

# ARMENIAN Autumn 2007 Issue 52

# VOICE

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## CAIA NEWS

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE CAIA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The following are the names and contact details of CAIA's Management Committee members. They welcome you to this edition of the Armenian Voice Newsletter and will be happy to hear from you any suggestions and points of view about the work of the CAIA.

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### THE BEQUEST OF HELENE WELLS

The CAIA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that CAIA has now completed the administration of the bequest of the late Helene Wells and has distributed all funds of the bequest in accordance with the wishes of Ms Wells including all accumulated interest and the account has now been closed.

To advise the CAIA Board in deciding upon suitable recipients and allocation of funds, a Bequest Committee was formed comprising HG Bishop N. Hovhannisian, H.E. Dr V. Gabrielyan, Mrs R. Cherchian, Mr A. H. Palamoudian, Mrs A Hogg and Mr. L. Agulian and we would like to thank the members of the Committee for their contribution which

ensured that the process of distribution was objective, transparent and in an accountable manner.

The CAIA would like to also thank Rutters Solicitors for their cooperation and patience while we dealt with the time-consuming task of allocating distribution, and the responsibility of ensuring that we administered the bequest faithfully in accordance with the original intentions of the late Helene Wells to aid Armenia in memory of her father, Dr. Michael Mandinian.

The recipient organisations and the distribution of the funds from the legacy are listed below. All have acknowledged receipt of the funds allocated to them, to be used for the benefit of the people of Armenia in accordance with the wishes of the late Helene Wells, and all have agreed with our funding conditions, which include an undertaking by them to provide progress reports on the application of the funds.

#### **Bequest Fund:**

Helene Wells bequest allocated to CAIA: £156,664.49  
Interest earned (19.12.02 - 30.03.07): £8,680.70  
Total: £165,345.19

#### **Distribution of Funds:**

*Hayastan All Armenia Fund GB* to pay in full the cost of building one Apartment Block of eight apartments in the earthquake zone at Spitak, in Armenia. Building cost as requested by the Fund was USD \$157,700. Equivalent in GBP: £81,528.20  
*Friends of Armenia Charity*: £30,000.00  
*Association of Child Psychiatrists and Psychologists of Armenia (ACPP)*: £15,000.00  
*The Orran Benevolent NGO*: £15,000.00  
*Oxfam (Bridge of Hope) Fund*: £23,057.56  
Bank transfer charges: £100.00  
Rutters Solicitors - legal fees: £659.43  
Total: £165,345.19

Souren Grigorian  
Chairman of the CAIA Board of Directors  
June 2007

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### **REPORT ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECT FUNDED BY HELENE WELLS BEQUEST**

The construction of the "Yerankyuni" District in Spitak, Lori Region, Armenia, is one of the large-scale projects that the "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund has implemented in the Earthquake Zone. The District consists of 11 Buildings, 10 of which were constructed by the "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund local Committee of Great Britain.

The buildings are comprised of 6 or 8 flats each, 66 flats in total.

Six of the buildings were financed by donations received from Armenian families and various Organisations in Great Britain, while the remaining 4 were financed by individual funding of British Armenian benefactors. One of these four (Building 7b, comprising of 8 flats) was financed by CAIA, arising from the legacy of the late Helene Wells, in memory of her late father Michael Mandinian. This project is completed and victims of the 1988 earthquake now occupy all 66 flats.



According to the Republic of Armenia National Assembly Decision of 08/06/1998 and Republic of Armenia Government No. 222 Decision of 12/31/1998, the right of ownership of all Buildings constructed in the "Yerankyuni" District in Spitak would be held by the Municipality of Spitak and the flats would be allocated to citizens who lost their

homes because of the 1988 earthquake.

Armineh Carapeti – Chairperson  
*Hayastan All-Armenian Fund*

## BRIDGE OF HOPE

*Bridge of Hope*, a partner of *Oxfam* has recently been recognised by the Prime Minister of Armenia for its long-term commitment to supporting children with disabilities and upholding their rights. The '*New Millennium Generation Against Discrimination*' is one of the many successful projects that *Bridge of Hope* has implemented. The project aims to remove barriers, which can make social inclusion difficult for children with disabilities and their families. In the five Child Development Centres that *Bridge of Hope* covers, 843 children participate in a variety of activities on a daily basis: Speech Development and Life Skills classes, Physical and Art Therapy (drawing, sculpture, handicraft, singing, music & dance) and Debate Clubs.



This has helped young children to develop their communication and social interaction skills. The project has provided information and advice to parents of children with disabilities on Family Code, Family Law, Child Protection etc, and has also set up a parent support group and trained its members to share the very same information with communities across Armenia. The Parent Support Groups have the

additional benefit of uniting community members who have face similar difficulties.

Anna Papazyan a member of a Parent Support Group speaks of the difference the Project Hope's activities have made to her, "*Now that my child goes to school, now that I am aware of my rights, now I know that I'm not alone and even more, that we as parents have established a group, which is ready to teach people in any corner of Armenia... I have realized: 'I am strong, I am able to help myself and others' "*. Armik Sahakyan, another parent, adds "*Bridge of Hope always does its best to actively engage parents in the process of solving educational, social and cultural problems of children*".

On 1st June, International Day of Children, the centres held local campaigns with a large number of children and their parents participating in the event. Aimed at raising awareness and integrating

the community, the event brought together children from different local groups under the slogan *"Lets be together, lets be friends"*.

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### FILM PREMIER IN HAYASHEN

CAIA took part in a Film & Multi cultural program during March 2007 organised by WESTREP. As part of the film festival the word premier of Levon Marslands film entitled *"We want Genocide"* was screened in Hayashen to a very appreciative audience.

Levon was kindly present for Q&A session with the audience. This highly personal yet articulate and powerful film was made as part of his MA degree in film. The film includes interviews with Ealing MP Stephen Pound, German historian Dr.Tessa Hofman and rare footage of Raphael Lemkin who coined the word *"genocide"* speaking about the Armenian genocide. For further information contact Levon at:  
*leon\_marsland@hotmail.com*

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### CAIA TAKES PART IN ACTON CARNIVAL



On Saturday 14th July 2007, members and volunteers of the CAIA took part in the annual *Acton Carnival*.

The CAIA promoted its services and the Armenian community in general to the several thousand participants in the event.

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### EASTER FAMILY PARTY IN HAYASHEN



On Easter Sunday 8th April 2007 a Family cultural event took place in Hayashen organised by CAIA.

Over 100 people enjoyed the delicious food and exciting songs of popular singer Samvel Vardanian who was launching his first CD also on the occasion. The new CD can be bought from CAIA.

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### QUIZ NIGHT IN HAYASHEN

On Saturday 9 June 2007 almost 50 people enjoyed a fun Quiz Night in Hayashen. The evening included a delicious buffet meal kindly donated by JAKoBS CAFE to support the purpose of the evening, which was to raise funds for CAIA to purchase a new minibus.



The CAIA is very grateful to JAKoBS CAFE and everyone who attended and supported the event as well as those who could not attend but were kind enough to send their donations to the CAIA which raised almost £500 towards the new Minibus total target.

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### **IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS: INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE**

Eleven members of the Armenian community from West London successfully completed four days of training in Hayashen during the first two weeks of July 2007 to improve their employment prospects.



The free training was organised by *Tribal Consulting Group* in partnership with the CAIA financed by the *European Social Fund*. Free childcare, lunch and transports costs were also provided to the participants to encourage their attendance and undivided attention during the course.

The participants gained two certificates as a result of the training. The first was a *Level 1 Certificate in Preparing for Employment*, which covered topics such as planning careers, developing skills in the workplace, understanding citizenship and independent living. The second was a *Health & Safety Certificate*. In addition, all trainees received one-to-one career guidance and advice from staff from *Tribal Consulting Group* with the help of CAIA.

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### **CAIA VOLUNTEERS HONOURED**

On Saturday 30th June 2007 two CAIA Management Committee members, Mrs Karine Alexanian and Mrs Klara Gharapetian took part in a special conference organised for Trustees by *Ealing CVS*.



In the afternoon, three CAIA volunteers, Mrs Isgouhi Aghabekian, Suzy Manutcharova, and Rita Koundarjian were honoured with certificates along with fifty others from the local voluntary and community sector. Pictured above, with the Worshipful Mayor of LB of Ealing, are some of the CAIA volunteers and MC members who took part in the

events

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## CONDOLENCES

The CAIA wishes to express its condolences to its following members who have passed away in the past few months.

### **Mr Mackertich (Mac) Pachaian**

Born in Iran in 1929, passed away in June 2007. Mac Pachaian was a long time active member within London's many Armenian institutions and organisation as well as a custodian trustee of *Hayashen*.

Mac (*as he was affectionately known*) leaves behind two daughters, their families and his many friends who knew and respected his dedicated service for the London Armenian community.

### **Mr Hovhannes Bajakian**

Born 31st December 1920 in Kessab (Syria), Hovhannes Bajakian was a proud husband, father, grandfather and Armenian patriot. He was also a very passionate writer who contributed many articles, which have been published in many Armenian newspapers around the world, including "*Armenian Voice*" and "*Nor Serount*" in London. His published book titled "*Kioughagan Badker*" (Village Stories) is a symbol of his love for writing as well as being a platform for sharing his experiences and expressing memories of village life.

Mr. Hovhannes Bajakian sadly passed away 21st June 2007, aged 86. Mr. Bajakian will be sorely missed by all who knew, respected and loved him everywhere, especially those at CAIA's Hayashen Senior Citizens Club where he regularly attended.

