dance on New Year's Eve, with over 130 participants. The event raised much needed funds for the CAIA to pursue its objectives. Our sincere thanks to all those who helped and took part in a successful evening.

EASTER FAMILY GATHERING IN HAYASHEN



On 16th April 2006, over 120 people gathered at Hayashen to celebrate Easter Sunday. The afternoon included great food prepared by CAIA volunteers and Armenian music by Samuel Vardanyan and friends. Guest of honour was Cllr Jagdish Sharma who represented the mayor of London Borough of Hounslow and who made a stirring speech about the importance of promoting the diverse culture of minority ethnic communities as a way of promoting community cohesion and confidence in the multi-cultural society we live in today. The CAIA is grateful to the kind support it received from LB of Hounslow to organise this event.

CILICIA SAILS TO LONDON

During May 2006, many people of all ages, Armenian and non-Armenian, learned out about Cilicia, the replica of a 13th century Armenian Trading Ship which has been sailing around Europe.



CAIA members were able to find out first about Cilicia on May 19th when well-known writer Zory Balayan visited Haysahen to show a DVD and speak about the journey so far. On 28th May at St Katherine's Docks, hundreds of people, many drawn by the national BBC1 TV broadcast witnessed for themselves the magnificent sight which had captured the imagination of the nautical community and allowed the Armenian community to revel in its proud heritage. Following various speeches, ceremonies and cultural programme on the vessel and dockside, Cilicia" sailed away from London for the third daring stage of its voyage that will eventually take it back to Armenia.

As part of this unique experience, Lady Cox wrote a special poem dedicated to the ship and its heroes as she called them to wish them Godspeed:

Historic Cilicia, with all your crew
 We come today to honour you,
 As you sail forth from your winter rest
 To embark upon your final test.

When you leave our island, you will cross a sea
 That is part of Britain's history:
 Conquering Romans, Vikings, Normans came
 To fight, to kill, set our land aflame.
 But later, this sea kept our island free
 From the might of Nazi Germany.

But Armenia's ships plied many seas
 To bring trade, with peace, upon the breeze.
 Cilicia, you're a symbol of Armenia's past
 Of historic lands, seaboard and a kingdom vast:
 You're also a symbol of Armenia's heart
 With genius, science and every art:
 Music, dance, drama and historic books.

So you've blessed this dock which overlooks
 Shakespeare's Globe, cathedrals, and bridges around
 And where today your many friends abound
 To celebrate Armenia's spirit, which will never die
 But, like the eternal phoenix, will always rise high
 To create beauty from ashes, old life to new
 This is your spirit, Cilicia, and we honour you.

Cilicia leaves behind wonderful memories for us all! Congratulations to all who build and sail on her. For information visit www.acc.org.uk

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Mrs A Abrahamian; Mr & Mrs Aghabekian; Mr R. Anooshian
 Mr & Mrs Appleby; Mrs M Aslanian; Mr H Bajakian
 Mrs N Boghossian; Mrs R Cherchian; Mr R Chobanian
 Mr & Mrs Couligian; Mr & Mrs A J Creet; Dr A Danielian
 Mrs A Der Barseghian; Mrs Der Boghossian; Mrs S Der Hovanessian
 Mr A Derarsenian; Miss A Fermanian; Mrs K Gharapetian
 Mr S Grigorian; Mr J P Heron; Mrs N Hovsepian
 Mr & Mrs Z Jerejian; Mrs A Kanikianian; Mr & Mrs O Koundarjian
 Mr & Mrs K Krikorian; Mr H Koukouljian; Mrs A Mahdessian

Mrs T Mansourian; Mrs A Markarian; Mrs P Minassian
 Mrs S Minassian; Mrs L Nazikian; Mrs R Nicholas
 Mrs A Ohanian; Mr & Mrs Ozkaya; Shahbazian Family
 Mrs M Shekerdemian; Mr & Mrs Simon; Mr & Mrs Soutanian
 Mr J M Thaddeus; Mrs S Tokatlian; Mrs H Vartanian
 Prof. Th. Van Lint; Mrs K Voskanian; Mrs S Zador-Ohanian

Donation Received from Organisations:
 Middle East Christian Minorities Advisory Centre and Ealing Refugee Forum

Donation of Books for Hayashen Library
 Mr H Bajakian; Mrs O Bazil; Mrs M Shekerdemian; Mr G Yessaian

The CAIA is grateful for the financial support it received from the following during 2005/06.

