

# ARMENIAN VOICE

Summer  
2007  
Issue 51

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- Those who have kindly made donations to CAIA

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**CAIA NEWS**

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**CAIA ACHIEVES "INVESTORS IN PEOPLE"**



## INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

the outstanding improvements and achievements that the organisation has made during the past year. We will shortly display both the certificate and *Iip* plaque in Hayashen.

The process began back in February 2006 when the CAIA made a commitment to work towards achieving the *Investors in People* national standard. Following an initial diagnosis assessment of our current performances against the standards with the help independent consultant Angela Noonan, it was concluded that we were not very far away from achieving *Iip*. With Angela's help as well as the additional support of Wesley Harcourt from *Advice UK* we were able to identify our strengths and weaknesses as well as the good practices, which were many. Trustees and staff spent many hours with Angela and with each other reviewing CAIA's various policies, procedures and practices. The process has helped clarify roles and responsibilities of Trustees and staff, the organisational structure, our internal channels of communications, staff support and appraisal systems, individual staff/trustees training needs and development records, customer feedback systems and how all these fit into CAIA's business planning cycle. By involving everyone into the process has meant that all sections within the organisation have become clearer about what the organisation is trying to achieve and how one's own work, contribution and area of responsibility fits in. Needless to say we are delighted to have achieved Investors In People quality standard and thank everyone who contributed in the process which was funded from the *European Social Fund* via, *London West Learning and Skills Council and Renewal SRB 6 programme*.

Finally the *Iip* is subject to continuous review and assessment to ensure that our practices remain to the highest standards. The next *Iip* review will be during February 2010.

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### "WE ARE ALL HRANT DINK"

Hrant Dink, the most prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist, community activist and a champion of human rights and freedom of expression within Turkey was shot dead on 19th January 2007 outside the office of AGOS, the newspaper he founded in Istanbul.

Hrant Dink, a passionate promoter of the universality of human rights and who appeared on different platforms with human rights activists, journalists and intellectuals across the political spectrum in Turkey, was 53 years of age. Best known for his willingness to debate openly and critically issues of Armenian identity and official versions of history in Turkey relating to the genocide of Armenians in 1915. Dink also wrote widely on issues of democratisation and human rights. He leaves behind his wife and young family as well as the hopes and aspirations of many people in Turkey and around the world.

His assassination by a Turkish nationalist youth underlined the lengths to which some will go to prevent Turkey from becoming the country that Dink envisaged - a place where citizenship is a guarantee of rights, and not an instrument of assimilation with "Turkishness".

The CAIA deplores this political assassination and expresses its condolence to his family, friends and all the people within and outside Turkey who are struggling to bring about positive change and reconciliation within Turkish society. We are confident that the martyrdom of Hrant Dink was not in vain as the expression of thousands of people who paid their respects at his funeral and protested across around the world can witness. Courageous British journalist Robert Fisk called Hrant's murder the 1,500,001th victim of the Armenian Genocide. Another person who knew Hrant called him the Armenian Dr. Martin Luther King and so on. However for ordinary people within Turkey and abroad Hrant Dink tried to bridge the past and present of the Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Assyrian, Greek and many other people who suffer from an intolerable society which suffocates free speech, critical debate and dissenting opinion. As Hrant Dink's widow told mourners during his funeral, *"Seventeen or 27, whoever he was, the murderer was once a baby. Unless we can question the darkness that turned this baby into a murderer, we cannot achieve anything"*.

We are grateful for all the letters, e-mails and telephone calls of sympathy and solidarity CAIA received from many quarters following the murder of Hrant Dink. We publicly acknowledge your messages and thank you all on behalf of everyone affected by this tragedy. *"We are all Hrant Dink. We are all Armenians"*, proclaimed the posters held in the huge funeral procession by people of various minority and ethnic groups of Turkey. We echo those sentiments from London.

For more information, newspaper articles, photographs and tributes to Hrant Dink please visit this page on CAIA's website.

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### CAIA HOLDS SUCCESSFUL AGM

A productive and successful Annual General Meeting was held by the CAIA on 7th October 2006 in Hayashen.



The AGM began with CAIA Chairperson Mr Souren Grigorian thanking all members taking part, including those by proxy. In his report, Mr Grigorian summarised the achievements of the Board of Directors and the challenges it had experienced in the past year in the effort to rebuild the services and finances of the organisation. Mr Grigorian thanked all his fellow board members and CAIA staff and

volunteers who contributed toward this.

Mr Grigorian was followed by CAIA Chief Executive Officer Mr Misak Ohanian who provided a brief report about the activities and services of the charity over the past 12 months. Much of his report and the work of the charity had been circulated to members by a new glossy report printed to mark CAIA's 20th anniversary.

The next item on the agenda was to receive and approve the Financial Statements of the company for the year ending 31 March 2006 including the Auditors Report. CAIA's Treasurer, Mrs Vilma Gholian presented the item which members approved unanimously. Dominic Hill Associates were reappointed once again by members as CAIA's auditors for the ensuing year. There then followed the election of 3 new Trustee/Directors in accordance with CAIA's Articles of Association. The candidates elected were Mrs K Gharapetian, Mr S Shahiean and Miss L Shahbazian. They join the four existing members of the Board Mr Souren Grigorian, Mrs Karine Alexanian, Mrs Isgouhi Aghabekian and Mr Artak Grigorian.

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### THANK YOU TENI

Ms Teni Shahiean retired as a member of the CAIA Board at the AGM held on 7th October 2006 after almost 5 years of unflinchingly dedicated services to the aims and objectives of the charity.

Teni first became involved with the CAIA as a volunteer in the Hayashen Library, later in the Youth Club and was eventually elected on the Board in May 2002. In 2004 her contribution in CAIA was acknowledged by a Diveristy in Action Volunteering Award she received from the Mayor of LB of Ealing. As a young CAIA member, Teni has been a positive role model for others to follow in the active and vibrant life of our community. Well done & thank you.

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### CAIA VOLUNTEERS HONOURED



On Saturday 4th November 2006 at Thames Valley University afternoon tea was held to honour over 50 volunteers working in unpaid capacity within Ealing's diverse community and voluntary groups.

Amongst those who received certificates included 4 CAIA volunteers, Mrs Araxi Grigorian (above), Mr Souren Shahiean, Mr Ohanes Koundarjian and Miss Lucine

Shahbazian were recognised for volunteering 100 hours and more in the past year.



CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian was also given a certificate (to his surprise) for managing volunteers. The certificates were handed from Nigel Fogg, Grants Unit Manager at *Ealing Council* and Lizzy Saunders from *Ealing Volunteering Bureau* who had organised this excellent event thanks to a modest grant from *Awards for All*. If such an event is held again next year we hope to nominate further CAIA volunteers in

recognition of their contribution in CAIA's services and activities as nominations were limited to 4 volunteers per organisation for this event.

The CAIA appreciates and recognises all those unsung heroes who help it function for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged within the Armenian community throughout the year. We thank you all.

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### QUIZ NIGHT AT HAYASHEN



An entertaining family Quiz Night took place on 22 July in Hayashen. Following the meal, many of those taking part started dancing to gain more points!

The event raised £400 for the CAIA thanks to volunteers such as Mrs Rita Koundarjian.

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### LONDON PRESS AWARDS 2006

A photograph published in *Armenian Voice* was short listed at the Mayor of London's annual reporting *Asylum Press Award 2006*.

