ARMENIAN VOICE

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CENTRE FOR ARMENIAN INFORMATION AND ADVICE

NEWSLETTER FOR THE LONDON - ARMENIAN COMMUNITY. AUTUMN 2020 No.73

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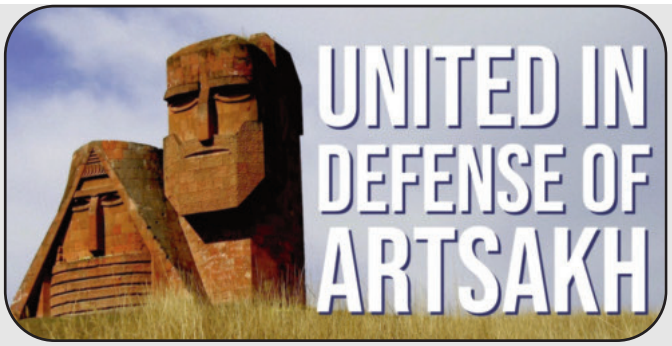
Website: *www.caia.org.uk* ***Facebook:*** *www.facebook.com/Hayashen*
THE WORK OF CAIA IS SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS CHARITIES, EALING & HOUNSLOW COUNCILS - NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED SINCE 1987



2020 WAS A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER FOR EVERYONE

2020 was a difficult year for the whole world with the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, and personal, social, and economic challenges. At the time of writing, over 126,000 people in the UK (who died within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test) and over 2.5 million in the world have lost their lives. With vaccines being rolled out in the UK and the world, whilst we must learn to live with this and other viruses, everyone hopes that there will be a bright light at the end of this particular dark tunnel.

COVID-19 has exposed more clearly the difference between the haves and have-nots. No virus would, in theory discriminate between the people irrespective of their standing in society or wealth, but the sad truth is that the most affected by COVID-19 have been those from the most deprived sections of the community. Despite this, we hope that the whole world can come together in the spirit of cooperation and compassion without any considerations for political or economic interests in order to tackle the pandemic, including the availability of safe vaccine to all countries and their populations.

For *CAIA*, our main emphasis has been and will continue to be how to deal with the severe pressures on our service users, making timely and reasonable adjustments to sustain our services and to minimize the impact of the pandemic on our community, staff, volunteers, trustees, funders and others we work with in the charity and statutory sector.

Our community activities were numerous to list them all here, but one of them was calling the more vulnerable members of our community to enquire about their well-being and offer assistance, including home delivery of free weekly food parcels, and generally finding ways of delivering our services online.

Other significant challenges for *CAIA* in 2020 included the following:

Firstly, the devastating port explosion in Beirut in August 2020, which killed at least 200 people and caused billions of pounds of damage to the infrastructure, the economy, businesses, homes, places of worship and the ordinary people, including a large Armenian community, will take years to recover from exacerbated by the broken political system.

Beirut has long been recognised as the capital of the Armenian diaspora following the Armenian genocide and forced deportations in 1915. Many of the Armenian refugees who survived the genocide, settled in or passed through Beirut in their pursuit of finding other countries to live in.

Secondly, the unprovoked 44-day war waged against the twin democracies of Armenia and Artsakh, by Azerbaijan with the active assistance from Turkey resulted in thousands of Armenian soldiers and civilians being killed, injured with many becoming refugees in their own country and in Armenia.

For Armenians, this violence cannot be seen in isolation, but rather a continuation of the 1915 genocide. When the international community (with some honourable exceptions), including the UK government, are effectively silent about the recent atrocities of Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as the 1915 genocide, one can be forgiven for thinking that the slogan *"never again"* does not seem to apply to the Armenians.

CAIA participated in the various initiatives on addressing the problems facing London Armenians due to the pandemic, Armenia, Artsakh and Lebanon, including making donations to the *"Hayastan All Armenian Fund"*, *"Aid Lebanon Appeal"* and cooperating with the *Armenian Community Emergency Management Committee (ACEMC)* comprising of the Armenian Church and some 20 other UK Armenian organisations expressing our collective solidarity with the Armenians of Lebanon, Armenia and Artsakh.

The recent political unrest in Armenia, arguably as a product of the war with Azerbaijan and the eventual ceasefire agreement in November 2020 brokered by Russia continues to reverberate in the lives of Armenians in Artsakh, Armenia, and the diaspora. We hope that we can unite and begin rebuilding our nation and strengthen its civil society, economy, its political system, the Government, its institutions and the Army by constructive, cooperative and democratic means and can look to a better and brighter future for all Armenians.

CAIA has always been and will continue to be here for the UK Armenians and those abroad within its limits largely thanks to our members, funders, and your kind donations that have sustained us over this extraordinary year. ■

URGENT PRIORITIES RAISED IN THIS SPECIAL VISIT REPORT *by Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)*

+ Maltreatment of prisoners

+ Violations of international law

+ Genocidal policies/War of Terror

+ International impunity

+ Humanitarian aid

+ Self-determination

CAIA NEWS

DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT

Thanks to the support of the *National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund* in May 2020 *CAIA* started a three-year *Digital Inclusion Project* to enable more members of the Armenian community and those connected to them to get online so as to become more self-reliant, confident to access online information/services, and generally improve their digital and social media communication skills, for both personal and professional use.