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## CAIA ACTIVITIES REPORT 2006-2007

During 2006/2007, the CAIA provided a wide range of welfare, education and cultural services to diverse aged groups within the Armenian community to enhance the quality of their life. In particular,

- Advice and Information for refugees, senior citizens and unemployed.
- Armenian language pre-school services and summer Play-scheme.
- Older People's Lunch/social club two afternoons a week.
- Mini-bus transport facilities to help frail elderly and Carers to access CAIA services
- Diverse social, cultural and educational events several times a year, including an Armenian reference library operated on Sundays
- Networking and co-operation with various voluntary and statutory organisations on common areas of work in order to promote the needs of disadvantaged Armenians.

Below is a summary of these activities and services in 2006/2007.

## **1 - WELFARE**

### **(a) Information and Advisory Services**

CAIA's information and advisory service was available 5 days a week and provided face-to-face, by phone and internet to all Armenians and those connected with them irrespective of their background, gender, age, religious belief, political views or disability in accordance to CAIA's Equal Opportunities policy.

During 2006/7, this service provided culturally sensitive information and practical support benefiting 550 persons on 6076 times related to Welfare Benefits, Housing, Housing Benefit & Council Tax, Debt, Domestic Violence, accessing Health services as well as NASS support, Naturalisation and Immigration issues. CAIA's information and advisory services undertook each case in a sympathetic and professional manner to progress with the concerns of clients until these were resolved.

As part of this process, the Advice Officer intervened and took various actions with the permission of clients, these involved completing various forms, writing letters, providing letters of support, making referrals, telephone calls, sending faxes/e-mails, interpreting and translating vital personal information.

Much of the interventions involved liaising and entering into communication with various statutory bodies such as local authorities, DWP, Primary Care Trusts, Job centres, MP's, Councillors, the Home Office and other non-statutory bodies like solicitors, agencies such as Law Centres and Housing Associations to assist clients.

During the course of this work, the CAIA maintained accurate records of individual client casework electronically and stored as hardcopy files securely in filing cabinets in accordance to the Data Protection Act, CAIA's confidentiality policy and in line with the Community Legal Service Quality Mark Standard for General Help with Casework at Level 1 and exemption from Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner with regards providing immigration advice.

The key outcomes achieved for the poorest and most vulnerable Armenian families and individuals during 2006/7 included:  
£300,000 claimed through Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Carers Allowance, backdated NASS and Child Benefit payments.

9 Casework clients successfully obtaining Housing/accommodation

22 Casework clients successfully obtaining Naturalization, Indefinite Leave to remain and Exceptional leave to remain in UK.

14 clients were successfully helped in finding employment

8 were helped to obtain their Driving Licences

9 disabled and elderly people helped to receive Social Services Care Plans

9 people were helped to obtain British Passports

89 interpretation sessions were provided by CAIA between clients and their GP's, during Hospital appointments, Job Centres and various local authority departments.

The majority of CAIA's advisory clients were residents of London boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Wandsworth, Sutton and Harrow. The origin and birth place of the majority of them were from the countries of the former Soviet Union

such as Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia and politically unstable parts of the Middle East such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey.

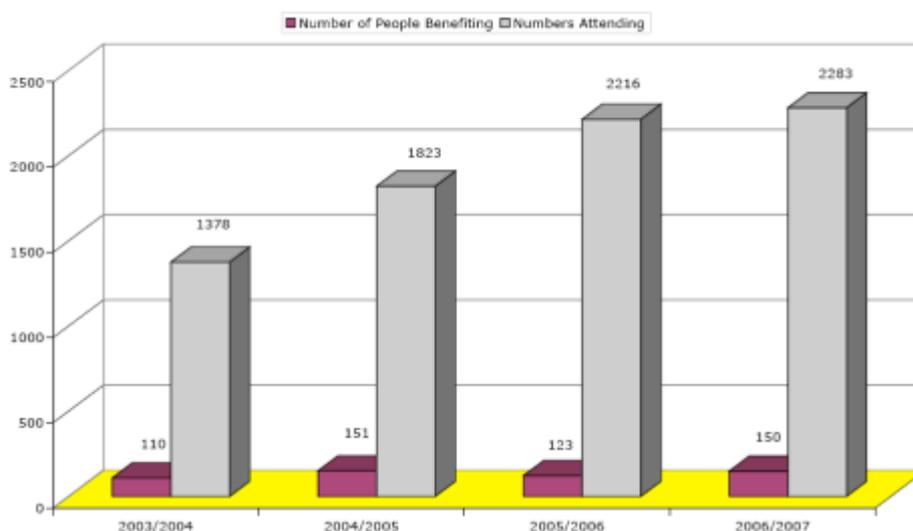
#### NUMBER OF CAIA ADVISORY CLIENTS 1997-2007

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 1997-1998 | 430 |
| 1998-1999 | 555 |
| 1999-2000 | 570 |
| 2000-2001 | 977 |
| 2001-2002 | 547 |
| 2002-2003 | 483 |
| 2003-2004 | 69  |
| 2004-2005 | 98  |
| 2005-2006 | 408 |
| 2006-2007 | 550 |

#### (b) Armenian Senior Citizens

The twice-weekly Armenian Senior Citizens Club benefited 150 socially excluded older people and their carers who attended 2283 times in 2006/7 where they ate together, socialised and obtained advice and practical support. The club held 92 sessions during the year which included diverse social, cultural and recreational activities for the benefit of those attending as well as a day-long seaside outing to Brighton and a major Xmas party in December 2006 attended by the Worshipful Mayor of LB of Ealing, Cllr. Diana Pagan. Free transport was provided 2020 times to 27 of the most frail and disabled elderly people living in LB of Hounslow and Ealing to help them access the club. In addition, contact was maintained with 300 Armenian Senior Citizens across London through occasional mailings to publicise the Lunch & Social Club. Evaluation of the quality of the project assessed via formal feedback from service users indicates a great deal of satisfaction for this provision resulting in large numbers of them subscribing as CAIA members.

**Numbers Benefiting from CAIA Elderly Day Centre Lunch Club**



The CAIA is grateful for the support it received for the Lunch Club from Awards for All, Comic Relief, London Catalyst and Hounslow Council/PCT, which contribute to the transport cost of bringing Armenian Senior Citizens to the club.

### **(c) Advocating the Health needs of Armenian Community**

One of the many roles CAIA's CEO plays includes taking part in external meetings, networking and advocating the health and social care needs of disadvantaged Armenians such as refugees, carers and older people to access NHS services.

The CEO attended various consultation meetings held during 2006/7 by Ealing PCT, Social Services and the local Voluntary sector to influence the strategic plans and commissioning priorities of statutory agencies. He attended meetings held by Hounslow Older People's Voluntary Sector Provider Forum, Ealing Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) Health and Social Care Forum, Ealing Voluntary Services Older People Forum, Ealing Advice Forum and a major conference at City Hall in November 2006 targeting older refugees organised by Age Concern England and the Refugee Council.

## **2 - EDUCATION**

### **Pre-School Learning Provisions & Summer Holiday Project**

In August 2006, a successful summer play scheme took place, which included a day long outing to Chessington Theme Park funded by The Neighbourhood Improvement Fund (NIF) benefiting over 70 children. The summer project was the 19th successive year that the CAIA via the Armenian Community Pre School Group had organised. The CAIA is grateful to all the sessional staff, volunteers and parents who helped with the project in particular Mrs Anne Boyadjian.

The Armenian Community Pre-School Group (ACPG) operates twice a week as a Parent and Toddlers drop-in provision. Over 70 children registered and benefited during the year mainly from refugee, low income, single parent and culturally mixed families, where sensitive support is offered to both parent and child in order to raise their self-esteem and confidence through play and social interaction, sustain their cultural heritage as well as gradually introduce them to multi-lingual learning and preparation for school.

We are grateful to the joint efforts of all the parents, staff and volunteers as well as the practical advice and financial support received from Ealing Council, the Hilden Charitable Fund and Ealing Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

Formal feedback obtained from both parents and children via questionnaires conclude that the summer project and the Parents & Toddlers Group are rewarding and essential services on many levels, not least of all for parental respite, children making new friends, learning together and generally strengthening their sense of identity and belonging.

## **3 - PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITE, AND CULTURAL EVENTS**

**(a) 'Armenian Voice'** has been CAIA's main tool of promoting its work, profile and services within the Armenian community since 1987. 'Armenian Voice' was published twice in 2006/7 with over 6000 copies posted free to Armenian homes in London and elsewhere, including some local decision makers, funders, voluntary agencies, Armenian libraries/institutions abroad. 'Armenian Voice' is a vital link of communication between the CAIA and those it serves as it generates on-going dialogue by enthusiastic readers who kindly make donations

towards its work and services. In addition, "Armenian Voice" serves to encourage greater networking and involvement by dispersed Armenians throughout London and the UK.

**(b) CAIA's website ([www.caia.org.uk](http://www.caia.org.uk))** attracts on average 10 visitors a day totalling over 3600 annually. The purpose of the website is to promote the profile of the charity and its diverse services both in this country and abroad. During 2006/7 the website was maintained regularly which enabled anyone interested in the CAIA or London Armenians in general to read about CAIA's work, Armenian related news, past issues of 'Armenian Voice', annual reports or to establish contact with the CAIA.

**(c)** Three major successful social and cultural events were organised by the CAIA at Hayashen during 2006/7. An Easter Sunday family event, a Quiz Night in July and a New Years Eve Party which generated much needed funds for CAIA's charitable aims and objectives. A total of over 300 people attended these popular annual events organised by the combined contribution of many dedicated CAIA members and volunteers who spend a great deal of time and their own money to ensure each of the above mentioned events functioned smoothly.

#### **4 - MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE**

Governance and accountability of the CAIA operates at three levels with clear reporting lines and links. The top level of governance is provided by elected Directors/Trustees. This is the senior decision-making body of the CAIA. The staff/volunteers operational team led by the CEO, Mr Misak Ohanian, carries out the management on a day-to-day basis. The work of the operational management team carried out by staff and volunteers is reviewed and monitored at Board meetings to ensure CAIA is meeting its aims and objectives efficiently and effectively in line with agreed budgets and work programme.