- Association of London Government
- London Borough of Ealing
- City Parochial Foundation
- Acton Healthy Living Centre/Big Lottery Fund
- Hounslow PCT
- Ealing Children's Fund
- London Borough of Hounslow/PCT
- Capital Radio's Help A London Child
- Hilden Trust

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB EVENTS

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS CHRISTMAS PARTY



On 9th December 2005 over 80 Armenian senior Citizens enjoyed a great afternoon marking Xmas & the festive season at the Centre for Armenian Information & Advice.

Guests included Cllr. M Elliott, the Worshipful Mayor of LB of Ealing, His Grace Bishop Hovanissian, Mr Edmond Michaels, Chair of Ealing Refugee Forum. The Party consisted of

traditional Armenian foods, an informal cultural programme of singing, poetry and live Armenian Music which led to a great deal of singing. Mrs Rita Cherchian also spoke about the background of Xmas. Every Armenian senior citizen left the party with a present kindly donated by CAIA members



SENIOR CITIZENS SUMMER OUTING



On September 28th, 2005 a great day out took place for the benefit of Armenian Senior Citizens to the seaside resort town of Hastings .

1600TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVENTION OF THE ARMENIAN ALPHABET



On 30th September the Armenian Senior Citizens club held a cultural event marking the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet. The programme included poetry recitals and speeches by several people.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Armenian Senior Citizens mark International Women's Day at Hayashen on March 8th, 2006.

APRIL 24TH COMMEMORATION

On 24th April 2006, the date marking the 91st anniversary of the Armenian genocide, Armenian Senior Citizens gathered to pay their respect to the one and half million Armenian martyrs who perished in the Ottoman Empire.

Following a minutes silence, poems were recited and a lament sung. Mrs Sat Minassian and Mr Sarkis Grigorian provided the cultural programme.

The Armenian genocide has had a profound effect on the consciousness of th are, an effect made much worse by the continual denial of the genocide by si

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

During 2003-2006 Acton Healthy Living Project via the Big Lottery Fund has wishes to publicly thank the Big Lottery Fund, Ealing PCT and all those who h staff such as Abbi Agana, Mandy Hewey and several others behind the scene it receives from LB of Hounslow and Hounslow Primary Care Trust to enable i

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE TALKS TO SENIOR CITIZENS



On 27th January 2006, Mr Matthew Ra made a power point presentation at the London Fire Brigade could install smok

ACPG ACTIVITIES / CHILDRENS PROJECT

SUMMER OUTING TO LEGOLAND

On August 18th a special day-long outing was organised to Legoland Windsor Project staff. Originally we had planned to hire only one bus but due to unfor Child funded this trip, which paid for one coach and the entry tickets. Childre the most of the rides and activities.

Below is a group photo from the Summer Outing, where everyone posed hap



SUMMER PLAYScheme 2005

The CAIA organised a successful summer project during 1-19 August 2005 and Summer Outing, thanks to grateful funding from Ealing Council and the Hilden Charitable Trust.



25 children aged 1-10 attended to benefit from the diverse activities such as baking biscuit, painting T-shirts, making cards, masks, mosaic tile door numbers (see top left photo), as well as outings to Brent Lodge Park in West Ealing and Hounslow Urban Farm where children could feed the friendly animals (see top right photo).



One of the many activities was baking biscuits, where children thoroughly enjoyed preparing the dough and mixing the ingredients.



Children enjoying a ride on tractors in Hounslow Urban Farm.

CHILDREN'S HALF-TERM PROJECT



Children's Half-term activities took place in October 2005 and February 2006, organised by CAIA, as a part of

the Intergenerational Project funded by Ealing Children's Fund.

Parents and Toddlers activities as well as 3 days of cooking Western Armenian traditional Food such as mante, kube and taboule was prepared by children with the help of their parents.

The workshops proved to be a success for both parents and children, where they learned to cook together.



CAIA GAINS AWARD

The CAIA has been presented with a certificate of recognition on behalf of Ealing Children's Fund for "providing valuable services for children 5-13 years in LB of Ealing April 2003 - March 2006".

Judith Finlay, Director of Children & Families and Kate Subanney, Children's Fund Programme Manager, have signed the Certificate.

The CAIA is grateful for this recognition and the support it received from all those who contributed to the success of Ealing's Children's Fund, in particular the Council staff who helped all the funded projects.

