

ARMENIAN VOICE



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CENTRE FOR
ARMENIAN INFORMATION
AND ADVICE

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'HAYASHEN', 105A MILL HILL ROAD, ACTON, LONDON W3 8JF. TELEPHONE 020-8992 4621. TELEFAX 020-8993 8953

E-mail: armenianvoice@caia.org.uk Web-site: www.caia.org.uk

FUNDED BY THE LONDON COUNCILS & LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING

GOR MKHITARIAN & SONYA VAROUJIAN PERFORM A MEMORABLE EVENING OF ARMENIAN SONGS IN HAYASHEN



A magical evening of intimate and inspirational songs about love, yearning, friendship and the homeland delivered with great passion and originality transcending the generations. The evening of 9 May with singer-songwriters Gor Mkhitarian and Sonya Varoujian at Hayashen was enjoyed by almost 120 people of different ages. Gor Mkhitarian born in Armenia but now living in Los Angeles and Sonya Varoujian born in London but now living in Yerevan, travelled several thousand miles from opposite sides of the world to perform in Hayashen to the delight of a very appreciative and attentive audience. Accompanied



often only by their guitars they played two sets each in Armenian and English. Gor and Sonya ended the evening by singing couple of well known songs of Gomitas in a duet making sure that the audience sang with them. On the following day, Gor and Sonya took part in a workshop joined by some 30 members of the community composed mainly of young people and children where they talked about their musical background, influences, CDs and general life experiences. They also sang some of their com-

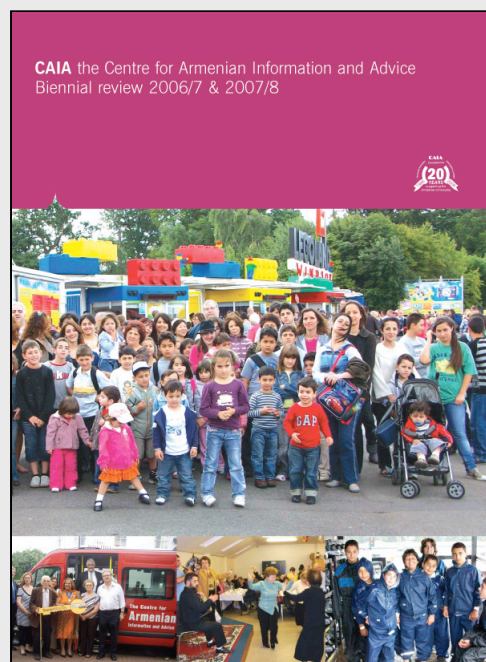


positions as well as traditional ones to ensure audience participation.

The CAIA and everyone who witnessed these wonderful performances were grateful to the kind support of the Big Lottery Fund's Awards for All and the Benlian Trust for making this unique weekend possible.

CD's by Gor and Sonya are available from CAIA. ■

CAIA PUBLISHES NEW BIENNIAL REPORT



If you would like a copy of CAIA's new 2 year biennial review which highlights its vital charitable services during 2006-8, please contact us and we will be pleased to post a free copy to you. Otherwise you can read it on CAIA's website at www.caia.org.uk ■



EASTER CELEBRATED IN HAYASHEN



On Sunday 12 April 2009 over 100 members of Armenian community celebrated Easter in *Hayashen*. The celebrations included good food and songs performed by popular singer *Samuel*. Special guest was Stephen Pound MP for Ealing North who once again spoke passionately about the Armenian people and their just cause and contribution to British society.



THANK YOU

A big thank you to all our volunteers who help write, produce and fold the *Armenian Voice* every 6 months so that it can reach every Armenian household across the UK
(Photo of volunteers folding AV issue No.54 in January 2009)



FREE ACCREDITED EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AT CAIA IN SEPTEMBER 2009



Following the success of a 5 day accredited training course at *Hayashen* held in January 2009 to help members of Armenian community find the jobs they want, the CAIA in partnership with *Tribal Education Group* are repeating this accredited course.

Who is it for?

This ASDAN qualification is designed to provide practical based skills to help you get where you want to be. This course equips individuals to progress to other qualifications and to employment. It has been prepared for recognising achievement in areas of personal skills and development.

When is it?

Tuesday 15th September	Tuesday 22nd September
Wednesday 16th September	Thursday 24th September
Thursday 17th September	

- Classes start from 10 am till 4pm Lunch is included.
- We can also pay for travel expenses if you have a valid receipt, as well covering the cost of child care.

What will the course cover?

- Career planning
- Making effective applications
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Maintaining working standards
- Communicating with others at work
- Exploring job opportunities
- Various problem solving activities
- Rights and responsibilities at work

The Next Step

Recruitment is now open but places are limited so register at by phone 020 8992 4621 or Email: info@caia.org.uk
We also have plans for other short training courses in the future at *Hayashen* about *Financial capability*. ■

COMING SOON TO HAYASHEN...

A tale of faith, love and treachery set amidst the turmoil of the 5th Century

SHUSHANIK
Queen of Armenia

*A full-length play
by J.E. Fairweather - based on a true story*

She alone stands between the freedom of Georgia/ Armenia
and the yoke of the Persian Empire.

A Dramatic Reading in English
October 2009

INTRODUCTION TO ARMENIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & HERITAGE IN HAYASHEN



Between Sunday February 22 to 22 March, the CAIA organised an 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 5-part course delivered professionally by various specialists such as Rev. Dr. Vrej Nersessian, *Head of Christian and Middle East Section, British Library*, Professor Theo van Lint, *Calouste Gulbenkian Chair of Armenian Studies, Oxford University*, Gregory Neil Topalian from the *Gomidas Institute*, author Joan George and Dalila Heath from the *Aghtamar Armenian Dance Group*.

Throughout the course, the students learned together, enjoyed Armenian and Middle Eastern traditional meals, and networked and contributed to very many interesting debates and discussion that took place on a wide range of issues related to Armenian history, literature, faith and culture. At the last session they even learned and practiced some Armenian traditional dances. The CAIA is pleased to announce that thanks to the success of this first attempt, it will be delivering another series during February / March 2010.



SARDARAPAT Déjà Vu

Sardarapat Déjà Vu, a film by Tigran Khzmalian in the Armenian language was shown at *Hayashen* on Friday, May 29, 2009. The film was shown thanks to the efforts of Prof Khatchatur I. Pilikian who also introduced this exceptional documentary film and the historical background leading to the battle of Sardarapat. (The full text of the introduction entitled *The Clash of Empires and Armenia- Then the Battle of Sardarapat* by Prof Khatchatur I. Pilikian can be read on CAIA's website at www.caia.org.)

After the projection a question and answer session took place chaired by Prof Pilikian. This unique film produced with artistic and historical integrity by Tigran Khzmalian was originally sponsored by the *Ministry of Culture of Armenia* but has encountered various restrictions when efforts have been made to screen it in Armenia. ■

CAIA TAKES PART IN ACTON CARNIVAL

On Saturday 11 July the CAIA once again took part in Acton Carnival organized by *Acton Community Forum (ACF)* in partnership with *Ealing Council* and many other local agencies.

Throughout the day many local people and decision makers visited CAIA's stall speaking with staff and volunteers. Below are some photos from day.