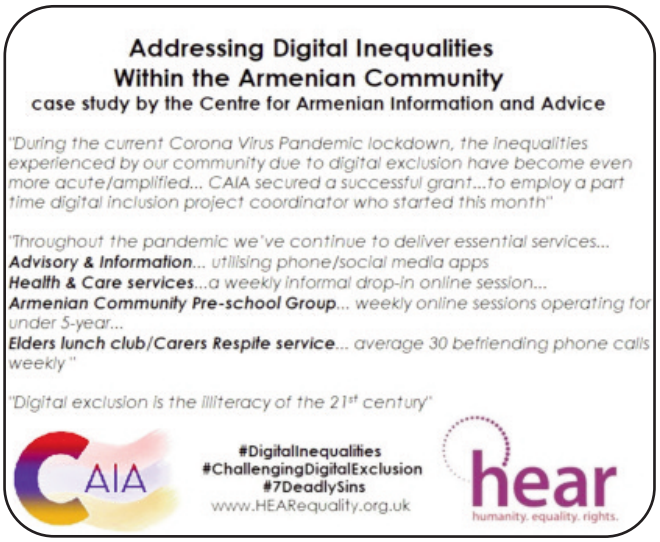
CAIA is offering free digital skills assistance to anyone who needs help using either a computer, laptop, tablet device or smartphone from their own home including access to free online courses.

Support and training is provided through 1-2-1 bespoke tutorials tailored to meet every need either face-to-face, over the phone and online. A free six-day course is due to take place annually.

Anyone interested, please contact Marina Esayan at *CAIA* on 020 8992 4621 or write to *digitalchampion@caia.org.uk*

Congratulations to 24 members of the Armenian community who received certificates in 2020 by completing at least two modules of the *Make It Click* project supported by the *Good Things Foundation.*

Photographed above are two students alongside *CAIA* Digital Champion Marina Esayan *(left)* and *CAIA* Youth Worker Venetia Abrahamian *(right).* ■



A new report produced by *CAIA* about addressing digital inequalities within the London Armenian community commissioned by *HEAR*, a pan-equality network, can be read via following link:
https://caia.org.uk/addressing-digital-inequalities-within-the-armenian-community/

ARMENIA MY LOVE, UK PREMIERE

On 24th November 2019, the UK premiere of the film, *Armenia My Love* took place at *Hayashen* organised by the *Centre for Armenian Information & Advice* and the *Romanca Society.*

The powerful and moving film presented the destiny of an Armenian family, living in the Ottoman Empire, in 1915, whose dreams are shattered with only memories left, in the eyes of a child, who lives to paint the story of his shattered childhood and that of his people.

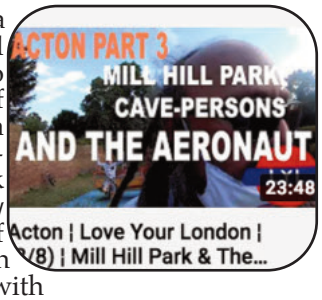
Following the screening, there was a Q & A with the producer, director and actress Diana Angelson Busuioc who explained what motivated her to make the film and answered all the questions posed at her elegantly and with grace. Thank you Diana and and the *Romanca Society.* ■

CAIA was one of a handful of organisations who achieved the Safer Supplementary Schools Award by Ealing Council. ■

SIMRA II PROJECT

CAIA participated in the *Simra II* project in the spring and summer of 2019 and as a European project all the partners gathered for a end-of-project Conference on 22 November at the *Watermans Arts Centre. Simra II* aims to support the development and empowerment of migrant women and girls and a report outlining the different models used by the participating countries will be disseminated in due course. Vanita Nicholls, a long-time member of *CAIA*, who facilitated the sessions run at *Hayashen* for the project made the presentation as part of the London partnership.
CAIA would like to thank the *Simra II* partners (from London, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, and Sweden) for the opportunity of being part of this experience, and would especially like to thank the members of the *CAIA Parents & Toddlers group*, the *Hayashen Youth Group* and the *Well-being Group* and hope that they found benefit from their participation in the sessions.
If you have a project proposal for *CAIA*, let us know.

ACTON & ARMENIANS



You might be interested in a video by Tristán White and Sharon Crawford who explore the rich history of *Mill Hill Park* in Acton, visit a site made famous by a legendary TV comedy series, talk about the *Acton County Grammar School* and some of its famous rock musician alumni and their links with Armenia and Armenians. *https://youtu.be/02L7vzPYHYo*

THANK YOU

Two afternoons a week English language cases take place at *Hayashen.* These classes are free and aimed at beginners of various levels and lead to a certificate.
Those taking part are vey appreciative of the classes.
If you know anyone who could benefit from this opportunity please inform them to contact *CAIA* on 0208 992 4621/*info@caia.org.uk*

CAIA'S CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

The core belief of *CAIA* is the inalienable right of all people to have the means to improve the quality of their life and the core values is the empowerment of users to help themselves to affect change in their lives through the provision of accurate information and impartial advice.
Annually *CAIA* helps 500+ vulnerable people of all ages born in 20+ different countries through advice and practical support about their rights as refugees/migrants, as isolated older/disabled people, careers, women/children subsisting on low incomes, poor accommodation or threatened with homelessness/deportations. *CAIA* enables them to address the inequalities they experience such as cultural exclusion, language and digital barriers to progress from surviving, coping, to adapting and thriving in society.
The *CAIA* is therefore grateful to 60+ generous people in UK and abroad who kindly responded positively to its first *crowdfunding* campaign in December 2019 via *GlobalGiving*, raising over £5000 to enable *CAIA* to continue to provide vital free legal advice services such as immigration, housing and benefit entitlements.
The campaign site is open via the following link:
https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/empower-armenians/

Use above QR Code to make a donation to CAIA

Use above QR Code to visit CAIA's website for the latest news

ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS

SENIORS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS

On 14th December 2019, *CAIA* organised its annual Christmas party at *Hayashen* for Armenian senior citizens, their carers and those connected to them.