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#### **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS**

Since the last publication of Armenian Voice, the following have kindly made donations to CAIA. Their generosity is highly appreciated.

*Mr & Mrs D Stephan  
Mrs E Der Boghossian  
Miss H Richardson  
Mr & Mrs J Haytayan  
Mr V P Shahbazian  
Mr M Shekerdemian  
Miss C Shahbazian  
Mr & Mrs H Boudakian  
J Muggleston  
Miss D Doudian  
Mr R Choobanian  
Mr R M Anooshian  
Miss g Lputian  
Mr J A Shahbazian  
Mr S Shahbazian  
Mr & Mrs Shahiean  
Mr B Gharapetian  
Mr & Mrs D Jones  
Ms Vartevanian  
Mrs Venn*

Mr A V Guzelian  
 Mr & Mrs H Aghabekian  
 Mr & Mrs Best  
 Ms L Mansurian  
 Mrs S Tokatlian  
 Mr & Mrs Z Mankassarian  
 Mr & Mrs T Couligian  
 Camberley Writers Circle  
 Mr R Shaljean  
 A Assadourian  
 Mr & Mrs Y Yeghiazarian  
 Mrs L Nazikian  
 M F Krikorian  
 Mr & Mrs B J T Rule

### **Donation of Books/DVDs for Hayashen Library**

Mr & Mrs Ovanesoff DVD & Books regarding the History of Sourp  
 Perghitch  
 Mr Diran Chekelian for CD  
 Ms Armineh Haladjian, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Father Shnork Baghdassarian  
 Mr Mikayel H Hayrapetyan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Mr Vatche Simonian  
 Ms H Vartevanian  
 Ms Suzanna Shahverdyan & Clive  
 Ms Elbis Boghossian

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## **ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AT HAYASHEN**

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### **HEALTH PROMOTIONAL TALKS IN HAYASHEN**



Since July 2007 a series of health and welfare talks and workshop have started at Hayashen's Senior Citizens Lunch club. The first talk, pictured opposite, took place on 6th July by Deniz Upton from *Hounslow Primary Care Trust*, which focused on raising awareness about Falls and Osteoporosis. Over 30 people benefited from the talk and the informative packs handed out by

Deniz.



On 13th July an overview about PALS (*Patient & Public Involvement*) was given by Michelle Smith from *Ealing Primary Care Trust*, pictured opposite, who stayed to meet and answer the specific concerns of Armenian Senior Citizens and Carers.

On Friday 27th July, Mary Hicks & Sandra Cambell from *deafPLUS West London* attended and spoke

for the benefit of Armenian Senior Citizens and their carers. They provide information about the work of *DeafPLUS* which is based in East Acton and works closely with Ealing Social Services. *DeafPLUS* provides

advice, practical support including IT training, interpreting and communication as well as specific equipment for those experiencing difficulties in seeing and hearing.

Debbie Wilson, coordinator of Ealing Carers' Centre spoke about existing support for Carers in Ealing on Friday 21 September in *Hayashen*.



Simon Gray, Manager of the Community Benefits Team at Ealing Council spoke about "Welfare advocacy and community finance services" on Friday 5 October 2007. Mr Harutiun Khatchikian kindly acted as interpreter. (See photograph opposite.)

Jackie Spencer and Farzana Naveel from Age Concern Ealing gave a presentation about "Planning for Retirement" on Monday 15 October 2007 in *Hayashen*. Mr Harutiun Khatchikian once again kindly acted as interpreter during the presentation. (See photograph below.)



All the above talks and presentations events were supported by the *London Catalyst Trust*. The CAIA is grateful for the support it receives from *LB of Hounslow, Comic Relief, and Ealing & Brentford Consolidated Charity* for the Armenian Senior Citizens social/lunch club.

Ealing Council also supports the CAIA to provide respite for carers who otherwise would not have any breaks from their caring duties during the week.

## H.E. DR. VAHE GABRIELIAN VISITS HAYASHEN



On Friday 20th July CAIA staff, members, and senior citizens attending the Armenian Senior Citizens Social/Lunch club had the pleasure of meeting His Excellency Dr. Vahe Gabrielyan, the Armenian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United Kingdom.

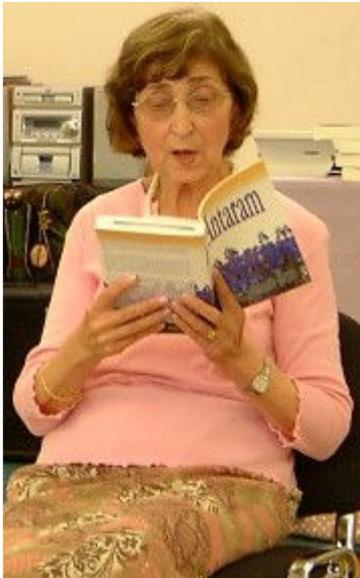
During his brief visit to *Hayashen*, the Ambassador congratulated the CAIA's unique charitable social welfare work for the benefit of the most disadvantaged members of the Armenian community. On the occasion of his visit, the Ambassador kindly distributed special hampers containing organic produce from Armenia to taste and enjoy.

CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian in turn thanked the Ambassador for his visit, kind words, and gifts to the Senior Citizens and gave a brief summary of

CAIA's plans to replace CAIA's aging mini-bus which provides free door-to-door lifts to *Hayashen* twice weekly to the most frail and disabled older people so that they can access CAIA's services.

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### AUTHOR MARIE SALIBIAN-BEST PRESENTS HER BOOK "ANTARAM"



Marie Salibian-Best described and read excerpts from her book ANTARAM on Friday 3rd August, 2007 at *Hayashen*.

During her hour long visit she answered questions about what motivated her to write the novel and signed copies. She also kindly donated all the proceeds from the sale of the book during the afternoon to the CAIA.

ANTARAM is an Armenian word which means unfading or undying. It is also the name for the flower known in English as *Stalice*, which keeps its colour even when it is dried.

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 and is a personal 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 and the characters will stay with you long after you close the cover. For further information about ANTARAM contact *Masis Books, 34 Julius Hill, Warfield, Berks. RG42 3UN*. Copies of book can also be purchased from CAIA. Price: £6.99 (Paperback) ISBN 0-955045-40-1

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### OUTING TO WORTHING

Almost 40 senior citizens, carers, and their children enjoyed a relaxing day at the seaside resort town of Worthing on July 25th. The outing was organised by the CAIA thanks to the support of *Hammersmith & Fulham Council*.

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## ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP ACTIVITIES

### PRE-SCHOOL GROUP EVENTS THIS SUMMER



On Monday 23 July 2007, a group of children were awarded their attendance/graduation certificates from the *Hayashen Armenian Community Pre School Group* (ACPG) as they start school in September. The students received their certificates from their much loved and respected play teacher Mrs Anne Boyadjian. ACPG operates as a "drop-in" Parents &

Toddlers Group every Monday and Friday between 10am-12pm. For further information please contact CAIA during office hours.

### ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SUMMER PLAYScheme

For 15 days between 6th-24th August 2007 another successful summer project week was organised by ACPG for the 20th successive year with the help and support of both staff and volunteer parents.



In total 70 children and young people aged 1-14 benefited from the summer project which included various short trip to local parks such as *Hounslow Urban Farm* and *Snakes & Ladders* in Syon Park as well as an all day outing to *Thorpe Park*. (See group photo above) The project was

kindly supported by *Ealing Council, The Hilden Trust, and Capital Radio's Help a London Child*.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

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### PHOTO EXHIBITION: "OTTOMAN ARMENIANS: THE FINAL IMAGES"

During April 2007 a Photographic Exhibition at Menier Chocolate Factory Gallery was organised entitled "*Ottoman Armenians: The Final Images*".

The exhibition was organised by the *Land and Culture Organisation (LCO) and Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide*, to mark the closing evening of a successful cosponsored exhibition.

The exhibition attracted 750 visitors from all walks of life; historians, politicians, directors, student groups, tourists, medical staff and others. Over 150 photographs with English and French narration provided documented history of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire prior, during and after the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

The collection provided a snapshot of family life, culture, intellectual and public figures as well as buildings and towns in Eastern Anatolia. The evidence then moved on to show how the leadership of a culturally rich and commercially vibrant society was arrested and taken away only to be killed by the authorities, followed by systematic uprooting of the remaining Armenian population with armed guards and the gendarmerie sending them into deserts to perish due to lack of sanitation, systematic killings and falling victim to sickness and hunger. The evidence continued to show some survivors and thousands of orphans who were fortunate enough to make it through the hardship of Syrian deserts or to a greater extent those saved by foreign missionaries active in the area at the time.

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### MEMORIAL CONCERT IN MEMORY OF HRANT DINK

A memorial concert took place on Friday, April 20th 2007 at *St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace* (London) in memory murdered Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. Participants included, classical Turkish Music Group Nihavend who performed a programme of music of Ottoman/Turkish Armenian Composers. They were joined by two distinguished British Armenian musicians Gilbert Biberian (composer/guitarist) and Khatchatur Pilikian (singer/writer). (You can read K. Pilikian's speech on this website).

The outspoken editor of the Armenian/Turkish weekly *Agos* was made a target of the Turkish nationalists by the mass media in Turkey following his conviction on trumped up charges for "*insulting Turkishness*".

The courageous voice of Hrant Dink calling for peace and reconciliation between Armenians and Turks was silenced by his assassination in Istanbul on 19 January 2007. His solemn funeral in Istanbul, attended by huge crowds - of Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Assyrian, Jewish and Greek descent - in a sea of placards reading slogans "We are all Hrant Dink", "We are all Armenian", turned to a strong expression of people's aspiration for living in peace and respecting each other's ethnic identity and shared history.

