



AYF TRI-REGIONAL PUBLICATION ON THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

ARF Youth Organization of Canada
AYF-YOARF Eastern Region USA
AYF Western Region USA

August 2005

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Turkey at the European Union's Door

There Shall Not Be Another 90 Years

A Nation's Tears

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Sireli Ungerner,

In February of this year, central executive members from Canada and the Eastern and Western Regions of the United States congregated in Montreal, Canada to conduct their annual tri-regional meeting. This weekend marked a continuous commitment of intercontinental communication and unity. Here we gained valuable insight on Armenian Genocide Commemoration events being planned in cities across North America. The three central executives also explored more ways to help each other reach our goals. Most importantly, each region enjoyed the opportunity to get to know one another, not only as individuals, but also as dedicated ARF youth members.

This publication represents our role as survivors, our mission here in the Diaspora, and finally, the product of our mutual obligations. Expressions such as these help combine our strengths and bring us closer to our cause as a collective unit. Through cooperation and solidarity, we can better understand our identity as members of the largest and most prominent Armenian youth organization in the world.

This initiative should be used as a stepping-stone for future publications and offers but a glimpse of our capabilities in keeping the Armenian public aware of our achievements.

United in common cause,

Central Executive

ARF Youth Organization of Canada

Central Executive

AYF-YOARF Eastern Region USA

Central Executive

AYF Western Region USA



Eastern Region

NORTHBROOK, Ill.—During the week of March 14, Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Chicago chapter member Karine Birazian lectured to over 150 Glenbrook North High School students about human rights issues, during the school's annual Diversity Week. The 60-minute presentation focused on genocides that occurred during the 20th century, the importance of recognizing acts leading up to genocide, and ways to prevent genocides in the future. The talk educated students about the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the Cambodian, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides. The main focus of the lecture was on Armenian genocide and educating students about the history, current denial and ways to become politically active about the issue.

During the presentation, two videos about the Genocide were shown. The first, Peter Jennings' April 1999 segment on ABC Nightly News about the Armenian genocide, was followed by a short clip from the BBC documentary "Armenia: The Betrayed." Both videos covered historic aspects of the Genocide, as well as efforts made calling for its recognition. Here, Birazian explained the current legislation in Congress relating to Genocide awareness, using it as an example of how to take a stance on genocide denial.

After the presentation, students approached Birazian, asking why the United States is not taking active steps to recognize the Genocide and why Turkey still is able to get away with committing a crime against humanity. Birazian helped students reflect on their own biases, instilling in them an understanding of what causes

AYF Member Talks to Over 150 Students in Illinois about the Armenian Genocide



"Through education, we can help prevent genocide in the future."

genocide and the steps that can be taken to prevent it.

"It was an honor to be part of Glenbrook North's Diversity Week this year," said Birazian. "As an alumnus of the school, I feel it is important to educate students about the Genocide; this year being especially important because of the 90th anniversary of the Genocide, when Armenians around the world will commemorate together. Through education, we can help prevent genocide in the future."

"I am a strong believer in teaching respect for diverse cultures. Karine puts a real face on the Armenian genocide. It is more difficult to turn our backs on injustice in the world when these in-

justices are happening to people we know," said Glenbrook North High School English teacher Marilyn Yablong. "Why do we need to teach about genocide? We teach about genocide so that we can recognize it when we see it happening in the future. Why have I been teaching about this topic for 34 years? I think that together, we can make a difference."

For over 10 years, Diversity Week has been raising awareness and educating students about different cultures and traditions, showing how diversity has helped individuals become leaders.

This article originally appeared in the April 16, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



Chicago AYF Member Discusses Armenian Genocide at School's Social Studies Day

NORTHFIELD, Ill.—On May 3, Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) member Karine Birazian lectured to over 60 eighth grade students from Sunset Ridge School on the Armenian genocide during the Social Studies Day, held at the school.

The day was filled with various activities as well as educational topics. During her presentation, Birazian focused on the Genocide and the importance of education. Students were shocked and disturbed; not only by the Genocide but by the Turkish government's refusal to admit that it even took place. Such manipulation of history, said Birazian, is a dangerous practice, antithetical to democratic values and human rights.

The State of Illinois requires that students be taught about the Holocaust, but social studies teacher Ron Levitsky, who organized the

Social Studies Day, said that a Holocaust curriculum is incomplete without first studying the Armenian genocide. "Because of this catastrophe, Rafael Lemkin warned the world of what he termed 'genocide' and the danger of Hitler. Failure to listen to his pleas helped cause the Holocaust. Subsequently, cases of genocide erupted in places like Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur," said Levitsky.