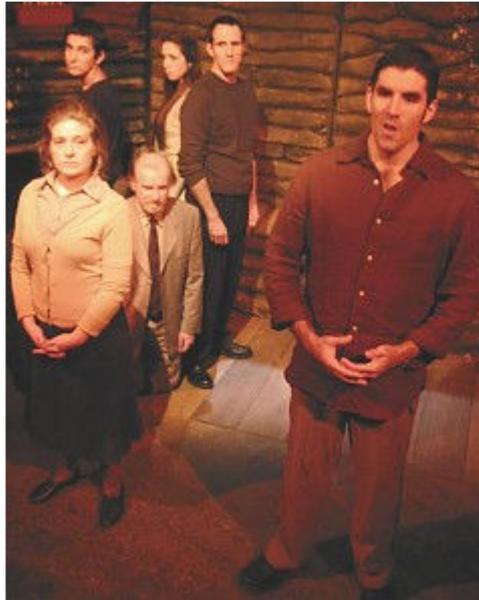
PARENTS & TODDLERS CHRISTMAS PARTY



On 12th December 2005, over 40 children, parents, and grandparents enjoyed a Christmas Party at the CAIA. Father Christmas visited the Centre to give gifts to all the children. Many thanks to Mrs Anne Boyadjian for all her hard work since September when the playgroup in the form of a Parents & Toddlers Group restarted.

COMMUNITY NEWS

"PROTEST" PREMIERES IN LONDON



program of spoken word and poetry billed as "I Wish to Die Singing." The piece was devised by Neil McPherson, opened on November 6 and continues a limited run until November 20.

Kouyoumdjian's partly-autobiographical piece begins at a demonstration against the denials of the Genocide. Its centerpiece, however, is a dream sequence in which the protagonist finds himself stranded in the middle of a desert, where he encounters an ancient Armenian goddess Anahid and contemplates life as it would have been if his ancestors had been spared the Turkish campaign of extermination.

"Protest," which debuted at the Downey Museum of Art in 2000, has been performed in most major California cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento. Earlier this year, actor J.D. Rudometkin performed the piece in a three-city tour that culminated at the El Portal Forum Theatre.

Kouyoumdjian is the winner of Elly Awards both for playwriting ("The Farewell") and for directing ("Three Hotels"). His writing credits also include "The Delicate Lines of Revolution." He is presently collaborating on the script of "Little Armenia," co-written with the Fountain Theatre and slated for production early in 2006. Armenian News Network/Groong

EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

On 18th November 2005, The City Council of Edinburgh adopted a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

The Resolution reads: *"This Council notes that a number of Parliaments around the world have recognised, as genocide, events that began in Anatolia in 1915, including recently, an 82% vote in favour of recognition in the European Parliament on September 2005. Council also notes that recognition was acknowledged when Edinburgh hosted the UK's Annual Holocaust Memorial Day in 2003. Council recognises the scale and tragedies occurred on all sides in the conflicts which began in 1915, but views that the Ottoman actions against the Armenian community did constitute genocide. Council welcomes Turkey's application for membership of the European Union and encourages dialogue and reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples. Council supports the view that genocide recognition should be made a condition for membership of the European Union."*

WORLD NEWS

VARIOUS WORLD NEWS ITEMS

NEW AMBASSADOR FOR ARMENIA NOYAN TAPAN - Anthony Cantor has been appointed Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Armenia in succession to Thorhilda Abbott-Watt who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. According to the "M2 Presswire" agency, Anthony Cantor will take up his appointment in January 2006. Anthony John James Cantor was born on February 1, 1946. For about 4 decades, he occupied different posts at the system of the Foreign Ministry of Great Briain and diplomatic missions of the United Kingdom abroad, including Tokyo, Osaka, Hanover, Hanoi, Rangoon, Accra. He was the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Paraguay in 2001-2005, up to the new appointment. He is married, has two daughters and one son.

A Major act of vandalism took place in Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan on 15th December 2005 when a group of Azerbaijani soldiers, supported by arms and equipment, destroyed the historically and religiously significant headstones of the medieval Armenian cemetery in Old Jugha, at the bank of river Araks.

The headstones were the remnants of those which survived similar Azerbaijani vandalism in 2002. The planned act of vandalism threatened the complete destruction of historic monuments belonging to Armenian, as well as world cultural heritage. After being smashed to pieces, the Armenian monuments were loaded on trucks and dumped in the river Araks.

