

ARMENIAN VOICE

Summer
2008
Issue 53

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CAIA NEWS

CAIA PURCHASES NEW MINIBUS

On Friday 6th June 2008, at *Hayashen*, over 50 delighted Armenian senior citizens and carers welcomed the delivery of a new 15-seat vehicle purchased by the CAIA for the benefit of frail, elderly, and disabled Armenians. This specially-adapted vehicle will be used to provide lifts twice a week to *Hayashen* Senior Social / LunchClub and replaces one purchased back in 1990 which had become too costly to maintain and a liability.



The Club is not only a lifeline and safety net for the most vulnerable and isolated Armenian senior citizens, but also acts as a conduit for them to access CAIA's, council, health and others statutory and community services which they would otherwise not be able to use. Annually, over 150 senior citizens use the club by visiting it 3000 times, which enhances their quality of life by reducing their isolation,

bolstering their independence and allowing them access to services, as well as providing support and breaks for their relatives/carers. 30 of

them are provided with free lifts over 2000 times annually, from their home to Hayashen and back, mainly from the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow.

The celebrations started with CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian welcoming everyone and thanking the four charities who had contributed to the purchase of the new vehicle: *The St.Sarkis Charity Trust, The Percy Bilton Trust, The Clothworkers' Foundation, and The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation*. He also thanked members of the Armenian community for their enthusiastic support for this project, as well as *Acton Community Forum* which supported CAIA with its fundraising expertise.

Misak Ohanian also thanked *Help the Aged* who provided practical advice in choosing the right vehicle, helping with the necessary adaptations, legal paperwork, etc. Special guest Councillor Mrs Seema Kumar the Deputy Mayor of LB of Ealing, and Graham Laile from *Help the Aged*, also spoke to wish those who will benefit from the vehicle all the best.



After a short interlude for lunch and refreshments, senior citizens, members of CAIA's Management Committee led by chair Souren Grigorian, and other guests, including representatives from the *Armenian Embassy, the Armenian Church of GB, the Armenian Church and Community Council*, and local press, gathered in front of the new vehicle where Ft. Shnork said a short prayer to bless

the vehicle.

Finally Councillor Mrs Seema Kumar cut the traditional ribbon to the cheers of all those present.

CAIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



On Saturday 8th December 2007, despite the heavy rain, over 50 CAIA members attended Hayashen to take part in the CAIA AGM.

The meeting included the Board's report by the chair, Souren Grigorian, activities report by CEO Misak Ohanian, and presentation of 2006/7 audited account by Treasurer Souren Shahian. This was followed by the election of 3

directors through secret ballot. Current directors Isgouhi Aghabekian and Karine Alexanian were re-elected along with Garo Boyadjian who was also elected to serve on the board.

CAIA WELCOMES MR TIM COOK, FORMER CLERK OF THE CITY PAROCHIAL FOUNDATION, TO HAYASHEN

The CAIA was honoured to welcome Mr Tim Cook to Hayashen's Senior Citizens club on January 28th, 2008.

Mr Cook is former clerk to the Trustees of the City Parochial Foundation and one of the most knowledgeable and respected figures within London's voluntary sector. Over the past 20 years, the *City Parochial Foundation* has awarded almost £100,000 towards CAIA's various services and projects, including the purchase of the Hayashen Centre in 1993/4. In 1998, the *City Parochial Foundation*, which manages also the Trust for London, gave an award to CAIA for its "*committed services to the community in acknowledgement of its outstanding achievements*".

Mr Cook accompanied by his gracious wife Margaret who is now together enjoying their retirement by occasionally keeping in touch with the sector.

Welcoming Mr & Mrs Cook was CAIA Vice Treasurer Mrs Isgounhi Aghabekian and CAIA CEO, Misak Ohanian who introduced them to the Senior Citizens who regularly attend the Day centre to enjoy the company of their peers, celebrate important dates in the Armenian calendar and obtain much needed advice and practical support to manage their day-to-day problems.

Mr Cook briefly addressed those present by thanking them for the warm welcome and congratulate the CAIA for continuing to provide much needed and diverse services for the London Armenia community for so long.

Below is a short letter we received from Mr Cook following his visit to Hayashen dated 3rd February 2008.

*Dear Misak,
Margaret and I would like to thank you most warmly for your hospitality when we visited the Centre on Friday. Your gift of Armenian liqueur was most appreciated.
Your own efforts over so many years have been remarkable and I am pleased that the Armenian community has benefited so much from them. Wishing you all the very best.
Kind regards, Tim*

TRAINING COURSES AT CAIA



The 4-day 21-hour training course took place in *Hayashen* during November-December 2007 about Community interpreting jointly organised by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA).

Ten 10 members of the Armenian community completed the basic introductory course during which

they learned:

- the role of the community interpreter in assisting communities to access services
- awareness of the provision of public services locally

- basic terminology from public services
- opportunities for a career in community

Following the success of the above course, a further free 60-hour Community Interpreting course took place between 22 January 2008 - 1 April 2008 over 10 weeks jointly organised again by the *Workers' Educational Association (WEA)* and *Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA)*. The course was funded through the *LSC Pan London ESF Programme 2* and enabled 15 people from different ethnic backgrounds (including 2 CAIA volunteers) to gain an *Open College Network London Region Certificate (OCNLR)*.



A 2-day course on Food Safety was delivered 4 times between January -March 2008 at Hayashen benefiting over 30 people living in West London from various ethnic backgrounds (15 of them Armenians). The course combined food safety training with elements of Customer Service and Job Search Skills. At the end of the course students gained a *RSPH Level 2 Certificate in Food Hygiene*.

To encourage attendance, students were provided with free lunch during the training, childcare and their public transport travel expenses reimbursed.

This course was jointly organised by the *Amani Trainers* and *Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA)*.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS AT HAYASHEN



On Sunday 23 March 2008 over 100 members of London's Armenian community celebrated Easter in *Hayashen*. The celebrations included good food and music provided by popular singer Samuel.

Specials guests during the celebration included Ealing councilor Ranjeet Dheer and London Assembly Member Richard

Barnes who were both standing as candidates in the forthcoming London Assembly elections. The CAIA is grateful to everyone who attended and supported the celebration; in particular to all the volunteers who worked so hard to ensure the event was a success.



*Left: Richard Barnes, London Assembly member for Ealing & Hillingdon alongside CAIA chair Souren Grigorian and CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian.
Right: Cllr.R Dheer next to Richard Barnes.*

HISTORY, MEMORY & THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

On Saturday 5th April 2008 a special screening of the English version of Serge Avedikian's documentary film "*We have drunk the same water*" was shown at Hayashen followed by a discussion.

When film-maker Serge Avedikian was invited to Istanbul in 1987, he could not resist crossing the Sea of Marmara to go and seek the town of his ancestors, where his Armenian grandfather Avedis had lived. The day he spent there left him with haunting memories.

