

ARMENIAN Summer 2010 Issue 57

VOICE

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 - CAIA is grateful to all of the following for their kind donations

CAIA NEWS

SPECIAL RECEPTION FOR VOLUNTEERS & NEW LEARNERS



The *Centre for Armenian Information & Advice (CAIA)* held a special reception on the evening of 24th June 2010 to thank its team of volunteers for their hard work over the past year and to hand out certificates to those students who have completed various trainings at *Hayashen*.

Volunteers are an integral part of the *CAIA* and are quite diverse, from young people and school children undertaking work placement to newly arrived people refugees gaining work experience. While the new learners range from university students to women learning new skills to rejoin the labour market after having children.

CAIA Management Committee members joined *CAIA* staff and special guest Very Reverend Dr. Vahan Hovhannessian, Primate of the Armenian



Church of The UK in acknowledging the volunteers for their dedication and congratulated the new learners who had completed the various courses such as *Employability*, *Armenian Cookery* and *Introduction to Armenian History, Culture & Heritage*. "Volunteers help us sustain our organization and develop new activities" said CAIA Chief Executive Officer Misak Ohanian during the start of the

event. "Our library, production of the newsletter, general administration, youth and elders clubs would not be possible without the vital contribution of dedicated volunteers". For example, volunteers undertake cataloguing, shelving, sorting, data entry and generally assisting with *Hayashen's* library which contains several thousand books, publications, Vinyl Disk records, photographs, posters, CD's, DVD's, Videos, Slides and community archives. "No matter how big or small the task, our volunteers get it done with the right support and motivation while learning new skills and having fun", said CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian. "At the same time they are promoting and sustaining the richness of the Armenian heritage and community."



At the end of the evening more than 50 of the invited guests enjoyed a delicious spread of Armenian and Middle Eastern buffet generously provided by volunteers and CAIA alike.

CAIA welcomes new volunteers and seeks to empower the community by offering educational and training opportunities. To learn more about what's on offer at CAIA, call 020 8992 4621 or email: info@caia.org.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

In February 2010 the CAIA was successfully audited once again against the *Investors In People (Iip)* quality standards. An independent assessor from Capital Quality

Limited interviewed staff, volunteers and trustees about the way it operates and recommended the CAIA for this nationally recognised quality standard. The 27 page report identified the areas of the strengths of the organisation, the areas for future training and development, internal communication systems, leadership and Management, involvement, empowerment and recognition of its staff and volunteers in the vision of the CAIA.



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

As a result the CAIA will continue to display the *Iip* plaque in the entrance of *Hayashen*. Needless to say we are delighted to have achieved *Investors In People* quality standard once again. *Iip* is subject

to continuous review and assessment to ensure that our practices remain to the highest standards.

EASTER CELEBRATED IN HAYASHEN



On Sunday 4th April 2010 over 100 members of Armenian community celebrated Easter in *Hayashen*. The celebrations included excellent Middle Eastern food served by volunteers and songs performed by popular singer Samuel. The celebration was part of "*Generations Together - Acton Together*" project which enabled young and older Armenians and to dance together and enjoy a special

afternoon with their friends and relatives in *Hayashen*.



Special guests to the event included Ealing Cllr. Bassam Mahfouz, prospective Labour MP for Ealing & Acton Constituency and Hounslow Cllr. Andrew Dakers, prospective Liberal Democrat MP for Brentford & Isleworth Constituency. Both spoke passionately to an appreciative audience and engaged directly with those present to find out about their needs.

TASTES OF ARMENIA



Thanks to the "*Generations Together - Acton Together*" project, a 7-day Armenian cookery workshops took place in February 2010 entitled "*Tastes of Armenia*".

Over 30 people from different ages and backgrounds took part in these free workshops led by experienced facilitators Mrs Azadouhi Ohanian and Mrs Caroline Koundarjian.



The first session which took on Sunday 7th February which attracted several people who visited *Hayashen* for the first time, while the rest of the sessions took place during the half term week holiday when the *Armenian Community Pre-School Group* operated, enabling lots of young people/children, parents and grand-parents to interact with each

other, share recipes and have a general good time while learning to cook and eat together.

Dishes that were prepared during the workshops included Cheese Borek, Mante, Taboule, Anoush Abour, Humus, Simit Halva, Olive Bread, Lentil Broth and other favourites.



The CAIA plans to organise further Armenian cookery classes in the autumn over several Sundays so register now. All those who took part in at least 3 of the sessions received special certificates acknowledging their attendance at a reception held in *Hayashen* on 24th June, 2010.

BEYOND INFORMATION & ADVICE

One of the main strand the CAIA charity pursues its aims and objectives is through training and educational activities for the most disadvantaged Armenians who for no fault of their own find themselves either unemployed or face barriers to gain new skills. While we are happy to continue to provide vital information and advice that many people rely on CAIA, we want encourage and empower our fellow Armenians to progress beyond the information and advise, to take charge and make positive changes to integrate further within society.

In the past 2 years the CAIA has made great efforts in partnership with various training agencies to provide new learning opportunities for the many people who approach CAIA for information and advice about financial and other difficulties.



One such recent example was a 6-week accredited free training course that took place during April/May 2010 entitled "*Personal Best*" delivered by *Action Acton*.

Further training and workshops about gaining employability skills took place in February and June 2010 funded the London West Learning and Skills Council benefitting 25 people in total,

mainly women. The course was delivered by professional trainer and career coach Ms Alison Shuttle who prepared various handouts and designed the course handbook.

Lunch, crèche facilities and travel expenses were provided to the students to remove any barriers they may face in attending the course which covered included a Skills assessment, Short and long term goal planning, Information about the job market, How to Market yourself, Managing a job search campaign, Applying for jobs, Types of CV's, Planning, preparing and completing a CV, How to complete application forms, Applying online, Writing covering letters, Developing confidence at interviews and further support.



Another area which the CAIA has identified the need for during the current economical crises is *Financial Capability*. At a time when people are struggling the make ends met and debts are increasing, managing household income and budgeting has become even more important.



With this in mind, the CAIA organised a special 4-day *Financial Capability* course in June 2010, specifically targeting more mature Armenians. The course was delivered by Martha Lawton, a former financial adviser and independent practitioner who specialises in teaching money management to people who are in or vulnerable to poverty. The course covered, money

management and budgeting , Banking, Understanding credit and interest rates, Dealing with debt, Maximising income, Saving, Taxes and benefits, Insurance and financial planning.

16 students benefited from the course which included lunch and travel expenses to assist their attendance.

See below article by Martha Lawton about the course.

"No!" cries one woman. "That can't be right!" says another to her neighbour. There is horror and anger across the room. We are playing a game to find out how much it costs to borrow money from different places and we have reached the doorstep lenders and the payday loans companies. The interest rates these companies charge are so high that most borrower pay back at least twice what they borrowed in only a few short months.

In the room are a group of Armenian people, mostly over 50 years of age, who in spite of the fact that it is World Cup week, have braved the heat and come to *Hayashen* to learn about making the most of their money.

This four day course was supported by the *Nationwide Foundation*. We looked at day to day money, budgeting and saving, benefits for older people, how to take on big companies and win, planning for the future, including the delicate issue of wills and funerals, and how to avoid getting into trouble with debts.