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## ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION EVENT IN EALING TOWN HALL

A commemorative event took place in Ealing Town Hall on 21st April 2007, to mark the 92nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide organised by CRAG. Local MP Stephen Pound and Mr Ara Palamoudaina, the chair of the *Armenian Community & Church Council of GB (ACCC)* delivered the main speeches. (You can read the ACCC speech on this website)

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## CONFERENCE ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE HELD IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

A major Conference was held in the House of Commons on Armenian Genocide Day 24th April 2007 following a commemorative service for the first time in the Houses of Parliament Church (St Mary's-under-Croft).

The events were organised by *Armenia Solidarity*, the *British-Armenian All-Party Parliamentary Group* and *Nor Serount Publications*. The church service was under the care of the Rev. Frank Gelli, who called for the government to be more proactive in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Taking part was soprano Seta Tokatlian. Two wreath-laying ceremonies took place, the first one at the Monument to the Innocents, Westminster Abbey, officiated by Dean R Reece of the Abbey with the participation of representatives of the *Darfur Union of the UK* and the *Aegis Trust*. Seta Tokatlian read the poem "We are Few" by Barouyr Sevak.

The second ceremony took place at the cenotaph, where E. Williams appealed for more efforts to add to the 104 MPs who have signed Early Day Motion 357 in Parliament, recognising the Genocide, by sustained lobbying by all Armenians. Distinguished parliamentarian Lord Avebury chaired the Conference. Farhad Malekian, director of the *Centre for International Criminal Law*, Uppsala, Sweden, concentrated on the legal aspects of crimes against humanity and genocide. Historians Christopher Walker and Greg Topalian concentrated on the tactics of denial used by denialist historians and the British Government.

Author Desmond Fernandes made an analysis of denialist policy. Dr Margaret Brearly concentrated on the parallels between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. Linda Melvern, Vice President of the *International Association of Genocide Scholars*, read a powerful statement from the organisation recognising that what happened to the Armenians was undoubtedly Genocide.

Professor Theo Van Lint discussed the genocide in the context of the cultural genocide that this involved for Eastern Anatolia. A strongly worded message from the UK based Muslim Public Affairs Committee, recognising the Armenian Genocide as a crime against humanity, was read by Odette Bazil of the *British-Armenian All-Party Parliamentary Group*. She also read a reply from Geoff Hoon, MP on behalf of the government, which exposed the government's position as being at variance with the position of the overwhelming majority of genocide scholars and experts in the UK and throughout the world. A vote of thanks was given by the well-respected campaigner in parliament on the issue, Baroness Caroline Cox.

Ambassador Dr Vahe Gabrielyan, who was present at the event thanked the participants and the organisers for the "impressive" presentation. The results of the conference, together with statements received from Genocide experts such as Prof Donald Bloxham (*Edinburgh University*) Dr Mark Levene (*Southampton University*) and Prof Martin Shaw (*Sussex University*) was presented to the government a few days later.

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### MEETING ON "DARFUR AND ARMENIA"

A meeting on "*Darfur and Armenia*" was organised on 27th June 2007 by *Armenia Solidarity*, the *British-Armenian All-Party Parliamentary Group*, *Nor Serount Publications* & the *Armenian Genocide Trust in the House of Commons*, in the evening, in conjunction with, the *Genocide Prevention All Party Parliamentary Group* and *The Aegis Trust*.

In the meeting, Dr James Smith of *The Aegis Trust*, in a major speech on Ethical Foreign Policy emphasised the parallels between Armenia and Darfur where the Turkish model of the 20th century is being successfully repeated. Ruth Barnett spoke on the psychological effects of denial and introduced the concept of reducing the present "*Genocide Footprint*" by addressing the issues of past genocides.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, Dr Vahe Gabrielyan, emphasised the political dimensions of genocide recognition which could not be addressed by any commission of historians however eminent. The meeting was chaired by John Bercow MP of the *Genocide Prevention All Party Parliamentary Group*, and attended by several other parliamentarians including Lord Avebury, Lord Alton of Liverpool David Burrowes MP as well as David Drew MP, the sponsor of the meeting.

The present Armenian Genocide Recognition effort in the UK is an ever expanding coalition which is gathering momentum involving more and more Armenian and UK supporters. "*Genocide recognition is a Human, not merely an Armenian, issue*" said Eilian Williams, a spokesman for the organisers.

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### ARMENIAN-BORN SURGEON IS MINISTER AT DEPT. OF HEALTH

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has appointed a practising surgeon as a minister at the Department of Health. Armenian born Professor Sir Ara Darzi, 47, who is charged with improving patient care, has been promoted from his previous role as National Advisor on surgery.

Sir Ara, chair of surgery at Imperial College London, supports government plans to reconfigure NHS services. When he took over as prime minister, Mr Brown said he planned a broad-based government of "*all the talents*". Sir Ara will combine his ministerial duties with his research and clinical commitments, including the supervision of students.

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### LONDON "LORD OF THE RINGS" MUSICAL STARS ARMENIAN ACTOR

The musical "*Lord of the Rings*" started at London's Drury Lane theatre in June, which includes Armenian actor Sévan Stephan. Those interested

can watch video clips of the production which include an interview with Sévan, on the following website: [www.theatre.com/video/id/3006510](http://www.theatre.com/video/id/3006510).

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### **REGINA ARADESIAN: GRADUATE OF BA (HONS) JEWELRY DESIGN**

Regina Aradesian, is a graduate of BA (hons) jewellery design from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design.

Regina explains the concept and technique of her work in the following statement *"My collection explores the compilation of traditional Armenian patterns with the intricate textures of the cellular world when observed with a microscope. The jewellery is contemporary and surprising, made out of precious metals and transparent plique-a-jour enamels, lit up from behind to enhance the colourful contrast of church-inspired cut outs over a full, textured background"*. To find out more about Regina's work please visit her website at: [www.aradesijewellery.com](http://www.aradesijewellery.com).

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### **DOCUMENTARY FILM "THE GENOCIDE IN ME" SHOWN AT ICA**

At the *Birds Eye View Film Festival* held during 8-14th March 2007 at ICA, a documentary film by Araz Artinian, called *The Genocide in Me* [Canada, 2005, 52' event total 82'] was shown followed by Q&A with the director.

An angry, tender and funny film, *The Genocide in Me* deals with the impact of the 1915 Armenian Genocide on the life of young filmmaker Araz Artinian, who has had to carry this legacy since her childhood. In this personal journey through recent Armenian history, Artinian, torn between her father's passionate commitment to the Armenians of the Diaspora and her own personal needs, confronts the reality of living in a multicultural melting pot, and asks herself the universal question *"Where do I belong?"*.

From Armenia to Egypt to Canada, Artinian traces her parents and grandparents' history, trying to understand their fervoured patriotism and it's effects on her life, eventually travelling to Turkey to see for the first time the river she was named after.

The documentary deftly weaves together 8mm film footage shot by the filmmaker's grandfather from the 1940's to the 1980's, with riveting photographic archives of the Genocide, the filmmaker's present-day video journals, and a deeply honest narration. Through moving interviews with the last survivors of this Genocide in the USA and through her risky trip to Turkey, Artinian goes back to the origin of her father's obsession, an obsession born of the Turkish denial and the fear of losing the Armenian culture.

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### **ARMENIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS ON DISPLAY AT BRITISH MUSEUM EXHIBITION**

Some of the world's most important and beautiful religious texts were brought together for the first time in a major exhibition at the British Library during 27th April-23rd September 2007.

Exquisite and rare examples of Jewish, Christian and Muslim sacred texts from the Library's collections were presented alongside treasures on loan from other institutions in a unique modern context. The sacred texts are treated together thematically, exploring points in common and differences between and within these faiths, looking at the ways in which they have been produced, interpreted and used, both through history and in the present day.

The exhibition demonstrates how these three faiths have co-existed and influenced one another and, through their interaction, have shaped much of European civilisation and culture. Revd.Dr.Vrej Nersessian, Curator for the Christian Middle East section has selected the thirty exhibits representing the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Georgian, Syriac and Nubian Christianity.

The exhibition was opened by HRH Prince Moulay Rachid, HH Prince Moulay Youssef, Princess Lalla Joumala of the Moroccan Royal Kingdom and His Royal Highness The duke of Edinburgh.

The accompanying catalogue *Sacred: Book of the Three Faiths* illustrates and describes all the exhibits in the exhibition and can be purchased from the British Library.

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### ARMENIAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION FC

After leading the league table for most of the season and despite beating their closest rivals Duke of York Wanderers 3-2 on the final day, the Armenian Youth Association FC was pipped to the title solely on goal difference.

Alex Ohanessyan was the hat-trick hero of our well-deserved victory on Sunday May 13th. His passion and work-rate inspired the rest of our boys - Sevag Bardkajian and Alen Duvarcyan excelled at the back - to dominate the opposition and prove ourselves as worthy runners-up, earning promotion to the 2nd Division of the *Chiswick & District Sunday Football League* from next September.

Nick Nicolaou, Secretary / Manager of the team had this to say: *"I am confident that with the addition of 2-3 players we will have plenty of depth in the squad to remain consistent throughout the coming season. Well done to everyone for a magnificent year!"* Meanwhile the reserve side marshalled by player-manager Mark Bedrossian completed their first season and they will continue to play in the West Fulham Sunday Football League. Both teams hope to play their home matches next season on Sunday mornings: North Acton playing fields, Noel Road, Acton, London W3. For more information on how to play or support the AYA FC contact Nick Nicolaou Tel: 0208 810 7324 or [niknicolaou@hotmail.com](mailto:niknicolaou@hotmail.com).