This area, which is situated between Armenia and Iran, has been home to a majority Armenian population for generations before they were ousted by successive Azeri governments. The cemetery held more than 10,000 individually carved, artistically unique headstones called Stone Crosses - khachkars. The Azerbaijani government began their destruction in the 20th century, continued with great force in 2002, and in December 2005 resumed with a vengeance attempting to wipe out traces of Armenian presence in the area.

The fact of soldiers taking part in the act of vandalism testifies to the Azerbaijani authorities' involvement in yet another attempt of disguising history with the aim of completely eliminating any trace of Armenians and historic Armenian presence in Nakhichevan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has expressed frustration and deep concern over the issue and has called upon Baku and Nakhichevan to stop these acts immediately. In the meantime, the Ministry has urged UNESCO and other international bodies to send experts to Nakhichevan without delay, so that the fact of vandalism can be recorded and urgent measures be taken.

A lawsuit against French insurer Axa for \$17 million was settled in a California court on 27 October 2005. The company was accused of failing to pay death benefits for the insurance policies purchased by Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire prior to the genocide in which up to 1.5 million

people were killed. Descendants of victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide soon will be able to use a searchable website to check whether any of them are eligible to make a claim to a French insurer. The Axa settlement follows a similar agreement with New York Life Insurance Company in early 2004 under which it agreed to pay \$20 million.

A civil court in Belgium on 16th November 2005 returned a verdict finding Emir Kir (Socialist Party), the State Secretary of the Brussels region of Belgium, a "liar" and "denier" in connection with his statements and actions concerning the Armenian Genocide. Kir has said that he will appeal the verdict. The court proceedings began after Kir lodged a complaint against the administrators of the website www.suffrage-universel.be, Messrs Mehmet Koksal and Pierre-Yves Lambert, on the grounds that the website misrepresented him. The accusations, among others, included the charge that Kir had taken part in demonstrations denying the Armenian Genocide, and that he had articulated positions denying this crime against humanity. The Court found that the authors of the website were "by no means wrong" in applying the "denier" characterisation to Kir, and went on to note that this type of clear labelling of deniers serves the common good and advances the purposes established by Belgian law to penalise Armenian Genocide denial.

"It is impossible to remember without tears what has happened to Armenians in Turkey," Israel's chief rabbi Yona Mezger said on Nov. 22 when paying a visit to the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, Noyan Tapan reported.

When asked why Israel has not recognised the Genocide so far, Mezger said, "As a clergy representative, I recognise the fact of the Genocide, the rest is up to the political and international relations." Israeli Knesset Member Yuir Stern, in turn, said that Turkey itself will admit to the Genocide. "Personally I recognise that historic fact and I am sure it is necessary for Turkey to come to terms with its own history," Stern said.

On 15 December, 2005, the Lithuanian Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the 1915 Armenian Genocide perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire. The Lithuanian lawmakers qualified the Armenian massacres as genocide and called on Turkey to recognise that historic fact. Seventeen countries as well as over 30 US states have recognised the Armenian Genocide to date.

Armenian President Robert Kocharyan has decorated the deputy speaker of the British House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox, with the Mkhitar Gosh Medal for her significant contribution to the strengthening and development of Armenian-British relations and for many years of humanitarian, fruitful and courageous work. Kocharyan presented Cox with Armenia's state award today.

After the awarding ceremony, President Kocharyan highly valued Cox's consistent and purposeful work, the Armenian president's press service has

told Arminfo.

Cox said it was her 60th visit to Nagorny Karabakh as part of the pilgrimage mission to Artsakh (Karabakh). She shared her impressions of Artsakh with Kocharyan. Cox said that on every visit to Nagorny Karabakh, she sees obvious progress both in Armenia and Artsakh. At the request of the guest, Kocharyan updated her on the current situation in the Karabakh settlement process in the light of his recent meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Kazan.

For more than 1700 years Armenian art and culture created invaluable masterpieces. One of these masterpieces is not only a distinguished example for the power and liveliness of Armenian Art during the centuries, it is also a National Sanctuary of Armenia - the Codex Etchmiadzin.