Back to the credit game, the participants are angry "Who is this loan company? Is this legal? They sound so respectable!"

I explain that the company is one of the biggest lenders to low income people in the UK. We talk about the fact that the UK does not limit how much interest a company can charge. I explain how interest builds on itself creating a vicious cycle of debt. I also explain where they can go for help.

In private, during the break, one person comes to talk to me about their problems. A credit card company is charging so much that they can't pay off the debt, they can only try to stop things from getting worse. I suggest that they go for free debt advice and talk with them about where they could go.

For older people on a fixed pension, debt is particularly frightening because they do not have the hope that their income will rise in future so they can repay what they owe.

This has been an exciting course to teach and my first real introduction to Armenian culture and people. They seem very frustrated by British bureaucracy and paperwork. To be honest I think most British people are too. I try to explain the systems without apologising for them. I want people to leave feeling that they have more power in the system than they felt they had when we came in. We talk about who else can help you, the regulators, ombudsman, trading standards and the free advice agencies.

It has been a challenging four days but I have really enjoyed my time at *Hayashen* and I think the participants have too. They smile and shake my hand and several of the women kiss me goodbye. As I pack up I hope to be back. Learning to manage money is about power and bringing more power to the Armenian community in Britain seems like a good idea to me.

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE



Between Sunday February 21 to 28 March 2010, the CAIA repeated its successful "Introductory" course about Armenian history, culture and heritage thanks to the support of *Ealing Adult Education Department*.

16 students from diverse background benefited from the 6-part course delivered professionally by various specialists such as Rev.

Dr. Vrej Nersessian, Head of Christian and Middle East Section, *British Library*.

Rev. Dr. Vrej Nersessian, spoke on two sessions to

Introduce the history of the Christianisation of Armenia

Explain the development of the Armenian identity with the Christian church

Raise awareness about the impact of Armenian Christian art on the art of Byzantium

Look at the rituals of the Armenian Church in holy week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday

Introduce the development of Armenian manuscripts to highlight the main events linking Art and Theology.

Dr Aida Alayarian (Director of *Refugee Therapy Centre*), spoke about *The consequence of the denial of the Armenian genocide*.

Photographer Tigran Asatrjian shared images from his several trips to Historic Armenia entitled *The land beneath our feet*

Historian Ara Iskenderian spoke about The formation of the modern Armenian Nation

Dr. Peter Shabenderian gave an overview of Armenian Architecture and Armenian paintings.

While Dr Denise Aghanian, kindly donated her book *The Armenian Diaspora: Cohesion & Fracture* (2007) to all the registered students.



Throughout the course, the students learned together, enjoyed Armenian and Middle Eastern traditional lunch together at the end of each session, networked and contributed to very many interesting debates and discussions that took place on a wide range of issues related to Armenian history, literature, faith and culture.

It was also pleasing that another 15 non-registered people attended the various individual sessions during the course, including the new Primate of the Armenian Church in the UK, the Very Reverend Dr. Vahan Hovhannessian.

The purpose of the course is to not only promoting our rich cultural heritage to Armenians and non-Armenians alike but to act as a platform for further learning. Below are the views of one the participants who benefited from the course this year, Mr Argam Shahenian, a second year Modern History student at University of Westminster.

The course held at Hayashen helped me so much with not only learning more about the history of my motherland, but also was a wonderful opportunity to have debates and discussions with fellow community members. I felt that they shared the same passion, anger and pain as I have felt living in Britain but not having the firm identity due to the British governments denial of the Armenian Genocide.



With regards to my studies, I found the lecture on the history of Christianity and the Armenians very helpful for my dissertation. My dissertation was on British propaganda during the First World War; to be more specific, Wellington House, which was a propaganda department used to gain sympathy and support from neutral nations, such as America before she declared herself to the

allied cause. The department did this by distributing pamphlets about the Armenian Genocide. The lectures at Hayashen helped me develop my introduction, as the lecturer pointed out how the Western world had always tried to shift attention from the relevance of Armenia and the birth of Christianity. I found this to be ironic because up until the First World War, the Armenians were not renowned for being the first to convert into Christianity as a whole, but once Wellington House started its propaganda campaign, then they clearly exploited the Armenian Christian identity in order to gain sympathy from America.

Also, I found the lecture on 'Trauma and the Armenian Genocide' to be very interesting, because it helped me answer many questions about my own identity as a British Armenian. I was surprised to find that the



generation after the one, which had faced the massacre, never spoke of it, as they did not want their children to face the pain they had. For me, not as a British Armenian, but as a human being, it broke my heart, as it was then that I saw the real consequences of denying the fact of how people were massacred because of their identity. I would love to see more courses at Hayashen as I found

them very beneficial and personally rewarding.

The CAIA hopes to not only repeat the course next year but to develop it further. Contact CAIA if interested.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

In the past few months the CAIA contributed to a multi stream project led by a consortium comprising:

*Advice Services Alliance
AdviceUK
Age UK (formerly Age Concern)
Citizens Advice
Law Centres Federation
Youth Access*

The Lottery Fund project funded the above consortium to:

increase access to advice
enhance the quality of advice
demonstrate the value of advice
improve the efficiency of advice services
build the capacity of the advice sector

The CAIA was one of several of agencies which worked with consultants provided by the consortium and one tangible outcome of this work was that it enabled the CAIA to successfully re-audit for the *Community Legal Service Quality Mark Standard for General Help*.

Other differences the consultancy enabled us to make was:

- 1- develop methods of collecting outcomes best suited to our client groups
- 2- test different methods of collecting outcomes in order to better demonstrate the value of our advice work and its beneficial impact on the lives of our service users.

"Outcomes are the effects or changes brought about by the activities provided by an organisation ... in recent years; both voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) and funding bodies have become increasingly aware of the value and benefit of becoming more focused on the outcomes of their work." (Charities Evaluation Service website, 2007)

Outcome data is valuable in a number of contexts. It enables advice services to gain a deeper understanding of how social welfare law advice impacts on services users lives, can feed in to improving service delivery, provide feedback to advisors about how their work makes a

difference, can feed in to wider policy strategy development and public service improvement. It can also help provide justification for advice to funders and help funders to meet their own targets and demonstrate value for money in their funding strategy



With this in mind on Monday 12th April, we run a focus group with some of CAIA's advisory clients to explore outcomes arising from the provision of general social welfare law advice provided by CAIA.

The Focus groups was interactive and provided a useful forum to understand the peoples' experiences, feelings, thoughts and attitudes. It enabled us to learn

more about their experiences and how they have changed as a result of the advice intervention and in what ways.

See below results of the outcomes focus group:

The CAIA is quite different to many traditional social welfare law advice providers in that it provides a holistic service that goes way beyond pure legal information and advice. It is typical of many community based organisations that provide a wider community service for specific target groups in that it maintains long-term relationships with its users and strong relationships are developed over time.

Set questions were asked and these are summarised/grouped together here. The key themes that emerged from the Focus Group have been grouped together.