From Left: AFC representatives Stephen Flynn, Stephen Hutchinson, and Cllr John Gallagher (white jacket) alongside CAIA members.



CAIA's decorated stall promoting CAIA, Armenia & Armenians



Deputy Mayor of Ealing Council, Cllr. John Ross visiting CAIA's stall during Acton Carnival.

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CULTURAL ACTIVITIES & HEALTH TALKS FOR ARMENIAN SENIOR CITIZENS

On 16 January 2009, on the initiative of *Ealing PCT*, a special Language Focus group was held with 12 Armenian Senior Citizens and Carers aged 65-80 in Hayashen. The purpose of the group discussion was to obtain "Patient Feedback on Language, Interpreting Services". Following a brief presentation by Suky Johal from *EPCT*, CAIA CEO Misak Ohanian interpreted and explained the purpose of the focus group before Hrachik Sarian asked the agreed questions in both Armenian and English languages. The answers and views expressed were subscribed and drafted into a report for *EPCT* to produce a final reports based on similar feedbacks from other minority ethnic communities in the borough.



The conclusions and recommendations based on the experience of Armenian patients using the services were:

- 1- Reception staff needs to be more proactive in promoting availability of service.
- 2- Reception staff and Health professionals need to be more aware about Armenians and their language and should provide the appropriate Armenian interpreter for each individual patient.
- 3- The font size of the Language Poster should be larger and more eye catching/brighter as it has not changed for many years. The location where the poster is displayed can be more prominent and should be checked regularly anonymously by *EPCT*.
- 4- Overall communication and speed should be improved between hospital/GP and patient to reduce unnecessary anxiety/stress with personal records used more efficiency in identifying language, transport and other needs.
- 5- Greater engagement should take place with the Armenian community via CAIA, which has intimate knowledge/experience about this. This is vital in the light of the over-reliance of many older/disabled people on their adult children to help them access NHS services.
- 6- The quality of CAIA's interpretation and advocacy service should be recognised and used more often as they are well known and trusted by the community/patients who regularly use its services, approach for advice and information.

Other talks addressed at engaging Armenian Senior citizens, carers and those connected with them, which took place during the past 6 months included:



♦ "Cancer Screening Programmes" by Stella Ward - Ealing PCT Outreach Nurse Mentor on 30 January 2009 (above photo)



♦ "NHS Brent's service user involvement process" presented by Mr Ralh Jiwan from NHS Brent Friday 27 February (above photo)

♦ "Prostate Cancer Awareness" by Caroline Mark, Volunteer Development Manager from The Prostate Cancer Charity on 27 March

♦ "Community Mental Health for Older People" by Dr. Stephen Orleans Foli from West London Mental Health NHS Trust 17 April. This resulted on CAIA organising a series of surgeries open to the public by appointment

♦ "Ealing Community Advocacy Service" Ann Owen MIND Ealing on 22 May.



♦ "Know your rights - Clear & practical consumer advice" by Nita Lewis from Consumer Direct London, Liaison Officer London Councils on Friday 29 May 2009. (above photo)



♦ "Cancer Awareness" by Deepa Masru and Damyanti Patel from Macmillan Cancer Support on Friday 12 June, 2009.



◆ On 20 February 2009 Armenian Senior Citizens marked *St Vartan's Day* and the heroic battle of *Avarayr* by singing and reciting poetry. (Photo of above & below)



FREE LIFT TO CHURCH EVERY MONTH

Since February 2009, Armenian Senior Citizens and Carers from the West London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow have been provided with free lifts by CAIA to Armenian Church services in Kensington thanks to the kind support of *AGBU London Trust* and encouragement of the *Armenian Church & Community Council*.

The following church services have been attended so far this year, with more planned later.

- St. Sarkis Armenian Church, on 15th February
- Palm Sunday St Yeghiche 5th April
- Ascension (*Hampartsoum*) - Sunday 24th May
- Pentecost (*Hokekaloost*) - Sunday 31st May
- Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord (*Vartavar*) - Sunday 19th July

Anyone interested to benefit from this new service should contact the CAIA office on 0208 992 4621. ■

CAIA TAKES PART IN THE LAUNCH OF NHS EALING'S SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME



The CAIA took part for the launch of *NHS Ealing's Single Equality Scheme* on 19 January, 2009 at Ealing Town Hall. 150 people attended the conference entitled "*Closing the Gap*". CAIA was one of 18 local community organisations that displayed their work and supported the event which aimed to promote equal opportunities, fight discrimination and build strong community relations. ■

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BENEFITS ADVICE SURGERIES organised in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at Hayashen

- Wednesday 22nd July 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
- Wednesday 26th August 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
- Wednesday 23rd September 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
- Wednesday 21st October 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
- Wednesday 18th November 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
- Wednesday 16th December 2009, 10.30 am - 1.00 pm

By Appointment In Advance

Contact CAIA Office On 020 8992 4621

Armenian interpreter available.

* * *

FIT AS A FIDDLE PROGRAMME organised in partnership with Hounslow Age Concern at Hayashen



- Monday 20 July, 2009 -12.30-1.30pm - MOT Health Check
- Monday 27 July, 2009 -12.30-1.30pm - Chair Yoga
- Monday 3rd Aug. 2009 -12.30-1.30pm - Foot Care
- Monday 10th Aug.2009-12.30-1.30pm- Alternative Therapy
- Monday 17th Aug.2009-12.30-1.30pm- Alternative Therapy
- Monday 7th Sept. 2009-12.30-1.30pm - Healthy Foods
- Monday 14th Sept. 2009-12.30-1.30pm - Foot Care

* * *

OUTPATIENT COMMUNITY CLINIC West London NHS Mental Health Trust with Dr S Orleans-Foli Consultant Psychiatrist at Hayashen

- Thursday 10th September 2009 – 1.00-3.00pm
- Thursday 15th October 2009 – 1.00-3.00pm
- Thursday 26th November 2009 – 1.00-3.00pm
- Thursday 14th January 2010 – 1.00-3.00pm
- Thursday 25th February 2009 – 1.00-3.00pm

Please book appointment by telephone on 020 8992 4621 with Hrachik Sarian in advance.

This is a new totally confidential service for the Armenian community. ■

HAYASHEN YOUTH CLUB



The Hayashen Armenian Youth Club (HAYC) operates twice a month between 4-7.00pm. Its there time and space to enjoy the company of their peers and socialise. An opportunity to enjoy free snacks, play pool, table tennis and football, access free internet or watch Armenian Satellite TV, play computer games (XBOX) on 50" Monitor or just listen to CDs. Below are some highlights from the past few months.



On 16th January 2009 representatives from AYA FC came and spoke at HAYC to recruit new young players (See above Nick Nicolaou from AYA FC speaking) and as a result



two youth team was formed by AYA FC for under young people aged 10-13 and 14-19. (See football group photo above)



On 17th April a major going away party was organised for Andre Khosrovian, a popular member of HAYC. (See group photo above)

On 19th June another member of HAYC, Larisa Gharakhanian held a birthday party, something which any young Armenian person can now do so at HAYC by simply contacting us in advance. (See photo below of the birthday girl on the left with friends)



On July 10 a round table discussion took place about "Belonging" with over 15 young people expressing their frank and honest views one way or another about their identity and sense of belonging in the London. Below are sample views expressed during the passionate debate:

"I have school, home, friends, family and British passport but am not sure. I want to say I belong in London because my life is here but my heart says Armenia".