Recently, the Illinois state legislature passed legislation extending the study of the Holocaust to a broader curriculum on genocide, including what happened to the Armenian people from 1915-1923. Levitsky believes that such a requirement is more important than ever. And after listening to Birazian, many of Levitsky's students enthusiastically agreed.

"It is always inspiring and an honor to educate others about the Armenian genocide. I am very

passionate about our cause and about educating people about the Genocide. It is something so deeply embedded within me; I cannot imagine not being proactive for this cause," said Birazian.

She has also been working closely with members of the state senate in getting a resolution passed that will mandate the teaching of the Armenian genocide and other genocides in the Illinois curriculum.

"It is great to know that people care about this cause and want to help educate others about it. Although we have a lot of work to do, the Armenian National Committee (ANC) of Illinois is prepared to undertake this challenge and help to incorporate genocide curriculum in Illinois schools," said Birazian.

Reprinted from the July 9, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.

Eastern Region

AYF Members Participate in Genocide Commemoration Gathering 8,000 in New York's Times Square

NEW YORK—On April 24, members of the Armenian Youth Federation-Youth Organization of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (AYF-YOARF) joined people from throughout the Eastern Region gathered in New York City's Times Square to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, with an event organized by the United Regional Committee of Eastern United States.

New York's Times Square was filled with more than 8,000 Armenians, most of them having come on buses from various locations of New York State, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and even from as far away as Detroit, Mich.

The United States, Armenian and Artsakh flags, the uniformed boy-scouts and girl-guides, the identical shirts worn by AYF members and the posters and placards borne by many of them demanding recognition and restitution for the first genocide of the 20th century, caught the eye of the constant stream of passers-by.

Among the speakers were Senator Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairman Frank Pallone (D-N.Y.).

In his speech, Schumer said that the lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide by the United States was unacceptable, promising to fight alongside the Armenian-American community until final victory.

Among his statements addressed to the thousands present, Pallone said, "A Turkish official says in The New York Times, that the Armenians raise the so-called 'genocide' issue, in order to follow it with demands for restitution and reinstatement of rights. Yes! We

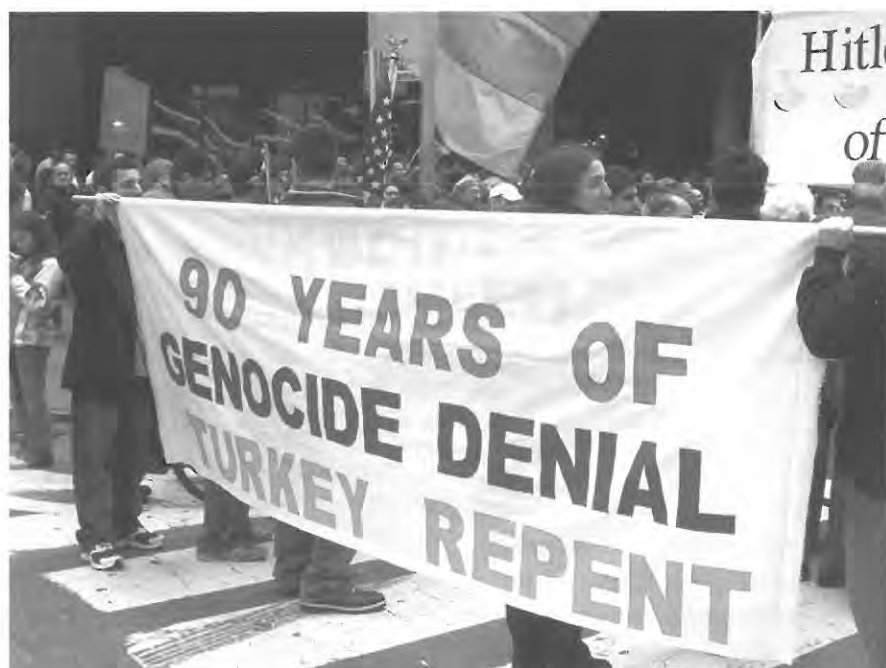
shall demand, because the Genocide that was committed requires restitution and the reinstatement of the Armenian people's rights!" He also noted that the United States must recognize the Armenian genocide regardless of the consequences.

After the Times Square program, the throng marched to St. Patrick's Cathedral where Armenian and non-Armenian clergy officiated special services. In a fitting program that took place in the same building, writer Peter Balakian, former Michigan Congressman David Bonior and Armenian Ambassador to the United Nations Armen Martirosian addressed the public.