Question: Issues people came to the CAIA with

Clients approached the centre, as expected, with a wide range of problems. Most of the clients had multiple problems, many of which required advice on immigration status, naturalisation and passports. At least 2 cases involved the cessation of benefits where Exception Leave to Remain was being extended and the DWP had cut benefits, not knowing that where a case is still pending you are still eligible for benefits. Most clients have a language barrier and need help with filling in forms for housing and welfare benefits, appealing decisions and applying for jobs. Clients have sought help with claiming tax credits, Job Seekers Allowance, income support and child benefit and disability allowances.

Question: How did that problem affect you, how did it make you feel?

All participants said their problems had a big impact on their health, feelings of security, and that they experienced high levels of sadness, unhappiness and stress. They said their issues impacted on their relationships with family and that children were distressed by moving frequently and not being able to maintain friendships they had made. Also, because clients moved so often there was nobody of standing in the community who can provide character references for their naturalisation, they moved around so much and had different doctors, teachers so no one was able to sign for them. Their constant relationship with the CAIA enabled Centre staff to help with these references.

The quotes below are used to illustrate.

Quote:

"I had nothing and it made my health much worse. I am not able to work because I fell ill with mental health problems and my benefits were cut. I was very worried as the benefits department wanted me to work and I could not due to my health issues". Most clients said that when they came to England they did not know many (in some cases any) people or where to go for help.

Quote:

"Starting from 1997 when I came to this country I knew nobody. I asked people where I can get help and Armenian people said come to the Centre. I spoke no English and knew nothing about the system. The centre has helped me from 1997 till now, I can't know all the laws and the centre has all those skills. Even where they haven't they know how to get it. I have met social workers, benefit people and the centre organised all the people I needed to see. All that advice was very helpful, all my needs were met here, even now they help, every day life is not easy and something comes up and you can't solve that problem. Even now when you send papers the benefits department claim you have not sent them, even where they have been sent recorded delivery. Your benefits are stopped and you have done everything, they are forcing you but you can't force them. The centre protects us, the centre does everything for me, I cannot know the law and there is so much to get through."

Quote:

"It is very, very stressful, I have moved a lot in the last 7 years when I was in temporary accommodation, I am now in permanent accommodation but it has taken a long time and was very difficult. I have children, and it was very hard for them, the children had to move from school to school and my child was crying for a few months because she missed her friends and teachers. It is especially hard when you are coming from abroad and have to settle in to a new life, you make contacts and friends and then you have to move again and again, it is doubly stressful, it is stressful enough coming from one country to another and then moving from one hotel to another, one school to another, you don't know the language. Your health suffers and your family relationships suffer. No one thinks about that or counts the cost."

Quote:

"From 1997 I have moved so many times, 11 places in 6 years, 3 metre by 4 metre we had in just one room. I got into a permanent property scheme after 7 years. You can't say you don't like the room, you refuse you're fired. All that pressure I feel for my family. Sometimes the hotels were very smelly and dirty, 20 – 30 people using one bathroom, how can you wash a newborn baby in one bathroom with one toilet used by 30 people. The centre cares for me, no-one else does. They [the Government] pay £1550 for one room I went to them and said a private landlord was asking £850 for a flat with 2 bedrooms, where is the logic".

Question: What difference has the advice the Centre has provided made to your life in terms of wellbeing?

Overwhelmingly participants said that if they had not had the help from CAIA their health would have deteriorated. One participant said: *"It saves money for the NHS, instead of going to the doctor I come here".*

"I came here heavily pregnant with no word of English and no family, it was my first baby and I was very scared, I did not know what to do. The centre helped me with a translator and she sat there with me for 9 hours 10 hours. It was a very big help. I was very young, no English and no family. The centre helped me a lot."

People also said that without the advice they received, and the advocacy provided they would have no money, nor be able to feed their family. The Centre gives them hope and a safe place to come. One participant described it as the only place that offers them protection and helps them understand their rights and get what they are by law entitled to.

CAIA CONTRIBUTES TO GLA'S SURVEY OF REFUGEES IN LONDON

In December 2009 the Mayor launched London Enriched, a strategy aimed at ensuring the successful integration of London's refugee communities, enhancing community cohesion across the capital. The strategy outlines the issues London's refugee communities face in becoming a part of the city, and how the *Greater London Authority (GLA)*, and others, might best work to help address them.

In order to ensure that the strategy is successful in facilitating integration, and Mayoral policy is as effective as possible, there was a need to develop robust baseline information about London's refugees, in a number of areas such as level of English skills, access to good housing and healthcare, and barriers to finding employment. This is where you come in.

The GLA commissioned Ipsos MORI, on the Mayor's behalf, to carry out a survey of London's refugees to help collect the above information. The CAIA was pleased to cooperate with *Ipsos MORI* to ensure the views of Armenian refugees were heard. A representative from *Ipsos MORI* visited *Hayashen* over two days in June and interviewed 20 Armenian refugees.

Once the survey work is complete the report and data will be used to inform the Mayor's decision making and will be available for use by other service providers like your local authority or Primary Care Trust to enable them to make the best possible decisions for their integration support efforts.

CAIA & AGHTAMAR DANCE GROUP TAKE PART IN ACTON CARNIVAL



The CAIA took part in *Acton Carnival* once again this year on 10 July 2010 with a stall promoting its work and Armenian culture, literature and heritage. CAIA Members and volunteers Nelly Hovsepyan & Hrant Sargsyan (photo opposite) helped operate CAIA's stall.

Also contributing to the cultural proceedings this year on stage was *Aghtamar Armenian Dance Group* who performed several traditional dances which mesmerised the large crowd of visitors in Acton Park. The



dance group has been using *Hayashen* twice a week for the past several months, getting ready to perform publicly once again.



Acton councillor, and new Deputy Mayor of London Borough of Ealing, John Gallagher was one of the many people who visited CAIA's stall and enjoyed the Armenian dance performance in Acton Park on a hot and sunny day.

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS AT HAYASHEN

HEALTH TALKS & ACTIVITIES FOR ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS



Macmilan Cancer Support held two Cancer Awareness workshops and discussions in *Hayashen* during February and March.



On Friday the 9th of April 2010, John Calvert from the London Borough of Hounslow came to talk about "*Safeguarding adults*".

On Friday 14th May 2010, Paul Oppe from Personalisation Programme Manager Ealing Council came to talk about "*Personalisation – greater choice for older people and carers*".



On Friday 18th June 2010, Kam Patel, Business Development Manager from *West London Pension Services*, spoke about the various entitlements available to senior citizens and the disabled. He also circulated various leaflets and handouts during the course of his presentation which was followed intensely by all those present.



As a result of the cooperation between the *CAIA* and the *Pension Services*, specific monthly surgeries have started to take place in *Hayashen* for the Armenian community.

In addition, the *CAIA* and the *Pension Services* have also agreed a referral process for any Armenians in London who would like to arrange a home visit by the

Pension Services to make claims. For further information and a surgery appointment please contact *CAIA* on 020 8992 4621.

BENEFITS ADVICE SURGERIES

Benefits Advice Surgeries organised in partnership with the *Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)* now take place once a month in *Hayashen* on the following days:

Wednesday 14th July - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
 Wednesday 18th August - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
 Wednesday 15th September - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
 Wednesday 13th October - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
 Wednesday 10th November - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
 Wednesday 8th December - 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

Entitlements that we will help you apply for are:

Pension Credit
 Attendance Allowance
 Disability Living Allowance (including children under age of 16 or under)
 Cares Allowance
 State Pension
 Bereavement Benefit
 Housing Benefit
 Council Tax Benefit
 Winter Fuel Payments
 Social Fund
 Tax Credits

If you have language difficulties An Armenian interpreter will be available. We are here to help you maximize your income. If you are unable to attend, we can arrange a full benefit check in you own home or any other venue you would feel comfortable.