"Yes. I belong in London because I was born here and my family members were born here and I live here."

"Armenia because I was born there and Armenia is my homeland".

"No I don't belong in London".



If you would like to be kept informed about HAYC and receive regular information by post and e-mail contact: Hayc@caia.org.uk

DIASPORA ARMENIA CONNECTION (DAC) CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The non-profit, non-political organisation *Diaspora Armenia Connection* (DAC) celebrates ten fantastic years of benevolent work in Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh this year.

The organisation, which was founded in 1999 in France, was set up by Gregory Guerguerian and Anouch Der-Sarkissian both students at the time, who were both eager to discover and aid the country and people of their heritage.

Their first project began with a small group of just five volunteers where they successfully set up a summer camp for children in Saghmosavan, Armenia. Since then, DAC has flourished and grown and now boasts branches in Armenia, the UK, France and most recently Spain, with participants from all over the world.

Over the last ten years DAC volunteers have run three-week-long summer school activity projects for village children and renovate the local schools which are often dilapidated and lack basic educational resources. Previous projects have included the funding and construction of a nursery school in the village of Talish in Nagorno Karabagh, and a cultural centre in Saghmosavan, Armenia. Furthermore DAC now carry out a Health & Hygiene Programme which aims to instruct the children and their parents on the basic principles of health and hygiene. This programme also enables them to determine the health needs in each village with the results relayed to local health authorities for their files.

After ten years, DAC volunteers have seen their efforts benefit ten villages including six in Armenia and four in Nagorno Karabagh. DAC thus achieves its development orientated objectives by promoting ties between Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora and other cultures through interaction with the village children and local populations while improving the welfare of Armenian children in rural areas.

On considering the future of the organisation Gregory Guerguerian, co-founder, said, "Over the next decade, we would like to see DAC continue its activities in Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh to engage renewed interest and undertake new members, working together with local NGOs and authorities in order to become an integral part of a sustainable rural development plan. We hope that DAC will continue to thrive for many more years and wish the organisation every success."

To celebrate its tenth anniversary DAC has put together a beautiful book recently presenting a stunning collection of photos, which encompass the valuable experiences the volunteers have lived.

If you would like to become a DAC Volunteer, purchase the 10th Anniversary Book or make a donation, please contact **Ruth Tchapanian**, Mobile No: 07941 034 524 or by e-mail: contactuk@da-connexion.com and web address: www.da-connexion.org



ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP



Details of the *Armenian Community Pre-school Group* and *K Tahta Sunday School* have been included in Ealing's first Supplementary Schools Directory launched on Friday 24th April at *Ealing Library*.

The Directory was published by *Ealing Supplementary Schools Consortium* and coordinator Lorna Jones, which has been set up to support supplementary schools in the borough as they work to improve the education of young people in Ealing. (Above - Group photo of Hayashen Parents & Toddlers Group - Class of 2009)

Ամառային Խաղածրագիրներ Հայաշենում

Օգոստոս 3-21, 2009 ժամը 10 -12.30

Պտույտ դեպի Չեսինգթոն

Չորեքշաբթի 19 Օգոստոս 2009

Տոմսերի եւ տեղեկութեան համար

հեռաձայնէք 020 8992 4621

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Summer Playscheme in Hayashen

August 3rd - 21st, 2009 from 10 am -12.30 pm

All Day Outing to CHESSINGTON ZOO &
THEME PARK

Wednesday 19th August 2008

For further information telephone 020 8992 4621

ARMENIAN VOICE ADVERTISING RATES

One Advertisement

Full Page (A4)	£120
Half Page (A5)	£ 80
Quarter Page (A6)	£ 60
Minimum Size	£ 30

Four Advertisements

Full Page (A4)	£400
Half Page (A5)	£280
Quarter Page (A6)	£200
Minimum Size	£100

INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR JOAN GEORGE

Joan George, author of *“Merchants in Exile: The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835 – 1935”* has followed up her Manchester book to write about the other Armenian community in England – London, and once again created a masterpiece in celebration of our community, from its birth to present day.

“Merchants to Magnates, Intrigue and Survival: Armenians in London 1900 – 2000” provides a detailed historical account, that also offers a more intimate insight into different personalities and families, some well known and infamous, others unknown and forgotten, but nonetheless having played important roles in either the London Armenian community’s life, or Britain’s life itself.

The book is rich in information, stories, anecdotes and mini-biographies. A must read for Armenians in London today – in order to appreciate the efforts of our predecessors and the heritage of our community, which is often forgotten, or not even thought about in the day to day survival of a small minority group in a big city and multi-cultural society. From important figures in business and politics, to the unsung heroes of the Armenians fighting for Britain in the World Wars, we learn about the ‘wealth’ of the London Armenian community over the last century, that has survived and prospered and how it continues to function and flourish and also contribute to Armenia and Armenian issues on a global basis.

Joan George, as the author of these definitive sources about Armenians in Britain, is one of the personalities who British Armenians are indebted to!

INTERVIEW

Q. What inspired you to write the book and follow on from your Manchester Armenians book “Merchants in Exile”? Your book covers such a wide time span, from the before the 1915 genocide time, the two wars, to the Earthquake and Karabagh up to the present; how did you go about researching it? And what was your starting point?

A. My main purpose in writing anything about the Armenians is to give them some much-needed publicity. The Turks did an efficient job of annihilation, not only of the people, but of their identity. In multicultural Britain, the Armenians’ identity is particularly at risk because they are such a small minority. The diversity of my research arose through one thing leading to another, rather like digging out a family’s history. In writing the Manchester book I had two contacts in London. Dr Vrej Nersessian was helpful for records at the British Library, and Andrew Kevorkian, an Armenian-American journalist based in London, gave some valuable introductions, which snowballed into my meeting more key people of the older generation.

For historical facts, I found the works of Akabi Nassibian and Christopher Walker invaluable, the many biographies of Calouste Gulbenkian and the unpublished writings of Tiran Nersoyan, kindly provided by the St Nersess Armenian Seminary, New York. Surprisingly many English books written during WW2 provided me with Armenian names in the index, which I could then follow up.

Q. What were the one or two most interesting discoveries you made about London Armenians in the period?

A. I think the two most interesting discoveries I made regarding the Armenians in London were how quickly they settled in, adapted and prospered, and during the 2 World Wars, how willingly and courageously they joined the British forces and fought for the Allies.

Q. What can London Armenians today learn from our predecessors?

A. I think that adaptation is the most important lesson to be learnt from the early settlers in London.

Q. There were lots of scandals and intrigue, e.g. Calouste



Joan George reading excerpt from her book to attentive students in Hayasahen during the Armenian History, Culture & Heritage Studies Course in March 2009.

Gulbenkian’s life and habits, the Sotheby’s sale of Armenian illuminated manuscripts being stopped – which ones stand out most for you?