Nearly twenty years later, Serge Avedikian returns to Soloz and tries to break the deep-seated taboo between Armenians and Turks. His aim is to help people turn their minds to the future without forgetting their past.

*Copies of the DVD can be purchased from the CAIA at £16.
Please add £2 for Postage & packing.*

THE LONDON COUNCILS WILL NO LONGER FUND CAIA'S ADVISORY SERVICES

After 22 years the London Councils (formerly known as the London Boroughs Grant Scheme) will no longer fund CAIA's advisory services.

The CAIA was part of the only Minority Ethnic-led, pan-London grouping applying for funding from pot 38 to provide legal advice submitted by *Advice UK*, yet the *London Councils* (representing all 33 London Boroughs) concluded that the CAIA along with 5 other members of the partnership bid should not be commissioned for the next 4 years. Despite extensive lobbying by concerned CAIA members, service users and the Armenian community, which included a petition of 500, over 100 protest letters and emails such as the one below to Cllr Paul McCannah, chair of the Grants Committee and other local councillors, as well as a rejoinder (appeal) by the partnership, the *London Councils Grants* committee decided on 29th April 2008 not to fund the CAIA. Transitional funding will come to an end on 31st October. On the other hand the committee agreed to fund a much smaller bid submitted by the CAIA for its work with Armenians Elders in the next 4 years. The CAIA has now only a few months to find alternative funding in order to continue providing this essential advisory and advocacy service to help

the most vulnerable within our community to access their statutory rights.

In the meantime *London Voluntary Service Council* will be using CAIA's experience in its response to the governments *cohesion guidance consultation process* regarding the shift of funders from specialist to generic services because they (and us) believe that the CAIA was not commissioned because it targets a single ethnic group. According to the new funding climate, the funding of "*single groups*" (e.g. *Black, Asian & Minority ethnic organisations and other groups supporting specific equality communities*) should be the exception and not the rule!

Cllr Paul McCannah
Civic Centre,
Silver Street
Enfield EN1 3XY

London Councils Commissioning - Legal Advice Ref. No.38

Dear Cllr Paul McCannah

We are writing to express our concern about the prospect of the Centre for Armenian Information & Advice (CAIA) losing funding from the London Councils for its much needed and valued legal advisory services.

CAIA provides a unique service and is the only such specialist provision for London's 20,000 strong Armenian community who have arrived from various troubled parts of the world to establish a new life.

The CAIA was part of the only Minority Ethnic led, pan-London grouping applying for funding from pot 38 to provide legal advice submitted by Advice UK and if the grant officer's recommendation is enacted will result in the loss of services to many disadvantaged and vulnerable people such as the elderly, disabled, refugees, carers, unemployed, and young families living in poverty. They will be left without not only essential information and advisory services but a voice and practical advocacy support that they rely onto access their statutory rights as they are unable to use these due to various social, cultural and language barriers as well as lack of confidence in dealing with official bodies such as the Home Office, NHS, DWP, etc.

The CAIA is acknowledged as a unique gateway and conduit for this hard to reach community through its partnership work with various local agencies including GP's, Hospitals, council departments, DWP, Home Office, Job centres and many others.

We therefore appeal for your intervention and support at this crucial time in order to safeguard the well being of our community."

HAYASHEN YOUTH CLUB EVENTS

On 16th November 2007 the *Hayashen Armenian Youth club* was re-launched as a monthly event for children and young people up to the age of 19.

Activities include watching Armenian TV via newly installed satellite, computer games, pool table, table tennis, football table, board games,



piano, listening to DVD's. Freesnacks and soft drinks were provided throughout the time by 4 parents who acted as volunteers, largely in the kitchen providing snacks.



The club also enabled a group of 25 children and young people to see *The Lion King* in the West End kindly supported by *Ealing Council's Cash4Youth*.

The club provides opportunities for young people to engage and network with each other, share positive experience and express their views directly to CAIA. The next two dates of the club were on Friday 18th January and 15th February 2008 which had Dr. Souren Asaturyan leading seminars about the special educational software produced by his company, Hye Computing.



On Friday 14th March, Vicki Brennan, Deputy Manager *Ealing EBP* (top right hand photo) gave a presentation at Club about apprenticeship schemes operating in WestLondon. Apprenticeships offer young school leavers the opportunity to learn on the job whilst getting paid and are available in a wide range of industry areas including Administration, Childcare,

Construction and many more.

On Friday 14th March, a limited number of active members of the Youth Club attended a special Celebration at Ealing Town Hall for those groups who had participated in the *Cash 4 Youth* funded projects. Six young people from the *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club* took part in the celebration event through a special exhibition and stall promoting Armenia, Armenians and the club.

The *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club* meets monthly and if you wish to receive regular information and take part in future outings/events please let us have your name, address and email.

**ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP
XMAS PARTY**



For the 21st consecutive year the ACPG organised a Xmas party on 10th December 2007 for children and parents alike. Children sang, danced, jumped, ate snacks and home-made cakes with their parents for over 2 hours. Father Xmas also visited the party handing out presents to all the well-behaved children.

We are grateful to our Playworkers, parents and volunteers for their dedication throughout the year.

PARENTS & TODDLERS VISIT EXHIBITION



On Monday 25th February parents & Toddlers from Hayashen visited the International Dolls Exhibition organised by the *Ladies Creative Centre* (LCC) in Ealing. Nousha Pakpour, founding member of the LCC welcomed the children and Parents and kindly gave them a guided tour which they enjoyed thoroughly.

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.

Mrs A. Abrahamian
Mr & Mrs. Aghabekian
Mrs I. Aghabekian
Mrs M. Amirian
Mrs M. Andreassian
A. Assadourian
Mrs S. Avnessian
Mr V. Avnessian
Mr M. Avedian
Mr G. Bedrossian
Mrs M. Best
Mr H. Boudakian
Mrs O. Brose
Mr K. Chakmakjian
Mr R Chobanian
Mr T. Couligian
Mr A. Danielian
Mr N. Der Partogh
Mr K. Didonian
Miss Doudian
Mr. & Mrs. Galustian
Mrs K. Garabedian
Ms J. George

G. George
 Mr & Mrs C & H Gogbashian
 Mr & Mrs S. & V. Grigorian
 Mr A. V. Guzelian
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 J. Muggleston
 Mr. & Mrs. Nazloomian
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 Mr & Mrs S. V. Rule
 Mrs M. Shekerdemian
 Mrs P. Shahiean
 Mr & Mrs D. Stephan
 Mr V. P. Shahbazian
 Mrs C. Shahbazian
 Mr S. Shahbazian
 J. A. Shahbazian
 N. Simon
 Mr B. E. Smith
 Mr A. Tamzarian
 Mrs S. Tokatlian
 Dr S. Tamrazians
 Mrs A. Vartevanian
 Mrs. Venn
 Mrs K. Voskaian
 Mr C. J. Wickendon

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AT HAYASHEN

CAIA ORGANISES ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS XMAS PARTY FOR THE 20TH SUCCESSIVE YEAR



On Friday 7th December over 70 Armenian senior citizens enjoyed their annual Xmas feast in *Hayashen*.