Bonior, once more, condemned the United States' lack of genocide recognition and called on those present not to give up hope, assuring all that someday justice will prevail. Martirosian, too, told the audience that Armenia will champion the national rights of the Armenian people and pursue the reinstatement of those rights.

Concluding the day's program, in an impressive ceremony, Genocide survivors passed on flaming torches to the youth—heirs of the countless martyrs.

This article originally appeared in the April 30, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



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Philadelphia AYFers Attend Hovannisian Lecture

PHILADELPHIA, Penn.—In commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Philadelphia chapter, in coordination with local Armenian organizations of Philadelphia, organized a lecture featuring professor Richard Hovannisian on May 6 at the Constitution Center in downtown Philadelphia.

The Armenian General Athletic Union (Homenetmen) Scouts presented the color guard; Michelle Asadourian sang both the Armenian and American national anthems. In addition, 40 students from the Armenian Sisters Academy performed a short presentation of songs and poetry.

Hovannisian said that Armenians know why the Genocide must remain in memory, but the challenges lie in educating non-Armenians with the facts and placing such events into the fabric of human history. He said that all of the tragedies in Cambodia, Rwanda and Sudan demonstrate echoes of the Armenian genocide. Sadly, Hovannisian said, genocide is a fact of history that remains unknown by many.

According to Hovannisian, this time in history is similarly vital to the human experience, and has forced Armenians to learn and know the signs that cause genocide: fear, feelings of endangerment, and threat by those

who perpetrate such crimes against humanity. When all countries finally recognize the Genocide, he said, Armenians need to be prepared for its implications on the human experience.

Armenians in the Republic of Armenia and throughout the diaspora are the guardians of their past and current history, Hovannisian said. They carry the responsibility of motivating the youth to educate themselves so they will know the facts of history and events such as the genocides of the 20th century may be curtailed in the future, he said.

During the question and answer period following the presentation, Philadelphia AYF member and AYF-YOARF Eastern Region Central Executive chairperson Antranig Kzirian asked Hovannisian for his thoughts regarding whether reparations and restitution of lands could be a reality in the case that the government of Turkey did officially recognize the Genocide. Hovannisian responded, saying that Armenians must continue to educate their youth and the world as to the reality and severity of the Genocide in order to legitimize the world's view of this crime against humanity and to make reparations and restitution an eventually practical option.

This article originally appeared in the June 5, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



(L to R) Ara Chalian and Dr. Richard Hovannisian

'Armenians in the Republic of Armenia and throughout the diaspora are the guardians of their past and current history.'



Eastern Region

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—On May 26, twenty junior members of the Providence Varantian Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) chapter presented a special show consisting of an evening of patriotic songs, poems and a dance performance at the Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Providence. However, this year's program was not a talent show as in the previous 4 years, but a concert dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

During the program, a short presentation of pictures was shown that featured Genocide commemorative events hosted and attended by the Providence Armenian community. The production included pictures from a candle light vigil march from the Sts. Vartanantz church to the Rhode Island State House and the Armenian Genocide Observation on Capitol Hill.

The program's finale included songs such as "Aruynod Trosh" and "Pour Toi, Armenie," the latter written by singer Charles Aznavour. A dance was also performed, which began with a mother showing her children how to write the letters of the Armenian alphabet. Suddenly, the loud sounds of the dhol from a musical piece by Ara Gevorkyan made the family scatter as they watched the dancers perform.

Later, as the family gathered together again, a Turkish soldier took the sons away from, leaving the mother with only two daughters. The dancers then returned to the performance as a sign of eternity; that the Armenian nation will continue to live. At that moment, the two boys returned to wave the Armenian flag, leaving the audience on their feet for a standing ovation.

After the dance, Rev. Gomidas Baghsarian blessed the juniors who were traveling to the annual AYF Junior Seminar the following morning. In his closing remarks, he said that he was amazed at how well the juniors sang the songs in Armenian and that he was pleasantly surprised at hearing the French song and seeing the remarkable dance performance. Baghsarian also recognized the Mourad Armenian Saturday school for providing the opportunity to be educated in the Armenian language, as well as the parents of the AYF juniors for their support and encouragement.

This article originally appeared in the June 18, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.