Various dignitaries, journalists and community groups including CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian and regular contributor of *Armenian Voice* Mr Ohannes Koundarjian attended the award ceremony held at London's City Hall on 12th December. Mayor Ken Livingston presented the awards assisted by Director of Liberty Shami Chakrabarti and the GLA's Director of Equality and Policing Lee Jasper.

In his speech the Mayor paid tribute to London's local and community media. The CAIA welcomes Armenian related articles and news items from budding journalists and any others for publication in *Armenian Voice*, which this year marks its 20th anniversary. *Armenian Voice* was first published in January 1987.

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### ROBERT EVANS MEP VISITS HAYASHEN TO CONGRATULATE NVQ STUDENTS



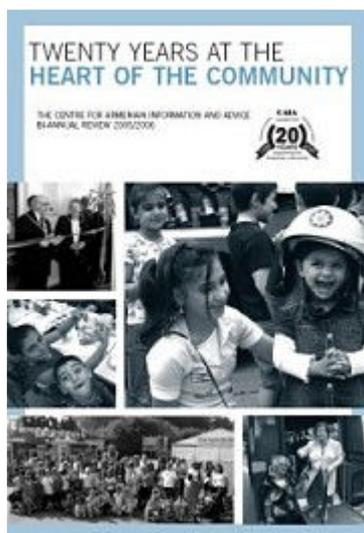
Member of European Parliament Mr Robert Evans visited Hayashen on 21st September to meet and congratulate all the community workers and the organisation, including CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian who successfully undertook an NVQ in Management training course thanks to funding from the *European Social Fund via Renewal SRB 6 Programme* and the *London West Learning & Skills Council*.

Robert Evans MEP spoke at length with all 10 students about their organisations who work in West London's Somali, Bosnian, Albanian, Iraqi

and other communities. Robert Evans MEP handed each of the students with a certificate of appreciation.

Following the ceremony Robert Evans MEP was given a personally guided tour of Hayashen by CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian and shared their private thoughts about Turkey's application to join the EU, the recognition of the Armenian genocide as well as the unwarranted destruction of Armenian cultural heritage sites in Nakhjevan by Azeri soldiers last year.

## CAIA PUBLISHES NEW BI-ANNUAL REPORT



Copies can be purchased from CAIA for £2 (inclusive of p&p).

## OSHAGAN TRIO VISITS HAYASHEN



The award winning Oshagan Trio visited Haysahen on 14th July 2006 following their triumph at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales.

The group, composed of soprano Gayaneh Grigorian, Grigor Arakelian kemani and arranger, and Ara Bakhtikian doudouk, met and performed a sample of Armenian ancient and traditional folk songs to

both parents and children and, later in the afternoon, to over 30 Armenian Senior Citizens.

## NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN HAYASHEN

On 31st December 2006 the CAIA marked the 20th anniversary of its establishment by organising a major celebration. Over 125 people enjoyed themselves to the sounds of Armenian traditional music and the singing of Samvel late into the night.

To celebrate this important milestone, there were delicious Armenian and Middle Eastern dishes and pastries, a special raffle draw to raise funds for CAIA's charitable work and unprompted dancing by many of those



present. A great time was had by everyone, young and old. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped to the success of the evening.

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### I WISH TO DIE SINGING



A reading of "*I Wish to Die Singing*" was performed live in Hayashen on Saturday 9th September 2006 for a specially invited audience to raise funds for future performances at the Finborough Theatre.

"*I Wish to Die Singing*" is a very moving one-act monologue of spoken word and poetry about the Armenian Genocide. Congratulations to all the performers and the producers Michael Nersisyan and Susannah Stevens and director Kate Wasserberg.

### INTERVIEW WITH NEIL McPHERSON

Neil McPherson is the Artistic Director of the Finborough Theatre. His play, *I Wish to Die Singing*, about the Armenian Genocide, is due for production in October 2007.

Neil McPherson trained as an actor for three years before becoming Artistic Director of the New End Theatre in 1996. He has been Artistic Director of the Finborough Theatre since January 1999, where his company Concordance has produced over 50 shows. *I Wish to Die Singing* premiered at the Finborough Theatre in November 2005, where it sold out for three Sunday night performances. Other plays by Neil McPherson include *Mumper's Dingle*, an adaptation of the novels *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* by George Borrow. Recent Finborough awards under the management of Neil McPherson include: The Empty Space Peter Brook Dan Crawford Pub Theatre Award 2005, The Empty Space Peter Brook Award Rent Mark Marvin Award 2004, Pearson Award Bursary for Playwright-in-Residence James Graham 2005, Pearson Award Best Play for Playwright-in-Residence Laura Wade 2005.

Neil McPherson is interviewed by Susannah Stevens for the Armenian Voice.

**Q:** Given the lack of awareness about the Armenian Genocide, how did you come to learn about it and what made you decide to write the play?

**A:** I have always been interested in world history and I read a good deal about the genocide and the events leading up to it, having been told about it first by a school friend who is Armenian. In 2005, I planned to produce an American play about the Armenian genocide to commemorate

the 90th anniversary, but unfortunately couldn't obtain the rights. I looked without success for another play and eventually decided to write something myself. The American play we originally planned to do was set in the US in the aftermath of the genocide but I felt it was important to write a piece that described the events. There didn't seem any point in doing a play about survivors when people were so uninformed about the genocide itself. I felt this play needed to be written.

**Q:** *Do you have any personal experience that relates to the genocide?*

**A:** No, but I feel passionately that it should be more widely understood and acknowledged, and I hope that my play may help to educate people. I was concerned that it might be inappropriate for me to write about the genocide, I didn't want to appropriate a history that was not mine. However, given the level of denial about the genocide, I can only hope that the fact I have absolutely no personal or family involvement in the genocide may provide a rebuttal to those who continue to deny the events of 1915.

**Q:** *Did you base the play on specific materials / writing?*

**A:** I tried to base my writing on the most impartial reports I could find – I am aware that even informative historical accounts and summaries are subject to bias, especially when the writer has any personal connection to the events. The sources I found the most useful were eyewitness accounts, as the information provided was generally incontrovertible – those writing their impressions were recording the actions of the moment, and I felt they were more immediate. I preferred the human and personal stories to the political histories, but I also found a good deal of Armenian poetry I wanted to include.

**Q:** *How did you conduct your research – what are the resources for finding out information about the genocide?*

**A:** Most of my research came from the Internet. Very few books on the subject are available. The Internet was a great resource, with a number of original reports and eyewitness accounts. I was actually able to print off the Bryce Report from 1916 by the British Government. A friend also lent me Armenian poetry that I couldn't have found elsewhere.

**Q:** *How do you hope these performances will be received by the public?*

**A:** I would like to see a mixed audience – both Armenian and non-Armenian. For our November production, I was given very positive feedback by the non-Armenian audience. I was also surprised by how little they knew about the genocide. Many educated, intelligent people who all knew about the Holocaust had no inkling of its precursor in 1915.

**Q:** *What do you think about the fact that the UK does not officially recognise the Armenian Genocide?*

**A:** Perhaps if there was public pressure to recognise the genocide, we could begin to address the fact that the UK has not declared its official position. Part of the reason for this play is to raise awareness. When the play premiered in November, I was asked by some Armenian groups to do a one-off show especially for the Armenian community. I decided against this, because I felt it would defeat the object. I want to see a wide audience watching this play – we want as many people to know the facts as possible, it is only then that the public can become properly informed. If we can raise the money to fund a full four-week run of the play, we could begin to address this. Finborough productions are regularly reviewed by the national press. We couldn't reach such a wide audience

with a one-off charity event. Q: What about the fact that France has just declared it illegal to deny the Armenian Genocide? A: I think it's a step in the right direction. The increasing political recognition of the genocide shows how important it is to engage with the subject immediately in the realm of art and theatre. As many commentators have mentioned, there are two genocides – the actual genocide itself, and the subsequent denial by the Turkish government. There is nothing we can do about the tragedy of the first, but we can try to ensure that it is acknowledged. This is theatre - it won't change the world. But maybe it's a start.