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### FILMS MADE BY ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI JOURNALISTS SHOWN AT ICA

*Conciliation Resources* organised a screening and discussion, with six 15-minute films made by Armenian and Azerbaijani journalists at ICA (*Institute of Contemporary Arts*) on 27th September 2007. *Dialogue Through Film* was a unique cross-conflict initiative bringing together young Azerbaijani and Karabakh Armenian film-makers who have made

a series of films about Nagorny Karabakh, a Caucasus region which has been the focus of a dispute between Azerbaijanis and Armenians for more than a decade.

Twenty young journalists have been involved in the project since it started in 2006. The films they've made reflect the traumas, fears, hopes and humour of people whose everyday lives remain deeply affected by the Karabakh conflict. *"We wanted to make good films but we also wanted to help ourselves and others to think differently"* said one participant, *"these films show that we might have different aspirations, but war is not the way to solve our conflict"*. For further information visit: [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org).

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### **STEPHEN POUND MP SPEAKS TO ARMENIAN AUDIENCE**

On 7th October 2007 Stephen Pound MP for Ealing North spoke to a large audience of Armenians at the Navassartian Centre about his visit to Armenia and Artsakh (Karabakh). The trip and the talk was organised by the Armenian National Committee.

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### **25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN RELIEF SOCIETY OF GB**

On 12th October 2007, the *Armenian Relief Society of GB* celebrated its 25th anniversary with a reception held at the Medical Society of London. Over 80 members and invited guests from various local Armenian organisations, including H.G. Bishop Hovanissian and H.E. Dr Vahe Gabrielyan, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia were present at the event which honoured the charitable work of the *ARS GB* and its members.

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### **WELSH MONUMENT TO VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IS UNVEILED**

The unveiling of a Welsh National Monument to victims of the Armenian Genocide took place on Saturday, November 3rd at the Temple of Peace, Cardiff.

The stone Cross was arranged by the Welsh-Armenian community under the leadership of John Torosyan in appreciation of the Recognition of the Genocide by the elected representatives of Welsh people.

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### **HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE MEANING OF "IAN"?**

Most Armenian names end in *"ian"* or *"yan,"* meaning the *"son of"*, but some Diaspora Armenians have changed these endings to blend in their host societies. Today in Turkey *"oglu"* often replaces *"ian"*, while Russian Armenians may change the endings to *"ov"*; e.g., Gary Kasparov, Serge Parajanov. A name ending in *"ian"* is not always exclusively Armenian, since the ending can also be occasionally found in names in Irish, Persian, English, Philippine, and some other cultures. Armenian last names generally fall into five specific categories: Aristocracy, Parent, Geography, Occupation or Trait.

**Aristocracy** - The ancient Armenian aristocracy ("Nakharar" class) was derived from Parthian-Persian stock and many of their names ended in "uni" or "ooni." Most of these families were destroyed over the centuries but some still survive today; e.g., Sasuni, Rshtuni.

**Parent** - Many Armenian names are derived from the first names of an ancestor; e.g. Davidian, "son of David," Stepanian, "son of Stepan," or Krikorian, "son of Krikor/Grigor." Until the 19th century, virtually all first names had a religious origin, so most of those last names are also religious.

**Geography** - Some last names are based on geographic origin and end in "lian" (Turkish) or "tsian" (Armenian). Typical examples are Sivaslian "from Sivas," Urfalian "from Urfa" and Vanetzian "from Van." These names were typically given to an immigrant who migrated from a different region of Armenia. Obviously everyone living in Marash would not call himself or herself "Marashlian".

**Occupation** - Most last names were taken from the professions of an ancestor. These names frequently originated with the tax collectors who needed to identify all individuals for tax purposes. Typical examples are Najarian "son of a carpenter," Arabian "son of a wagon/ teamster," and Vosgarichian "son of a goldsmith." Many of these occupations are not Armenian, since the tax man (typically a Moslem Turk, Persian, Arab, etc.) would use his own native word for the occupation; e.g., the name Boyajian is based on the Arab/Turkish term "boyaji" "one who dyes."

**Trait** - The most confusing and curious names are those based on some trait of an ancestor. Typical examples are Topalian "son of the cripple", Dilsizian "son of the tongueless one," or Sinanian "son of the spearpoint". Many of the origins of these names are unclear unless one understands the original context. As an example, Dilsizian indicates that an ancestor had his tongue cut out by the Turks for using the Armenian language, while the term "Sinan" was a slang term applied to somebody either with a very erect military-like carriage or who was "hung like a horse." Some of these traits are not physical, but rather reflect personality or social status; e.g., Melikian "son of the king" or Harutunian "son of the resurrection." The name Harutunian could be based on an ancestor named Harutune (so-named because he was born around Easter time), or adopted by a convert to Protestantism to show his status as a "born-again Christian".

Many last names today have been shortened or modified to aid pronunciations by non Armenians; e.g., the name Mugerditchian/Mkrtichian becomes "Mugar," Husseniglian, becomes "Hewsen," and Samourkashian becomes "Samour." These abbreviated names often drop the "ian" ending, and are not immediately identifiable as being Armenian to an outsider. The name categories of Occupation and Trait can differ significantly between Eastern Armenians and Western Armenians, since the eastern names often have Persian, Georgian or Russian roots, while the western names may have Turkish, Arab, or Greek roots. Names with the prefix "Der" or "Ter" show that

one of the ancestors was a "Der Hayr" (a married parish priest), a position of great social status among Armenians; e.g., Der Bedrosian, Ter Petrosian.

The study of Armenian Names is a fascinating exercise, since virtually every aspect of the culture is reflected in names. There have been extensive studies of Armenian names in the Armenian language, but little has appeared in English and many Armenians (born outside of Armenia) do not understand the significance of their own names.

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### INTERVIEW WITH GOR MKHITARIAN AND SONYA VAROUJIAN

The music scene in Armenia can be paralleled to the emerging identity of the country today. Struggling to preserve the essence of the past and finding a foothold in today's world are challenges that face many aspects of the developing Armenian nation. Both singer-songwriter Gor Mkhitarian (pictured bottom left) and Sonya Varoujian (pictured bottom right) embody the transition within the music scene now evolving in Armenia and Los Angeles. They are contemporary pioneers in the Armenian World/Folk music scene. Both are helping to spearhead the next chapter in Armenia's rich musical history by blending rock, folk, and Armenian traditional music to create a distinct sound that is both compelling and fresh. Varoujian and Mkhitarian present us with meaningful lyrics, simple arrangements, and unique sounds – both from very different backgrounds, different in their approach, yet equally mesmerizing.



This year, both Gor and Sonya have been nominated in the category for "*Best Alternative Album of the Year*" at the 9th annual Armenian Music Awards. They have just finished rehearsing for a concert they will play in Montreal and it seems their collaboration makes perfect sense. Recently, I was able to connect with the busy singer/songwriters and ask them a few questions about their work, life, and ideas about the future of Armenian music.

#### **So when did you both start playing music?**

**SV** – I started later than most people. Even though I sang from the time I was a child, I picked up the guitar at the age

of 15 by chance after my uncle came to our house with it. He saw how much the instrument fascinated me and suggested I keep it for a week. When he came back I was playing and singing Joan Baez on the guitar and he decided that I should definitely keep the guitar. I ended up practicing every day and really enjoying the instrument. I didn't start composing my own melodies until I was 18. At first I didn't take what I was doing very seriously but when I saw that my music was touching people I decided I should start recording my songs.

**GM** – I also started playing guitar at the age of 15. I was originally known as the lead guitarist for one of Armenia's most popular rock bands, Lav Eli. We recorded three albums and then I decided to start a solo career in 2000.

### **How many CD's have you recorded? Are they all in Armenian?**

**SV** – I recorded 3 CD's and one tape (yes - reel to reel)! As I was born in England and raised in the USA, all of my songs were in English initially and I formed a band called Seven in New York City between 1997 and 2001. We played many of the clubs in New York and developed a strong following. During these years I recorded a CD entitled "Seven" and a CD entitled "Confession". They were very good years creatively and then I relocated to London where I focused on design. It was only after a trip to Armenia in 2005 when I went as a volunteer to a very small village in Lori (the region that Gor is from) and worked in a small village with children for two weeks where I had a sudden burst of creativity again. Before I knew it I had all these new melodies coming and for the first time I was writing in Armenian. It was a very exciting time for me. I felt an outpouring from my soul and I realized I was meant to go back into the music. I phoned my friend Nareg Hartunian (founder of Naregatsi Art Institute) and he told me I should have no hesitation in realizing my desire to record an Armenian CD. It wasn't long after that I decided I wanted to return to Armenia and record with local Armenian musicians. I must say that Naregatsi Art Institute sponsored the printing and duplication of the CD and were a great help to me in this last project. I am very grateful to them.

**GM** – I have recorded one EP and five albums since I launched my solo career in 2000. Always fusing traditional Armenian music with both rock and folk idioms, I sing both in English and Armenian. My most recent release, "Acoustic Folklore," expands on this style and adds new instruments into well known hits such as "Mokats Mirza", "Sarer" and "Shogher jan". I would say that British rock and American folk genres formed the basis of my songwriting. My brothers were the reason for that. About 20-30 years ago, during the Communist Era, the Soviet Armenian underground music scene had a great number of "illegal" American and British records. My brothers listened to very "deep underground" music such as the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, and Deep Purple. Naturally that influenced the development of my musical taste into something very different from the mainstream taste. I'm lucky they didn't listen to Azeri music, which was very popular at the time. About 70-80% of the people would turn on the radio and listen to the AM frequency coming

from Baku. Because Armenia was under Communism at the time, the music was force fed to us and these limited choices were all that were available. So, people became comfortable with Azeri and Turkish music in Armenia and that has become the basis for much of the "Rabiz" or pop music that is so popular today.