Throughout the 4-hour event the Senior Citizens, including some of their carers from across London enjoyed the company of their peers, entertained themselves by playing the piano, reciting poetry and telling jokes.

His Grace Bishop Nathan Hovhannissian and Fr. Shnork Baghdassarian were guests to the event to gave their blessings and prayers.



At the end of an enjoyable afternoon, Senior Citizens took part in a raffle draw, where almost everyone won prizes. The CAIA is grateful to all the volunteers who helped in organising the event, including cooking, decorating the hall, donating and wrapping Xmas gifts and helping to serve the meal, refreshments and Middle eastern pastries.



ENGAGING ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS & THEIR CARERS

The CAIA continued its series of health related talks and workshops at *Hayashen* as part of its plan to bring together health and care professionals to engage with Armenian senior citizens and their carers.



On 15 November Hermit Kaur, Healthy Eating Adviser from Ealing Primary Care Trust (EPCT) spoke about "Healthy Cooking" to a keen audience. (See left photo)

On 23 November Sarah King, Continence Manager of Ealing PCT spoke about this not often discussed personal problem at the Armenian Senior Citizens Social Club.

Suky Johal (Ealing PCT) spoke about Language and Interpreting Services - How Patients can access NHS services on Friday 25 January 2008 at the Club.

On Friday 23rd May 2008 Gona Saed from the Dementia Advocacy Network of Westminster Advocacy Service spoke at Hayashen's Senior Citizens Club.

EXERCISE CLASSES

Thanks to a successful grant application to *Ealing PCT*, the CAIA has organised chairobic exercise classes at Hayashen's Senior Citizens Club with tutor Anna Cheeta. The first exercise class took place on Monday 16th May 2008 will continue once a month. The class is open to anyone



over the age of 55. For all dates please contact CAIA during office hours.

Senior Citizens Exercise classes

Following dates on Mondays from 1:30 -2:00 p.m.

Dates for 2008: 7th July, 18th August,
8th & 22nd Sept, 6th & 27th October,
10th & 24th November, 8th

December

Dates for 2009: 12th January,
2nd & 23rd February, 16th & 30th March

Day Trip to Brighton

Wednesday 23rd July 2008

Coach leaves Hayashen at 9.15 a.m.

Members £10, Non-members £12 each

For tickets please contact CAIA.

ARMENIAN HEALTH ADVOCACY & OUTREACH SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The CAIA seeks to enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged members of the Armenian community in London, specifically those in poverty and isolation. The CAIA supports their diverse need through the provision of welfare, education and cultural services at a welcoming centre for all Armenians. The following text is also available in Armenian.

The CAIA provides free, confidential and independent information and advice. All services users/clients are advised to respect these aims. The CAIA's Health Advocacy & Outreach Officer, Hrachik Sarian, can help you in the following ways:

1. HOME VISITS

Make home/hospital visits to discuss your health and care needs and advise. Especially if you are too sick or frail to travel yourself or are busy looking after someone. You are welcome to telephone and request such a visit any time.

2. ADVICE SURGERIES

Obtain health and care advice in Hayashen. This can be provided by either coming to see the Health Officer on Friday afternoons between 1.30 - 2.30 p.m. or by making an appointment in advance to avoid disappointment or delays. PLEASE inform us of any cancellation or delay.

3. HELP WITH ACCESS

Offer support to improve access to statutory health and care provisions from the NHS and local authorities, including:

- Link up with your GP, dentist, optician, district nurse, clinic, chiropodist, hospitals, social workers and any other health/care professional, so that problems are identified early and addressed.
- Help registering or change of GP.
- Arranging interpretations for your GP/hospital or other appointments.

- Deal with problems of transport for hospital or other appointments.
- Help register as disabled with social services, make referrals to other community groups for support.

4. **ADVOCACY**

- Contact health professionals about any specific health needs.
- Make complaints about health/care services on a confidential basis. This includes helping individuals write letters, making telephone calls and speaking on your behalf.

5. **HEALTH PROMOTION**

Arrange for you to attend and participate in health promotional workshops/events in Hayashen to improve your knowledge of looking after yourself and help you age healthily.

6. **OTHER PROCEDURES**

In order to provide the above services efficiently for your benefit we recommend you observe the following rules and regulations. Please read this carefully and co-operate with us to carry it out.

- Clients must produce any relevant information / documentation / records concerned with their enquiry / personal circumstances.
- Clients are responsible to notify the Health Advocacy & Outreach Officer of any changes in circumstance; change of address/telephone, your GP or particular illness, etc.
- The Health Advocacy & Outreach Officer will on the first instance diagnose your needs and only after that recommend a course of action, which she will undertake only after your approval.
In the event that you instruct her to act on your behalf she will only do so in consultation with you to avoid any misunderstanding. If you do not co-operate with the Health Advocacy & Outreach Officer honestly and diligently, we reserve the right to refuse any further assistance. Lack of cooperation includes but is not limited to, breaking our rules of confidentiality, use of abusive language, endangering or threatening the safety of CAIA staff.
- Clients who require specific facilities such as interpretation / transport / home visit should notify the office at least 48 hours in advance.

7. **OTHER SUPPORT**

Refer your other needs such as housing, welfare, and immigration to CAIA's advisory services.

8. **COMPLAINTS**

Complaints regarding this or any other CAIA service can be made in the following way:

• **Stage 1:**

If you have any urgent concerns or complaint, please write to the Chief Executive Officer outlining all the basic facts of the problem together with dates, names if applicable and other details. We will acknowledge your letter within 10 working days, following which we will conduct a detailed investigation of your complaint. If you are unable to put the complaint in writing, the CEO can help you write down the details of the complaint.

Stage 2 will only be considered after you have used and exhausted the procedures involved in Stage 1:

Stage 2:

The CAIA hopes that all complaints will be resolved at Stage 1. However, if you are not satisfied with the way in which the problem is dealt with, please write to the Chairman of the CAIA who will arrange for the matter to be investigated by the Management Committee, in order to resolve the problem.

Please outline the following in your letter:-

- A brief summary of your complaint.
- A telephone number and address where you can be contacted.

We will attempt to respond to your complaint within 10 working days. If a detailed response cannot be given, an acknowledgement will be sent indicating when a full reply can be expected from us.