**Q:** *What are your future plans for I Wish to Die Singing?*

**A:** The original production was presented and funded entirely by the Finborough theatre and with an immense amount of work given free by actors and technicians. As I mentioned, we are currently fundraising to produce a four-week run in October 2007. As a registered charity, we rely on donations to finance our projects. We would like to involve as many people as possible in the project, both for financial support and general involvement.

If you would like to make a donation, please contact Neil McPherson at [admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk) or Susannah Stevens on 07811447655/[zannstevens@hotmail.com](mailto:zannstevens@hotmail.com).

All cheques payable to: *The Steam Industry* and send to Emma Reed, General Manager at The Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED.

*The Steam Industry* is a registered charity and runs the Finborough Theatre. Use Gift Aid to make your donation worth more. For every £1 you give, we receive an extra 28 pence back from the Inland Revenue. If you would like to use Gift Aid, just let us know, and we'll do all the paperwork for you! All donations are gratefully received.

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## ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AT HAYASHEN

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### DAY OUTING TO BRIGHTON



On 26th July 2006 CAIA organised an all day outing to Brighton. 35 senior citizens, their carers and relatives enjoyed a very warm summers day together.

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### SENIOR CITIZEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Friday 8th December the CAIA organised its annual Christmas Party for Armenian Senior Citizens in respect of their life-long personal



sacrifices towards their family, community, sustaining the Armenian identity, faith and cultural heritage.

The event, held in December every year since 1987, was attended by almost 100 people included several guests among them representatives from the Armenian Embassy, the Church, the Ealing & Brentford Consolidated Charity, local Acton Cllr. John Gallagher and Cllr. Mrs

Diana Pagan, the Worshipful Mayor of London Borough of Ealing.

The event included delicious Middle Eastern food and exciting live traditional Armenian music which ensured that everyone at some point rose from their seats to dance. In addition to the live music, there was a cultural programme which included traditional Armenian dancing by Nareh, the young granddaughter of two of our regular senior citizens and a brief but very funny excerpt from Hagop Baronian's satirical play "The Eastern Dentist" performed by well known actress Jenia Nercessian.

During the event, the Worshipful Mayor of London Borough of Ealing said a few words praising the Armenian community and the CAIA and took the opportunity to give veteran medals to two long time CAIA members who had served in the British Army during the Second World War. One medal was given to Mr Arsen Der Arsenian and another to CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian on the request of Mrs Azadouhi Ohanian, the widow of the late Andranik Ohanian.

Near the end of the party, gifts and presents were distributed by CAIA to all the senior citizens in attendance. The CAIA thanks all the volunteers who helped out with this successful event as well as to everyone who contributed towards the costs, including the *Ealing Neighbourhood Improvement Fund*.

Below is a brief letter of thanks received from the Worshipful Mayor of London Borough of Ealing following the event.

*Dear Mr Ohanian*

*Thank you so much for inviting me to your annual Xmas Party for Armenian Senior Citizens yesterday.*

*It was a lovely occasion, with excellent food and entertainment, and very good company. I really enjoyed the occasion, and it was a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet some of your members, who were obviously enjoying themselves greatly.*

*Congratulations on founding the CAIA and continuing to run it so successfully for 20 years. You are providing a really great service to your members, not just socially but with the provision also of advice and information, which can be so confusing.*

*I was really pleased to be able to present the war medals, and especially your Father's to you. Your Mother is so proud of you, and she told me your Father was as well. I am sure you will treasure it.*

*My thanks also for the bottle of Armenian wine. That was most kind, and thank you for agreeing for me to use it as a prize at the Mayor's Christmas Party on Thursday.*

*With kind regards and very best wishes.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Cllr. Diana Pagan*  
9/12/2006

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### **ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AT CITY HALL**

The CAIA took a group of Armenian Senior Citizens to participate in *Listening Event* on the 15th November 2006, hosted by the Greater London Authority at City Hall. The event was part of a collaborative project led by *Age Concern England* and the *Refugee Council* which aims to promote greater involvement of older refugees at all levels of society, through consulting with communities, listening to their voices and raising awareness of their experiences, needs and capabilities. The programme also focuses on the specific concerns and needs of older refugee women and explores gaps in services for them. A total 20 Refugee Community Organisations and 115 older people attended the event from a wide range of ethnic communities and languages. It was extremely rewarding to witness Armenian and other Senior citizens became socially visible for one day and through focused workshops articulated their claims to appropriate housing, health care, access to information, education, training and employment. Participants at the event felt valued and respected. Participants at the meeting were also invited to get involved in the London Older People's Strategy Group and in the Mayor's Board for Refugee Integration in London - both of which acknowledge that there are gaps in representation of older refugees.

Throughout the day twenty in-depth interviews were conducted by three trained refugee community researchers. The Research Unit at the *Refugee Council* is writing up the report of the individual interviews and will be available shortly on their website at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk). The event was filmed and will be used to raise awareness of various decisions makers and authorities.

The CAIA congratulates the organisers and participants, in particular the Armenian Senior Citizens who attended and spoke in the workshops and represented their community so well.

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### **15TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATED**



On Friday 22nd September over 50 senior members and friends of the CAIA marked the 15th Anniversary of the Independence of Armenia at Hayashen with various patriotic speeches and poems. The Armenian Embassy was kindly represented at the event by Mr Mher Margaryan. This was one of several events marking Armenia's independence held throughout London in September. (*The late Mrs Armenouhi*

*Mahdessian reciting passionately for her beloved Armenia for one last time*).

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### **PROTEST BY ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AGAINST FUNDING REFUSAL**



The Centre for Armenian Information & Advice (CAIA) has 20 years unparalleled track record in providing vital, culturally sensitive and quality assured services for vulnerable older Armenians & their Carers.

Despite this experience, expertise and additional Community resources / infrastructures in place, CAIA

Health & Social Care commissioning application was refused along with several other long established lunch clubs/elders day centres in LB of Ealing. The decision was neither equitable or a fair reflection of the diverse needs of older people living in the borough.

In an open letter to Ealing councillors, the CAIA has said that without funds *"significant number of vulnerable older people, many of them disabled and their carers will remain isolated and excluded, suffering in silence due to language difficulties in accessing basic statutory services, denied from the company of their peers and the twice weekly hot lunch which they have come to rely on. Where will they go now? Who will they turn to assist them in managing their day-to-day debts and other problems? Who will champion their needs/concerns when the CAIA is not resourced to do so any longer? It is not enough just to refuse funding without explaining in detail how the PCT/LBE will address the needs of vulnerable Armenian older people across all the range of their services."*

Some 250 most vulnerable, frail and isolated older people (many of them the children of the orphans who survived the 1915 Armenian Genocide) are directly effected by this decision as well as relatives.



On 8th February, Ealing Council's Scrutiny Committee met to review the the decision by the Council. Despite the falling snow 23 Armenians Senior citizens, carers and their relatives attended the meeting and made their views known to the 14 councillors present. In addition, a petition signed by over 90 people affected by the decision was handed to the chair of the Committee Cllr. A Young.