A. Nubar Gulbenkian’s denial of the Genocide must be the most outstanding scandal.

Q. Out of all the eccentric characters portrayed in your book, who interested you the most?

A. I really can’t say which of the eccentrics intrigued me most. We are all slightly odd in one way or another.

In passing judgment on Armenian eccentrics I always take into account their history. Centuries of repression by an incompatible culture will inevitably lead to reaction of some kind. Calouste Gulbenkian was reared to believe that he was superior to everyone else, in a very Oriental sense. He was highly intelligent and used his good education to increase not only his wealth but his freedom of choice. His son, Nubar reacted against his father’s austerity, but shared his shrewd judgment and business acumen, so in a way they understood one another.

Q. The title of the book is ‘Merchants to Magnates, Intrigue and Survival: Armenians in London 1900 – 2000’; how did you come up with that title and what did you want it to reflect?

A. My granddaughter sharpened up my rather dull title of *“Armenians in London”, 1900-2000*. The intention was to sell the book!

Q. Having now written the London book following your Manchester one, how do the two Armenian communities in England compare? Did you find similarities? What were the differences?

A. The chief difference between the London and Manchester communities was, and is, that the former is younger and from different host countries, causing antagonism and splits, and the latter was almost entirely from Ottoman Armenia, Constantinople and Smyrna, they had prospered at the same time and had more interests in common. Splits were minimal.

Q. In terms of your dual identity, being half-English and half-Armenian, do you feel equally Armenian and English, or more one than the other? and what about London Armenians’ identity in general?

A. I believe the one theme which runs through the London community is this need for their identity to be recognised. On Armenian identity, I think there is a need to establish it in the UK because the community is still relatively small, and Turkish and Azeri propaganda ensure that Armenia and Armenians are rarely mentioned.

It was very different in the last quarter of the 19th century, when the British press, more than any other, regularly reported

the atrocities against Armenians taking place in the Ottoman Empire. (I deal with this subject fully in my book *"Merchants in Exile"*). At that time much of Victorian England had a clear image of Armenian identity, largely as Christian martyrs, later as refugees and orphans. Eminent people raised funds for their "fellow-Christians", and Gladstone, as you probably know, called the Sultan "the great assassin".

The later genocide (then described as mass extermination, or terrible massacres and deportations perpetrated by the Turkish government) was publicised in Parliament and in the press despite Britain's preoccupation with WW1. There were assurances from the US, France and Britain that Armenia would be liberated from the Turkish yoke after the war.

Now, the London community tends to preach to the converted - and it is difficult in the circumstances not to do so. They eulogise on Armenian talent, history, heroism, and so on, in their own press and at their meetings, but the gross injustices suffered by Armenians over the centuries are rarely given an airing in the British press.

On the whole the Armenians in London seem to have struck a good balance between maintaining their traditions and adapting to the British way of life, especially in education.

For myself, when I am among Armenians, I feel rather English and undemonstrative. In British company, on the other hand, I am conscious of belonging to a much older civilisation. While they are nit-picking around a subject, I can usually see it as a whole in need of a swift solution.

Q. You don't speak Armenian; how did you find researching and writing a book bearing that in mind? Did it pose any difficulties?

A. The church records were the only ones I consulted in Armenian, and they were translated for me by Father Shnork.

Q. You refer to your meeting with the older generation of London Armenians; how have 2nd and 3rd generation Armenians in London fared? Did you find any differences in attitude or outlook, perhaps about identity, culture, language etc between the generations?

A. It is difficult to generalise about the younger generation of Armenians in - and outside - London. The Sunday School is popular and shows that many parents want their children to keep the language alive and learn Armenian songs, etc. Others, who have been through the English education system favour adaptation in the interests of their career prospects. I also know of several cases where English spouses have enthusiastically adopted Armenian ways and supported their cause.

As I am accustomed to English mediocrity, the talent and brilliance of Armenians is a constant source of amazement to me. But of course there is an Achilles heel. I am told of internal splits and futile jealousies. It seems as if nature always has the need to put the brakes on genius. If only Armenians worldwide would UNITE, their future would hold more promise than their tragic past. But some cannot throw off the influence and prejudices of a previous generation, and the British alternative has become a slippery slope down, unfortunately.

Q. What is the next project, if there is one?!

A. Unfortunately publication of the book in 2009 coincided with the 50th anniversary of the death of our famous local artist, Stanley Spencer. I interviewed him several times in 1955, and had an article on him published in that year. I also had other unpublished material about him, so the journalist in me said "do something in this 50th year"! The result is *"50 Years on: some Memories of Stanley Spencer"* an anthology of people's memories and my own. It has been a rather rushed job and a friend is helping with self-publishing, as publishers are going through a difficult time with the crunch. But that is my final project!

Louisa Culleton

(Copies of *"Merchants to Magnates, Intrigue and Survival: Armenians in London 1900 - 2000"* can be purchased from the CAIA or from the publishers Gomidas Institute) ■

Tigran Asatryan

'While the truth is not negotiable, the terms of reconciliation are. Turks and Armenians need a new vision; a new vision to demolish the wall; a new vision for a new century.'

George Jerjian, London, June 2003

Tigran Asatryan, a BA (Hons) graduate of Photography at University for the Creative Arts at Rochester, Kent took part in the 'Out of Range' exhibition, held at The Rag Factory, Brick Lane, London in June, 2009.

His work raises the matter of the Armenian Genocide and during the project his views and feelings about the subject changed from anger, hatred and uncertainty to forgiveness and possible reconciliation. In a statement Tigran writes "To forgive it doesn't mean to forget and that's why I made 3 pilgrimage visits to the Republic of Turkey during December 2008 - April 2009. " This is why "I took photographs in various locations of Eastern Anatolia, with the concepts of loss and absence addressing the themes of the loss of relatives, exile from one's fatherland, the loss of one's dreams and the possibility of a peaceful future.

I would like my work to be a channel for mutual recognition, reflecting on losses that constitute the legacy of the last century. This is a legacy we carry in ourselves and the consequences of the Armenian Genocide in history forms a part of our internal reflection."

For his final degree work he wrote a dissertation entitled 'The Eye of History: a Visual Memory of the Armenian Genocide'. The photography book entitled 'the land beneath our feet' can viewed online at www.tigranasatryan.com



Below are excerpts from the Introduction by Paula Sayer from *"the land beneath our feet"*

This is my story about what I had not experienced and about what I had not witnessed...

I was born in to it. I am of Armenian decent, born in Latvia, living in Britain, but from an early age I knew that something bad had happened some time ago between the Turkish and Armenian people. That we cannot be friends anymore for what they had done towards our people, that there is no trust, and never would be. (Tigran Asatryan)

Tigran Asatryan, like many other ethnic Armenians of his generation, grew up with a simmering hatred of Turkish people perpetuated by a community in exile where memories of the past are both a burden and responsibility. To be affected by genocide, even generations later, means you must store your homeland, heritage and history in a collective memory when all else tangible is gone.