GENTLE KEEP FIT CLASSES – FREE

(Supported by BAA Communities Trust)

Monday 9th August - 1.45pm
 Monday 13th September - 1.45pm
 Monday 18th October - 1.45pm
 Monday 15th November - 1.45pm
 Monday 6th December - 1.45pm
 Monday 17th January 2011 - 1.45pm
 Monday 14th March - 1.45pm

Just turn up at *Hayashen* - benefits of attending include:

Improved mobility and posture
 Improved balance and coordination
 Improved circulation
 Lower blood pressure
 Making friends and socializing

NEW PRIMATE BLESSES HAYASHEN



The week following Easter-Sunday the new Primate of the Armenian Church in the UK, the Very Reverend Dr. Vahan Hovhannessian, took the joyful message of Easter "on the road"! On Friday, April 9, the CAIA was honoured to host of the traditional and beautiful Armenian ceremony of the Blessing of the House. Rev. Dr. Nerses Nersessian and Rev. Fr. Shnork Baghdasarian joined the Primate

and the many CAIA members and guests in the blessing ceremony at *Hayashen*. Before the service, Fr. Vahan explained the meaning of the blessing ceremony and the Armenian traditions associated with it. The ceremony included chanting of biblical passages, singing of the hymn of the resurrection Aysor Haryav, "*Today He is risen...*", and the blessing hymn "*Amen. Alleluia*" three times.



This was the second visit of the new Primate to *Hayashen*. The Very Reverend Dr. Vahan Hovhannessian was kind enough to visit the Armenian Senior Citizens Club just before his formal appointment in March 2010. He was warmly welcomed by the many Senior Citizens and Carers who attend the club regularly.

SILVER SURFERS AT HAYASHEN



Seven Silver Surfers sessions took place at *Hayashen* during January & February 2010 benefiting 12 people aged 50+ thanks to the *Generations Together* project involving 7 volunteer School children from Acton High School (3 of whom were Armenians). Further such sessions are planned in the Autumn.

HAYASHEN YOUTH CLUB

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST FEW MONTHS



Two family days out took place thanks to the support of the *Generations Together - Acton Together* project. 36 young people visited the *London Lyceum* in February 2010 to enjoy production of *Lion King* and another 53 young people and children visited the *Wembley Arena* in March 2010 to enjoy the production of *Disney Live - Three classic Fairy tales*.

HAYC ORGANISES 2-DAY RESIDENTIAL

The CAIA is pleased to announce that *Ealing Youth Youth & Connexions Service* has agreed to support the *Hayashen Armenian Youth Club (HAYC)* to a 2 day residential weekend for 25 young people at Woodrow High House via its *Cash4Youth* programme. (www.woodrow-high.co.uk)

Owned by London Youth and set in the beautiful Chiltern Hills near Amersham, this lovely old 17th Century Manor House, once occupied by Oliver Cromwell's family during the English Civil War, provides a kaleidoscope of training and activity opportunities to almost 5000 youngsters who attend the House each year. For all, a visit to Woodrow High House represents a unique and intensely rewarding experience which will assist the passage along the often difficult journey from childhood to adulthood.

A "big thank you" to our young volunteers Aram, Avo and Selineh for their successful presentation at Ealing Council which made this possible. The Coach will leave *Hayashen* at 5pm on 17th September and return on Sunday 19th September in the afternoon. Full Board will be provided and activities will include in indoor and outdoor activities such as orienteering, archery, swimming and much more.

For further information contact CAIA on 020892 4621 or by email at: hayc@caia.org.uk

ACPG QUALITY RECOGNISED

In February 2010, the *Armenian Community Pre school Group (ACPG)* successfully gained Ofsted registration. The registration was initiated by the *CAIA* thanks to the advice of *Ealing Playservices* to ensure that the ACPG gain the quality recognition it deserves.

COMMUNITY NEWS

"WALES REMEMBERS THOSE WHO SUFFERED IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE OF THE EARLY 20th CENTURY"

"Wales remembers those who suffered in the Ottoman Empire of the early 20th century" In an unprecedented gesture of solidarity, the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, sent the above message to the Armenians in Wales and their supporters in remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.

They had gathered on 23 April 2010 to pray for their lost ancestors at the memorial in the *Temple of Peace, Cardiff*, on land generously donated by the Welsh people and with local funding from the Torosyan family.

This was special too as the new Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Very Rev Vahan Hovhannessian who had arrived within the last month, offered the requiem (hokehankisd) prayers in his first of many visits to Wales, assisted by Deacon Stepan Ovanessoff. The community was honoured with the presence of Canon Chancellor Patrick Thomas, St David's Cathedral, Church of Wales, Rev Dr Trystan Owain Hughes, Anglican Chaplain to Cardiff University representing the Archdeacon of Landaff as well as representatives of the Baptist Union of Wales.

There was true fellowship between the churches, including the exchange of gifts, and all the people to remember all victims of all genocides. The Welsh have been early and staunch friends of the Armenians for which we are so grateful. Also attending were two strong supporters of the Armenians in their fight for recognition, Jenny Randerson of the Welsh Assembly and Stephen Thomas of the Welsh Centre for International Affairs.

The First Minister's message timed to be read out at the commemoration is a remarkable milestone in Wales: First Ministers have not reached out on this way ever before.

This have been a good year with the January Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Cardiff including an Armenian priest, Der Shnork, saying prayers with the Armenian Genocide mentioned more than once in specific terms. Work has already begun to consolidate this position and advance further in 2011: recognition requires year-long effort.

There was also an unexpected surprise that day. The Primate and the organisers made a pilgrimage to a statue of the Virgin Mary of Penrhys, Rhonda where they were met by Sharon Rees, secretary and Christian worker of the church. This statue has a remarkable history but the reason for the visit is that the United Reformed Church in this small village were the first to take the Armenians into their hearts.

This church devised a special service with its own liturgy in 1998 to commemorate the victims of the genocide. This service will be researched and hopefully repeated in the presence of an Armenian and

Welsh congregation. Truly the Welsh churches have compassionate congregations. Those in Penrhys deserve special praise of their support despite the community being in one of the most deprived areas in the UK.

The most active Welshman, Eilian Williams, was not present but represented by his daughter. Eilian had decided to join the *Human Rights Association of Turkey* commemoration at the Istanbul station from where the Armenian intellectuals and leaders were sent to their death on 24 April 1915.

During the reception that followed, we received a message that over 100 persons had already gathered at the station despite the attentions of the authorities.

He then was to join the Turkish intellectuals at Taksim Square in an act of remembrance and atonement. This demonstrates the calibre, humanity and integrity of the Welsh people and why they are such a bulwark for the Armenians. We humbly salute their spirit.