This manuscript, created in 989 and today situated in the Mashtots Matenadaran in Yerevan, is due to its age not accessible to the public. Fortunately, this treasure of the Armenian people was reproduced as a Fine Art Facsimile Edition - as a complete faithful truecolour reproduction of the manuscript in the original format down to the smallest detail. Text and artistic design of this tetra evangeliary, created in 989, are closer to the roots of Christian manuscript tradition and book illumination than any other manuscript. Fifteen full-page images and four monumental hierarchical full-page feast images from the 7th century, bound in the manuscript, represent the oldest testimonies of Armenian book painting. This exclusive edition, as a witness for the exceptional art and culture of the Armenian People, is now available. Furthermore a Documentation Kit with three Fine Art Facsimile leaves gives a first impression of this exceptional manuscript.

Further information: classic publishers, Augasse 10a, A-8020 Graz; phone +43 316 699 870, fax +43 316 699 870-30, e-mail office@classic.co.at

CD and DVD REVIEWS

THE DIVINE LITURGY - KOMITAS

The Divine Liturgy (Armenian:Badarag) is the most sacral worship service of the Armenian Church. Following the apostolic tradition that dates back to Thaddeus and Bartholomew, two of Christ's disciples, the Armenian Church is a keeper of ancient liturgical traditions passed on orally through the centuries. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the chants of the Divine Liturgy were harmonised in two major choral settings by the revered Armenian churchman, composer and folklorist Komitas, today generally appreciated as the founder of Armenia's modern classical music. Komitas wrote his opus magnum presented in this recording on the eve of the Armenian genocide, to which he fell victim, adding to the poignancy of this work. The Hover Chamber Choir aims to convince music lovers all over the world with its sophisticated handling of this ambitious composition. For further information contact Kulter Aktiv by e-mail horak@kulturaktiv.org

THE JOURNEY

An independent film about a young Armenian woman on an emotional journey of cultural discovery, passion and life. The year is 1991. The Soviet Union has collapsed and Armenia is at the threshold of her independence. It has been ten years since twenty-three year old Eve left her homeland and immigrated to New York City with her parents. Eve struggles to pursue her passion as a photographer while waitressing at nights. However, amidst the ever-continuous vitality of America, Eve yearns for stillness that will soothe her soul. Tragedy strikes, transforming her dreams into nightmares. Eve learns that in Armenia her childhood friend, Arman, has been killed. Unexpectedly she gets called on an assignment to photograph the events taking place in the Caucasus and finds herself on journey that changes her life. Facing her past both culturally and emotionally, Eve finds herself caught up in the independence movement of Armenia and the crisis of committing to a man, whom she falls in love with. Eventually, Eve determines the struggles with destiny in light of her new found love and rediscovery of her homeland. The Journey is directed by Edwin Avanesov of Burbank and Emy Hovanesyan of Glendale who also produced and wrote the screenplay with Anghela Zograbyan of Glendale. Starring Sona Tatoyan as Eve, Also starring Varduhi Varderesyan as Eve's Grandmother, Tigran Nersesyan as David and Anoush Stepanyan as Emma. The Journey won the Audience Choice Award at the Milan International Film Festival in 2002. Three Armenian filmmakers from Los Angeles, California. The film cost less than \$1 million to make, was shot using a digital camera in Armenia and Los Angeles and features English and Armenian dialogue and subtitles. For further information, visit www.evesjourney.com

BOOK REVIEWS

THE GREAT GAME OF GENOCIDE IMPERIALISM, NATIONALISM AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OTTOMAN ARMENIANS by Donald Bloxham Price: £19.99 (Hardback) ISBN 0-19-927356-1

Publishing to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the beginning of the genocide on 24 April 2005. The Great Game of Genocide addresses the origins, development and aftermath of the Armenian genocide in a wide-ranging reappraisal based on primary and secondary sources from all the major parties involved. Rejecting the determinism of many influential studies, and discarding polemics on all sides, it founds its interpretation of the genocide in the interaction between the Ottoman empire in its decades of terminal decline, the self-interested policies of the European imperial powers, and the agenda of some Armenian nationalists in and beyond Ottoman territory. Particular attention is paid to the international context of the process of ethnic polarisation that culminated in the massive destruction of 1912-23, and especially the obliteration of the Armenian community in 1915-16.

The opening chapters of the book examine the relationship between the great power politics of the 'eastern question' from 1774, the narrower politics of the 'Armenian question' from the mid-nineteenth century, and the internal Ottoman questions of reforming the complex social and ethnic order under intense external pressure. Later chapters include detailed case studies of the role of Imperial Germany during the First World War (reaching conclusions markedly different to the prevailing orthodoxy of German complicity in the genocide); the wartime Entente and then the uncomfortable postwar Anglo-French axis; and American political interest in the Middle East in the interwar period which led to a policy of refusing to recognise the genocide. The book concludes by explaining the ongoing

international denial of the genocide as an extension of the historical 'Armenian question', with many of the same considerations governing modern European-American-Turkish interaction as existed prior to the First World War.