The Chief Executive Officer
The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice
105A Mill Hill Road, Acton
LONDON W3 8JF
Tel: 020 8992 4621
E-mail: info@caia.org.uk

CAIA TAKES PART IN A CONFERENCE

CAIA TAKES PART IN A CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTING THE SUFFERING OF "INVISIBLE" OLDER REFUGEES

Older refugees are an invisible group, suffering from a combination of discrimination and isolation, according to charities Age Concern, the Refugee Council and many others such as the CAIA. The warning came on Wednesday 9 January 2008 at a groundbreaking conference held in City Hall to highlight and explore the barriers facing the plight of older refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

Those taking part in the conference expressed their concern that a lack of awareness about the needs of older refugees is leading to many being failed by local services and organisations.

Many older refugees have a wealth of experience and skills which, given the opportunity, they are keen to put to good use in the UK - through volunteering roles, participating in education and training, and taking up employment opportunities. However, language barriers and widespread discrimination mean that many older refugees find it extremely difficult to access information, services and claim essential support, setting them on a path to loneliness and isolation instead of integration and inclusion within their local communities and wider society.

Below is the speech by Misak Ohanian, CAIA's CEO, who was one of the invited speakers at the conference.

Armenians are a people proud of their ancient past and concerned about their collective future. *"Ours is also a story of moving, rebuilding, moving again"*.



Armenians are one of Britain's oldest refugee communities. They have sought asylum in Britain since 1915, when the Ottoman government wiped out half the Armenian race in what is regarded as the first genocide of the 20th Century.

Today, Armenian people are still fleeing from persecution in Turkey, the former Soviet Union and other troubled parts of the Middle East such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Jerusalem. For many it is also the 3rd and 4th time attempt in their lifetime at

making a permanent home.

The problems of newly arrived refugees are still the same: arriving alone, homeless and penniless, they are isolated and so have little or no opportunity to prepare for their new lives. They have often suffered the loss of family and friends and face an uncertain future in a foreign land, with an unfamiliar language. All Armenians living outside Armenia and considering themselves Armenian, (irrespective of their present national status or years of residence in a particular country) share the common heritage of being displaced or in exile. This is because Armenian history is one of endless persecution, massacres, invasions, and emigration and as such they carry with them their family suffering, and the personal insecurities of being foreigners with the problems of adjusting to different societies. Present-day Armenian asylum seekers fleeing from the former Soviet Union or from the Middle East face a variety of complex problems including reception, settlement and integration in Britain. Specifically, they often do not have the information or the language skills to access basic statutory services. Armenians live and work in the same economic, political, cultural and social climate as other refugee and small ethnic minority communities in Britain. This means that our community is not immune to the various challenges, insecurities and problems facing these communities such as social exclusion, struggles for equal access to public services, economic integration – without loss of cultural/ national identity. However, one specific problem Armenians face in comparison with other minority ethnic communities is that they are 'invisible'. This is because Armenians as an ethnic group are not identified under OPCS census information because they arrive from different countries, such as the former Soviet Union or the Middle East (similar to Kurds or Roma people). Therefore local authorities, hospitals and GPs often record their nationalities as either British (for those taking British nationality) or from their country of birth. Consequently, their specific social and cultural needs are not generally recognized or addressed by the statutory or voluntary sector. This can intensify their isolation, anxiety or mental anguish, lead to deteriorations in health, a lack of self-esteem and confidence and, in the case of one Armenian refugee, suicide.

A survey of the needs of the Armenian community in London conducted by the CAIA in 1988 revealed

- linguistic and cultural diversity,
- diversity regarding the countries they had fled from, in their levels of education, living conditions, health, class and economic position, experience of discrimination and in their attitudes, levels of integration and participation in the social/economic or cultural life of Britain.
- The majority did not access local authority or other statutory services and they had varying expectations from them as well from the Armenian community, church and cultural societies.

It confirmed that Armenians live predominantly in the outer West London Boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow, Harrow and Brent. Our advisory records in the past 20 years reveal that new Armenian refugees arrived in London, most notably after the break up of the Soviet Union, and because of the continuous tensions in the Middle East since the 2nd World War.

Subsequent data and researches reveal the weakening of traditional forms of social relations and structures as a result of the impact of the assimilation process: for example, breakdown of the extended family, inter-generational tensions, the rise in mixed marriages, the inability of the Armenian church and other traditional organizations to operate as before in the Middle East or their country of origin, and the personal/ cultural tension of accommodating dual-identities.

The Armenian community is not helped by the continued denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish state and NATO allies such as USA and Britain. The most recent example of this denial is the exclusion of Armenians from the National Holocaust Remembrance Day events marked each January.

Hitler himself said the following just before he gave orders to the kill Poles and Jews in Eastern Europe, *"Who after all today remembers the Armenians?"*

The past and the present are intertwined for us.

Armenians are a scattered population, which can mean loss of contact with the wider family, and friends who have settled in different countries. Yet it is the older people who keep the identity of their national traditions, homeland and culture identity alive. Therefore there is great respect with regard their role and status in the family. But this is often undermined as I said earlier due to various social/economic and cultural pressures within British society which has only recently started to recognise the importance of the older generation as the glue which binds the family together in the face of the dysfunctional family, anti social behaviour, racism and bullying within society.

However, while most Armenia Senior Citizens are fluent in Armenian and the language of the countries where they come from they are often unable to speak or articulate clearly as well in the English language, have little or no knowledge of their rights & statutory entitlements or how to access information, advice and appropriate services. Just as importantly, given the history of persecution Armenians have experienced over the years, they have little confidence in others to defend, advocate or negotiate on their behalf. Neither are they forthcoming in expressing an opinion nor make the simplest complaint. They simply are not in a mental state to challenge the inequalities of the poor or lack of services they have to bear with and often accept their fate and suffer in silence.

The Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA) was established in 1986 to reverse this unacceptable situation and today is their principal focus of support for almost 20,000 Armenians scattered across London and nearby.

The CAIA seeks to enhance the quality of life for disadvantaged members of the Armenian community, specifically those in poverty and isolation such as elderly, Carers and disabled refugees, many of who are often women caring for their elderly parent, sibling or husband.

The impetus of its founding CAIA came from our deep understanding of the Armenian people's long history of persecution and struggle to survive against all odds and that the time had come to resist and not to accept our destiny devised by others, but to grasp the opportunity that Britain's liberal society offered us as refugees and new citizens.

Since its establishment over 20 years ago, the CAIA has tried to provide holistic services to different age groups and the most vulnerable strata within the Armenian community which includes information, advocacy and advice, a children's playgroup, a social/lunch club for senior citizens, free door to door lifts to those we can collect in our mini-bus, training, reference materials, translations, various publication initiatives such as researches, community directories and a free, bi-lingual newsletter which reaches 3,000 Armenian homes twice a year.

Our activities take place in our Hayashen Community Centre, which we purchased in 1994 thanks to the enthusiastic support of the Armenian community and major donations from various Trusts. CAIA has a subscription-paying membership of over 350 members, which elects a seven-member Management Committee to administer its affairs at its AGM. The organisation presently employs 2 full-time and several sessional staff, and relies on many volunteers who all contribute towards the various services.