FILM "FROM ARARAT TO ZION"

On 19 May 2010, a 70-minute documentary film titled "*From Ararat to Zion*" and produced by Vem Media Arts was screened at *Brunei Gallery Theatre*, London, which pays tribute to Armenian pilgrims over the last 2000 years, who have contributed to the preservation of spiritual traditions and Christian legacy in the Holy Land. The film is narrated by Aidan Quinn, directed by Edgar Baghdasaryan, the film score by Lisa Gerrard, written and produced by Fr. Mesrop Aramian.

The film presents the stories the pilgrims brought with them and the imprint they left in some of the holiest places of Christianity. It follows the paths taken by Armenian pilgrims as they travelled between two focal points in history: from Mt. Ararat to Mt. Zion, from A to Z.

Striking scenes of the Church of Holy Sepulchre by night, the colourful spectacles of Easter in Jerusalem, the Ceremony of Holy Light, Mount Sinai in Egypt, the Monasteries of the Judean Desert, and the summit of Mount Ararat provide exquisite visual tapestries on every level of the story. (see trailer at: fromararattozion.com/en/trailer_and_synopsis.htm)

EXHIBITION: "MAGNIFICENT MAP: POWER, PROPAGANDA AND ART"

Magnificent Map: Power, Propaganda and Art is the title of an exhibition that is open between 30 April-19 September 2010 in The British Library. Sourced from one of the greatest map collections in the world, many of the visual delights will be completely new even to experts, that comprises of over 130 magnificent examples ranging from Ancient Rome (AD 200) to the modern period.

Most people are unaware of the impact originally created by wall maps, and painted maps because so few have survived. They used size and beauty to convey messages of status and power. This exhibition focuses on re-establishing manuscript, painted and printed mural maps as a major cultural medium particularly in early modern Europe.

The British Library's map collection contains fifteen maps in the Armenian language. For a description of these see Dr. Vrej Nersessian, *Catalogue of Early Armenian Books, 1512-1850*. The British Library, 1980, entries 677-691, pp.150-152. This Catalogue provides a description of the early Armenian printed books in the British Library and the Bodleian Library. Of special significance is the magnificent Armenian atlas called *Hamatarads Ashkharhatsoyts Meds* [Atlas of the world in double-hemispheres, BL Map Room 920.(89)] printed in the printing press of Archbishop T'ovmas Vanandetsi Amsterdam in 1695. The engravings of the map are by "Amsterdam's most renowned engravers" brothers Adrian and Peter Schoonebeck and the Armenian text by the nephew of Archbishop T'ovmas Ghoukas Nurijanian Vanandetsi. The eight-sheet map measuring 126 x 158 was a "prohibitively expensive for all but the wealthiest of patrons".

The description and evaluation provided by the curators of the exhibition in their catalogue of this spectacular map is well short of being competent [124]. The full and comprehensive provenance of the map is provided by the 12 line Armenian inscription on the map which the curator's have not consulted. To facilitate the use of the Map Ghoukas Nourijanian, Vanandetsi in 1696 published his *Banali Hamatarads Ashkharhatsutsin* in the same press as the Atlas. In order to ensure the full benefit of the Map and Key for the Armenian merchants who held influential position during the heyday of the Dutch East India Company, the headquarters of which were in Amsterdam, Ghoukas Nurijanian produced a third manual called *Ganj Tchapoy, kshroy, tevoy ew dramits vorov bolor ashkhari vacharakanoutiwnn vari...* (A manual of the measures, weights, numbers and currencies by which the world's entire trade is done), issued by the T'ovmas Vanandetsi press in Amsterdam in 1699. According to the colophon the patron of this volume was Khatchatur of New Julfa, son of Petros.

The catalogue refers to "*the Armenian Archbishop Warthabeth*" giving the impression that Warthabeth is the name of the archbishop. In fact warthabeth is the Armenia term *vardapet* by which celibate or unmarried priests are known in the Armenian Church. These errors could have been avoided if the curator's had consulted British Library's Catalogues of its own holdings.

In May 1707 the two important figures of Armenian printing T'ovmas Vanandetsi, Archbishop of Goghtn province in Van, and his nephew Ghoukas Nurijanian, founders of the Armenian press in Amsterdam, visited Oxford. On the 29th of May, in the renowned Teatro Sheldoniano, Archbishop T'ovmas Vandandets was rewarded a Doctorate of Divinity, and his nephew, Ghoukas Nurijanian was given the award of Master of Arts. In connection with the conferment of these honorary degrees, a pamphlet was printed. One of the testimonials appended to the narration gives a list of the books printed at the Vanandetsi press in Amsterdam up to that date, which were the Archbishop's gift to the Bodleian Library and are kept in the collection under a press mark which bears the initials 'Th' for T'ovmas' (see Nersessian, pp.41-43). The second exhibit of timely interest is Fred. W. Rose's *Serio-Comic Map for the year 1877* (size 55.5 x 71cm; BL.Maps*1078.(45)). Russia threatened to invade the enfeebled Ottoman Empire in support of its fellow Christian Bulgarians who had been the victims of a Turkish massacre (indicated by a skull). Britain and Germany were determined that Russia should not conquer Constantinople and thereby gain direct access for its fleets to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Rose shows Russia as an octopus with two eyes (representing St Petersburg and Moscow). It is throttling

Poland and nearly strangling Finland, while its tentacles threaten the shah of Persia, Central Asia, Armenia, the Holy Land, and Constantinople, shown as the Sultan's gold watch. Greece, portrayed as a crab, is ready to join the Russian attack on Turkey. The old German emperor, Wilhelm I, tries to push back the octopus, and Hungary wants to intervene but is restrained by Austria, while England and Scotland look on anxiously. In the event Germany and the United Kingdom made a common cause at the Berlin Conference in 1878 from where the British Prime minister Disraeli returned holding the 'Peace with Honour' document subsequently satirized by Fred. W. Rose. Well worth a visit.

Rev. Dr. Vrej Nersessian - The British Library
Head of the Christian Middle East Section

SETA'S ARMENIAN BLOG

This well-established Blog is well worth visiting on a regular basis for a wealth of information of interest to Armenian nationals and to the Armenian Diaspora world-wide. Although it has a particular role in promoting international recognition of the Genocide, the Blog encompasses a great deal more and includes many articles of general appeal to all those concerned with Armenian affairs. Much of the content is difficult or impossible to find elsewhere and the long list of links provided gives easy access to a plethora of material on social, political, religious, educational and cultural matters, and many news items from around the world.

Please take a look and bookmark the link:
www.setasarmenian.blogspot.com.

MORE THAN AN APRICOT TREE



An Apricot Tree (*Prunus Armeniaca*) was dedicated as the first public monument in England in memory of the 1.5 Million Victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The dedication took place in the London Borough of Ealing on Saturday 17th April, 2010, in a prominent position in a green along the Ealing High Street.

The Dedication Ceremony was conducted by the Primate of the Armenian Church in the United Kingdom, the Very Rev. Vahan Hovhannessian and a message was delivered on behalf of the British Armenian community by Mr Ara H Palamoudian, Chairman of the *Armenian Community & Church Council of Great Britain*. Also present was a member of the Armenian Embassy representing the Ambassador, Dr Vahe Gabrielyan and several hundred local Armenians.