Almost 100 people enjoyed an afternoon of good food, company and entertainment. Special guests included His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, the Armenian Primate of UK and the Mayor of *Ealing Council*, Dr Councillor Abdullah Gulaid. Both spoke during the function and praised *CAIA* for its charitable work as well as congratulating everyone for the New Year and Christmas.
CAIA is grateful to the many volunteers who helped with the success of this function which was taking place for the 34th consecutive year as mark of respect for our older generation and their carers.. Special thanks to *JAKOBS* restaurant and *The Felix Project* for catering supplies. ■

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING GROUP & 1-2-1 SUPPORT SESSIONS

This two-year project finished in 2020 with 62 people, several of them Carers of others such as older partners, benefiting from 110 group sessions, 207 one-to-one sessions and 22 home visits by Project Coordinator, Scarlet Sarksan.The final year of the project involved:
- Reviewing to identify change in the need of the group due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Providing 1:1 support (counselling/welfare check) via telephone and *Zoom*
- Moving to online sessions, and later moving back to face to face in *Hayashen* courtyard *(above)* and local parks.
- Sustaining group engagement by setting up a *WhatsApp* group, which was a very useful platform for mutual support such as sharing recipes, music and other tips. Practical support was provided to some group members to learn how to use *WhatsApp, Skype and Google* to enable everyone to join the group meetings remotely to reduce anxieties and help improve general emotional well being. Some of the carers who by sharing their experiences have felt that they are not the only ones who are struggling with caring responsibilities and learned new ways to cope. Remote group meeting topics included:

➢ Facing and managing the challenges of the lockdown, isolation and boredom.
➢ Adopting new hobbies during the lockdown such as painting, gardening and cooking.
➢ Coping with anxiety, panic and loss/bereavement.
➢ The disproportioned negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on BAME communities.
➢ Social distancing and living with the virus
➢ Denial of mental health issues

The *People's Health Trust* which funded the project commissioned an independent case study of the impact of the project, which can be read via the following link:
https://caia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Armenian-Wellbeing.pdf

ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

On 24th July 2019, 50 children and parents enjoyed a sunny day out at *Whipsnade Zoo* organised by *ACPG*. The day was spend walking and seeing all the different animals such as lions, giraffes, rhinoceros, penguins, elephants, chimpanzees, taking a steam train ride, having a picnic and eating ice cream!

Brilliant presentation and informative discussion with Nola Saunder *(above),* a specialist *Domestic Abuse & Complex Needs* Worker from *Hestia* based at *Ealing Council* in January 2020 with Armenian Women at *Hayashen.*

.A fun *Halloween* party in October 2019 at with parents and children dressed up enjoying themselves at *Hayashen*.

Eating together during the 2019 ACPG Christmas party

On Monday 16th December 2019 the Hayashen Parents & Toddlers group enjoyed a wonderful Christmas party.
Thank you to all the children and parents who contributed to the fun as well as Father Christmas who visited and gave out presents.

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE 2020

During February-March 2020, *CAIA* organised its annual *Introduction to Armenian History, Culture and Identity* course thanks to the support of *Ealing Council*.
The first session took place on 16th February 2020, with Andre Simonian, the talented lead singer, songwriter of the musical group, *The Beautified Project* a guest speaker. Andre spoke and introduced his groundbreaking documentary *"Melody for Harmony"* to a delighted audience at *Hayashen*. The aim of the documentary was to promote dialogue between the ordinary citizens of Armenia and Turkey with political and historical problems, through the international language of music. At the end there was a very interesting discussion and questions, which Andre replied and explained patiently.

On 23rd February 2020, Emilia Ashken Wyszynski *(below)* delivered a presentation about *'Nor Arax'*, an Armenian village in *Bari*, a port city by the *Adriatic Sea*, Southern Italy. What connects her to this village was her grandfather, Diran Timurian, who lived there alongside fellow Armenians of that time who had fled persecution from the Ottoman Empire.

Emilia started with a brief history of Armenian influences in Italian culture. Some examples included *San Lazzaro degli Armeni* (meaning *"Saint Lazarus of the Armenians"*), a small island in the *Venetian* Lagoon, which houses the monastery of the *Mekhitarists*, an Armenian Catholic congregation. Another was that of the *Church of Santa Maria de Armenis*. This church was part of the ancient monastery *Benedictine*, the name of which is likely due to the presence of Armenian population in *Matera*. There was reference to the notable Armenian poet Hrand Nazariantz, whose untiring efforts enabled the establishment of *Nor Arax*, which housed the Armenian refugees in the countryside of *Bari*. The village and the barracks, which housed the exiled Armenians, gave them the opportunity to work, build a school and chapel – a home away from home. More specifically, these Armenians helped establish and maintain the production of oriental carpets. Weaving skills and knowledge which they had gained in their homeland and subsequently utilised to survive. A tribute to their heritage. Emilia also explained that the word *'Arax'* was a reference to the river flowing through Armenia, Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan. This, according to Emilia, was a symbol of water, new life and rebirth, hence *'Nor Arax'*. It was not, therefore, surprising that the speaker gave credit and recognition to the Italians of that time, without whose compassion and generosity these Armenians would not have had the chance to flourish again.

On 1st March 2020, Dr Hratch Tchillingirian *(above)* presented the findings of *"The Armenian Diaspora Survey"*, a 4-year project funded by the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* and led by the *Armenian Institute London*.
The aim of the project was to find out the views of the people that make up the Armenian diaspora. Hratch reported during the first two years of the project in 2018 and 2019, around 3000 people have responded to the survey. Results for 2019 are still being analysed but this event at *Hayashen* was the first for people to hear the key results gleaned so far. In 2018 they surveyed people from Armenians living in for cities of *Boston, Cairo, Marseille* and *Pasadena*, and in 2019 Armenians living in Argentina, Lebanon, Canada and Romania. The main themes of the questions in the survey focused on identity, language and culture, community engagement, political engagement, and connections with the Republic of Armenia today.
Everyone present was very impressed with the quality and thoroughness of the research as well as the presentation. Many interesting questions were asked at the end with everyone. The survey data and project progress is freely available for anyone to view and use via the following website: *www.armeniandiasporasurvey.com*
Raffi Bedrosyan *(below)*, author of the book *'Trauma and Resilience: Armenians in Turkey – hidden, not hidden and no longer hidden'* was the fourth speaker of the series on 8th March 2020. Raffi, who had kindly travelled from Canada specially to speak,explained how after the Armenian genocide, around 60,000 orphans remained in Turkey and were

taken in by various families. In doing so they were Islamised, forbidden to speak Armenian and exposed to the teachings of the *Quran*. Some boys, of any family connections, were taken into Turkish military schools while many girls were sold off as slaves. Richer girls were often sought after by the slave traders/owners due to their inherited property/land. Many descendants of these orphans were therfore raised with the notion that their ethnic identity was Kurdish or Turkish only to find out, at the end of their ancestor's life, that they in fact held Armenian roots.