The Armenian Genocide, also known as the Great Calamity or *"meds yeghern"* refers to the annihilation of approximately 1.5 million of the Christian Ottoman Armenian minority by Muslim Turks during and just after WWI. Preceded by a series of massacres in 1894-96 and in 1909, the Armenian Genocide is widely acknowledged as one of the first modern genocides - the deliberate, systematic and coordinated destruction of a national group.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

To coincide with the Organisation's AGM being held in London, the UK-based *Land and Culture Organisation* ("LCO") team held a fundraising event which was attended by over 70 members of the community in February. Kegham Kevonian, the Founder of LCO, presented the organisation's history and growth and also explored its current projects. Guests were then treated to a recital by David Satian, the Armenian composer and jazz pianist, well known on the international music circuit. Finally, H.E. Dr. Vahe Gabrielyan, Armenia's Ambassador to the UK, encouraged the guests to donate to LCO's projects in Armenia. The evening was a great success in promoting LCO's ambitions and aims for the UK in 2009. For further information visit: www.landandculture.co.uk

* * *

Armenia – Land & Culture, an Exhibition of Photographs and Lettering took place at *The Royal Geographical Society*, London organized by *PRO ART & Co*, *AGBU London Trust* and the *Embassy of the Republic of Armenia* during 2-6 March 2009.

This exhibition of photographs of Armenia and pictures of medieval manuscripts together with various types of Armenian lettering shows the country and its cultural heritage. Armenia became the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 AD. Christian iconography came to play a very important role in Armenian art and architecture, and its churches were built in distinctive style. The carving of decorative stone monuments called *khatchkars* (cross stones) is an ancient form of Christian Armenian art and a characteristic part of the national heritage. Armenian cultural heritage is best presented through written monuments deriving from as early as 405 AD, when the Armenian alphabet was created by a scholar monk Mesrop Mashtots. The alphabet helped develop the Armenian language, literature and arts, allowing for the advancement of the art of the illuminated manuscripts. The exhibition presented a country of scenic beauty with a millennia-long history and traditions, an excellent destination for cultural, religious, historical and adventure tourism.



Exhibition guests, Deputy Mayor of LB of Ealing Cllr. Seema Kumar & H.E. Dr. Vahe Gabrielyan, Armenia's Ambassador to the UK.

SCREAMERS, a documentary about genocide which features award winning heavy metal band from Los Angeles *System Of A Down*, was released on DVD on 20th April 2009. The critically acclaimed film, directed by Carla Garapedian, traces the history of genocide and genocide denial through the atrocities in Armenia, The Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur. To coincide with the film's release, *Screamers* was screened by Amnesty International to a capacity audience at their Human Rights Centre in London on April 21 and presented by vocalist SOD Serj Tankian the following day at Oxford University. "*Screamers*" was also shown on British Television last year and has caused a strong emotive response everywhere that it has been shown. Three of the four band members are Armenian by origin, and they have turned their concerts into a form of lobbying, with the aim of persuading governments around the world to recognise the 1915 massacres of Armenians as genocide.

Carla Garapedian's film follows the band as they mount a campaign, targeting the US and British governments, and interviewing some high profile supporters and survivors of past atrocities along the way. Whilst the band's starting point was the Armenian massacres, the film sheds light on why mass killings continue to happen, despite the often repeated cry of 'Never Again'.

* * *

The 2nd *Pan-Armenian Youth Conference* took place on May 9th 2009 at *London Metropolitan University*. The conference was a relatively successful event attended by eight separate organisations working with, for or amongst British-Armenian youth and representing a wide spectrum of political, philanthropic, student and cultural bodies.

In all nearly fifty delegates attended alongside the panelists. Such an unprecedented level of unity amongst the British-Armenian youth belied not only its willingness to cooperate but also provided good grounding for some conclusions to be drawn from both delegates and panelists.

The main goal of the conference was to discuss the ways in which the British-Armenian youth can unite and collaborate amongst themselves, and also how they, as Britons, might speak with one voice in British society in order to achieve common Armenian goals. Interestingly the main issue discussed was how best to maintain and develop an Armenian cultural identity in the British-Armenian Diaspora. The conclusion was the necessity of furthering the Armenian language through community radio, publications and effective, professional Armenian language courses. Simultaneously it was agreed unanimously that young British-Armenians should do more to promote Armenian culture within the wider society and in so doing perhaps better define the title "*British-Armenian*". Three conclusions can be said to have emerged from the conference; firstly to establish a common email database for collective advantage in advertising Armenian related events/projects etc; secondly attempt to further build up contacts between the established British-Armenian community and new arrivals to ensure the permanence, unity and development of a wider community; thirdly to formulate and promote a cultural agenda that will enable all British people (Armenian and non-Armenian alike) to learn more about Armenian culture, music and literature. One delegate opined that the Armenian community is akin to a 'sinking ship' – almost in decline and losing its space, if indeed any space, to voice its peculiar and particular concerns in a multicultural Britain that insists for ethnic communities to be noticed they speak with one voice and a clear agenda. The desire to partake within British society and simultaneously push an Armenian agenda and maintain an Armenian identity was unanimously expressed.

How the British-Armenian youth, who represent a generation of 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants at ease with its dual identity and the title British, progress from here rests as much on the positive outcomes of this conference

being worked into tangible and progressive networking as it does on community and organisational backing for the British-Armenian youth to stake out a political and cultural voice in modern multicultural Britain.

By Ara Iskanderian

(A more in depth of the conference's discussions and outcomes can be read at <http://aralexanderian.blogspot.com> under entries for May 13th.)

* * *

To mark the opening of a new *Armenian Studies department* at the *University of London's (UoL) School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)* the new chair of Armenian History Dr. Igor Dorfman-Lazarev presented the department's inaugural lecture on Armenian historiography to a packed room.

The young Armenian Muscovite, who specialises in Byzantine-Armenian inter-church relations, proceeded to take his rapt audience on a four thousand historical journey through the annals of Armenian history. There were brief, but tantalising biographies of Armenian greats interspersed with the course of events that have shaped and dictated events upon the Armenian plateau.

Dr. Lazarev outlined how early invasions by Proto-Armenians and their merging with Urartuan culture formulated the early Armenian nation. This nation was defined through acts such as the conversion to Christianity, the Genocide, whilst the almost continuous invasion of peoples from Assyrians through to Soviets further defined Armenians as a people, their mentality, manners and mores as well as the shape of Armenia itself.

The trip through Armenian history was exhaustive and comprehensive, with Dr. Lazarev attempting to place Armenian history within a regional context thereby showing the significance of Armenia as an area of study, both in its own right and as relevant to a wider region. In this regard the importance of certain Armenian language historical sources, such as Sebeos' account of early Islam or Mathew of Edessa's history of the Mongols revealed the importance of the Armenian language to certain fields within history.

Therefore to coincide with the history chair Dr. Krikor Moskofian will be teaching Western Armenian, this was stipulated as a requisite for funding by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the endowers of the chair. The department will open as of this coming September and will be running a Certificate of Armenian Studies programme as well as evening classes in Western Armenian. All courses and modules are open to all UoL students to attend and audit. The department will run for a minimum of two years, by which time it is hoped, enough interest would have been generated to ensure funding from SOAS itself.

The longevity of a much awaited, and much needed, Armenian Studies department at SOAS thus rests upon the interest it generates and will therefore require some community backing and support in order to maintain itself.