THE TRUTH WILL SET US FREE
Armenians And Turks Reconciled by George Jerjian
Price: £10.00 (Hardback) ISBN 0-9544599-0-3

Armenians and Turks Reconciled is simply unimaginable. Yet the unthinkable is possible and even highly probable. Back in 1985, if anyone had predicted the fall of the Berlin Wall, they would have damaged their careers. In that same year, if anyone had predicted that Robbin Island-prisoner Nelson Mandela would become President of an apartheid-free South Africa, they would have been ridiculed as Naive dreamers. In 2002, George Jerjian predicted that the Turks, in wanting more democracy, would be compelled to face the truth about the Armenian genocide and reconciliation would ensue. Without a doubt, people are chuckling now, but for how long? The Truth Will Set Us Free: Armenians and Turks Reconciled is a powerful combination of touching family story, a compelling argument that proves the Armenian genocide beyond any doubt, and a visionary olive branch solution to one of history's most intractable dilemmas. We all tend to think that big results require big efforts, efforts beyond the ability of one individual. In The Tipping Point, author Malcolm Gladwell shows us that one imaginative person applying a well-placed lever can move the world. Jerjian believes Armenians and Turks may almost be at the "tipping point".

BIOGRAPHY OF ROGER ALTOUNYAN

Roger Altounyan (1922-1987) was a British physician and medical pioneer who alleviated the lives of asthma sufferers world-wide by inventing the drug Intal and also the little Spinhaler. He was of Anglo-Armenian extraction. His father, Ernest, was a friend of Arthur Ransome who used Roger and his sisters as models for the Walker children in the Swallows and Amazons series. He served with distinction in the RAF during the war. In this biography Rodney Dingle reveals the development of this intriguing, exceptional man who, during the second half of his life, devoted himself to the relief of fellow-asthmatics through his inspiration, heroic habit of using himself as a human guinea-pig during his years of research. For further information contact Rodney Dingle, Haymore Thatch, Church Road, Lympstone, Exmouth EX8 5JU or e-mail: dingle@tiscali.co.uk.

ANTARAM
by Marie Best
Price: £6.99 (Paperback) ISBN 0-955045-40-1

ANTARAM is the story of Reya, the daughter of an Armenian family. It begins in Famagusta, Cyprus - the sunny island nesting in the warm waters of the Mediterranean, in the 1950s. The island which became a heaven for some of the many Armenians deported from Turkey in the early 1920s.

We follow Reya as her story unfolds. We share her happiness and feel her

loss. We can almost smell the aroma of the wonderful food she learns to cook. We witness her world falling apart after the Turkish invasion in 1974, when she reluctantly leaves her beloved Cyprus to relocate in London. And ultimately, we rejoice in her triumph, as she rebuilds her life. This book is written from the heart. It is tribute to the courage of the Armenian people living in the Diaspora. They embrace their adopted country, they abide by its rules, but they never forget their heritage, because like the flower antaram, it remains evergreen in their psyche.

It's a good read, I would recommend it to everyone. The characters will stay with you long after you close the cover. For further information contact Masis Books, 34 Julius Hill, Warfield, Berks. RG42 3UN

CONCILIATION RESOURCES - ACCORD

An international review of peace initiatives

The limits of leadership - Elites and societies in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process

Despite a decade of deadlock in the Armenian-Azerbaijani struggle for sovereignty over Nagorny Karabakh, this conflict remains unresolved and of enormous strategic importance, not least because of its proximity to oil and gas transport corridors from the Caspian basin to Europe and beyond. International mediation efforts have yet to succeed, leaving much to be learned about the structure of the peace process and the respective roles of elites and societies. The costs of stalemate can be measured in lost opportunities for democratisation, economic development and the integration of the South Caucasus into the wider world.

This policy paper offers a digest of the findings from issue 17 in Conciliation Resources' (CR) Accord series, The limits of leadership: elites and societies in the Nagorny Karabakh peace process. With articles authorised by the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers, political and civic actors, as well as international experts, the publication is available in English and Russian (www.c-r.org/accord).