Letters of support have also been sent to local MP's and Councillors by members of the Armenian community and the Armenian Community & Church Council. The CAIA has now made a formal appeal to Ealing Council claiming that *"The Council and PCT did not act reasonably and take account of all the facts available, as set out in the application, at the time the decision was taken"*.

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## ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP ACTIVITIES

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### CHILDREN'S SUMMER PLAYScheme

Between the 7th and 25th August 2006, the CAIA organised its annual summer project for children. Over 50 children benefited from activities that were based at Hayashen, as well as from various trips including to

the Hounslow Urban Farm, Acton Fire Station, the Kids Cookery School, and a day long outing to Chessington Theme Park by coach.



The CAIA is grateful to all the parents, volunteers and teachers who contributed to another successful summer project and also to Ealing Council, the Hilden Charity Trust and Ealing Neighbourhood Fund for supporting the project financially.

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## PARENTS & TODDLERS CHRISTMAS PARTY



On Monday 11th December 2006 over 50 children, parents and grandparents attended the annual End of Term Christmas Party of the Armenian Community pre School Group. The 20th year in a row. The two hour event kicked off with a short song and dance performance by the young children which was followed by free refreshments and a light buffet. Father Christmas also attended the event to distribute

small presents and gifts to all the children, many of whom regularly attend Hayashen's Parents & Toddlers Group.

The CAIA is grateful to Mrs Anne Boyadjian who helped organise the party and who runs the Parents & Toddlers Group twice a week. The CAIA is also grateful to Mrs Anno Cholakian for once again donating the gifts to the Children.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### NORWAY'S COUNCIL OF KRAGERO RECOGNISES GENOCIDE & MAKES HISTORIC DECLARATION IN LONDON

On Sunday 3rd December 2006, a deputation comprising three officials from Kragerø, Norway, including Mayor Laland and Deputy Mayor Jensen made the historic declaration ratified unanimously by all members of their City's Council - across all parties - stating that *"the atrocities the Armenian people were subjected to must be considered as Genocide"*.

The function held in Hayashen, London, was organised by the ACCC's 'CRAG' Committee (*Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide*) and the deputation had travelled to London specifically so as to make their Council's declaration for the first time in the world from one of the leading capital cities of the European Union.

The Norwegian city of Kragerø has erected a statue honouring Bodil Catharina Biørn in 2005, who spent 30 years of her life providing relief to the Armenians in the Ottoman empire before, during and after the Armenian Genocide and who had witnessed the massacres personally including the killing of almost all of the children in a Children's Home in Moush.



The function which included a photographic exhibition was introduced by Mr Charles Malas of CRAG, followed by words of welcome from the Chairman of the *Armenian Community & Church Council*, Mr Ara Palamoudian. Mayor Laland and Deputy Mayor Jensen then made a presentation of their City, made the official declaration and presented a copy to CRAG. (Full text can be read on [www.accc.org.uk](http://www.accc.org.uk))

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### ARMENIAN PROFESSOR AWARDED CBE

Professor Haig Gulvanessian, recently retired from BRE and visiting Professor at *Imperial College London* has been awarded the CBE for his services to the construction industry. Professor Haig Gulvanessian is an Armenian; born in the British mandate of Palestine in 1941. He moved with his family to Cyprus in 1948 and completed his primary education at the Junior School from 1948 to 1953 and his secondary education the English School, Nicosia from 1953 to 1960.

He is active in Cyprus at the present time presenting courses on the Eurocodes to members of ETEK.

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### PHOTO EXHIBITION SHOWS ARMENIA IN A NEW LIGHT

Members of the Armenian community in London and Manchester were able to see Armenian land through the eyes of volunteers in an exhibition hosted by the *Land and Culture Organisation (LCO)*. It was the first ever exhibition organised by the group of young professional Armenians and those who attended would agree that it was an astounding success.

The collection was seen by 150 members of the local community at the Gulbenkian Hall in London during the weekend of October 28 and 29, 2006. LCO visited Manchester on November 5, 2006 to show the



collection to 70 members of the local community on the premises of the Holy Trinity Church.

The unique photographs were taken by individuals who have visited and worked in Armenia, Iran and Syria as volunteers with *LCO*, to aid in renovation and protection projects of ancestral land and sites. Each image portrays life through the eyes of a volunteer; the camaraderie on the

worksites, the friendships created with the local communities, as well as the discovery of the sheer beauty of Armenian land. By hosting this exhibition in London and Manchester, *LCO* was able to meet a great array of people from the community to showcase the ethos of the organisation.

*LCO* has undertaken renovation projects on ancestral land since 1977 and continues to undertake a vast number of short-term and long-term projects. In the idyllic village of Datev (in the region of Goris), *LCO* undertook the restoration of the Sourp Minas church, which dates from the 17th century. Volunteers focused their efforts on the church roof, its interior as well as its surrounding walls.

As one of its main ongoing projects, the organisation is working towards the renovation and development of the hospital in the town of Shushi in Nagorno Karabakh. In 2001, *LCO* began working on the site and has now fully completed the refurbishment of the Department of General Medicine, as well as the gynaecological centre. Furthermore, the newly improved water-pipe system provides water to the entire hospital, all of which means that patients now have access to a wide range of hospital services and treatments without having to travel to the city of Stepanakert.

Since its inception, *LCO* has attracted a large number of volunteers from the Armenian Diaspora around the world. Nonetheless, each year it relies on the work of volunteers to fulfil its objectives and anyone interested in joining a summer campaign is always welcome to get in touch. *LCO* will be announcing its summer 2007 projects early next year.

To find out more about the organisation and its upcoming events, please contact: [landandculture@hotmail.com](mailto:landandculture@hotmail.com) or write to *Land and Culture Organisation*, 11 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6HT. Anie Keshishian

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## ROBERT FISK LECTURE & BOOK LAUNCH

Robert Fisk, *The Independent's* renowned Middle East correspondent, came to the Maria Assumpta centre in Kensington on the 14th of October to talk about his new book "*The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*", the state of the modern Middle East and the Armenian Holocaust, which constitutes an entire chapter of his book. Fisk is best known for experiencing and reporting the on-the-ground realities of a region he has lived in for the past thirty years, and also a staunch campaigner for the recognition of the Armenian Holocaust. On the evening Fisk did not disappoint, giving a passionate and entertaining, yet sober and informative speech to a packed hall, before taking time to meet those present and to sign copies of his book.

Fisk's speech focused on the Armenian genocide, although he maintained his objectivity by insisting he was not pro Armenian *per se*, something



that can only heighten his standing as an international commentator and make him more of a powerful force as an ally of the Armenian community. He spoke out against the recent French law which makes denial of the holocaust a criminal offence, arguing that making the issue a matter for legislation would open the floodgates for other legal claims from other genocides, allowing such tragic events to

become legal weapons in trivial political brinkmanship.

Tellingly, in the wake of the French law, a motion was put forward in Turkey to make the denial of the Algerian "genocide" at the hands of the French a criminal offence. Fisk also broached the idea that Armenians, in order to make it even harder for denial of their tragedy to take place, they should compile a list of those Turks whose brave actions they wished to commend during the genocide, some of who took great risks to protect and provide for those Armenians that they could. He importantly spoke of the challenge for Armenians, no matter how arduous a task it may be, to fight for the recognition of their Holocaust themselves, as the current state of the Middle East does not give the international community the luxury of engaging in revisionist history of events 95 years prior, while the current world continues to burn.