Providence AYFers Present Concert Dedicated to 90th Anniversary of Genocide



AYF Juniors Prepare Posters for April 24 Events

Paint and brushes in hand, 15 members of the Providence Varantian junior chapter gathered at the Sts. Vartanantz Church in Providence a week before April 24 to design posters calling for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. Members later carried them during the annual candle light vigil march to the Rhode Island State House, and later during the April 24 commemoration in New York City.

This article originally appeared in the May 14, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



TEXAS AYF



Western Region

The Turkish Denial and Genocide Recognition

AYF Ashod Yergat Chapter Hosts Event Featuring Taner Akcam

ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.—On March 6, the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Ashod Yergat chapter invited Turkish scholar Taner Akcam as the keynote speaker for discussion titled “Turkish Denial and the Future of Genocide Recognition.”

Through his writings, lectures and research, Taner Akcam—currently a visiting professor at the University of Minnesota—has been an active proponent of the Armenian genocide. He is the author of numerous books, articles and essays, including his most recently published work *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*. Through his efforts, Akcam says that hopes to enlighten and educate the Turkish people about this missing part of their history as a way of bridging the gap between current day Armenians and Turks.

He further affirms that his pursuit for Genocide recognition is not a result of his concern for Armenia’s well being. Rather, Akcam believes that Turkey is on its way to becoming a free and democratic nation, and if it truly wants to become a democratic and free state, it needs to come to terms with its history. He expressed that without accepting the past, it is not possible to progress forward.

The main area of Akcam’s discussion revolved around why Turkish people have a difficult time coping with their past. While the more common belief seems to be the issue of reparations, Akcam argued that the problem lies much deeper, as a psychological issue. He said that people in Turkey have trouble accepting that their forefathers, who they have recognized as the “heroes” of the Turkish Republic, are in fact the same group of individuals that participated in the Genocide.

Akcam asserts that this mental shift is a very difficult and deep-rooted problem, but believes that there is a bright future ahead. The key is, as proposed by Akcam, to find a new set of heroes and public role models that can replace the current group of forefathers. Particularly with the current reforms and changes within Turkey in response to European Union pressures, he believes that progress will come even quicker. For Akcam, the question is not “if” the Turkish people will realize their past, it is more a question of “when.”

The audience of over 200 people, predominantly Armenian, was receptive to the Akcam’s ideas and comments about the Genocide and the future of recognition. During a question and answer session, many voiced their concerns and questions with the speaker.



Turkish scholar Taner Akcam

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'The Walk May End, But the March Continues...'



FRESNO, Calif. — "The walk may end, but the march continues." This slogan is written in bold and italicized letters on every page of the March For Humanity Web site. Organizers of the 215-mile and 19-day walk from Fresno, Calif., to Sacramento say that the requisite three months of planning and three weeks of executing the March For Humanity was the minimum they could do to raise awareness about the Armenian genocide in order to obtain its proper recognition, restitution and reparation.

"Similar to what our slogan suggests, we and the Armenian youth as a collective must create new and more powerful ways of securing justice for the Armenian genocide," said March For Humanity director Vicken Sosikian. "We are currently discussing ways to not only continue the march [for justice], but also to expand it."

In conjunction with the last two days of the walk, organizers of the March For Humanity launched a nationwide ad campaign on April 19 and 20 on CNN Networks. Reaching an audience of up to eight million Americans, the March For Humanity marked the first recorded instance of a nationwide Armenian genocide ad campaign. The commercials informed viewers about the March For Humanity, the Armenian genocide and guided them to the March For Humanity official Web site.

The 30-second commercials coincided with an official letter to the March For Humanity from Senator Bob Dole. "From 1915 to 1923, 1.5 million Armenians perished through a policy of deportation, torture, starvation, and massacre," reads the letter signed by Dole. "Despite the vast numbers of victims, many people remain unaware of this significant tragedy."

"The March For Humanity brings people together in spirit of remembrance for all those who suffered. The more we spread awareness of such atrocities, the better prepared we are to prevent them in the future," wrote Dole. "Thanks for all you do to educate our nation about this genocide."

"Americans have been kept in the dark about the Armenian Genocide and the subsequent horrors experienced by its 1.5 million victims," said Sosikian. "Our ad campaign aims to educate the public about this

crime against all humanity."

The event received media coverage from outlets in geographical locations that normally do not have much news to offer about the Armenian genocide. Newspapers and television news programs in Visalia, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Turlock, Modesto, Lodi, Stockton, Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank, and other California cities all echoed news of the March For Humanity.