Raffi also referred to reconstruction of the *Surp Giragos church* in *Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd*. This reconstruction has proved to be a place of solace for Islamised Armenians to gather. *(Sadly the church has since this talk has been damaged and closed down again which is indicative of the trauma and resilience of these quasi-Armenians).*

On the one hand, the pressure to hide their identity while on the other, the fear of discrimination or becoming ostracised even from their own Turkish family in revealing their roots. The latter was and still is particularly difficult as this poses various risks, threats in the workplace environment and even *'excommunication'* from close friends and relatives.

Another subject Raffi spoke about was *'Project Rebirth'*, which helps to support Islamised Armenians to get in touch with their original roots, language and culture by scheduling visits to Armenia. Their eldest student was 84 years old while their youngest was 8. Some members were even baptised as Christian during their visits to Armenia.

CAIA CEO and founding member Misak Ohanian spoke informally on Sunday 15th March 2020, about the history and various milestones of the *CAIA* since its establishment in 1986. These included *CAIA's* charitable role in helping Armenian refugees settle and integrate in UK by enabling them to access thier local rights, sending humanitarian aid during the Armenian earthquake in 1988 and first *Artsakh* war, supporting emerging NGO's following Armenia's independence, the purchase of the *Hayashen* Centre in 1994, developing diverse progames and projects. for various demographics within the community. Following questions and answers, a new 15-minute documentary to mark *CAIA's* 30th anniversary was also premiered.

The documentary can be viewed via following link: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKUwyMAf1Zs*

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the sixth and final talk in the series was postponed.

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE 2021

6 half day Course - 1:30 - 4:30 pm at Hayashen

The series this year is dedicated to Ani King-Underwood 1950-2020

Sunday 2 May 2021 – *The Second Karabakh War: Karabakh, Armenia, and the Armenian Diaspora"* - Vicken Cheterian

Sunday 9 May 2021 – *Why be Armenian in Europe today? 10 Reasons why you are lucky to be Armenian (or to know one)* - Nicolas Tavitian

Sunday 16 May 2021 - *A Smoking Gun? Talaat Pasha's Report on the Armenian Genocide* - Ara Sarafian.

Sunday 23 May 2021 - *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen by Leon Surmelian* - The journey behind the book, selected readings and some insights into the author's other works – Presentation *by* Richard M. Anooshian, *(Armenian Institute)*

Sunday 30 May 2021 - *Reading Silences: Essays on Women and War in 20th Century Turkey* - Suzan Meryem Rosita Kalayci

Sunday 6 June 2021 – *Armenia at a Crossroads: Reviving the National Project after the Second Karabakh War* - Dr. Kevork Oscanian

To attend one or more of above sessions please enrol in advance by email to *info@caia.org.uk*

The above image is a still from the documentary made for *CAIA's* 30th anniversary by young brilliant director Seda Grigoryan. Her biography can be read via following link: *https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3878174/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm*

HAYASHEN YOUTH CLUB

An exciting *HAYC* session took place on 6 September 2019 with talented musician Raz as special guest. Raz demonstrated to the youth not only how to compose a song but they wrote one together. Well (20%) of one anyway, which was lot of fun, especially when it came to write the song lyrics. Something about a red sweater! The fun continued during supper followed by a fantastic cream cake marking the birthday of one of the youth, Luke. Happy Birthday Luke. Finally the youth enjoyed watching a video of Raz's band performing. The band is called *"From the Outside"* and you heard it first here!

On 4 October, *HAYC* welcomed Aren Berberian *(above)* who gave a visual presentation about the fascinating history and culture of the medieval era Armenian kingdom of *Cilicia* focusing on the *Crusades* and *Kessab,* the last surviving region of *Cilicia* and all of Western Armenia which is today part of Syria. The youth asked lots of questions to Aren who was kind enough to answer all of them.

Following a *Create your own Milkshake* session on 8 November, it was time to mark Christmas on 6 December with a party where the youth enjoyed music, food and plenty of games such as balloon run, create your own snowman, ping pong spoon, bottle flip and more!
Prizes were awarded to everyone for various reasons such as winning the activities, most attended Youth, best dressed, best volunteer, etc.
On 17 January 2020, *HAYC* welcomed Marilena Simonian *(above)* who spoke about her experience of qualifying as a pharmacist. She also answered questions related to her studies and qualification over pizza supper, garlic bread and homemade *halva* washed down with fruit juices.
On 31 January 2020, a well-being workshop was delivered by *CAIA's* Youth Worker Venetia who is a psychology student at *Brunel University.*

On 21 February 2020, David Karapetian, a talented young singer *(above)* who studies in the junior programme of the *Royal Academy of Music* shared his experience at *HAYC.* David also sang a short song to the delight of everyone. His singing was recorded and displayed on *CAIA's Facebook* page which attracted lots of positive comments.
The next *HAYC* session took place on 6 March when we marked *Science Week* with various interactive and fun learning experiments such as making slime.
On 13 March 2020, *CAIA's* Advice Worker, Arthur Manouk Cahill delivered a workshop and fun quiz entitled *Have you thought about being a Lawyer?* The youth were thought provoked by the subject matter and enjoyed the challenge of guessing the answers to the questions during the interactive session

After several months during which *HAYC* operated online, the youth club restarted on 17 July and 3 August 2020 in *Hayashen* carefully and in a socially distanced manner during activities, eating together and discussions on how the youth managed their time during the lockdown. More about how we managed *HAYC* during the lockdown can be read on page 12.