His analysis of the current state of the middle east also made for fascinating listening, as in his words: *"in thirty years of living in Beirut and reporting from the Middle East, I have never witnessed so much incandescent anger in the Arab street"*. He elaborated on this with an amusing yet starkly disturbing anecdote about the difficulties of reporting in present day Iraq: *"the reason journalists cannot report accurately how bad the situation is in Iraq, is because to go out and do so would involve one getting their throat slit"*.

Rarely can someone convey such grave sentiments in such an amusing yet moving way, and this witty delivery was characteristic of Fisk throughout the evening. This was even evident in the closing question and answer session where he made several insightful comments on the state of current journalism. When referring to the historically de-contextualised reporting often found in today's tabloids and broadsheets, he quipped that: "the journalist today should discard the notebook from his top pocket, and replace it with the history book".

Joseph Downing

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## ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE MARKED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Arman Kirakossian (Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia) was the keynote speaker at the 15th Anniversary Commemoration of Armenia's Independence held at House of Lords, on 5 December 2006. The commemoration included distinguished guests including Armenia's ambassador to the UK Dr. Vahe Gabrielyan, former Prime Minister of Armenia Dr. Armen Sarkissian, Lord Averbury, various MP's and diplomats, the Mayor of LB of Ealing, Cllr. Diana Pagan, and representatives of Armenian organisations. The event was chaired by Baroness Cox of Queensbury and organised by the *British-Armenian All-Party Parliamentary Group*.



The event gave an opportunity for Dr. Kirakossian to present copies of his seminal work, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question from 1830 to 1914* (published in 2003) to the Library of the House of Commons and the *British-Armenian All-Party Parliamentary Group*.

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### EXHIBITION MARKS INDEPENDENCE

On the occasion of Armenia's independence Dr. Anna Andraasyan, nee Tilbury, organised a personal art exhibition near Southampton at Bartley Lodge Hotel on the 21st and 22nd of October. For more information contact Anna Andraasyan by e-mail on [aandr2002@yahoo.com](mailto:aandr2002@yahoo.com).

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### UK CHURCH LEADERS VISIT HOLY LAND

As part of an ecumenical pilgrimage of solidarity with the Christians of the Holy Land, the four co-Presidents of Churches Together in England (*the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, Free Churches Moderator, the Reverend David Coffey and the Primate of the Armenian Church of Great Britain Bishop Nathan Hovhannisian*) visited Bethlehem and Jerusalem for the period 20-23 December 2006.

During their meetings with Church leaders and in grassroot institutions in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the four leaders conveyed their solidarity to the local Christian communities of the Holy Land. They reminded those communities that they are not forgotten and that their witness over two millennia, often in demanding circumstances, is acknowledged and appreciated. A television documentary following the '*pilgrimage of peace*' of the four UK church leaders was screened on ITV1.

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### VAUGHAN PILIKIAN HONOURED

In November 2006, Vaughan Pilikian was nominated for a distinguished *Grierson Award 2006*, for his documentary on the Indian poor who risk their lives to scarp the poison ships of the Western government. At the same time as he was being honoured at a star-studded ceremony on Friday 17th November at the *Royal Geographical Society - Kensington - London*, by a coincidence, his film was shown simultaneously the same evening at the Curzon (Art) Cinema, to launch a new cinema-art magazine - *VERTIGO*.

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### ARMENIA SOLIDARITY

*Armenian Solidarity* (an independent campaign organisation, formerly known as Wales-Armenia Solidarity) is appealing for people to contact their MP asking him/her kindly to sign the following two Early Day Motions in the House of Commons, which have been tabled by its efforts.

They are on the Turkish blockade of Armenia (EDM No. 344) and on the Genocide titled Armenia (EDM No. 357).

Nia Griffith(MP for Llanelli):

#### **Blockade of Armenia EDM No: 344**

*That this House recognises the incompatibility of Turkey's ongoing thirteen-year blockade of Armenia with the declared UK, NATO, and EU policy objectives of regional security and prosperity; is appalled by the fact that Turkey is the only Council of Europe country to engage in a blockade against a fellow member-state; notes that the blockade has already had a considerable negative impact on Armenian, Turkish and regional development and continues to undermine efforts at international development in the region; further notes that Armenia is in favour of establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey; and urges the Turkish Government to lift its blockade and work towards the establishment of diplomatic relations without any preconditions inconsistent with international law or the EU accession criteria.*

Spink, Bob (MP for Castle Point, Essex):

#### **Recognition of the Armenian Genocide - EDM No: 357**

*That this House believes that the killing of over a million Armenians in 1915 was an act of genocide; calls upon the UK Government to recognise it as such;and believes that it would be in Turkey's long-term interests to do the same.*

There have been sixteen Armenian-related EDMs in the Commons since 1995. Usually only about 30 to 60 sign them. However, this time taken together, 120 current MP's have signed one or more of the EDMs. For more information and help in how to contact their MP, Armenia Solidarity can be reached by writing to [eilian@nant.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:eilian@nant.wanadoo.co.uk) or by phone on 07876561398 (daytime and evening or 01286 871218 (evening only).

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### **ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RECOGNISED AT THE OFFICIAL UK HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY EVENT**

The Armenian Genocide was officially recognised at the Holocaust Day Event in Newcastle, UK this year, following representations from Armenia Solidarity official John Torosyan, a leading figure in the Welsh-Armenian Community. Even though it was given a place previously in the fringes of the event, this time recognition came from the main stage. It is significant because the organising body, the Holocaust Day Trust, is supported by the British government, with a minister usually participating at the event.

It will now be increasingly difficult for the UK government to keep to their position of denying the truth of the Armenian Genocide when they have sponsored an event, which has recognised this truth. Speeches are prepared beforehand, and it was not a question of one speaker speaking her mind. This was with the full permission of the organisers.

Below is the text of what was said in the National Commemoration. It was by Mary Blewitt of SURF, the Rwandan survivors fund: *"The only reason I can think I was spared is to help those who, like me, must live with the legacy of genocide. I represent only the survivors of the genocide in Rwanda, but try when possible to speak as well for the survivors of the Holocaust and the genocides in Cambodia, Kosovo and Armenia. I try to ensure that their voices are heard - voices that tell the whole truth, that*

*warn us of what humanity is capable of, that remind us of the suffering that must never again be permitted to happen to anyone, anywhere in the world."*

Confirmation of this may be obtained from: Chief Executive, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, PO Box 49743, London, WC1H 9WU - Tel: 0845 838 1883 - [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)

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### **"MIGRANTS WITH THE MOSTEST"**

According to an article published in The Sunday Times on 10th September 2006, *"Found: Migrants With The Mostest"*, Armenian immigrants and their descendants are the most successful ethnic group in the UK. According to the article, *"Of the 2,651 people of Armenian descent in Britain, more than 1,600 run businesses and a high proportion live in expensive parts of west London."*

Among the most successful is Bob Manoukian, property developer and former agent for Prince Jefri of Brunei. He has a family fortune of £300m, according to The Sunday Times Rich List. Other successful people with Armenian roots include David Dickinson, presenter of the BBC's Bargain Hunt, and Ara Palamoudian, chairman of the Armenian community & church council of Great Britain. He said: *"Armenians have always tried to be self-sufficient and not to be a burden on any country. It could be the history of the Armenian people, the way their lives have been over centuries. They had to find shelter around the world."* The article concludes by stating that *"Many Armenians fled to England after the first world war, during which up to 1.5m died, amid allegations of genocide by the Turks. Other waves arrived in the 1970s and 1980s."* The article can be read on the News section of CAIA's website.