The CAIA meets the needs of an extremely isolated group whose language is never catered for by the statutory authorities. We undertake preventative work helping older people overcome problems at an early stage by working closely with local statutory agencies such as Social Services, GP's and hospital to ensure that Armenian Senior Citizens

extend not only their independent life but improving the quality of their lives. Our experience however of working with these agencies often only exposes their inadequacies and lack of culturally appropriate provision for our community.

In contrast we have found that those who use our day centre and other services grow in confidence and feel more able to take up opportunities - like when we organised English classes specifically for older people, our inter-generational Cookery classes and to make use of our newly established Library.

Offering twice weekly lunches, celebrating important dates in the Armenian calendar go a long way to reduce their isolation. Our centre is also used it for funeral gatherings as we are close to the cemetery in Acton where there is an Armenian corner. The organisation helps with funeral arrangements and provides practical and emotional support to the bereaved. The gatherings are an occasion for families to get together and are not always gloomy affairs. Older people who are widowed or widowers have warm feelings for the centre and enjoy making a return visit to Hayashen which sometimes coincides with a visit to the grave side with others from the day centre. Being able to meet together and having one place to celebrate a past life are important parts of the structures in life.

Aside from the services CAIA offers, we also act as a gateway to other services by organised surgeries in our premises with DWP staff, local councillors and other professionals to come and meet the community to help access services.

CAIA is well placed to offer a more comprehensive service to Armenian Senior Citizens because we can increase their access to our own internal advice services and thus to external services, which will assist their independent living

There is a need to develop specific and culturally appropriate services linked to the wider community, catering to an ageing minority ethnic older people, which is increasing annually.

This is one way of promoting/fostering 'integration' for older refugees

Another way is to encourage access/exchange and build relationships with other communities and service providers as there is potential for more creative partnerships with mainstream voluntary and statutory agencies.

The Older Refugees Programme is one such positive example, which is highlighting and drawing attention to the issues for older refugees AND we thank you for giving others and us a voice and a platform to do so.

My Key messages to conference delegates, policy-makers and service providers are:

- You can learn a great deal about the contributions of older refugees & asylum-seekers within their

communities, so please consult them when making decisions about their needs and involve them so that have a say in planning of service as too often they are not.

- Acknowledge and support the valuable work of RCO's and voluntary/community sector organisations, which provide critical support and services for older refugees and asylum-seekers in Britain; do this by funding them properly, some are also best placed to be commissioned.
- Encourage and support partnership working/links between RCO's and mainstreamvoluntary and statutory agencies, so that each learns from the expertise ofthe other and to ensure better engagement with and involvement of olderrefugees in developing appropriate services and policy responses.

Thank You
Misak Ohanian
CEO-CAIA

COMMUNITY NEWS

ARMENIAN MEMORIAL STONE VANDALISED



The Armenian community throughout the UK was shocked and traumatised after a monument to commemorate the 1915 genocide was vandalised and desecrated in the early hours of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January 2008.

The monument, which is situated at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff and was erected only in 2007, had its ornate Armenian cross smashed by a hammer, which was found at the scene. Eilian Williams of Wales Armenia Solidarity condemned the attack, which happened just hours before a memorial service in remembrance of the 1.5 million Armenians killed in the genocide of 1915.



Despite this, Armenians and Welsh gathered to pray for victims of all genocides on the United Kingdom's Holocaust Memorial Day and to remember the first anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the journalist killed

for raising the issue of the Armenian Genocide in the Turkish press.

Eminent Welshman Robin Gwyndaf prayed in Welsh and English, Assembly Member Jenny Randerson called on the UK government to recognise the Armenian Genocide and Martin Shipton, representing the National Union of Journalists and chief reporter for the "Western Mail", gave the tribute to Hrant Dink. Solemn prayers for all genocide victims and speeches were disrupted by continual taunting by protestors using a megaphone.

Copies of the book "Remember" were presented to the guest speakers representing the theme of the occasion. One of the Welsh Armenians said *"This is our holiest shrine. Our grandparents who perished in the Genocide do not have marked graves. This is where we remember them"*.

It is ironic that the main Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Liverpool again failed to remember the Armenian victims of the first genocide in the 20th century. The decision runs against the core purpose of this solemn day, and shows that the lessons from the last century have yet to be fully grasped by even the organisers of HMD. Eilian Williams of Wales Armenia Solidarity called on *"Armenians and other sympathisers throughout the world to send messages of support to Wales Armenia Solidarity (eilian@nant.wanadoo.co.uk) to be forwarded to the Prime Minister of the National Assembly of Wales. We also challenge the UK government and the Turkish Embassy to condemn this attack on a peaceful ethnic and religious minority"*. He further said: *"We shall repair the cross again and again, no matter how often it is desecrated. We also challenge the UK government and the Turkish Embassy to condemn this racist attack."*

ARMENIAN MOTHERS DAY CELEBRATED

As Armenia celebrated Motherhood and Beauty Day, a public holiday with ladies receiving congratulations and good wishes, the Armenian Embassy in London held a reception in honour of the female representatives of London Armenian organisations hosted by Mrs Hasmik Gabrielyan, the Ambassador's spouse on the 7th April 2008 in the *Armenian House*, Kensington.

The Ambassador joined the party for official welcome and shared the friendly and relaxed atmosphere which included food and drinks which the guests enjoyed along with the traditional Armenian chit-chat. At the end of the evening, every guest was given a rose in appreciation of their work and the day.

NEW ARMENIAN EMBASSY WEBSITE

A new and comprehensive website of the Armenian Embassy in London has been established at www.armenianembassy.org.uk. The website is a welcome addition to several helpful websites already promoting the vibrant life of UK's Armenian community. This new web-site aims at keeping everyone abreast of main events in Armenia and the work of Embassy. The website includes the Embassy's news releases and bulletins since 2003 as well as a photo gallery of Embassy events and related events to which it has contributed one way or other.

The site also boasts an extensive photo gallery of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, depicting various aspects of the country's life and a rich list of links to other websites.

BISHOP HOVHANNISIAN ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

On 21st November 2007, Bishop Nathan Hovhannisian spoke to attending MP's at the Parliamentary Breakfast after Holy Communion.

This is a once-monthly event whereby Canon Robert Wright, 78th Speaker's Chaplain, invites religious dignitaries from different Churches to partake in the Parliamentary Service and later address the Members of Parliament. The talk was followed by a Q&A session that dealt with the current realities of the Armenian Church, issues relating to the Armenian Genocide and Karabagh.