**What is it that inspires your creativity? What are your songs about?**

**SV** – For me God (love) inspires me in all its forms, people inspire me, nature inspires me, and definitely my own personal experiences inspire me. My music comes from a core place in my soul. I suppose I have been asked why I don't sing more traditional/popular songs. I like to sing my own songs because they are very real to me. When I perform a song I am very much singing something very close to me. It's almost as if I am living them. Often people ask me to describe what it is that defines a good singer. I often say it is how much they can allow themselves to honestly portray that which they are singing about – to make the audience feel those emotions. It isn't usually about the quality or perfection of a voice that distinguishes a performance but rather the effectiveness of delivering the emotion or the message. My songs are about love in all its forms – human love, love for homeland, love for the people in the village in which I volunteered.

**GM** – My inspiration comes from everything and everywhere. I really do like performing because a great synergy is created between me and the audience. I give them my emotions, and they give me back theirs, and so on, continuously. It's good to know that they've come to hear specifically "my" music, which means that there is something they can take from me.

**How would you describe your music? Were you influenced by anyone?**

**SV** – My last CD Janapar is a CD of 13 original Armenian songs – one of which I sing in English. I have incorporated many authentic Armenian instruments such as qanun, shvi, duduk, as well as a quartet, guitar, oboe, clarinet, and percussion. Some of the songs I like to perform with just the guitar or with a cello and guitar. A lot of people say it has an Irish feel to it and it seems I also have fans in the non-Armenian market. I've been told it is very earthy and folksy. My song Depi Yerkir was recently included on a World Music Compilation CD in South Korea! It's nice to be reminded of how music is the universal language. It never ceases to amaze me. I was inspired by folk singers such as Joan Baez, vocalists like Sinead O'Connor and Sarah McLachlan. My Armenian music inspiration came from artists such as Armen Movsisyan, Rouben Hakhverdian, and Lilit Pipoyan. I had the privilege of working with Narine Zarifyan who wrote the arrangements for my last CD – she has also worked with Rouben Hakhverdian. Working with her was fantastic because she understood what I wanted to convey and was able to produce what I envisioned.

**GM** - I never classify my music into a genre because music is what it is. However, if pressed for an answer, Armenians in Hayastan like to call my music "folk-rock." To the general listening public and many Armenian Diasporans, it is considered "Alternative Armenian folk" or sometimes simply "world music." Some of my musical influences include Simon and Garfunkel, Sting, Dave Matthews Band, Rouben Hakhverdian and Bob Dylan.

**Did you expect that both of you would be nominated in the category of "Best Alternative Album" this year? Do you think you will take the award home this year?**

**SV** – I was actually pleasantly surprised when I found out about the nomination. As I hadn't really promoted the CD fully I suppose I hadn't thought about it. I had 3 concerts in Yerevan last year which were all extremely successful. I also participated in the Golden Guitar Festival in Yerevan in August 2006 which was my first appearance on a stage in Armenia. The feedback from the audience and the media was very positive. After I returned to London I didn't have the musicians I worked with so I kept a low profile for a while. I felt that some time in Los Angeles would give me the opportunity to perform my music. Since I recently arrived I have been asked to play this year's Telethon, the Armenian Music Awards, a World Music Festival, and Mosaic II in January. I believe that outside of Yerevan, this is definitely the place to be for Armenian music! As for winning, I am not sure what the criteria is but of course I would be thrilled to win. Truthfully I would love it if either of us managed to win the award. I admire Gor's work very much!

**GM** – Of course it is always a pleasure to be nominated. I have been fortunate enough to have been nominated for a total of eleven industry music awards for my five albums in the past. Sonya is also a very interesting and talented musician. I look forward to collaborating with her and as she mentioned we will have a few more performances together before the London concert—for example, we will play at the Armenia Fund Telethon & the Armenian Music Awards in November.

**Where can we hear your music?**

**SV** – My music is available on line at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), [www.narek.com](http://www.narek.com), [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com), [www.armenianvendor.com](http://www.armenianvendor.com), [www.cdrama.com](http://www.cdrama.com), and in CD shops in Yerevan and LA. There is also a lot of information and some of my songs on [www.myspace.com/sonyavaroujianmusic](http://www.myspace.com/sonyavaroujianmusic) and I keep a blog about my experiences in and out of Armenia [www.sonyavaroujian.blogspot.com](http://www.sonyavaroujian.blogspot.com). I also recorded a music video in Armenia called "Hambuyr" which can be viewed on YouTube.

**GM** – I have a website [www.gormusic.com](http://www.gormusic.com). My music is also available above mentioned websites and locations. For my three music videos visit [www.youtube.com/gormusic](http://www.youtube.com/gormusic).

### What are your plans for the future? Any more albums or tours?

**SV** – I would love to keep creating and writing. Currently there are proposals to bring Gor and myself to London, Australia, Toronto, and Boston for concerts. I think there are a lot of exciting things in store for the future. I am taking one day at a time but thanking God for everything and always, always reminding myself to live with passion. I think when you do something with honesty and passion that others can appreciate that.

**GM** – The future continues to look bright. I am currently working on new songs and hope to start recording some of these new tunes starting now. I'm collaborating with some experimental musicians, and hope something good will transpire out of it. Working with musicians with no boundaries who are not afraid to put their music out to the general public without worrying about how "it should be," is where my frame of mind is now with regards to my new stuff. I like to work with artists who aren't afraid to take a chance with their music. I define that as fresh.

Gor Mkhitarian and Sonya Varoujian are off to Montreal at the end of the week. The Canadian audience is in for a treat! Stay tuned for concerts in your area.

Sara Anjargolian

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### "I WISH TO DIE SINGING" AT FINBOROUGH THEATRE

#### PRESS RELEASE

**ABrawl in association with the Finborough Theatre presents - *I Wish To Die Singing***

*The world premiere of a documentary drama featuring poetry, images, music and verbatim theatre, commemorating the Armenian genocide and the 1.5 million who died under Ottoman rule.*

PRESS NIGHT: FRIDAY, 4 JANUARY 2008 , 7.30pm

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office Tel: 0870 4000 838 or book online at [www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**Wednesday, 3 January– Saturday, 25 January 2008**

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm. Saturday matinees (from 12 January) at 3.30pm

Tickets £12, £9 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £12 all seats.

For more information please contact Rachel Payant on 07977 173135 or e-mail [press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk](mailto:press@finboroughtheatre.co.uk).

#### How to donate

All donations are welcome in supporting of the production of *I Wish to Die Singing*.

The *Finborough Theatre* receives no public or private funding from any source, and relies solely on the support of our audiences. Please do consider supporting us. Please make cheques payable to 'Brawl' and

mail to: *Rachel Payant, Finborough Theatre. 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED*

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## NEWS IN BRIEF: DIASPORA

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A stamp dedicated to the memory of the editor-in-chief of the Agos daily Hrant Dink has been privately issued in France. The stamp includes a mention of the day of assassination of Dink, instead of the seal it is written: "slain journalist". On the left of the stamp issued, it is written "1.5 million +1" which symbolises the number of the Armenian people murdered during the events of 1915 and Hrant Dink's death. The stamps designed by Genevier are being printed by the French Post authority and in comparison with the standard stamp price of 0.5 Euro the Dink stamps would be sold for 2.5 Euro.

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Arto Tunjboyajian and Yasar Kurt are working on a CD dedicated to the memory of their friend Hrant Dink. Currently the Turkish composer and singer Yasar Kurt is on a stay in Armenia. This is the musician's first visit to Armenia and he sees a unique mission in it. Instead of the words "We are all Hrant, We are all Armenian", Arto and Yasar will sing: "We are all Hrant, we are the man every bullet against whom is a bullet against all of us. The bullet against Hrant Dink has not killed him, only we can kill Hrant without silence".

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A total of 28 members of the Armenian community have been killed in Iraq as a result of military operations carried out by the USA and another 28 taken captive. Additionally, 3,000 Armenians have left Iraq over the past four years. The refugees have mainly moved to Armenia, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

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A pilgrimage to the Turkish-occupied Armenian Monastery of Sourp Magar, took place on 6th of May, 2007 with the participation of more than 200 community members - most of whom were visiting the Armenian Monastery for the first time in 33 years. The pilgrimage was organised by the Cypriot Armenian MP Vartkes Mahdessian and The Armenian Prelature of Cyprus.

Going through memory lane participants remembered similar days, decades ago when the community would gather for the annual Harissa, and when the land of Cilicia would be visible by the naked eye especially during winter, with the snow covered Taurus mountain on the opposite shore only 40 miles away. Sourp Magar Monastery is a very different place now. Destroyed and abandoned, it greeted the pilgrims with its empty walls, barren floors and ceilings. The pilgrims explored every corner of what once was a very lively place while its abandoned and destroyed walls, evoked emotions and images of the past. The visitors found the church to be in a derelict state, with many inscriptions destroyed. The perpetrators are thought to be prospective developers who have set their sights on transforming the monastery into a casino.

Eyewitnesses reported that many buildings had no roofs and are in danger of collapsing. "It was all very upsetting to see," said Mahdessian.

Archbishop Varoujan Hergelian led those present in a prayer of grace, Hayr Mer in Armenian, while some had brought candles with them to

mark the holy day of the monastery's saint, a Coptic recluse who had lived in the caves below the present site of the monastery in the 12th century. The 9,000-acre estate of olive, citrus and carob trees leads down to the northern seashore, which lies within a military zone and near a Turkish Army camp in the Kyrenia mountain range. Community members were quick to suggest that any renovation, alteration or restoration by UNESCO, or any other international body, should be done with the approval of the owner of the Monastery, who is the Armenian Church of Cyprus.

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An international conference held on Saturday 26 in the city of Valence on European policies affecting Armenians in the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia. The event was held as part of a Europe-wide awareness raising campaign on EU policies concerning Armenians. It was held in conjunction with a European seminar for Young Professionals.