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### **ARMENIAN SCHOLAR ASPIRES TO BECOME FIRST FEMALE PM**

Each year London Metropolitan University awards 50 graduate scholarships to outstanding students from developing countries throughout the world, to enable them to obtain a top class degree in the UK. Since 2003, London Met has awarded scholarships to six students from Armenia, and most recently Ms Olya Azatyan, from Yerevan, was awarded a prestigious British Council Chevening scholarship to study for a Masters in International Public Administration at the London Met.

Olya said: *"I have always been interested in politics and want to help improve conditions in my country, and one day I also hope to become the first female Prime Minister in Armenia"*. Mrs Denise Apkarian Panattoni, who manages the Scholarship programme at London Met, said: *"London Met offers a full range of courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The number of Armenian students studying at London Met has doubled since we opened up our scholarship programme to Armenian students. We are pleased to encourage and welcome more Armenian students as they are proving to be hard-working, ambitious and dedicated students who generally do their best in whatever they set their minds to"*.

For more information about London Met scholarships visit:  
[www.londonmet.ac.uk/scholarships](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/scholarships)

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### **DIKRAN TAHTA PASSES AWAY**

Dickran Tahta was one of the outstanding mathematics teachers of his generation. The theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, when asked to name one teacher who had inspired him, named "Mr Tahta" He was born in Manchester where his Armenian parents set up home after the first World War. Mathematics was his main subject at Oxford, but he read widely and intensively English literature, philosophy and history. He became a leading member of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics. From 1960 until 2006 he wrote books, founded and edited journals on Mathematics Teaching, participated in producing innovative teaching materials and TV mathematics series. A magical teacher, he enjoyed the lively interaction of the classroom. In his last years at Bradford-on-Avon, he produced a thoughtful book, called Ararat Associations, linking Atom Egoyan's film Ararat (2002) with his own life and the history of Armenia. He was a wise and generous man who inspired love and an increase of intellectual energy in every one who came within his ambit. His wife Hilary died in 2000; he is survived by three daughters and a son. *(Summarised from The Guardian 5th January 2007 obituary.)*

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### **APPEAL TO SUPPORT ZARUHI HARUTYUNYAN**

About 2 years ago Zaruhi Harutyunyan was plucked from Yerevan and taken to Cyprus by Simon Aynedjian the editor of Gibrahayer e-magazine because she had shown exceptional talent in the game of tennis. Her pleas for help were rewarded by Simon who arranged for Zaruhi to remain under his supervision and train at the Cyprus National Training Centre in Nicosia.

With the help of both Simon and some financial support from local and diasporan Armenians through the Medium of Gibrahayer Zaruhi was despatched to mid and far east to compete and within 4 months proved that she indeed was a talent. Her results elevated her world ranking by 1000 positions.

At this point Simon and Zaruhi met with Dickran and Haig Bedrossian, tennis enthusiasts living in London and L.A. respectively.

In order to continue Zaruhi's successes she was despatched to compete in Istanbul where she won 2 ITF Junior Internationals back to back.

Zaruhi stayed in London with Dickran and trained at the acclaimed Alan Jones' tennis Academy under the watchful eye of ex-Wimbledon champion Jo Durie. All this time London and diasporan Armenians continued to donate funds to Zaruhi's account. She jumped to 300 in the world rankings and continued to win ITF events in the UK.

Now Zaruhi has been sent to L.A. under the supervision of Haig Bedrossian who has arranged for her to attend the Weil Tennis Academy until May, to mix with the top tennis players in the world. The grand cost of this is something approaching \$20,000.

During this short period of her stay in LA she has beaten accomplished juniors at the Academy and in the Region. SHE HAS A GREAT FUTURE IN THE GAME OF TENNIS AND SHE PLAYS FOR ALL ARMENIANS.

Zaruhi needs our financial help in order to achieve this goal. Please support her by sending funds directly to her in L.A., c/o Haig Bedrossian for the benefit of Zaruhi Harutyunyan, Wells Fargo Bank, A/C #122000247 - 6173349975 or cheques to: POBox16181 North Hollywood Cal. 91615-6181 USA

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## WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

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### FRENCH "ANTI-GENOCIDE DENIAL" BILL

French politicians have voted to adopt a bill that would make it a crime to deny that the 1915-1917 massacres of Armenians by the Ottomans was genocide.

The draft law, which has provoked the fury of Turkey, the modern state that emerged from the Ottoman empire, will now be sent from the National Assembly, or lower house of parliament, to the upper house Senate for another reading. The bill must be ratified by both the upper house Senate and the French president to become law, but Turkey has already warned that today's vote would damage ties between the two NATO allies.

However, France's Armenian community, which is approximately 500,000 -strong and one of the largest in Europe, had pushed hard for the bill and found cross-party support within parliament. The motion was carried by 106 votes to 19. The legislation establishes a one year prison term and US\$45,000 fine for anyone denying that a genocide occurred - exactly the same sanctions as those imposed for denying the Nazi genocide of Jews during World War II.

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### TRIBUTE TO HRANT DINK: HOUSE OF COMMONS, THE UK PARLIAMENT

Armenians, Kurds, Turks and others gathered in a vigil outside the House of Commons, London on Tuesday, 30th January 2007 to honour Hrant Dink and to call on the UK government to help the process of reconciliation between our peoples by the recognition of the truth of the Armenian Genocide. The vigil was led by Lord Averbury, and included the singing of the "*Hair Mer*" by Seta Cox.

Later, inside the House of Commons the Tribute to Hrant Dink was held. A message from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was read, followed by an eloquent oration on Hrant's significance from Prof. Khatchatur Pilikian. Seta Cox read her poem of tribute to Hrant "Without You". This was followed by an insight into Hrant's personality and a masterly analysis of the Armenian Genocide by Prof. Hovannes Pilikian.

Eilian Williams of *Armenia Solidarity* made the point that Turkish democracy at present is based on the lie that there was no Genocide of Armenians, and appealed for all to strive for a multi-cultural Turkey where the Human rights of minorities are respected.

Kurdish and Turkish supporters, including Dr Fariudin Hilmi, a former minister in the government of Iraqi Kurdistan and also by Turkish journalists, gave messages of solidarity. The Kurdistan National Congress and other Kurdish groups as well as the Turkish-Kurdish Centre in London were represented.

The meeting was sponsored by Ms Nia Griffith MP, who has also put down a motion in parliament noting that Hrant Dink was a campaigner for the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide. She closed the meeting giving encouragement to all.

Present were several parliamentarians including Mr Paddy Tipping MP of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Armenia, and David Howard MP of the Liberal Democrats, as well as Lord Rea. Amongst other distinguished guests were the Turkish journalist Koray Duzgoran and the authors Mr Martin Short, and Ms Edwina Charles.

The vigil was organised by *Armenia Solidarity* supported by *Nor Serount Cultural Association* and individual members of the Armenian community. The full text of the message from the *Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation*, the oration from Prof. Khatchatur Pilikian and The Kurdistan National Congress can be read on CAIA's website.

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## SCREAM

*System Of A Down* have lent their voice, music, and support to a ground-breaking new film called *Screamers*, which had its acclaimed world debut on 2 November, 2006 in Los Angeles as part of the prestigious *AFI Film Festival*.

Directed by the award-winning, humanitarian activist Carla Garapedian, *Screamers* is an internationally produced documentary that covers the history of modern-day genocide and genocide denial, beginning with the Armenian Genocide in 1915, and how the world's inaction led to other massacres.