In his speech, Mr Palamoudian thanked the Ealing Council and said *"This tree is a monument against Genocide, so that Genocide is never forgotten and therefore never happens again. No matter against whom perpetrated – be they Jews, Tutsis, Ruwandans or Armenians"*.

Unfortunately, Martin Smith, Chief Executive Ealing Council, at the last moment did not allow a permanent plaque to be erected near the tree due to deplorable external pressures and despite the fact that for over 20 years Ealing Council has recognised and regularly remembered the victims of the Armenian Genocide at various commemorative council functions such as Holocaust Memorial Day.

We hope the new Ealing Council administration, which includes the first Armenian councillor of the Borough Cllr. Ara Iskenderian, will rectify this situation before long.



It is also worth mentioning that during the same period the Tate Modern experienced similar external pressures regarding the Arshile Gorky exhibition which instigated the former president of the *International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)* to send a letter to the director and curator of the Tate Gallery, noting that it "*is beneath the dignity of the Tate Gallery to succumb to the pressure*

of genocide deniers for any reason". Arshile Gorky was one of the most remarkable American painters of the 20th century who was a surviving refugee of the Armenian Genocide. The trauma of the 1915 Genocide impacted his whole life and creative work before committing suicide in 1948.

NEWS IN BRIEF: DIASPORA & ARMENIA

On March 17, 2010 Turkey recalled its Ambassador from Stockholm and cancelled Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's scheduled visit to Sweden after the adoption of Armenian Genocide Resolution by Swedish Parliament. The Turkish Government made a statement after this decision. The majority of Swedish parliament voted in favor of resolution describing the mass killings of Armenians and other Christian minorities in modern Turkey by the end of World War I as genocide. A number of conservative MPs voted for the resolution, which resulted in motion passing by a casting vote -131 against 130.

The motion was originally introduced 10 years ago by Murad Artin who was at that time an MP for the *Left Party*.

In an article titled "*I share Armenian's Pain on April 24*", famous Turkish journalist and a columnist of the Turkish daily *Milliyet*, Hasan Cemal calls for paying tribute to those who fell victims to the Genocide. Hasan Cemal is the grandson of Cemal Pasha, one of the organizers of the Armenian Genocide in 1915.

"Today is April 24. April 24, 1915 is one of the shameful pages of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Armenians living and creating for centuries in Anatolia endured great anguish on the lands they lived; they stood great pains in their own state: they were eradicated, slaughtered and subjected to eventual extinction. Some call these pages of history as deportation, some - as tragedy, some - Genocide, while others call it Great Calamity. But it cannot be denied," writes Cemal.

"But today is April 24, the commemoration day of the Armenians, the tragedy the Armenian nation suffered on these lands. Thus let's first share the Armenian's grief on April 24, let's try to feel their pain in our hearts, let's equally mourn with Armenians", Cemal calls on Turks.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turks-in-first-commemorate-massacre-of-armenians-2010-04-24>

The world's oldest leather shoe, 1000 years older than the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and 400 years older than Stonehenge in Britain, has been found perfectly preserved in a cave in Armenia.

The 5500-year-old shoe was discovered by a team of international archaeologists. It is made of a single piece of cow-hide leather, had laces, and was shaped to fit the wearer's foot. The cave where the discovery was made is in the Vayotz Dzor province of Armenia, on the Armenian-Iranian-Turkish borders.

Manolo Blahnik, one of the world's best known shoe designers has said that "It is astonishing how much this shoe resembles a modern shoe!"

For further details and photograph visit:
news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/06/100609-worlds-oldest-leather-shoe-armenia-science

French-Armenian filmmaker Serge Avedikian won the Best Short Film prize at the *63rd Cannes Film Festival* this year. The symbolism in Avedikian's film, *"Chiennes D'Histoire"* (English title, *"Barking Island"*), cannot be more powerful. The official synopsis reads: *Constantinople 1910. The streets are overrun with stray dogs. The newly established government, influenced by a model of western society, uses European experts to choose a method of eradication before deciding, suddenly and alone, to massively deport the dogs to a deserted island away from the city.* The awards, chosen by a jury headed by U.S. director Tim Burton, were presented on May 23. Watch a trailer on:
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=IN8sxQVdI7Y>

BOOK REVIEWS

THE INVENTION OF HISTORY: AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA, AND THE SHOWCASING OF IMAGINATION

by Rouben Galichian

Gomidas Institute (London) and Printinfo Art Books (Yerevan). 2009. 112 pp., includes a DVD on Armenian Julfa and more than 50 color photos and maps. US\$30 and UK£20.

Rouben Galichian's *"The Invention of History: Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Showcasing of Imagination"* is a very important book that addresses a core issue facing the Armenian people 95 years after the Genocide: survival in the face of further erasures and eradications.

This is an issue with many dimensions, some of them well known and others not. Galichian, whose prior works include *"Historic Maps of Armenia: The Cartographic Heritage"* (I.B. Tauris) and *"Countries of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan"* (Gomidas Institute Books), focuses here on one of the

lesser known aspects, Azerbaijan and its attacks on Armenian history, identity and survival.

Azerbaijan was founded in 1918 under the leadership of the pan-Turkic *Musavat Party*. There had been no previous Azerbaijani state in history, and the name was taken from the territory south of the Arax River, in northern Persia (present-day Iran), where much larger numbers of Azeri speakers lived and continue to live today. Galichian notes that Persian officials considered the use of the name usurpation and protested its use at the time.

In the territorial jockeying that went on in the early Soviet Union Azerbaijan was given control of Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh), with its 95% Armenian majority, and Nakhichevan, that was 40% Armenian in 1920. These were bitter defeats for Armenia, but ironically, they also further exacerbated Azerbaijan's own identity problem. The people called Azeri today are an amalgam of Arab, Turkic, and Persian peoples who had historically been known as Caucasian Tatars. The territory that became Azerbaijan not only contained hundreds of thousands of Armenians but also large numbers of non-Azeri Muslims and some non-Armenian Christians. Azeri leaders were faced with the problem of how to forge a national identity where none had existed before.

The answer was to fabricate a history. The officially sponsored Buniatov or Baku School of historiography (Ziya Buniatov was an Azeri revisionist historian) developed to re-write history in the service of national ambition. In his early chapters, Galichian examines two books that exemplify the fruits of these labors, *"War against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage"* and *"Monuments of Western Azerbaijan."* Just as Turkey claims its roots in the Hittites and other people with whom it has no historical connection, Azerbaijan claims to be the heir to the Caucasian Albanians, a Christian people who ruled much of what is now Azerbaijan and had become extinct in the 12th century. This subterfuge eradicates a millennia long Armenian presence and allows Azeris to be presented as indigenous and the Armenians as latter day interlopers. This is the history that has been taught to Azeri schoolchildren for decades, and its irredentist implications are clearly revealed when we understand that *"Western Azerbaijan"* refers to Armenia itself.

Galichian painstakingly examines the fate of Armenian monuments in territories that came under Azeri control. No Armenians live in Nakhichevan today. Nor do we find the more than 200 Armenian churches, monasteries, chapels and cemeteries that were found there in the early 19th century. In one startling section of his book Galichian documents the fate of a cemetery that once contained 10,000 khachkars (carved Armenian burial stones). This cemetery in Nakhichevan was on the northern bank of the Arax River and clearly visible from Iran. The last 2000 of these khachkars were toppled and broken up a decade ago by the Azeri army. The remnants were taken away on trains or dumped into the river. Galichian provides photographs of this destruction taken by Scottish architect Steven Sim. Today the site is a military shooting range.