The conference was chaired and introduced by Nicolas Tavitian, Director of the *Inside Europe Resource Centre*. Emphasizing the importance of constructive engagement with the European institutions, he added that *"it is up to us [EU citizens of Armenian origin], and to our organizations to engage in a dialogue with European leaders. There is no shame in getting involved in European policy-making. It is up to us to educate our members in the European Parliament, our Commissioners and our Ministers and to formulate timely proposals"*.

The conference was part of a project implemented jointly by the magazine *les Nouvelles d'Arménie* (Paris), the *Inside Europe* information centre and the magazine *Ozer* and was organised jointly with AGBU in Valence. It was supported financially by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture and by the AGBU and was also supported by the city of Valence. Similar conferences have been held or are planned in London, Paris, the Hague, Sofia, Stockholm, Budapest and Prague. For more information: [contact@insideeurope.eu](mailto:contact@insideeurope.eu).

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On October 10, 2007 the US Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of the Representatives of the United States voted for House Resolution 106 asserting the recognition of the genocide of the Armenians. The resolution was adopted with a vote of 27 to 21.

This victory was obtained in spite of the high level of pressure exerted simultaneously by the American Executive and the Turkish State, and in particular through lobbies equipped with exorbitant financial means. The members of the Committee supported by a large movement of citizens did not take into account these pressures.

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Armenians from 29 countries were represented at the Second Convention of European Armenians held on October 15 and 16 in the halls of the European Parliament in Brussels. The participants were mainly leading members of the Armenian Diaspora of Europe and others with responsibilities in the political and associative domains interested in the Armenian Question, including Armenia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vartan Oskanian.

The film "Screamers", an exceptional documentary co-produced by the BBC, which analysed the workings of denials of genocides was screened

in the European Parliament after the first session, in the presence of the film's Emmy Award winning director, Carla Garapedian. The screening of "Screamers" was in honour of the memory of Hrant Dink, the Armenian journalist in Turkey, who in January 2007 was assassinated in Istanbul because he advocated for his country's recognition of the Armenian genocide.

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With their unique sound, energetic personalities and international appeal, Hashish Punk, hailing from Argentina, are trying to earn their place in the music industry. Performing in English, Spanish and Armenian, Juan Abajian, Levon Hassassian and Ernesto Vaneskeheian have been crunching out pop- and punk-rock inspired melodies since 2000. Their self-titled debut, which took them three years to release, has gained attention and attracted many fans on their MySpace music page, prompting the band to sell their albums on the Web site. Hashish Punk's appeal does not end at the Argentinean border. They mix their Argentinean upbringing with their Armenian roots and influences like Green Day and the Ramones. "My Hashish," in which they sing, "Yes eem Hayasdaneen, amen eench seeretzee/Yerp beedee veratarnam Mayr Hayrenik," translates to "I have loved everything about my Armenia. When will I return to the motherland?"

Hashish Punk's sound takes a lot of getting used to, though this is not necessarily their downfall. With the highly potent and infectious sound and their use of such instruments as the accordion on tracks like "Labbarah," this power trio's freshman effort will make you want to dance like no one is watching, even if you don't necessarily understand the lyrics.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF: ARMENIA

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In February Armenia's parliament passed a bill giving ethnic Armenians the right to hold dual citizenship, a measure which could almost quadruple the number of its nationals around the world. Wedged between Georgia, Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan, Armenia has a population of just 3.2 million and a Diaspora of 8 million spread across the globe, mainly in the United States, Russia and France. The law, passed in the final second reading on Monday, allows all émigrés to attain Armenian citizenship. Armenia's president, parliament deputies and constitutional court judges are not entitled to dual citizenship, according to the law. Armenians voted in favour of dual citizenship in a November 2005 referendum. Under the law, émigrés with dual citizenship can vote in national elections only if they obtain a local residence permit.

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Armenia held its 4th Parliamentary Elections on 12th May 2007, with a Turnout of almost 60%. Three pro-government parties won a strong majority in the 131seat National Assembly. In a joint statement, the International Election Observation mission, comprising 400 members representing the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, European Union and the Council of Europe, concluded that the elections demonstrated improvement from previous ones and were largely in accordance with international commitments. Although the preliminary report also mentioned "some issues remained unaddressed," Tone Tingsgaard, Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly assured that "none of the reported violations were serious enough to significantly affect the

election outcome." The positive assessment of the elections was further echoed by a series of governments and international organizations.

The ruling Republican Party of Armenia (RPA,) led by Prime Minister Serj Sargsyan, won almost 33.8% of the proportional vote, Prosperous Armenia, led by businessman Gagik Tsarukian, won 15.1%, followed by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) which gained 13.1 percent. All three parties are supporters of President Robert Kocharyan's policies. 90 of the 131 seats in the National Assembly are contested through the proportional (party List) system. The winning parties also won most of the remaining 41 seats contested in single-member constituencies. The RPA won the majority of all seats and could form a government on its own.

On 7th June, 2007, the fourth National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia began its first session. President Robert Kocharyan addressed the Parliament in a brief speech, and the Catholicos of All Armenians, Garegin II, who gave his blessings. The ceremonial part was followed by the election of parliament leadership. Opposition MPs from Orinats Yerkir and of the Heritage parties did not participate at the opening session. Chairman of the National Assembly Through a secret ballot (112 to 2) Tigran Torossyan was elected Speaker. Ishkhan Zakaryan from Barghavach Hayastan (Prosperous Armenia) party and Vahan Hovanissyan from Dashnaktsutyun party were elected Deputy Speakers.

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On May 13, 2007 Armenia's Hayko took the 8th place in Eurovision 2007. In all Hayko garnered 138 points with his song Any Time You Need. The highest 12 points Armenia got from Turkey and Georgia. Hayko got 10 points from France, Belgium, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Russia and Poland. 8 points came from Spain, Cyprus and Bulgaria. Greece gave 6 points; Belarus, Austria, Israel and Ukraine gave 5 points; Moldova gave 2 points.

*Be Line*, representative company of Microsoft in Armenia, and prime minister affiliated council on development of information technologies have developed Armenian language Microsoft Windows XP. Government language inspection service and 108 specialists supported the initiative. At the moment, Be Line is working on adaptation of Windows Vista and MS Office 2007, which the company plans to complete in 2008.

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Olympic-style torch relay unites survivors of all modern genocides to call for an end to darfur and all genocides. A special commemorative event took place at the Tsitsernakapert Genocide Memorial on 25 September in Yerevan, Armenia. The torch relay was organised by the Armenian Assembly of America in collaboration with "Olympic Dream for Darfur", as Armenia is the third stop on an international symbolic Olympic Torch Relay campaign that calls for an end to the genocide currently unfolding in Darfur.

Special guests in attendance consisted of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, Rwandan Genocide and Darfur Genocide as well as His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, and The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

For more details contact [info@aaainc.org](mailto:info@aaainc.org).

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## BOOK and CD REVIEWS

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## THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA: COHESION AND FRACTURE

By Denise Aghanian

0-7618-3683-7 / 978-0-7618- 3683-4

224 pages, P/Back List price: \$31.00; £20.99; €33.06

The Armenian Diaspora is a case study of the Armenian diaspora in Manchester, England. This study examines the complex social and political processes at play that maintain and shape Armenian identity. Professor Aghanian uses a comparative analysis in order to understand other Armenian communities throughout the world and other self-defined diaspora groups, locating similarities and differences between the various groups.

Professor Aghanian introduces the study by her definition of diaspora and an examination of classic and contemporary theories of ethnicity while she outlines how we construct our sense of identity in different settings. The tone of the study lends itself to a narration of the long, rich, and often traumatic history of the Armenian people: their adoption of Christianity; the rise of Armenian nationalism; the dispersion of the Armenians throughout the world; and their eventual independence. The outcome of the study is a close look at how Armenians successfully balance lives rooted in a particular territory while sharing very different cultural and social spaces. Their experience emphasizes their ability to combine resources and networks from multiple locations (transnationally) in order to maximize their freedom and independence from the confines of any nation. Ethnic consciousness is experienced in a variety of ways, nevertheless, wherever and however they are living they feel Armenian.

Denise Aghanian is a part time lecturer in history & politics at *Leeds Metropolitan University School of Cultural Studies*. She is the author of *An Ethnographic Case Study of the Armenian Diaspora in Manchester* (2005). Her research interests include diaspora politics, ethnicity, and transnationalism, as well as political philosophy. Copies sold at CAIA or via [WWW.UNIVPRESS.COM](http://WWW.UNIVPRESS.COM)

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## TURKEY: WRITERS, POLITICS AND FREE SPEECH In memoriam, Hrant Dink (1954-2007)

Edited by David Hayes - £7.50

ISBN: 978-1-4303-1570-4 Format: paperback, 132pp

The Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink (1954-2007) was co-founder and editor-in-chief of the bilingual newspaper *Agos*, and a key figure in democratic dialogue in Turkey and beyond. In face of pressure and prosecution, he was consistent and courageous in his efforts to speak the truth, defend justice and advance human rights. His assassination in Istanbul on 19 January 2007 is an irreparable loss.

Since 2001, openDemocracy has published widely on the issues raised by Hrant Dink's life and work: including Turkey's politics and possible European Union future, the free-speech trials of its writers, and Armenians in Turkey and the legacy of 1915.

*Turkey: Writers, Politics and Free Speech* is a special collection of openDemocracy articles on these themes, with three articles by Hrant himself. It includes reflections from both Turkish and Armenian analysts on Hrant's life and on the questions raised by his death and its aftermath. Dedicated to his memory, all proceeds from the sale of this

book go to Agos and the Hrant Dink estate. Contributors include: Murat Belge, Fatma Müge Göçek, Isabel Hilton, Nouritza Matossian, Elif Shafak, Hratch Tchilingirian, Anthony Barnett, and Peter Balakian.