The full text of Bishop Nathan Hovhannisian speech can be read on the ACCC website at www.accc.org.uk

PLAY, "BEAST ON THE MOON"

BEAST ON THE MOON, Richard Kalinoski's play dealing with those living with the legacy of genocide, was performed in Nottingham in November 2007. It's a little play, but one with a big heart, as it tells an unexpected love story. Set in Wisconsin in 1921, it begins with the arranged marriage of 15-year-old Seta (brilliantly acted by Karin Bedrossian) to young Armenian Aram. Both have lost entire families in the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Ottoman government against the Armenians between 1915 and 1917 in which 1.5 million Armenians were killed. But the question raised by Kalinoski's play is whether the pair can overcome the past to create a future together.

To coincide with this production, the world premier of the English language version of Serge Avedikian's documentary film *"We have drunk the same water"* was shown to over 70 people at Nottingham University thanks to the efforts of Armenian born Haniel Riviere-Allen, Manager of the History School, who has also formed an Armenian dance group called Kilikia. For more information contact by email haniel.riviere-allen@nottingham.ac.uk

FILM: "THE LARK FARM"

Returning to the big screen after a lengthy absence, the Taviani brothers have crafted a deeply felt adaptation of the Antonia Arslan novel on the Armenian genocide of 1915. THE LARK FARM (15) was shown at Riverside Studio which includes an all-star cast who tease out the human emotions of sweeping historical events that remain intensely controversial more than ninety years later.

The story begins in the charming country estate of Armineh (Arsinee Khanjian) and Aram Avakian (Tcheky Karyo) as they ignore the gathering clouds of conflict and prepare for the arrival of Aram's brother from Venice. Then, a Turkish military detachment arrives, slaughters every male member of the family and rounds up the women for a long march into the Syrian desert. During the march, spirited beauty Nunik (Paz Vega) falls in love with a dashing Turkish officer, but even friends in high places seem unlikely to save her and the other women from certain death. Beautifully crafted, *The Lark Farm* is a timely, thought-provoking examination of a holocaust that history has chosen to forget.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF HRANT DINK

On January 19, 2007, Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of the bilingual Armenian and Turkish weekly *Agos*, was assassinated by a young ultranationalist in front of his office in Istanbul. Hrant Dink was an Armenian journalist who lived in Turkey. He struggled for the

recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey, and for freedom of expression in his country. This commitment against the State denial brought upon him the hostility of the Turkish authorities, a conviction in virtue of the Turkish Penal Code 301 article, which protects "Turkishness" and finally a condemnation to death from ultranationalist groups.

Two major events marked the anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink in London.

On Saturday 19th January 2008 a diverse crowd comprising of Armenians, Kurds, Turks and intellectuals of other nationalities marked the first anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink at the *Monument to the Innocents* in front of Westminster Abbey, London. Prayers were said by Canon Segovsky of Westminster Abbey. The author Nouritza Matossian, a friend of Hrant paid her own personal tribute. The author Des Fernandes spoke about Hrant's clear position on the Genocide. Kasim Agpak said that Hrant's death was "*the outcome of a long planned implementation of constitutional racism and anti-democratic articles and attitudes*".

Messages of support were read from the singer Diamanda Galas, Swedish MP Esabelle Reshdouni, Gurgin Bakircioglu (*Vice Chair of The Kurdish Student and Academic Association of Sweden and editor of Beyan.net*). A portion of Hrant's work was read by Nouritza Matossian. Professor Khatchatur Pilikian, as his tribute, sang "*God the Free (song of freedom)*" by Mikael Nalbandian and two white doves of peace were released by Khatchig Vartanian, Editor of the UK Armenian magazine "*Voice of Nor Serount*".

The numerous Kurds, Armenians and Turks present agreed to enter in dialogue and consecrate their lives to study and learn from Hrant's many articles. The event was organised by *Armenia Solidarity, Nor Serount Cultural Association, Armenian Genocide Trust and Seyfo Centre*.

On 28 February 2008 *Amnesty International UK (AI)*, in association with *English PEN, the Armenian Institute and Index on Censorship* organised a special event entitled "*Sincerity, My Only Weapon: A tribute to Hrant*".

The event saw the premier screening of a 50-minute documentary by Nouritza Matossian of in-depth interviews with Hrant Dink. This was followed by a panel discussion with AI Turkey Researcher Andrew Gardner, writer and Broadcasters Nouritza Matossian and Ayse Onal.

GUARDIAN WEEKEND MAGAZINE ARTICLE

The CAIA has assisted a researcher, Beth Serota, and photographer / writer Caroline Irby who have been commissioned by the Guardian Weekend magazine to photograph and interview a child from every country in the world living in the UK. There are 193 countries (according to the UN) so they have had to photograph 193 children.

The CAIA helped them to get in touch with an Armenian child now living in the UK who was born in Armenia to Armenian parents. In May 2008 Beth visited the Hovanissyan family in Ealing, took several photographs and talked with the children about the differences between living in Armenia and the UK, what they miss, what their hopes are for the future, etc.

The finished work will be published in The Guardian magazine later this year. The Guardian also aims to publish a book of this work and Channel 4 will be showing the pictures and extracts from the interviews in a series of mini documentaries, as part of their *Three Minute Wonder* series. For more information please visit www.carolineirby.com.

EXHIBITION OF ARMENIAN LETTERING

An exhibition of Armenian lettering will be opened in the *Wren Library of Lincoln Cathedral* from Monday 7th to Saturday 12th of July, 2008. This will showcase the design of letters for the Armenian alphabet: hand lettering, book design and typeface design. Opening event will take place on 5th of July at 4pm with tickets only. All the other days the Exhibition will be opened 11am-3pm. Admission is free (*normal Cathedral entry applies*).

Further details of the Exhibition "*Armenian Type Now*" can be obtained by email: cpuzzov@lincoln.ac.uk or telephone 01522 895213.

AYA FOOTBALL CLUB: A GRAND YEAR



Long time AYA player and Manager Emilios Nicolaou receiving a volunteering award in February 2008 from Cllr. Pagan, Mayor of LB of Ealing on the suggestion of CAIA for his many years of services to the community (PHOTO)

AYA's first team boys topped off a great 2006/7 season by winning promotion to the 2nd Division of the *Chiswick and district Sunday Football League*, narrowly missing out on the Champion's Title, just on goal difference. They played some good football and showed tremendous team spirit, throughout the season, scoring 70 goals against 27. They finished with 42 points, thoroughly deserving their runner-up medals.

The reserves completed their first year, a tough but fruitful campaign, in the *West Fulham Sunday Football League*, and with the addition of a few more Armenian players, hope for even better results in the 2007/8 season.

In 2008, the AYA football club marks 44 years in the service of the Armenian Youth! As part of this celebration, a major commemorative visit took place to Cyprus in May 2008 where games were played with *AYMA, the Armenian Young Men's Association*, in Nicosia. A fitting way to pay homage to the founder members of the club, who all originated from Cyprus, back in 1964.