Galichian has collected and provided 'before and after' photographs of other Armenian sites as well. These include the before and after examples of abraded Armenian text on buildings which, while not destroying the buildings themselves, obscures their Armenian origins.

This is an important book for three reasons. First, Galichian's text and photographs document the continuation of genocide in the form of the final eradication of the Armenian people's history. The story Galichian

tells is not a new one and has close parallels in Azerbaijan's sister republic Turkey where Armenian monuments have been razed, used as targets in artillery practices, taken apart for building materials, and used as stables. And where the monuments have tourist value, they have been attributed to others. This is a game played by both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Second, Galichian's book is timely given the terms of the stalled (but revivable) Turkish-Armenian Protocols that would radically re-define Turkish-Armenian-Azeri relations without strong protections for Armenia's national security interests. The fate of Armenians in Nakhichevan including the final eradication and erasure of their historical presence was captured in the term "Nakhichevan-ization" that became a symbol of cultural genocide and inspired an Armenian vow that the process would not be repeated in Artsakh. Galichian's book stands as a warning. He makes it very clear what is at stake if Armenia succumbs to Western pressure, and to Turkish and Azeri promises of brotherhood, good-will, and solidarity.

Thanks to the liberation of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) between 1988 and 1994, the fate of Armenian monuments is now under Armenian control. The last of Galichian's contributions is that his photographs document both the ravages of Azeri vandalism and neglect of Armenian monuments such as Dadivank and the Gandzasar Monastic complexes and their subsequent restoration by Armenian artisans after 1994.

Overall, Galichian has made a truly significant contribution to our understanding of continuing attacks on the history and legacy of the Armenian people. He has compiled the history and allowed it to speak through text and photographs of the dangers of any Western brokered "peace settlement" that calls for the surrender of Armenian held territory without the full independence of an internationally guaranteed and recognized Artsakh.

Reviewed by Levon Chorbajian, Ph.D. is the translator and co-author of *"The Caucasian Knot: The History and Geopolitics of Nagorno-Karabagh"* (Zed Books) and the editor of *"The Making of Nagorno-Karabagh: From Secession to Republic"* (Palgrave Macmillan).

THE FIVE MELIKDOMS OF KARABAGH (1600 – 1827)

By *Raffi*

ISBN: 9781900355667

Raffi was one of the most influential Armenian writers and political commentators of the 19th century. His works included social and political commentaries, as well as epic novels. *"The Five Melikdoms of Karabagh"* (*Khamsayi Melikoutiunneru*) is one of *Raffi*'s scholarly works, where he drew on a range of manuscripts, books and oral sources to write a detailed history of Karabagh. The focus of his study were the five Armenian melikdoms (noble houses) that ruled this region, as Karabagh passed from Persian to Russian rule. Full of great detail and astute observations, *"The Five Melikdoms of Karabagh"* allow us to better understand this region today.

This publication, the fifth by *Raffi* in the *"Armenian literature in translation"* series published by *Taderon Press*, an imprint of the *Gomidas Institute (London)*. Both above books are available from books@gomidas.org.uk

A CHILD FROM EVERYWHERE: PHOTOGRAPHS AND INTERVIEWS OF CHILDREN FROM 185 COUNTRIES LIVING IN THE UK

By Caroline Irby

160 pages, paperback, 256 b/w and colour ills, 27x22cm 10.5x8.5in
ISBN13: 978 1 906155 93 3 - UK price £14.95

A Child From Everywhere is a colourful collection of photographs and interviews from the photographer Caroline Irby on children who have migrated to the UK from 185 different countries of the world. Published in association with Oxfam, with proceeds being donated to Oxfam in support of their children's aid programmes.

Photographer Caroline Irby has interviewed and photographed children from 185 different countries who have migrated to the UK. Of the hundreds of thousands of migrants to the UK each year, 26,000 of them are children. Irby set out to interview one child from each of the 192 countries in the world (according to the UN); 185 children agreed to take part in the project. The resulting *A Child From Everywhere* is a look at the nations represented and the multi-cultural layered image of the UK.

The photographs of the children, aged nought to sixteen, are accompanied by interviews in which they discuss their reasons for leaving their countries of origin, expectations of the UK, feelings on arrival, the cultural differences they have experienced, memories of the places they have left and thoughts on the future. The spectrum of children featured in this book reflects our world's wars, natural disasters and despotic regimes, as well as the universal dream of a better life. Collectively, the 185 children introduced in *A Child from Everywhere* give a fascinating, sometimes harrowing, but often humorous insight into the realities of a globalising world. Includes an introduction from prize-winning author Aminatta Forna.

To coincide with this incredible work, the publisher is delighted to offer "*Armenian Voice*" readers a 40% discount on all orders for this title due to CAIA's small contribution towards this project. For further details please contact Jessica Atkins at www.blackdogonline.com - Tel: +44 (0) 207 713 5097

DISPLACEMENT AND DISPOSSESSION IN THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

By Dr Dawn Chatty

Dr Dawn Chatty, University Reader in Anthropology and Forced Migration at the Refugee Studies Centre, Department of International Development, University of Oxford, has published with Cambridge University Press a new book titled *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. It traces the history of those who, as a reconstructed Middle East emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, found themselves cut off from their homelands, refugees in a new world, with borders created out of the ashes of war and the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Through personal stories and interviews within different communities, Dr Chatty shows how some minorities, such as the Armenian and Circassian communities, have succeeded in integrating and creating new identities, whereas others, such as the Palestinians and the Kurds, have

been left homeless within impermanent landscapes. Contact Dr Dawn Chatty for more information: dawn.chatty@qeh.ox.ac.uk

EXILE, TRAUMA AND DEATH: ON THE ROAD TO CHANKIRI WITH KOMITAS VARTABED

By Aram Andonian

Translated, edited and annotated by Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian

xiv + 186 pp. includes map and photos

Joint publication of the Gomidas Institute (London) & Tekeyan Cultural Association (USA)

ISBN 978-1-903656-92-1 - Price: UK£16.00

Part of "*Trilogy - April 24, 1915*" this work is a translation of 25 articles written by Aram Andonian in Armenian. Andonian was commissioned to write them by the publishers of Arevmoudk for their special edition dedicated to Komitas Vartabed's 75th birthday. These articles were published in Arevmoudk during a seven month period from December 1946 to June 1947. The articles were called "*Komitasi hed. Inch baymannerou dag aratchatsav Komitasi mdki daknabu*" ("*With Komitas: the circumstances which precipitated his mental turmoil*"). As the title implied, it was intended to highlight the Armenian composer's tragedy after his arrest and during his journey to exile. But the articles had unclogged the suppressed memory of those years in the author and the few articles that had been planned turned into a series that went beyond their initial mandate and covered the circumstances of not only Komitas' fate, but also the fate of all those intellectuals who were arrested during that same fateful night. Therefore, the initial title did not reflect the content of the series anymore. Each article was finished with the phrase "*to be continued*". The 25th article, despite the same ending, "*to be continued*", was to be the last instalment. They left the reader suspended in air and wanting closure.