By Ara Iskanderian

(If you have enjoyed these two articles then please check out my blogspot which is <http://aralexanderian.blogspot.com>)

* * *

Political analyst, Vicken Cheterian spoke about "*War and Peace in the Caucasus, Russia's Troubled Frontier*" on 2nd July, at Arundel House, London, organised by the *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, one of the world's leading authority on political-military conflict. Vicken Cheterian is a Geneva-based researcher, who has worked as correspondent in the Middle East, and later in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Russia and Ukraine, reporting for leading European papers, and has consulted various international organisations as well as the Swiss Foreign Ministry. He holds a PhD from *The Graduate Institute, Geneva*. His research interests include conflicts, peace building, nationalism, transition, democratisation, and environment and security. He is the founder of the

Caucasus Media Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, which he directed from 2002 to 2005. His latest book entitled *War and Peace in the Caucasus, Russia's Troubled Frontier* was published by *Hurst* in 2008, and by *Columbia University Press* in February 2009. (See book review on page 14)

* * *

Tamara Krikorian, who had risen to prominence in the field of Arts, in Wales and further afield passed away on 11th July 2009. She was descended from a family who had fled the first Massacres of 1896. Eilian Williams, founder of the *Wales-Armenia Solidarity committee* writes that "when I told her that there were widespread protests in Wales with much money collected for Armenians in 1896, she said "You don't know how much knowing this means to me" I am glad she was there for the inauguration of the Genocide Monument in 2007 in Cardiff, even though she was not well. She was also present in 2002 at the meeting in the National Assembly to mark the recognition of the Genocide by the majority of Assembly Members. She was a lady of great presence, and dignity, and with a great warmth of heart.

The funeral was held in St Augustin's Church, Penarth, near Cardiff on 27th July followed by internment in Penarth cemetery.

Below is a tribute from the Welsh Arts Council web-site:

"It is with much sadness that we report the death, on Saturday 11th July 2009, of Tamara Krikorian.

Tamara was a leading light in the visual arts world of Wales. Tamara was best known for her championing of artists' practice whilst director of, first the Welsh Sculpture Trust and then *Cywaith Cymru*. Artworks Wales, the national organisation for public art in Wales. She was instrumental in the development of the careers of some of Wales's most exciting and interesting artists, offering them the support to take risks and multiple platforms and fora to show their work that went far beyond the traditional model of a public art agency.

Trained as a musician, Tamara was a pioneer in the use of video as a means to make art, and is mentioned in the same breath as Yoko Ono, Derek Jarman and Sally Potter amongst many others, who created a context for contemporary artists such as Steve McQueen, Douglas Gordon and Gillian Wearing. The recognition of her seminal influence has only recently been truly acknowledged. Her campaigning led to this art form being legitimised, in the latter part of the 1970s.

Whilst living in Scotland, from the mid 60s to the late 70's, she met her partner, the artist Ivor Davies. She taught in Maidstone and Newcastle and co-founded London Video Arts, before settling in Wales, where her commitment to allowing artists to have a voice made her much beloved by those who worked with her."

* * *

British Embassy Political/Projects Officer Naira Sultanyan and Project Support Officer Bela Dallakyan in Armenia won *Foreign Secretary's Innovation Award 2009*. They developed a ground-breaking Armenian language computer game called '*Play Democracy, Make It Reality*'. Produced to promote political awareness among young people before Armenia's presidential elections, the game allowed players to run as candidates in a virtual presidential race. It won widespread plaudits throughout a country where understanding of the democratic process is limited.

Naira Sultanyan will be speaking about the work of the British Embassy in Armenia as well as demonstrate the computer game on **Saturday 8th August** in Hayashen at 6pm. Everybody is welcome to attend.

* * *

What is the Armenian for "Genocide"?, an article written by London born student Anoosh Chakelian was published in Volume 52 Issue 1 of *The Oxford Student* on 15 January 2009. (Read full article on CAIA's website at www.caia.org.uk)

* * *

Armenian Journey, an exhibition starting 3rd August at York Minister. For more information phone 0844 939 0021 x 2540 or send email to exhibition@yorkminister.org

The New York Times reported in March 2009 that a long-hidden official document from the Ottoman Interior Minister, Talaat Pasha, detailing the deportations of 972,000 Ottoman Armenians from 1915 through 1916 has been unearthed.

In Turkey, any discussion of what happened to the Ottoman Armenians can bring a storm of public outrage. But since its publication in a book in January, the number—and its Ottoman source—has gone virtually unmentioned.

Newspapers hardly wrote about it. Television shows have not discussed it. “Nothing,” said Murat Bardakci, the Turkish author and columnist who compiled the book. The silence can mean only one thing, he said: “My numbers are too high for ordinary people. Maybe people aren’t ready to talk about it yet.”

For generations, most Turks knew nothing of the details of the Armenian genocide of 1915 to 1918, when more than a million Armenians were killed as the Ottoman Turkish government purged the population. Turkey locked the ugliest parts of its past out of sight, keeping any mention of the events out of schoolbooks and official narratives in an aggressive campaign of forgetting.

But in the past 10 years, as civil society has flourished, some parts of Turkish society are now openly questioning the state’s version of events. In December, a group of intellectuals circulated a petition that apologised for the denial of the massacres which some 29,000 people have since signed it.

With his book, “*The Remaining Documents of Talat Pasha*,” Mr. Bardakci (pronounced bard-AK-chuh) has become, rather unwillingly, part of this ferment. The book is a collection of documents and records that once belonged to Mehmed Talat, known as Talat Pasha, the primary architect of the Armenian deportations.

The documents, given to Mr. Bardakci by Mr. Talat’s widow, Hayriye, before she died in 1983, include lists of population figures. Before 1915, 1,256,000 Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire, according to the documents. The number plunged to 284,157 two years later, Mr. Bardakci said.

* * *

The Armenian Genocide was commemorated in Turkey for the first time on 24th April 2009 in an event titled “*Armenian Intellectuals and 24 April 1915 – They were Arrested, Exiled and Did Not Even Have Grave Stones*”.

The commemoration was organised by the Commission Against Racism and Discrimination of Human Rights Association’s Istanbul Branch. In a statement they said: “April 24, 1915 symbolizes the beginning of the process that led to the annihilation of the physical and spiritual existence of Armenian community; the intellectuals who lost their lives following the arrests on this date are not only a great loss to the language and culture of Armenian community, but also a great loss to us. We regard it as our duty to commemorate them.”

The event opened with Armenian and Assyrian songs performed by the group “*Kardes Turkuler*” (Songs of Brotherhood). Lawyer Eren Keskin, greeted the audience, numbering around 150, and said: “Today is the 24th of April, the 94th anniversary of the arrests in Istanbul which started the Armenian Genocide in 1915.” She added, “The official history [in Turkey] denies the genocide, but we know what happened and we believe it’s important to tell people the truth. So, today we will commemorate the most brilliant intellectuals of the Ottoman Armenians: the poets, writers, physicians, lawyers, and members of parliament, who were taken away on the 24th of April, 1915 and murdered.”

The Bosphorus Performance Arts Group presented the life stories and poems of three great Armenian poets who perished during the genocide—Roupen Sevag, Siamanto, and Taniel Varoujan—as well as the life and work of writer, lawyer, and parliamentary member Krikor Zohrab, who was also killed during the genocide. The presentation was accompanied by photographs projected onto a screen and Armenian folk music played in the background.

Publisher Ragip Zarakolu talked about *Teotig*, the Armenian writer who was arrested together with the others but escaped miraculously, and his famous book *Hushartzan Abril*

Dasnimegi, which will be published in Turkish soon by the *Belge* publishing house. An exhibition of pages from this book was held in conjunction with the event, with lit candles under each page. A brief Turkish translation of each page was also provided.