In Nicosia the AYA played two matches; they lost to *Bank of Cyprus*, the champions and cup holders of the island's amateur league, and drew with A.Y.M.A. There was much to admire in both performances: D poise and ability on the ball, good passing, high work-rate, and a great team spirit that truly deserved better results.

A.Y.M.A treated the AYA with a fabulous welcome barbecue and reception at their clubhouse on the night of our arrival, attended by more than 100 people including a number of former AYA players. The

A.Y.M.A committee also hosted a farewell night out at a popular Cypriot taverna on their last day, where everyone danced merrily to the bouzouki music.

The AYA group were also guests of honour at a party thrown by Vartkes Mahdessian, a former player and now the elected representative of the Armenian community in the Cyprus Parliament, at his home.

After the May football tour to Cyprus, AYA FC won all four remaining matches beating even their closest rivals and eventual champions *Barnes Eagles Seniors*, who defeated us in the *Feathers Cup Final* in April, to secure 2nd place and promotion. It was a truly magnificent effort and the team owes a lot to the camaraderie and self-confidence developed during its fantastic trip to Cyprus.

ALL YOUNG ARMENIAN FOOTBALL PLAYERS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN OUR TEAMS!

Please call Nicholas (1st Team Manager) Tel: 0208 810 7324 Mobile: 07984 641582 or Mark (2nd Team Manager) Tel: 0208896 1288, Mobile: 07971 455784

NEWS IN BRIEF: DIASPORA & ARMENIA

Prof. Donald Bloxham, Professor of Modern History at the *University of Edinburgh* and currently the J. B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Senior Scholar-in-Residence at the *U.S. Holocaust Museum* in Washington, D.C., was awarded the *Raphael Lemkin Award* by the *Institute for the Study of Genocide* on November 9, 2007 in New York City in recognition of Bloxham's scholarly contribution to the field of genocide studies. Bloxham is the youngest full professor of history in the UK and the winner of several prizes and honours for his work in addition to the Lemkin Award. He is also the author of *Genocide on Trial: War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory*, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches* (with Tony Kushner), and the forthcoming *Genocide, the World Wars, and the Unweaving of Europe*.

On 25th November 2007, the 50th birthday of national hero Monte Melkonian was marked throughout Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) with various solemn events, concerts and TV documentaries about his life and struggle. Monte was born in California but in his teens became aware of the injustices committed against the Armenian people. He spend the rest of his life travelling, and defending the local and national rights of various Armenian communities in the Middle East. He was imprisoned for several years in France in the 1980s due to his involvement with the *Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia* (ASALA). He finally settled in Armenia and became a commander "Avo" in the Artsakh Defence Force fighting off Azeri attacks on Armenian villages in the Artsakh's war of liberation. He was martyred in 1993 defending the Armenian people he loved so much.

The reopening of the *Calouste Gulbenkian Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem* took place on November 3, 2007, after an extensive renovation and refurbishment funded by the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon* and the *Saint Sarkis Charity Trust* of London. The Library was the vision of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian (1921-1929), and the cornerstone was laid in 1929, but the late Patriarch did

not live to see his dream realised, and it was his successor, Patriarch Torkom I Koushagian who presided at the Library's opening in 1932. The 2007 reopening ceremony was attended by the contemporary members of the Gulbenkian dynasty, key figures in the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* and the *Saint Sarkis Charity Trust*. During their weeklong visit, they were given the opportunity to view firsthand the many benevolent projects that their illustrious forebear had funded in and around the Armenian Patriarchate and Jerusalem. The presence of Paul Gulbenkian, the benefactor's grandson and President of the *Saint Sarkis Charity Trust*, and Michael Essayan, his great grandson and a Trustee of the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*, together with their spouses, lent a special poignancy to the culmination of the renovation efforts of this unique repository of over 100,000 volumes in the Holy Land. Following the opening program, a reception was held in the Patriarchate's Main Hall.

In Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay on November 22, 2007, the Parliament of South America (*known as MERCOSUR*) passed a resolution recognising the Armenian Genocide. The unanimous decision of the Human Rights Committee of the parliament passed the following resolution that states "*The Parliament of MERCOSUR condemns the genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey from 1915-1923 which took the lives of one-and-a-half million people. The Parliament expresses its support to the righteous cause of the Armenian people. The Parliament also appeals to governments and parliaments, which have not recognised and condemned the Armenian genocide, to adopt similar decisions.*" MERCOSUR member states Argentina and Uruguay have already recognised the Armenian Genocide. Chile followed suit in 2007. MERCOSUR, established in 1986, is one of the largest intergovernmental organisations in South America. The associated members of MERCOSUR are Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

In Nicosia on 6 March 2008, Marios Garoyian was elected President of The Cyprus House of Representatives. His political career rocketed in the last three years. In 2006 he was elected Member of Parliament and then President of DIKO and has now been voted to the second highest political position of the country thus becoming the highest-ranking Armenian political figure outside Armenia.

Serge Sarkisian was sworn on 9th April 2008 as Armenia's third president since the Soviet collapse, nearly two months after an election that opposition groups criticised as rigged.

"May God give me strength not to disappoint my supporters, to overcome all difficulties and to find a recipe for resolving the problems of those who are disappointed and have lost hope, those who need hope, faith and optimism" he said in a live televised inaugural address before parliament.

Western observers issued an overall positive assessment of the February 19 election, but noted serious flaws, especially during the vote count.

Supporters of Sarkisian's election challenger, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, and other opposition activists staged mass protests in the

capital, Yerevan, after the vote, alleging fraud. Shortly after his inauguration, Sarkisian signed a decree appointing his namesake, Central Bank chief Tigran Sarkisian, as the country's new Prime Minister.

Georges der Parthogh, veteran journalist, international news photographer and a leading member of the Armenian community of Cyprus, died in Nicosia on 2nd June 2008. He was 84.

Born in Harar, Ethiopia on December 18, 1923, Georges came to Cyprus with his family in 1935. He attended the English School in Nicosia after which he served with the Air Ministry. He later joined the *Times of Cyprus* where he worked from 1955 to 1959 and where he met Lana Matoff, whom he married in 1960.

Georges' career as an international correspondent saw him working for *Reuters* (1959-1963) and *United Press International* (1963-1979) covering wars and civil commotion in Cyprus, Malta, Middle East, Iran and East Africa.

In 1979 he co-founded *The Cyprus Weekly* with fellow journalists Andreas Hadjipapas and Alex Efthyvoulou. Also, since 1989 he was a special correspondent for *Azg* newspaper in Yerevan and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in Boston. During the catastrophic earthquake in Armenia and the war of liberation of Nagorno Karabakh, Georges led several humanitarian aid delegations, for which he was awarded the *Nagorno Karabakh Gold Medal*. He was granted an honorary citizenship of the Republic of Armenia and received the *Golden Pen Award of the Union of Armenian Journalists* for his 50-year career as a journalist, as well as the *Intercollege Media Institute Award* as a prominent journalist and photo-reporter. He actively supported photography at home and abroad, encouraged young photographers and received several awards as a member of the Cyprus Photographic Society and continued judging competitions until recently. He served his community as a member of the Board of Governors of the *Melkonian Educational Institute*.