J PETCHEY YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to 15-year old David Karapetian, winner of the *Jack Petchey Foundation* Young Achievement Award.

Congratulations to young popular singer Erik Antonyan, with his *Jack Petchey Foundation* Young Achievement Award presented by *CAIA* Youth Worker Venetia Abrahamian.

A group from HAYC visited and met the Worshipful Mayor of Ealing Borough, Councillor Dr Abdullah Gulaid on 21st October 2019. The Mayor kindly introduced the history of the Town Hall and held a small reception for the group.

Over 50 young people from *HAYC* enjoyed the production of *Matilda The Musical* in central London on 26th February 2020, thanks to the support of *BBC Children In Need.*

HAYC GO KARTING FUN DAY

On 23 October, 2019, 36 young people enjoyed a great day out of go-karting at *Brentwood Leisure Centre* organised by *CAIA's Hayashen Armenian Youth Club*. The day started from 9am with full of energy and excitement, travelling by coach with laughter and music. On our arrival, the youth were greeted by the Centre staff who delivered a health and safety presentation before the youth wore the special driving uniforms. The youth competed against each other several times safely and securely over the next five hours. 16 large pizzas were shared at lunchtime by the youth. At 4pm, the fastest (and safest) young drivers were announced to the delight of their friends. By 6pm all returned back to *Hayashen* tired and happy into the arms of their parents.

In October 2020, thanks to the *Havelock Family Centre*, *CAIA* distributed 18 tablets to Armenians families who met certain criteria as part of a wider project to support children to do their homework online or remotely. The project helped a total of 100 families across West London from diverse backgrounds. ■

NewStatesman

SCIENCE & TECH LONG READS MAGAZINE EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

INTERNATIONAL 8 OCTOBER 2020

Why the Armenian diaspora is rallying as war rages in Nagorno-Karabakh

A long history of genocide and pogroms informs the response to the conflict with Azerbaijan.

The Armenian writer Silva Kaputikyan wrote of her nation as a walnut tree: *"sprawling over the small corner of land"*, spilling its fruit *"to nourish foreign soils"*.

Over the past ten days, a sense of threat to that small corner of land has triggered an outpouring of solidarity among diaspora Armenians as far afield as Syria and Los Angeles. Fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the ethnic Armenian enclave of *Nagorno-Karabakh* has escalated into the worst conflict in the region since the 1990s. Although under international law the territory is sovereign Azerbaijani territory, most Armenians argue that *Nagorno-Karabakh* has the right to self-determine separately from Azerbaijan.

There is no single Armenian diaspora, points out Armenak Tokmajyan, a scholar at the *Carnegie Middle East Centre* in Beirut, himself an Armenian who grew up in Syria. And in normal times, diaspora communities are usually divided over the politics of Armenia itself, or simply not overly concerned with day-to-day issues in a tiny country thousands of miles away. Yet at times of existential crisis, he says, Armenians rally together in a show of unity for their spiritual homeland. Marginal differences are instantly forgotten as intergenerational trauma and the fear of losing their national state reasserts itself.The modern state of Armenia is a tiny fraction of the size of the lands historically inhabited by Armenians, many of whom lived for centuries in what is now eastern Turkey. After the genocide carried out against them by the Ottoman Empire in 1915, hundreds of thousands were then scattered around the world. Around a million also live in Russia, a legacy of the communist period when Armenians migrated from their own Soviet republic to more prosperous areas of the union. The diaspora is estimated to comprise at least eight million people, more than twice the number living in the country itself.

Most diaspora Armenians perceive their place outside historic Armenia to be a direct result of displacement during the genocide, leading to a heightened awareness of threats, says Alex Galitsky, the communications director at the *Armenian National Committee* of America Western Region, an advocacy group representing the largest community of Armenians outside the country. *"So when we see these attacks on Armenia from Azerbaijan and Turkey, we see the representatives of the same ideology of pan-Turkism which led to the 1915 genocide."* He adds that Armenians worldwide are estimated to have raised some $70m in donations for the Armenian cause since fighting broke out less than two weeks ago.

"We have a responsibility towards Armenia. Many of us feel survivors' guilt," says Misak Ohanian, the founder of the *Centre for Armenian Information and Advice* in west London. He was born to a family of genocide survivors in Cyprus and moved to the UK after the partition of the island in the 1970s. *"Armenia depends on us speaking up and offering political support,"* he adds in a clipped Cypriot-Londoner accent.

London Armenians appealing outside Downing Street in October 2020 for British government intervention to end attack on Artsakh.

Prominent diaspora Armenians, such as Cher and Kim Kardashian, have rallied support for Armenian forces via their social media platforms, a not-insignificant driver of popular opinion given their cultural clout and the relative unfamiliarity of the conflict in the Caucasus abroad.

Several US members of Congress, some representing heavily Armenian areas in the US such as Los Angeles, home to the largest Armenian population outside the Caucasus, have offered rhetorical support for the *Republic of Artsakh*. Galitsky says the Armenian cause attracts bipartisan support for different reasons. *"Republicans support Armenia as a bastion of Christianity in a largely Muslim region full of threats to US national security interests, while Democrats offer support for the self-determination and independence of all peoples,"* he says.