In turn, Eren Keskin talked about *Gomidas*, while songs performed by *Gomidas* himself (recorded in 1912 in Paris) were played in the background and his photographs projected on the screen. At the end, Eren Keskin said, “Let’s leave the last word to *Gomidas Vartabed*.” And *Gomidas*’ song “*Karun a*” was heard while images of the deportation of Armenians were projected on the screen.

* * *

Silva Harotonian, an Iranian citizen of Armenian descent, held a modest role with a humanitarian organization working to improve child and maternal health in Iran. Her work and life were interrupted in June 2008 when she was charged by Iranian authorities with participating in an effort to overthrow the Iranian government through a “soft revolution.” In January 2009, she was sentenced to three years in jail.

On June 24, Silva’s family, supporters and humanitarians worldwide gathered in Paris to raise attention to the one-year anniversary of her arrest in Iran and continue to plea for mercy and respectfully urge the Iranian government for her release. Be sure to check out all of the photos, videos and related materials from the event below and we invite you to sign our online appeal to show your support and to help free Silva. For more information visit: www.freesilva.org

* * *

In 2005, 550 members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) signed a letter addressed to the British Parliament arguing that the 1916 parliamentary “Blue Book,” titled *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16*, was wartime propaganda material—a mere fabrication—and that the parliament today should formally withdraw it.

Clearly, when the TGNA drew up that letter, they hadn’t seen the book, let alone read one line of it. The book had not yet been translated into Turkish and was not accessible in Turkey. Four years later, on Friday June 26, 2009, Lord Avebury, the vice-chairman of the Human Rights Group in the British Parliament, and Ara Sarafian from the *Gomidas Institute* (London), introduced the authorised Turkish translation of the Blue Book in Ankara at a press conference hosted by the Human Rights Association, Turkey and the Ankara Initiative for Freedom of Expression. It was announced during the meeting that copies of the Blue Book translation were sent to TGNA members, individually packaged and addressed to every single Turkish parliamentarian, “in an effort to enable them to be better informed about their subject matter.” Permission was also obtained for the distribution of the book to bookstores in Turkey.

Addressing the audience, Ara Sarafian, the editor of the uncensored editions of the original Blue Book published by the *Gomidas Institute* in 2000 and 2005, pointed out that the official criticism of the Blue Book adopted by the members of the TGNA was based on the denial of the existence of the Toynbee papers in the British archives, which gave “incredible details” on the 1916 publication. The TGNA position, he said, also denied the existence of the printed confidential key that accompanied the Blue Book, which disclosed the names and places withheld in the original publication. “Similarly, the fact that the United States was the main source of information for the British, especially official State Department records from the Ottoman Empire, has simply been ignored, even though the original records in question are still available in United States archives today,” said Sarafian. He thus called the TGNA position a denialist position, as it systematically denied information that was relevant to the issue under discussion, and introduced irrelevant or false information.

Sarafian said the TGNA letter raised some serious questions, such as: “How could members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly pass judgment on a 1916 publication and declare it as a

fabrication in such a public manner, when clearly most of them had never seen the work they were criticizing, including the uncensored edition published five years earlier?"

Sarafian concluded "The best way to counter their negative impact is through open public discussions. The uncensored edition of the Blue Book, which has been translated into Turkish, is such an exercise in an effort to re-engage the Armenian issue within a more democratic and open Turkey. I hope that at least some deputies of the TGNA will reconsider their collective position on the Blue Book and distance themselves from it."

Taking the, Lord Avebury summarized the history of the "Blue Book debate" between the TGNA and the British Parliament. "On Oct. 12, 2005, Lord Archer of Sandwell QC, Lord Biffen, and I organized a meeting in Westminster for British parliamentarians to respond to a petition sent to members of the British Houses of Parliament by the Turkish Grand National Assembly contesting the veracity of the 1916 British Parliamentary Blue Book, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16*," he said. "It was our appraisal that the TGNA was not properly informed about the Blue Book. Consequently, on January 27, 2006, 33 British MPs responded to the TGNA petition with a letter to the speaker of the TGNA, Bulent Arinc, inviting members of the TGNA to a face-to-face meeting with their British colleagues to discuss the Blue Book. Since there was no response to that letter, a second email communication was sent on September. 1, 2006 to all individual members of the TGNA, inviting them to a face-to-face meeting. Again there was no response. Our final conclusion was that most TGNA members were not aware of the actual content of the 1916 Blue Book, nor the archival trail associated with it. In order to facilitate better understanding and reflection, I suggested that the Gomidas Institute should undertake the Turkish translation of their uncensored edition of the Blue Book, which was replete with discussion and full archival references. I am pleased that they were able to undertake such a major project so that a whole new Turkish readership—not just members of the TGNA—can appraise the Blue Book issue in an informed and balanced manner. The publication of the Turkish edition of the book is a milestone in a historical sense for Turkey and I believe a new era for dialogue will be created after this book." Lord Avebury concluded with a quotation from George Santana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." He went on to state that there were dark chapters in the history of all nations and gave two examples. In 1997, the queen of Great Britain personally apologized in Amritsar, India, for the 1919 massacre of Sikhs who were shot in that city by British troops, while in 2008 the British Parliament apologized for the British government's role in the Irish potato famine.

There were some in the audience who disagreed with Sarafian and Lord Avebury. During the question and answer session, they were allowed by the moderator, Ozturk Turkdogan, the chairman of the IHRA to comment about the "Armenian lies," to show their denialist books and other printed materials, and to ask Sarafian and Lord Avebury what they would say about the "genocide" of the Azeris by the Armenians. In this way, Turkdogan demonstrated that denialists could express themselves in non-violent ways in place of physically or verbally abusive means, which has often been the case—from the trials of Hrant Dink, Orhan Pamuk, and others, to panel discussions or conferences. Sarafian told the denialists that they should let the press conference continue, and that he would be happy to discuss what they had to say, sensibly, in another forum, after he saw their literature and had a worthwhile response.

After the press conference, asked about his overall impression about the event, Sarafian said, "We, as the Gomidas Institute, did what we wanted to do. This is part of a process, not an end in itself. A diasporan Armenian organization translated and published a book in Turkey about the Armenian Genocide, and made a public presentation. We called on the Turkish parliamentarians through email messages to come, but none of them did. Next week they will receive their books. I hope the significance of this opening will become apparent. We plan to print more books, make more presentations, and have more discussions in Turkey. And we will press on with the Blue Book issue, in good time, when the members of the TGNA have had a chance to look at our publication."

(For further information please visit www.gomidas.org) ■

Tigran Asatryan - continued from page 9

The Genocide was led by a group of nationalist reformists known as the Young Turks who wished to stop the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire by both expanding eastwards and assimilating the various minorities. When this was met with resistance the Young Turks saw WWI as an opportunity to rid the country of its Armenian population. The Genocide was followed by another series of massacres beginning in 1920 and by 1922 Armenians had been almost eradicated from their historic homeland and scattered. Although the Young Turks were eventually tried in absentia by the new Ottoman government and found guilty, the sentencing was never carried out and eventually annulled.