*System Of A Down* have always worked to spread the message about official Armenian Genocide Recognition within the U.S. and other world powers that have yet to formally acknowledge that it took place. The band felt compelled to work with this unique project that hauntingly illustrates how the denial of those crimes led to more genocides of the 20th Century- from the Holocaust to Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda.....and all the way to present-day Darfur.

Using *SOAD's* music as the backdrop to historical footage and current accounts from genocide survivors, *Screamers* presents some of the great questions of our time: Can we stop genocide? Do we really mean 'never again'? And how can we take action to prevent atrocities of this magnitude from happening in the future? For more information visit [www.screamersmovie.com](http://www.screamersmovie.com) and / or [www.systemofadown.com](http://www.systemofadown.com).

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## TIME MAGAZINE

The 12 February 2007 issue of the European edition of *TIME* magazine - available in news-stands throughout Europe - carried a full-page factual announcement on the Armenian Genocide, along with a complimentary DVD, in English and French, which contains a compelling 52-minute documentary on the Armenian Genocide by French director Laurence Jourdan. The DVD also includes a 46-minute interview with Dr. Yves Ternon, a leading expert on the Armenian Genocide.

Both the DVD and the full-page ad were provided free of charge by *TIME* Europe (circulation 550,000) after realizing that its staff, without proper review, had inserted in the June 6, 2005 issue of *TIME* Europe a Turkish DVD as a paid advertisement under the guise of promoting tourism to Turkey. The Turkish DVD, paid for by the Ankara Chamber of Commerce, was a deceitful attempt to spread malicious lies and denialist propaganda on the Armenian Genocide.

Following an outcry from Armenians across the world, TIME apologized for disseminating the Turkish DVD.

Subsequently, Michael Elliott, the Editor of TIME International, issued the following public statement: *"Please be advised that, in common with other leading news organizations, it is TIME's policy and practice to refer to the Armenian genocide as a historical fact. Accordingly, I will be informing our correspondents and editors that the term 'Armenian genocide' should be used without qualification."* TIME is to be congratulated for placing journalistic ethics above all other considerations.

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## **ELECTION IN CYPRUS**

On 22 October 2006 an Armenian Cypriot – Marios Garoyian - was elected as the new leader of the ruling Democratic party in Cyprus. Moments after the results Marios Garoyian was proclaimed President. He thanked voters for their confidence in embracing his vision and in his short speech at the Democratic Party headquarters in Nicosia, he called for unity and a stronger party.

Marios Garoyian is the first Armenian Cypriot that is being elected leader of a political party in Cyprus. In May 2006 he was elected as member of the Cyprus Parliament with top preferential votes in Nicosia.

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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **ARMENIANS IN EGYPT CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARMENIANS TO MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EGYPT**

By Sona Zeitlian (2006), 241 pages, with maps and 55 illustrations. Translated into English and much expanded by the author from her original Armenian version.

Hraztan Sarkis Zeitlian Publication, 3324 Grand View Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90066, U.S.A. ([www.hszpub.com](http://www.hszpub.com), email: [struere@aol.com](mailto:struere@aol.com)).

This book was inspired by a lecture on Medieval Egypt, in the course of which the author learnt of a wazir of Armenian descent called Badr el Gamali, who, in the 11th century, became instrumental in saving Egypt's Fatimid Caliphate from collapse, and shaped the second century of its existence.

The author, born and raised in a suburb of Cairo, is now resident in the U.S.A. For Armenians in Egypt, she gleaned information from secondary and primary sources about the impact and influence of Armenians on Egypt's social, political and commercial life throughout the last quarter of the 11th Century to the 1960's, when the Armenian community became depleted. However, mention is made of some of the few Armenians who remain and still practise their professions and skills.

A congenial and hospitable place with many familiar features, Egypt became a popular refuge from persecution during Ottoman times, as well as later at the time of the Genocide. Many of the refugees were able to prosper and make a valuable contribution to their host country, without losing their culture or sense of identity. Their sense of community was strengthened by organizing various relief efforts for fellow Armenians in the Homeland. As is well-known, AGBU was formed in Egypt in 1906 under the presidency of Boghos Nubar Pasha. In addition, the 1,000 or so

orphans who were brought to Egypt were also placed in families, while organisations were formed to unite and assist them.

Between 1808 and 1908 Armenians acted as Egypt's Foreign ministers for a total of 64 years. With their knowledge of several languages and forward-looking outlook, Ministers such as Nubar Pasha were especially valuable in the field of diplomacy. At that time, Egypt was subjected to what was called Capitulations, which meant that the native authorities had no control over Europeans, and consular jurisdiction encroached over the rights of Egyptians. The Armenian ministers fought long and hard to have it annulled. If the European Powers were not yet ready to accept a repeal of the Capitulations, at least Nubar Pasha saw to the establishment of the Mixed Courts. He had managed to obtain this concession in the form of a firman from the Ottoman Porte, a vital and important step towards the judicial sovereignty of Egypt.

On a personal note, the photograph of the Court of Appeal in Alexandria, and the section on the significance of the Mixed Courts, are of special interest to me, as my father was a writer and lawyer in Egypt. Among the clients he defended in the Mixed Courts were many Armenians. When these Courts were abolished, his legal notes had to be translated from French into Arabic by his assistant, and he was no longer able to plead in person, though he did attend the courts, wearing the obligatory fez. In the field of education, it was an Armenian Education Minister Yacub Artin Pasha Cherakian who established Cairo's Teacher Training Institute, and inaugurated the first school for girls in 1873.

Part III takes us on a fascinating journey through the Armenian contributions to Industry, Commerce, Education, the Media and the Arts. In many of these branches, the Armenians not only fostered the well-being of their own compatriots, but also established a sound basis for the Egyptian workforce. This stemmed from a tradition established by former statesmen such as Nubar Pasha. As the author herself acknowledges, the gaps and omissions in this section are mainly due to reliance for her research on interviews with Egyptian-Armenians.

Alexander Saroukhan (1898-1977), well-known throughout the world for his caricatures, and to Alexandrians and Cairenes for his political, economic and social comments in Armenian publications such as *Arev*, and in the Arabic *Rose al Yusef* and *Akhbar al Yom*, and the French language *La Bourse Egyptienne* and *Images*, was one among many talented Armenians who were able to integrate with ease into the Egyptian and cosmopolitan scene that characterized the Egypt of the day. His caricatures of diasporan manners, idioms and expressions encapsulate the uniqueness of the Armenian diasporan language and attitude.

There is an amusing, if puzzling, quote from Lord Cromer on Dikran Pasha, who, even before being appointed Prime Minister, was a thorn in the flesh of the British Consul-general. As soon as Dikran Pasha's appointment was made, Lord Cromer objected that it was unseemly for a Moslem country to have a Christian head of state. He went on to say that Dikran Pasha had "the Armenian national characteristic of a Franco-Byzantine mind". Make of this what you will. The word "Byzantine" may refer to complexity or even a taste for intrigue, yet the quote reveals far more about Cromer's own character. He certainly had more than his fair share of prejudices. It's saddening to read that Cromer would continue to do his best to remove Dikran Pasha from power by resorting to the most despicable means possible - using news of the tragic events in the Ottoman Empire's Armenian provinces for his own ends. This book is an interesting read not only for Armenians who have lived in Egypt, but also

for anyone with a penchant for history and the study of diasporan societies. In the case of diasporan Armenians, this flexibility, combined with a strong sense of their own culture, ensures that the words Armenia and Armenian, for so long in danger, are kept alive. Sylvie Howse

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### THE ARMENIANS - FROM KINGS AND PRIESTS TO MERCHANTS & COMMISSARS

By Razmik Panossian. 442pp, paperback (2006), C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., ISBN: 1850657882.