For the time being, the military situation does not appear overly preoccupying for Armenia, despite the strident utterances of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who has warned of a second genocide if Azerbaijan were to gain the upper hand. But if it were to seem that *Nagorno-Karabakh* could be overrun, Galitsky says, the Armenian community would mobilise in a way it hasn't since the war of the 1990s. *"At least anecdotally, I have heard of Armenians from the US and Europe who have travelled to Armenia with the specific intent of volunteering for the armed forces. If the facts on the ground were to change significantly, I would expect to see our community come together to do what is necessary."*

Shushan Davtyan, who was born in Russia and now lives in Denmark, says trauma passed down through generations defines the collective consciousness of the Armenian diaspora. *"We have suffered innumerable hardships. But we persevere no matter what."*

Written by Ido Vock - International correspondent at the *New Statesman.* ■

A memorial shrine and prayers for the fallen soldiers and victims of the Artsakh war held on 22 November 2020 at the Armenian Genocide Memorial Apricot Tree in Ealing, West London attended by traumatized and grieving local Armenians. ■

ARTSAKH

On 27 September 2020, Azerbaijan supported by Turkey attacked the Armenian population of Artsakh

01

THE SUNDAY TIMES
Rod Liddle

NEWS | COMMENT

Let's talk Turkey

Memo to the Foreign Office. When Covid has finally disappeared, can we keep in place the quarantine for people travelling on holiday to Turkey? Just on principle? Keep the returning holiday-makers in an unpleasant hotel to be lectured all day by Greeks, Kurds, Israelis and Armenians about why Turkey is the last place you should visit.

The country's foul regime is now intervening, with its usual malevolence, in the worsening dispute in Nagorno-Karabakh. The region is almost exclusively Armenian, but Azerbaijan has hold of it. The UK should recognise the breakaway republic and support the Armenians — victims of a genocide the Turks still refuse to acknowledge.

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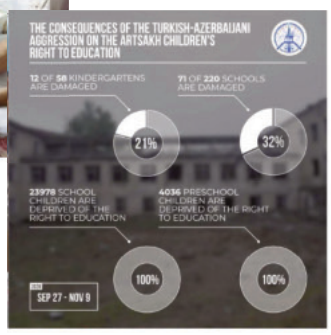

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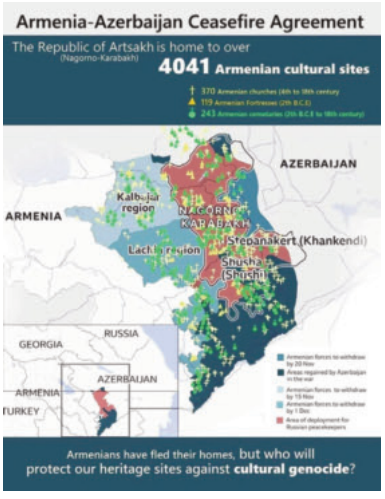

On 9 November 2020, Armenia accepted a Russia and Turkey-backed ceasefire ending the 44-day attack by Azerbaijan. According to many this is not the end of the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabahk) conflict; it is just the beginning of a new chapter because the rights of the indigenous people of Artsakh has not been resolved.

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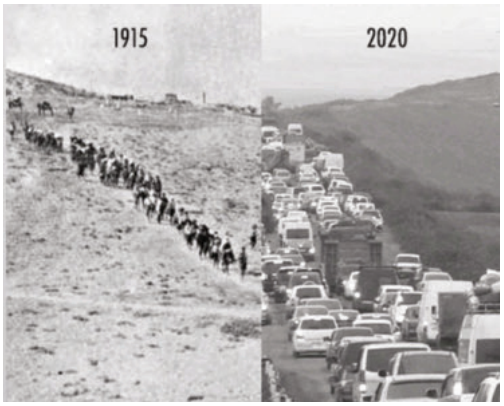


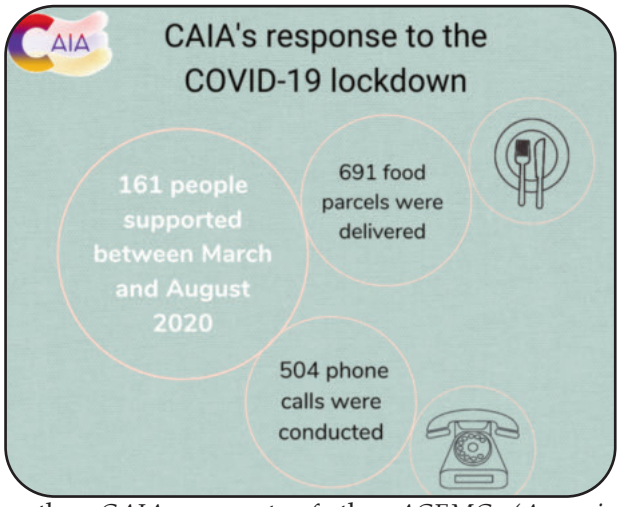
COVID-19 PANDEMIC & CAIA

Between March 2020 and 2021, there were three lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore during these 12 months the *CAIA* had to adapt its operations three times, restructuring the way it delivers its service to maintain support for the Armenian community and same time comply with government regulations.
CAIA's services during this period was extremely reassuring for those who were vulnerable, anxious and needed help to cope with the negative impact of the pandemic such as reduced income, disputes from overcrowded housing, digital exclusion, immigration status, job loss, health and mental well being.
Below are examples of how we managed our services.

The above and below images are from *CAIA's Hayashen Parents & Toddlers Group* operating online two mornings a week during the first lockdown which that ensured social interactions were maintained, under 5s learned and sang together to keep spirits high, reduced parents and children's anxiety/fears and stress of staying indoors.

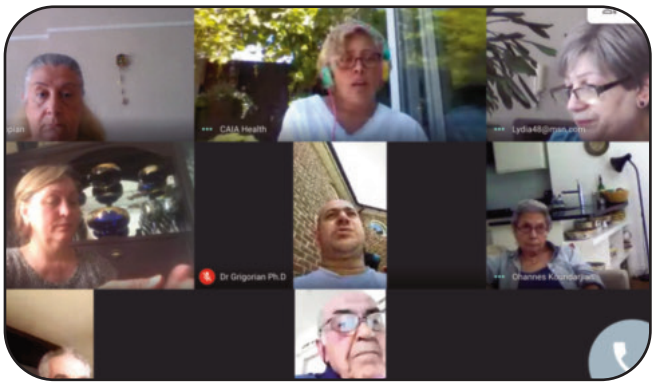
The image below is also from the first lockdown of *CAIA's Hayashen Youth Club* which took place online from May until end of June 2020. The virtual youth club activities included interactive sessions such as a talent show,with individual youth playing a musical instrument, singing, demonstrating magic tricks and sports. etc. Another session was called *Fun with Flags* where young people had to guess the flags of various countries.