To transform the articles to a book required some additions and editorial intervention. A new title had to be adopted to reflect the content of the final work. The chapters were also given titles instead of numbers. The book also included a short epilogue. The annotations were used to give the reader an appreciation for the names mentioned in the articles. The pictures of the individuals mentioned added a welcome visual dimension to the verse. Everything else, including the unequal length of the chapters, were left as they were in the original series.

The other two titles of "*Trilogy - April 24, 1915*" are Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian, "*Teotig: Biography, with a Monument to the Martyred Intellectuals*" (transl. by Ara Stepan Melkonian) (vol. 2), and Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian, "*The Survivor: Biography of Aram Andonian*" by Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian (vol. 3).

ZABELLE BOYAJIAN & HER "ARMENIAN LEGENDS AND POEMS" EDITIONS OF 1916, 1958 & 2009

She was the "*Splendid Armenian Woman*", the "*Never-to-be-forgotten Zabelle Boyajian*". With these and similar phrases some of the major Armenian intellectuals of the first half of the 20th century, such as Arshag Chobanian and Avedik Issahakian, expressed their genuine admiration for this multi-talented artist par excellence. Both Chobanian and Issahakian also shared copious correspondence with Boyajian.

Born in 1872 at Diarbekir (one of the ancient Armenian capitals, Tigranakerd), Zabelle was the daughter of an Armenian Protestant clergyman become the British Vice-Consul at Diarbekir. Her mother was an Englishwoman, a kinswoman to the poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855). After losing her father during the genocidal massacres of mid 1890s in Ottoman Turkey, Zabelle continued her education in London, and there she settled till the end of her flamboyant life as a creative and performing artist.

In her eulogy to the poet, painter and playwright Zabelle Boyajian, the noted Armenian writer named Mrs Siran Seza forwarded a heartfelt request to AGBU - The Armenian General Benevolent Union. Seza asked AGBU to publish Zabelle Boyajian's complete works, graciously arguing that will honour AGBU's latest project, its Jubilee Programme, which included, among others, publications to promote the Armenian cultural heritage. Seza's eulogy/article appeared in Beirut, Lebanon (*Yeridasart Hayouhi -Young Armenian Woman*, 1957, no 1-2), just few weeks after Zabelle's death in London, on Jan. 26th 1957.

AGBU did not fully oblige to Seza's request. No publication of Zabelle's complete works ever appeared then and neither thereafter. Even today, more than half a century later, Mrs Seza's perceptive request and genuine wish remains unfulfilled.

But AGBU did embark on a worthy project -the republication of one of Zabelle Boyajian's major works, her "*Armenian Legends and Poems*", just one year after Seza's eulogy. Here is the foreword of that AGBU Jubilee Publication of 1958. Therein we find a judiciously delineated *raison d'être* about the quality of a choice that eventually served as a memorial to Zabelle herself.

ZABELLE BOYAJIAN's Armenian legends and Poems was hailed with enthusiasm when it was first published in 1916. The passing of more than four decades has not diminished its value as a comprehensive chrestomathy of the legends, folklore, and poetry which constitute the permanent treasures of our cultural heritage.

The AGBU is fully convinced of the intrinsic value of the book, both for our American-born youth and other English-speaking Armenians, among whom there are unmistakable signs, of an increasing awareness of our historic past, and for scholars and historians who are engaged in research on the art, folklore, and culture of the Armenian people.

Therefore, in recognition of the notable service rendered by Miss Boyajian to our art and literature, it is republishing this monumental book as a part of its Jubilee Program.

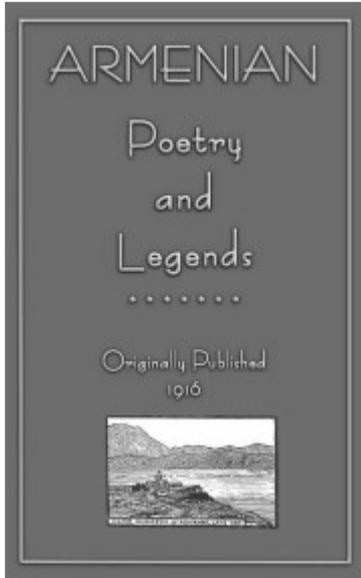
The late Zabelle Boyajian, painter, poet, and a keen student of historic values, prepared this book during one of the most tragic and agonising periods in our recent history. Wholesale massacres were then destroying helpless and defenceless people by the hundreds of thousands; deportations were uprooting the survivors from their ancestral homeland and scattering them into the Arabian deserts.

But through all these persecutions and ordeals, the Armenian people, once a proud and independent nation, survived and kept alive its Christian faith, its ideal of freedom, its culture, and its spiritual values.

Limitations of space and the scope of the book forced the author to omit some of our famous contemporary poets who lived and created prior to and following the great catastrophe. However, such commissions in no

way detract from the value of the volume, and we share the author's prophetic conviction that "Armenian Muses have still many treasures in their keeping which cannot be destroyed."

The book also contains a study of Armenian legends and poetry by Aram Raffi, son of the foremost Armenian novelist. Mr. Raffi's scholarship has provided a valuable addition to Miss Boyajian's work. We believe that no further justification is needed for the republication of Zabelle Boyajian's Armenian Legends and Poems, which, more than any other of the author's works, will keep her name alive.



Well fifty-one years after AGBU's republication of Zabelle Boyajian's stupendous book in a quasi-facsimile format that included the original colourful illustrations, all reproduced diligently, (J.M Dent & Sons Ltd; Columbia University Press), a contemporary London publisher, ABELA PUBLISHING, dared to tackle a similar task with a panache, hence "resurrect" - the publisher's own choice of word - that same major oeuvre of Miss Boyajian. ABELA accomplished the task but with a difference. Zabelle's Boyajian's Armenian Legends and Poems is now 'resurrected' in a much more accessible format than the original of 1916 and the AGBU republication of 1958. Zabelle's Armenian Legends and Poems is now a

paperback-- a handy quasi pocket book. But, alas, the illustrations are not 'resurrected' in their original glorious colours. These are now in their black and white dimly presence. Is that the 'price paid' for its accessible format? Who knows! Strange as it might seem, the only colourful illustration is that of the Armenian national tricolour flag on the front cover. Moreover, the tricolour's presence is 'accompanied' by the reproduction of the Republic of Armenia's coat-of-arms on its penultimate page (275), as if we have in hand a pocket book of 'Tourism in Armenia' and not a book of a poetic promenade through the Armenian cultural heritage that it certainly is. Perhaps both intentions could have been served, and graciously so, if Zabelle Boyajian's book was 'resurrected' to mark an anniversary of the Third Republic of Armenia. It might be argued though that the philanthropic intention of ABELA PUBLISHING "to help the underprivileged in Armenia" through "a percentage of the net sale of this book" (back cover notes) did jump the queue of all the above considerations, having thus decided to dedicate the paperback "To The Undying Spirit of Armenia" (front-page iii). Then, we might as well say --- fair enough and happy 'resurrection' to Zabelle of 1916 in paperback.

Khatchatur I. Pilikian, March 2010

Copies of "Armenian Legends and Poems" can be purchased from CAIA

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