He leaves behind his wife Lana, two sons, Yervant, and Masis, two granddaughters and his brother Noubar Johnder Parthogh who lives in London. The funeral took place at *Sourp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Church*, Nicosia on Friday, June 6, 2008.

BOOK REVIEWS

Against The Grain: The Armenian genocide - why Britain is at fault

Interview by Chris Green

Scholarship on the Armenian genocide is dominated by two strands, both very simplistic. One is the Turkish nationalist strand, which effectively tries to deny that it occurred, and that the Armenians who died were only killed as a direct result of their own treacherous behaviour. The second strand comes from the Armenian diaspora, whose scholars argue that genocide did occur: but their explanations for this are sometimes based on dubious evidence and are often polemical. The truth transcends both. Genocide was a policy choice made by a specific regime under specific conditions, not a culturally determined crime.

No one knows exactly how many people were killed, but in the immediate aftermath of the First World War at least 800,000 deaths

were acknowledged by the new Turkish nationalist leader Mustapha Kemal Ataturk. Of around two million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1914, only 400,000 remained after the war. So the question is, what happened to them all? We know they were deported to harsh desert regions, and although some escaped to Arab states, most were massacred on the way by Ottoman paramilitaries. Putting the death toll at 200,000, as some Turkish nationalists do, is utterly untenable in terms of simple mathematics. It was one of the most intensive killing campaigns of the 20th century.

Yet both the USA and Britain still refuse to recognise it as genocide. They accept that a lot of Armenians died during "tragic wartime events", but say that the issue is best left to Turkey and Armenia. This is partly because a lot of Turkish state funding goes into official denial campaigns. In Britain, Holocaust Memorial Day assiduously tries to avoid mentioning the Armenian genocide, as a direct result of Turkish state pressure. So, a day supposedly dedicated to the commemoration of extreme events "*to ensure that they never happen again*" can't even confront one of the major genocides of the 20th century.

This is not just a matter for the history books. There's a direct line between Turkey's failure to confront what happened to the Armenians and the continuing persecution of Turkey's Kurds. Greater international pressure for freedom of speech and human rights in Turkey is the best way to improve the Kurdish situation. As for Britain, it should be wary of making grandiose but easy moral gestures about humanitarian issues if it is going to crumble under pressure. This isn't something that's going to go away.

Donald Bloxham's latest book, '*The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*', is published by Oxford University (Reproduced from www.independent.co.uk - 21 February 2008)

The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies

By Richard Hovannisian

Hardcover 461pp - ISBN: 0765803674

Price: \$49.95

Publisher: Transaction Publishers

Professor Hovannisian pulls together powerful essays and presentations on the cultural and ethical legacies of the Armenian Genocide, a persecution of ethnically Armenian people living in the then Ottoman Empire over a period of three decades starting in 1894.

The Ottoman Empire, ruled by a Turkish dynasty and administration, sought to halt its rapid decline of fortunes by trying to focus on the purity of its own Turkish ethnicity at the expense of its "*minorities*". The memory of the Armenians living today testifies that this "divorce" was horribly traumatic and shows no sign of closure, mostly due to the fact that the modern nation of Turkey debates the facts of this Genocide. The essays explore how this memory has persisted in a multitude of forms, being transmitted generationally. The book will likely be a monument to the human experience of collectively trying to understand a traumatic event.

Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia

By Armine Ishkanian

Price: £80.00 ISBN: 978-0-415-43601-4

Hardback 216pp Published by: Routledge

This volume considers the challenges of democracy building in post-Soviet Armenia, and the role of civil society in that process. It argues that, contrary to the expectations of Western aid donors, who promoted civil society on the assumption that democratisation would follow from the establishment of civil society, democratic regimes have failed to materialise, and, moreover, a backlash has emerged in various post-Soviet states. Armine Ishkanian explores how far the growth of civil society depends on a country's historical, political and socio-cultural context; and how far foreign aid, often provided with conditions which encouraged the promotion of civil society, had an impact on democratisation. Based on extensive original research, including fieldwork interviews with participants, *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia* considers various democratisation initiatives in recent years, and assesses how far the Armenian experience is similar to, or different from, the experiences of other post-Soviet states.

My Brother's Road

By Markar Melkonian

Paperback 344 pp ISBN:

9781845115302

Price: £12.99 Published: I.B Tauris

What do 'Abu Sindi', 'Timothy Sean McCormack', 'Saro', and 'Commander Avo' all have in common? They were all aliases for Monte Melkonian. But who was Monte Melkonian? In his native California he was once a kid in cut-off jeans, playing baseball and eating snow cones. Europe denounced him as an international terrorist. His adopted homeland of Armenia decorated him as a national hero who led a force of 4000 men to victory in the Armenian enclave of Mountainous Karabagh in Azerbaijan. Why Armenia? Why adopt the cause of a remote corner of the Caucasus whose peoples had scattered throughout the world after the early twentieth century Ottoman genocides? Markar Melkonian spent seven years unravelling the mystery of his brother's road: a journey which began in his ancestors' town in Turkey and leading to a blood-splattered square in Tehran, the Kurdish mountains, the bomb-pocked streets of Beirut, and finally, to the windswept heights of Mountainous Karabagh. Monte's life embodied the agony and the follies bedevilling the end of the Cold War and the unravelling of the Soviet Union. Yet, who really was this man? A terrorist or a hero? "*My Brother's Road*" is not just the story of a long journey and a short life, it is an attempt to understand what happens when one man decides that terrible actions speak louder than words. Copies can be purchased from CAIA at £15 +£2pp.

My Grandmother

By Fethiye Cetin, translated by Maureen Freely

Hardcover 160pp - Published by Verso

In 1915, the author's Armenian grandmother, Heranus, was a little girl forced on a death march with others from her village. The men were

taken away by the gendarmes, never to return; some women drowned their children and then themselves in the river. Those who could no longer walk were killed with bayonets. A corporal on horseback snatched Heranus from her mother and galloped off to raise her as his Muslim Turk daughter, renaming her Seher. In her sober, heartbreaking memoir, Cetin tells her grandmother's story and how she helped her find relatives who had emigrated to America. Heranus' uncomplaining nature casts a horrifying light on the atrocities committed on a million and a half Armenians.

Maureen Freely's introduction is lucid and her translation - like her renditions of Orhan Pamuk's books - is fluid and elegant, amplifying the merits of this earnest memoir.

(Reproduced from FT June 7, 2008)