CAIA suspended its popular and vital weekly lunch club three times which many older/disabled people and carers rely on for respite. At each time *CAIA* organised weekly deliveries of free food to those who were self-isolating or housebound. Due to the limited number of volunteer drivers, we prioritised those who were unable to shop, cook and were struggling on their own due to the lockdown. Where we could not help directly, we referred the vulnerable to local food banks, other charities and local councils to help. During the first lockdown that lasted six



months, *CAIA* as part of the *ACEMC (Armenian Community Emergency Management Committee)* delivered over 690 free food parcels to 161 vulnerable Armenian households who were residents of the London boroughs of *Ealing, Hounslow, Kensington, Brent, Southwark, Hammersmith & Fulham*. We are grateful to the food provided by *The Felix Project, City Harvest, Ealing Food Bank, Morrisons Acton* amongst *others*. Additional support came from *DEFRA* thanks to a succourful consortium bid led by the *Young Ealing Foundation*. From the start of the pandemic, *CAIA* has been part of the *Ealing Together* umbrella agency composed of various statutory such as *Ealing Council, Ealing CCG, DWP* and

many voluntary and community groups who meet and communicate regulary to ensure that government messages to stay home in order to protect the *NHS* and save lives, were being implement practically at grassroots level. *CAIA* also contributed to the Mayor of London's, *London Together* initiative by *contributing to various* surveys and consultations, including about how we all can rebuild better.



The drop-in sessions of *CAIA's Emotional Well Being* group took place weekly online *(image above)* via *Google Meet* to ensure that during those difficult and uncertain times people had the space to talk with each other and offer mutual support. A regular theme of the discussions was how to cope with negative impact of COVID-19 such as anxiety, stress and staying indoors.

These sessions were led by Scarlet Sarksan, a qualified counsellor, trained in existential psychotherapy with experience in grief, trauma and loss. During the various lockdowns when it was safe, the group met outside including sessions in local *Gunnersbury Park* in Acton *(above).*

The *Hayashen* weekly Social/Lunch club has been disrupted the most during the three COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The club has been halted and restarted several times while at all times respecting social distancing rules *(see above photo).*
The club provides hot food, opportunities to socialise, undertake mild recreational activities such as bingo, table games such as pool and table tennis . ■

CONDOLENCES

The CAIA extends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of following CAIA members and freinds who sadly passed away since the last issue of this newsletter. Everyone who knew and loved them will sorely miss them.
If we have omitted anyone from the list below, please forgive us.

The *CAIA* mourns the passing of the following who attended regularly its weekly Senior Citizens Club.
We feel the pain of their families and loved ones comforted only by fact of the happy memories we experienced with them over the years at *Hayashen*.

+ Mooshegh Biglarian 1943-2020
+ Annik Abrahamian 1923- 2020
+ Anjella Rahanian 1928-2020
+ Krikor Chakmakjian 1928-2020
+ Seda Tarlalian 1938-2020

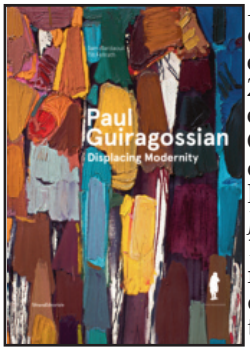
Condolences to the families of:
+ Hamo Mansurian 1948-2020
+ Karen Harutunyan 1965-2020 *(Former CAIA Trustee)*
+ Edman Ayvazian 964-2020
Armenian painter, architect and designer who created many portraits, landscapes, seascapes. His works can be find in many churches museums including *Lazar Gallery, House-Museum of Aram Khachaturian* and the *National Gallery of Armenia.* In 2015, Ayvazyan was awarded *Arshil Gorki of the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia.*

It is with profound sadness that we heard the passing of the ever smiling Ani King-Underwood (née Manoukian) on 17th October 2020.
Ani, born in 1950 in Lebanon, was one of the first trustees of the *CAIA* when it was formed in 1986 and an active member in various Armenian organisations, institutions, and involved with many publications and campaigns.
Ani was a committed, skilled and articulate journalist, documentary producer, director, an Armenian patriot and a loyal friend to many diverse people.
Ani's contribution within UK's Armenian community over the past several decades as well building bridges/supporting various human rights causes cannot be understated or summarised in a few sentences. She will be missed by everyone who knew her, had the honour of working with her and her many friends and family. ■

Views expressed in articles and other announcements appearing in "Armenian Voice" are not necessarily that of the CAIA.

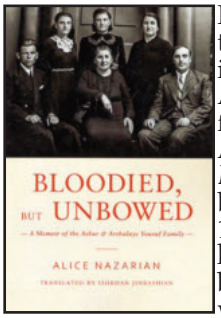
BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Guiragossian: Displacing Modernity
***Edited** by Sam Bardaouil, Till Fellrath, Manuella Guiragossian; 399 pp, ISBN 8836639070 - 9788836639076, Published by Silvana Editoriale.*