In a single swoop, 3000 years of Armenian heritage was destroyed – churches desecrated, villages emptied, libraries burnt – any remnants were, quite literally, erased by the Ottoman government. The weight of Armenian history was left to the survivors' collective memory while the rest of the world looked the other way.

Today the Republic of Turkey still disputes that genocide took place, despite the fact that twenty-one countries have officially recognised it as such. Scholars on both sides of the debate have researched and presented documents to support their point-of-view. According to the Turkish side what happened to the Armenians was not genocide, but a tragedy, and they see no need to apologise.

By contrast, the Armenian position is that Ottoman Turkey planned the extinction of all Armenians from Anatolia, their inherited homeland, with the extermination of approximately 1,500,000 Armenians. To most Armenians today it is crucial that Turkey officially recognises what happened as genocide and faces up to all that the word implies. For them, the horrors of the past coupled with the present denial, a refusal to use the word 'genocide', is seen by many as a desecration of both those that lost their lives and the memories of those that survived.

And so we have a stalemate; Tigran, like many other second or third generation Armenians, had come to a point in his own life where he needed to make up his own mind. Fed up with the friction of living both in the present and the past, weighed down with the burden of history, this body of work reflects Tigran's own journey of understanding and – ultimately – reconciliation.

These images have been selected from three visits to Turkey where his travels took him to Eastern Anatolia and the ancient capital of the Armenian kingdom, *Ani*; *Vakifli* – the last Armenian village to fall and now the only rural Armenian community in Turkey; and the villages where his Grandmother and Great-grandfather were born. Although on his journey he crossed routes with the marches and passed through deportation centres the idea for this book was not to archive history or photograph the exact spot that atrocities happened. Tigran went looking for his Armenian heritage and found just hints and whispers from the past – scratched crosses, tumbling ruins, landscapes covered in the purest white.

One of the distinguishing features of the Genocide was the secrecy surrounding the killing, made possible by the distraction of war and the remote killing spots, out of sight of the general population. The early landscapes – lonely, barren – reflect the isolation and vulnerability of the Armenian victims. And, somehow, in his travels, the grip of history has shifted a little. Just as man's imprint on nature seems so futile and temporary, the hated Turks metamorphosed into friendly young people with little or no knowledge of the Armenian past – so fresh in his own memory. Like the landscapes themselves, opening out with light and colour, so too are the first tendrils of understanding and reconciliation possible.

Ultimately these landscapes are witnesses to both the horrors of the past and a reflection of the movement from dullness to light, winter to spring, hate to reconciliation and are a celebration of the immutability of nature in the face of man's inhumanity to man.

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.
(Paul Boese) ■

BOOK REVIEWS

***Portrait in Light and Shadow:
The Life of Yousuf Karsh*
by Maria Tippet -
Published by House of Anansi Press,
Toronto, 2007 - 427 PP., illus., \$39.95 hardcover**

For much of the twentieth century, "*Karsh of Ottawa*" was the imprint of the most prestigious portrait photographer in the world, and to have been "*karshed*" was to have arrived in the exalted company of his well-known subjects, to name a few: Einstein, Warhol, Hepburn, Gable, Hemingway, Castro, George Bernard Shaw, Georgia O'Keeffe, Grey Owl, Bogart, Indira Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, Laurence Olivier, Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, Muhammad Ali, Pablo Casals, Pandit Nehru, Paul Robeson, Peter Lorre, Picasso, Trudeau, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Rainier, Princess Grace and Winston Churchill. Karsh was a master of the high style of portraiture that proposed to reveal inner character and other moral qualities by artful effects (his portrait of Churchill is Churchill to most of the world). In an interview reported in *The Life of Yousuf Karsh* by Maria Tippet (Anansi), he said that he strove to bring out "the strength and personality" of men and "*the charm and beauty*" of women. His life is given in three parts in the book by Tippet — The Making of the Man, The Crowning of a Career and The Living Legend — and seems to have consisted largely in the serial pursuit of, and visitations with, the Great of his time.

For those who do not know "*Yousuf or Josuf* (his given Armenian name was Hovsep) Karsh was born in Mardin, a city in the eastern Ottoman Empire (currently in Turkey). He grew up during the Armenian Genocide where he wrote, "*I saw relatives massacred; my sister died of starvation as we were driven from village to village.*" At the age of 14, he fled with his family to Syria to escape persecution. Two years later, his parents sent Yousuf to live with his uncle George Nakash, a photographer in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Karsh briefly attended school there and assisted in his uncle's studio. Nakash saw great potential in his nephew and in 1928 arranged for Karsh to apprentice with portrait photographer John Garo in Boston, United States. His brother, Malak Karsh, was also a photographer famous for the image of logs floating down the river on the Canadian one dollar bill.

Karsh returned to Canada four years later, eager to make his mark. He established a studio in the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario, close to Canada's seat of government. Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King discovered Karsh and arranged introductions with visiting dignitaries for portrait sittings. Karsh's work attracted the attention of varied celebrities, but his place in history was sealed on 30 December, 1941 when he photographed Winston Churchill, after Churchill gave a speech to Canadian House of Commons in Ottawa.

The image of Churchill brought Karsh international prominence, and is claimed to be the most reproduced photographic portrait in history. In 1967, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada and in 1990 was promoted to Companion.

Of the 100 most notable people of the century, named by the *International Who's Who* [2000], Karsh had photographed 51. Karsh was also the only Canadian to make the list.

In the late 90s he moved to Boston and on July 13, 2002 (he was 93 years old) Karsh died at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital after complications following surgery. He was interred in Notre Dame Cemetery in Ottawa.

*Views expressed in articles appearing in
'Armenian Voice' are not necessarily that of the
CAIA.*

***War and Peace in the Caucasus, Russia's
Troubled Frontier* by Vicken Cheterian
Published by Hurst & Co. Ltd – 288pp
Hardback 9781850659297 - £25.00
Paperback 9781850659877 £15.99**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Caucasus was wracked by ethnic and separatist violence as the peoples of the region struggled for self-determination. Vicken Cheterian, who spent many years as a reporter and analyst covering the region's conflicts, asks why nationalism emerged as a dominant political current, and why, of the many nationalist movements that emerged, some led to violence while others did not. He explains also why minority rebellions were victorious against larger armies, in mountainous Karabakh, Abkhazia, and in the first war of Chechnya, and discusses the ongoing instability and armed resistance in the North Caucasus. He concludes his book by examining chapters the great power competition between Russia, the US, and the EU over the oil and gas resources of the Caspian region.

Vicken Cheterian, a Swiss national, has been reporting from the Caucasus since the collapse of the Soviet Union for major European newspapers such as *Le Monde diplomatique*. He is based in Geneva where he is a consultant specializing on Caucasus-related research projects. ■

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For further information, please contact:

Dr Stefan Spurl

(Until 30th September 2009)

T: 020 7898 4338

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Professor George Hovhann

(From 1st October 2009)

T: 020 7898 4332

E: gh2@soas.ac.uk

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The *Armenian Youth Association Football Club*

invites the London Armenian community to come and share celebrations of its 45th anniversary from 1964 - 2009

Sunday 13th September 2009

at its home ground, Park Place, Acton, London W3 8JY, from 11am-11pm.

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