The publication is available via an online print-on-demand publisher, and can be accessed from: [www.lulu.com/content/750786](http://www.lulu.com/content/750786) Or from the opendemocracy site: [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net)  
For further information contact 020 7608 2000

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### **FROM EMPIRE TO REPUBLIC - Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide**

By Taner Akam

Hardback: £55 Paperback: £18.99

ISBN: 1 84277 526 X - ISBN: 1 84277 527 8

Taner Akçam is one of the first Turkish academics to acknowledge and discuss openly the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman-Turkish government in 1915. This book discusses western political policies towards the region generally, and represents the first serious scholarly attempt to understand the Genocide from a perpetrator rather than victim perspective, and to contextualize those events within Turkey's political history. By refusing to acknowledge the fact of genocide, successive Turkish governments not only perpetuate massive historical injustice, but also pose a fundamental obstacle to Turkey's democratization today.

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### **MY ARMENIAN HERITAGE**

by Sooren Apkarian

139 pages, 6" x 9", perfect binding, B & W interior ink

American born Armenian, Sooren Apkarian, spent a working life of 38 years in a cold-rolled steel mill (Detroit Steel Corporation). He was employed as a machine Operator, volunteered and became local Trade Union president, and progressed to Management Consultant status when he retired in 1985 and set about writing his fascinating memoirs.

This delightful narrative includes a brief family genealogy in the introduction and highlights two, eye opening, visits to his 'homeland', Armenia, pre-independence from the Soviet Union. Personal, witty and humorous, this is an enjoyable 'travel' book with a difference. Available at \$5.63 to download and \$12.93 + post & packaging) via this link: <http://www.lulu.com/content/737066>

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### **BLOOD AND SOIL - A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur**

by Ben Kiernan

768 pages, 31 maps scattered, 38 figs. in galleries, Price £25.00

ISBN: 9780300100983 - ISBN-10: 0300100981

For thirty years Ben Kiernan has been deeply involved in the study of genocide and crimes against humanity. He has played a key role in unearthing confidential documentation of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. His writings have transformed our understanding not only of twentieth-century Cambodia but also of the historical phenomenon of genocide. This new book - the first global history of

genocide and extermination from ancient times - is among his most important achievements.

Kiernan examines outbreaks of mass violence from the classical era to the present, focusing on worldwide colonial exterminations and twentieth-century case studies including the Armenian genocide, the Nazi Holocaust, Stalin's mass murders, and the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides. He identifies connections, patterns, and features that in nearly every case gave early warning of the catastrophe to come: racism or religious prejudice, territorial expansionism, and cults of antiquity and agrarianism. The ideologies that have motivated perpetrators of mass killings in the past persist in our new century, says Kiernan. He urges that we heed the rich historical evidence with its telltale signs for predicting and preventing future genocides.

Ben Kiernan is the A. Whitney Griswold Professor of History, professor of international and area studies, and the founding director of the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University ([www.yale.edu/gsp](http://www.yale.edu/gsp)). His previous books include *How Pol Pot Came to Power: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Communism in Cambodia, 1930-1975* and *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*, published by Yale University Press, Tel: 020 7079 4900.

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### **GRATEFUL ANIMALS - a bilingual folktale**

by Sona Zeitlian, illustrated by Alik Arzoumanian.  
Published by Abril Publishing Co.

The story is based on the oral traditions of the villagers of Musa Ler (Musa Dagh), and was first recorded by Sona Zeitlian in Ainjar (Lebanon). Readers may remember "Armenians in Egypt", a scholarly work by the same author.

Written sources of Armenian folk traditions and tales, which reflect the anxieties, aspirations and social conditions of the people, are few and far between. As with most folk tales, there is a moral to this charming story, which is told in simple language that belies the intricacy of the plot. Not only can it be enjoyed for its pace and sense of surprise and anticipation, but the bilingual format also makes it a useful educational tool. Anyone who wishes to familiarize themselves with the Armenian language will find that its straightforward approach works very well, especially as it was first recorded in its original dialect, and not in streetwise, modern idiom. It is also important as a means of acquainting the general public, adults and children alike, with Armenian works that have been hitherto inaccessible. The illustrations are colourful, playful, and the artist's style is in tune with folklore, as well as being expressive of the characters of the poor woodcutter, the robbers and liars he encounters, and the animals.

For further information e-mail: [struere@aol.com](mailto:struere@aol.com)  
For more information about Sona Zeitlian's publications, visit [www.hszipub.com](http://www.hszipub.com) Also well worth a visit is Alik Arzoumanian's website: [www.alikart.com](http://www.alikart.com)

Sylvie Howse

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### **ADAMGIRK: The Adam Book of Arak'el of Siwnik**

By Prof. Michael Stone and Dr. Sergio LaPorta

*Eloquent translation of biblical epic brings to light medieval Armenian culture*

The brilliance of paradise, the wickedness of Satan, and the inner struggle of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, come alive in the first-ever English translation of the early fifteenth century epic "*Adamgirk: The Adam Book of Arak'el of Siwnik*" (Oxford University Press). Translated from its original Armenian by Hebrew University Professor Michael E. Stone, the work balances literary felicity with faithfulness to the original, uncovering medieval Armenian poetic tradition through its more than 6,000 gracefully translated lines.

The theme of Adam and Eve has fascinated Armenians for centuries. By the time Arak'el composed his treasure in 1401, the Armenians had nurtured an extensive apocryphal literature about the first couple. Yet, although there were Adam and Eve poems before Arak'el, none is as long, complex and intriguing as his work. Faced with the pressures of external events, with the erosion of the church and its faith, Arak'el's interweaving of theological tradition and text with lyrical language and vivid imagery produced a remarkable work. "Adam was a newborn flower. ... His body shone like a spark, for the light of the spirit inflamed him", writes Arak'el describing the beauty of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and his resplendent vision of Paradise.

Arak'el was an abbot of the famous University Monastery of Tatew when Armenia was suffering under foreign rule and the Kingdom of Cilicia had ended. His work responds to the needs of his time. With an introduction setting the work and its author in historical, religious and literary context, Professor Stone and Oxford University Press have put Armenian's little known but brilliant epic poetry on the map, producing a work comparable in scope and range to classics such as John Milton's "Paradise Lost".

Published by Hebrew University of Jerusalem and available through Oxford University Press. To obtain a copy in UK, Europe and other countries call +44 (0) 1536 741 727; email [bookorders.uk@oup.com](mailto:bookorders.uk@oup.com), or visit [www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780199204779](http://www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780199204779).

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## **YEREVAN CITY VIRTUAL GUIDE CDROM**

Yerevan City Virtual Guide (YCVG), is the first multilingual interactive CD-ROM of its kind, which will familiarize you with Yerevan's cultural centres and historical monuments, as well as give you helpful hints on lodging, dining, sightseeing, business and entertainment opportunities.

The information in the Yerevan City Virtual Guide is arranged in 12 categories: Official, Travel, Attractions, Hotels, Restaurants, Finance, Shopping, Services, Production, Emergency, Tours and Map.

YCVG integrates various means of presentation to enhance the user's experience, including narration, virtual tour animation, slide-shows and panoramic photos. Used in Armenia for the first time, panoramic photos are spherical dynamic photos enabling the user to view places of interest rotating 360o in both horizontal and vertical directions. Produced at the Sony DADC factory, Austria, YCVG has several advantages over similar products:

- The guide is presented in 5 languages: Armenian, Russian, English, French and German.
- YCVG runs automatically with no additional installation required and

features easy and intuitive navigation.

- It is compatible with both Macintosh and IBM PC and is protected against illegal duplication.
- YCVG gives you the opportunity of connecting directly to existing web-sites or sending e-mail via active links on the Guide.

Emphasizing the role of the Virtual Guide in the development of tourism in Armenia, Director of Impresario Productions, Artur Tsulikyan states that "the release of such a high quality multimedia product is at the same time the best proof of the great potential for the development of information technologies in our country".

Founded in 2002, Impresario Productions develops and implements creative commercial projects in the areas of multimedia and modern technologies and specializes in graphic and website design, corporate identity and development and advertising. For more information contact: *Impresario Productions LLC* Artur Tsulikyan/Suren Tadevosyan, 5 Nalbandian str., #28, Yerevan, Armenia E-mail: [impresario@impresario.am](mailto:impresario@impresario.am) - [www.impresario.am](http://www.impresario.am)

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### THE NEW TEARS OF ARAXES

Featuring a never-seen-before satellite image of a vandalized medieval cemetery at the Iranian-Azerbaijani border, "The New Tears of Araxes", a five-minute film, tells the tragic story of thousands of ancient Armenian headstones flattened to the ground by the Azerbaijani authorities in Djulfa (Jugha), Nakhichevan. On December 15 2005, eyewitnesses across the River Araxes videotaped Azeri soldiers destroying Armenian burial monuments - khachkars (cross stones) - some as old as 1,500 years. Azerbaijani officials denied the vandalism, but banned European Parliament members from visiting the site in March of 2006. Only a few outside news sources tried to publicize the tragedy. "The New Tears of Araxes" is written by Sarah Pickman, a University of Chicago student, who was the only American reporter to cover the tragedy when she interned for Archaeology Magazine. Producer and narrator Simon Maghakyian, who is among America's top 20 college students according to USA TODAY (April 24, 2006), hopes the film will break a year of ignorance and silence. When asked why others should care, Maghakyian quotes Martin Luther King Jr. as saying "Injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere".

Music by Djivan Gasparian (Gladiator, The Passion of the Christ, Munich, Syriana); Digital sound track production by Transtar Entertainment Group; Photographs by Research on Armenian Architecture, and Argam Ayyvazian; Footage of 2005 destruction obtained from Tabriz's Armenian Church, Iran; Satellite image by Digital Globe; Map by The Times, London. "The New Tears of Araxes" is available at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for free viewing.