The book traces the evolution of Armenia and Armenian collective identity, in the homeland and in the diaspora, from its beginnings to the eve of the Armenian nationalist movement over Gharabagh in 1988. The emphasis is on the modern era - the seventeenth century onwards, including the Soviet period. Panossian's overall approach is that of interpretive political and cultural history, centred around theories of national identity formation and nationalism. The cultural identity of the Armenian people - expressed in their art, literature, religious practice and even commerce - played a vital role in preserving national memory, and forms an important component of this study, as does the author's analysis of the Armenian Genocide in 1915.

To obtain a copy of **THE ARMENIANS** at a special discount price of £12.50, inclusive of postage (r.r.p. £16.95), please send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to 'C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd.' to the following address, C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 41 Great Russell St, London WC1B 3PL Alternatively, email [maria@hurstpub.co.uk](mailto:maria@hurstpub.co.uk) or telephone 020 7255 2201 if you wish to buy by credit card.

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### SPOKESMAN No. 93

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation

Entitled **GENOCIDE OLD AND NEW** which includes contributions by Robert Fisk, Jean-Paul Sartre and Raphael Lemkin. The publication can be ordered online price £5 plus £1 p & p) at: [http://www.spokesmanbooks.com/spokesman/spksmn\\_93.htm](http://www.spokesmanbooks.com/spokesman/spksmn_93.htm)

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### THE ARMENIANS - PAST AND PRESENT IN THE MAKING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Edited by Edmund Herzig & Marina Kurkchian, RoutledgeCurzon - ISBN 0-700-70639-9

The Armenians considers how the Armenian people have constructed their identity through the accumulation of historical experience and shared collective memory. The book takes the reader through the complex and often bloody historical events that the people of Armenia have experienced and tracks the evolution of their culture and politics up to their current situation as a small post-communist country poised between Europe and the Middle East and linked to a kaleidoscope of emigrant Armenian communities spread across the globe.

The Armenians are one of the oldest nations in existence, privileged to have one of the world's most stable and persistent identities. The quality of 'Armenianness' has proved to be so resilient that it has endured for 2,000 years, even though in that time the Armenian people have been compelled to resist invasion, suffer persecution, tolerate alien rule and

take desperate measures to escape, including several mass emigrations that led to global dispersion. They even managed to survive the twentieth century's first large-scale genocide. In *The Armenians* a distinguished international team of social scientists seeks to explain how such confidence in a national identity came about, how it crystallized, and what Armenians today feel that they have derived from their spectacular past. The book pays considerable attention to the 1990s and 2000s, when post-Soviet Armenia has been building its independence, its political system, and its new economy and society. The book ends with an analysis of how the Armenian self-image has responded to the many challenges and contradictions thrown up by this rich store of experience.

*The Armenians* provides a comprehensive introduction to both the historical forces and the recent social and political developments that have shaped today's Armenian people. With contributions from leading Armenian, American and European specialists, it sets out the themes and issues of contemporary research in the history and social science of this distinctive people. The authors include Richard G. Hovannisian, James R. Russell and Ronald G. Suny.

Edmund Herzig is a Senior Lecturer in Persian Studies at the University of Manchester. His research focuses on the history and politics of Iran, Central Asia and the Caucasian region. His many writings include a book on contemporary Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, *The New Caucasus*, and a number of articles and book chapters on Armenian history and politics.

Marina Kurkchyan is a Fellow in Socio-legal Studies at the University of Oxford, specializing in the post-communist transition in Armenia, Russia and Ukraine. Her research focuses on post-communist legal culture, social policy and the second economy. Her publications include works on economic crime in Russia, the interplay between law and informal practices, welfare reforms and research methodology. For further information Tel: 0207 0176136 E-mail: [adele.bennett@tandf.co.uk](mailto:adele.bennett@tandf.co.uk) - [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)

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### **THE HEMSHIN – HISTORY, SOCIETY AND IDENTITY IN THE HIGHLANDS OF NORTHEAST TURKEY**

By Hovann H. Simonian, Routledge, ISBN 0-7007-0656-9.

The Hemshinli are without doubt one of the most enigmatic peoples of Turkey and the Caucasus. As former Christians who converted to Islam centuries ago yet did not assimilate into the culture of the surrounding Muslim populations, as Turks who speak Armenian yet are often not aware of it, as Muslims who continue to celebrate feasts that are part of the calendar of the Armenian Church, and as descendants of Armenians who, for the most part, have chosen to deny their Armenian origins in favour of recently invented myths of Turkic ancestry, the Hemshin and the seemingly irreconcilable differences within their group identity have generated curiosity and often controversy.

*The Hemshin* is the first scholarly work to provide an in-depth study of these people living in the eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. This groundbreaking volume brings together chapters written by an international group of scholars that cover the history, language, economy, culture and identity of the Hemshin. It is further enriched with an unprecedented collection of maps, pictures and appendices of up-to-date statistics. *The Hemshin* forms part of the Peoples of the Caucasus

series, an indispensable and yet accessible resource for all those with an interest in the Caucasus.

Hovann H. Simonian is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science of the University of Southern California. He is Swiss of Armenian origin and is the co-author (with R. Hrair Dekmejian) of *Troubled Waters: The Geopolitics of the Caspian Region*. More details from [www.Routledge.com](http://www.Routledge.com) or 01264 343071

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### **RESPECTED CITIZENS: THE HISTORY OF ARMENIANS IN SINGAPORE & MALAYSIA**

By Nadia H. Wright - Amassia Publishing 350 pages; 24 pp. black/white plates; maps, tables; bibliography ISBN 0-9751082-0-4 - (Paperback) RRP \$A 44 (incl. GST)

Armenians have long established settlements beyond their historic homeland – either through choice or force. From the eighteenth century, Armenian traders from Persia and India had ventured into South East Asia and by 1802 had established themselves in Penang. Later settling in Singapore, the Armenians played a significant role in the early life of both these British colonial outposts. Earning a reputation as respected citizens, the Armenians contributed significantly to the early development of Penang and Singapore.

Their numbers were minute, with no more than 830 ever living in Singapore and the lands which would later make up Malaysia. But their achievements were quite incommensurate with these numbers. Four of Singapore's icons: the Straits Times newspaper, the Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid, Raffles Hotel and the Church of St Gregory owe their existence to the enterprising Armenians.

In Malaysia, Penang's famed E & O Hotel and the stockbroking firm of A. A. Anthony are reminders of their presence, and the anthem of the state of Johore was composed by Mackertich Galistan.

Today, little is known of the Armenians in these two countries. Often mistaken by locals for Jews or Parsees, they have been overlooked in history, while the fact that only a handful still live in the region belies their early significance.

This book is testimony to their achievements, accounting for the Armenians in Malacca, Penang and finally Singapore, which boasted the largest Armenian community. It details the dynamics of the latter community, as well as focussing on St Gregory's Church, Raffles Hotel the Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid and the major Armenian commercial concerns. In particular, the true role of Ashkhen (Agnes) Joaquim in producing the hybrid is described, and for the first time, her photograph appears in print. The final section of the book outlines the principal Armenian families, following their fortunes and fate in this part of the world.

Based on extensive research from newspapers, church, cemetery and official records, interviews with Armenians and their descendants, this seminal social history of the hitherto neglected Armenians of Singapore and Malaysia is vital reading.

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