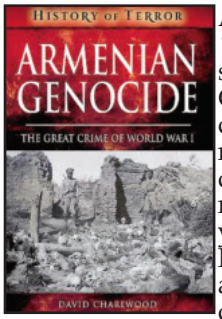
Paul Guiragossian (1926–93) is one of the most influential artists to emerge from the Arab World in the 20th century. Born to Armenian parents, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, he experienced the consequences of exile, first as a child, and later as a young refugee from *Jerusalem* arriving in *Beirut* in the late 1940s. Guiragossian's personal experience of displacement led him to craft a formal style and critical stance that were at the forefront of modernism's search for a language that could aptly express the complexities of the human condition. From the monumental to the minute, the figurative to the abstract, Guiragossian's work is equally marked by a constant negotiation of a wide range of art-historical styles as well as a profound rootedness within the complexity of his immediate cultural and sociopolitical context.
This timely and comprehensive monograph addresses Guiragossian's five-decade prolific career, shedding light on diverse aspects of the artist's oeuvre—ranging from his paintings and drawings to his illustrations and theater designs. It consists of more than 600 color reproductions of artworks and archival documents, and a select anthology of scholarly articles and newspaper reviews translated for the first time into English from Arabic and French. Edited by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, and Manuella Guiragossian, it provides a new reading of Guiragossian, situating his work within the cultural heterogeneity of the cities in which he lived, studied and worked, and revealing his impact on both his peers and the generations that followed. Drawing on a sweeping range of primary documents from the *Paul Guiragossian Foundation* archives, and building on recent scholarship on Arab modernism, this monograph is the most extensive publication to date on the life and work of the artist.

***Bloodied, But Unbowed: A Memoir of the Ashur & Arshaluys Yousuf Family** by Alice Nazarian; Paperback – Illustrated; Published by Nineveh Press - ISBN 9198410199 9789198410198*



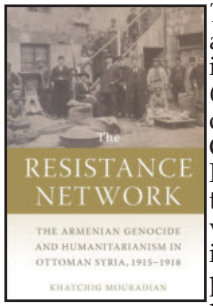
In this memoir, author Alice Nazarian tells the story of her parents and family in the shadow of the Armenian/Assyrian Genocide. Her father, Ashur Yousuf, a prominent Assyrian intellectual and professor at *Euphrates College in Kharpert, Turkey*, became a victim of the Genocide in 1915. Her mother, Arshaluys Yousuf, heroically struggled on after her husband's death, raising their six children while helping educate countless young children in orphanages and schools in the Middle East.
The memoir comprises a narrative of the turbulent life of Arshaluys and a section devoted to writings by and about Ashur Yousuf. This English translation, while faithful to the original Armenian, contains some new material and an updated genealogy of the descendants of Ashur and Arshaluys Yousuf.

***Armenian Genocide – The Great Crime of world war I**: by David Charlwood; Paperback, 128 pages; Published by Pen & Sword Military - ISBN 1526729016- 9781526729019*



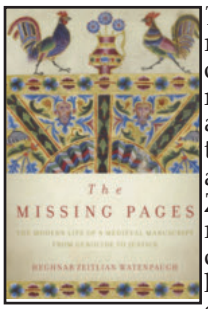
A moving, gripping short history of the *"forgotten genocide"*, told through the stories of those who witnessed it. Crammed into cattle trucks and deported to camps, shot and buried in mass graves, or force-marched to death: over 1.5 million Armenians were murdered by the Turkish state, twenty years before the start of Hitler's Holocaust. It was described as a crime against humanity and Turkey was condemned by Russia, France, Great Britain and the United States. But two decades later the genocide had been conveniently forgotten. Hitler justified his Polish death squads by asking in 1939: *'Who after all is today speaking about the destruction of the Armenians?'* Armenian Genocide is a new, gripping short history that tells the story of a forgotten genocide: the men and women who died, the few who survived, and the diplomats who tried to intervene

***The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915–1918:** by Khatchig Mouradian; H/C 262 pages; Published by Michigan State University Press; ISBN 1611863856 9781611863857*



The Resistance Network is the history of an underground network of humanitarians, missionaries, and diplomats in *Ottoman Syria* who helped save the lives of thousands during the Armenian Genocide.
Khatchig Mouradian challenges depictions of Armenians as passive victims of violence and subjects of humanitarianism, demonstrating the key role they played in organizing a humanitarian resistance against the destruction of their people. Piecing together hundreds of accounts, official documents, and missionary records, Mouradian presents a social history of genocide and resistance in wartime *Aleppo* and a network of transit and concentration camps stretching from *Bab* to *Ras ul-Ain* and *Der Zor*. He ultimately argues that, despite the violent and systematic mechanisms of control and destruction in the cities, concentration camps, and massacre sites in this region, the genocide of the Armenians did not progress unhindered - unarmed resistance proved an important factor in saving countless lives.

***The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice** by Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh; H/C, 436 pages; Published by Stanford University Press; ISBN 0804790442- 9780804790444*



The Missing Pages is the biography of a manuscript that is at once art, sacred object, and cultural heritage. Its tale mirrors the story of its scattered community as Armenians have struggled to redefine themselves after genocide and in the absence of a homeland. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh follows in the manuscript's footsteps through seven centuries, from medieval Armenia to the killing fields of 1915 *Anatolia*, the refugee camps of *Aleppo, Ellis Island*, and Soviet Armenia, and ultimately to a *Los Angeles courtroom*. At once a story of genocide and survival, of unimaginable loss and resilience. ■

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By becoming a member of the Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA) you help support Armenians in the UK and make a real difference to the lives of many. The CAIA is a registered charity in the UK No. 1088534.

We:

- Provide independent confidential advisory services on a wide range of issues
- Provide transportation and luncheon clubs for our elders
- Run regular youth clubs
- Run preschool and school holiday activities for children
- Promote Armenian History, Culture and educational Events
- Provide training and learning opportunities for adults
- Maintain a comprehensive community library.
- Provide volunteering/work experience/work placement opportunities & training where required.

When you join you will receive:

Regular **e-bulletins** and information about events happening in our community.

- Armenian Voice Newsletter
- An Invitation to our Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Reduced rates for CAIA activities/outings/workshops and priority booking.
- Along with your Family membership your children will have membership to our Youth Club.

I wish to become a member of CAIA and enclose the relevant membership subscription for the year:

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