Preliminary media monitoring shows that the following media outlets covered the March For Humanity: Lodi News Sentinel, Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Los Angeles Times, Daily News, Sacramento Bee, Stockton Record, Contra Costa Times, San Jose Mercury News, San Diego Union Tribune, San Luis Obispo Tribune, Merced Sun Star, USA Today, Burbank Leader, Glendale News Press, Monterey County Herald, Voice of America, Democracy Now, ABC, CBS, NBC, UPN and more than 100 other internet news sources.

"An estimated 10 million Americans have been educated about the Armenian genocide as a result of the news coverage generated by the March For Humanity," said Sosikian. "More detailed research is likely to show that this number is even greater when our nationwide CNN ad campaign is included. Now we must search for ways to educate not ten but 100 million about the Genocide."

The March For Humanity was made possible by the flood of financial and moral support it received starting in late January by Armenians and non-Armenians alike. More than 500 organizations, businesses and individuals invested in the idea. Some mailed in their checks, others made donations at the March For Humanity Web site, others sponsored walkers, while others delivered their donation personally.

Some donated food, others water, others their cars and some gave clothes. Some, who lived in cities the marchers walked through, opened their doors to the young group of devoted youth.

"The quantity of support we received to organize the march was unseen at least by me," said March For Humanity coordinator Serouj Aprahamian. "Although sup-

port is still needed, the amount we received prior to its beginning was a large encouragement for the walkers."

More than 11,500 different people from 84 different countries visited the March For Humanity Web site, www.marchforhumanity.org, between February 24 and April 24. More than 500 action alerts, calling on President George W. Bush to officially recognize the Armenian genocide, were sent by many non-Armenians.

"Hundreds helped make the March For Humanity a reality. We are thankful to each and every individual, business, and organization who contributed in anyway to the March For Humanity," Sosikian. "A few such donors we would like to thank in particular include the Armenian Relief Society, Armenian National Committee of America, AA Cater Truck Manufacturing Company, GBH, Homenetmen, Horizon Armenian Television, Asbarez Armenian Daily Newspaper, Kerovision, Adin of California, Sunworks Tanning, New Armenia Daily, Armenian Life Magazine, Axis of Justice, and all the churches who made our marchers feel like home every night. We would also like to thank Mr. Kevork Aslanian, Mr. Sarkis Sarkissian, and Mrs. Vergine Sarkissian."

The march concluded on April 21 with a rally on the steps of the state capitol building in Sacramento. The Rally For Humanity featured many elected officials including California State Assembly Majority Leader Assemblyman Dario Frommer and Speaker Pro-tem Assembly member Leland Yee.

"This is a rally in support of all those who seek the truth and all those who understand that genocide cannot go by with impunity," Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Western Region chairman Steven Dadaian told the Sacramento Bee.

At the capitol, a crowd cheered for the marchers. Supporters waved Armenian and American flags and held signs that said, "We will never forget" and "Remember the Armenian genocide of 1915, R.I.P. 1.5 million," reported the Sacramento Bee.

Reprinted from the April 23-30, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.

Western Region

AYF Holds Annual April 24 Protest in Front of Turkish Consulate

LOS ANGELES—On April 23, 2005, over 2,000 protesters gathered in front of the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles demanding recognition of the Armenian genocide. Predominately youth, the large crowd included many whose ancestors perished 90 years ago as well as those who stand firmly in the name of justice.

The crowd of protestors picketed across two blocks of Wilshire Blvd. chanting slogans such as "Eastern Turkey is Western Armenia" and "1915 never again." Many also carried signs stating "Genocide Unpunished is Genocide Encouraged" and "Turkey Republic of Inhumanity."

After two hours of protesting at the gates of the Turkish Consulate, the crowd gathered in front of the

building to hear an address by Melkon Melkonian. He assured the crowd that this generation, along with future generations of Armenian-Americans will continue their demand for the return of Western Armenia and all other reparations. The time to end injustice is now and no one will be able to stand in the way, he said.

Many countries and several states within the U.S. have officially recognized the Genocide. "The Polish government officially recognized the Armenian genocide this past week," said protest director Marie Minassian. "We are grateful for the integrity and courage they displayed in the face of Turkish threats and are hopeful that our government, here in the U.S., will



follow suit shortly," said Minassian.

For over 30 years, the protest at the Turkish Consulate has brought together the Armenian community all across the western coast of the United States. With a large number of gatherers creating a strong impact, it has attracted major media coverage including ABC, CBS, NBC, KCAL and various newspapers. The community will continue to come together and use all means and outlets necessary to ensure proper accountability for the crimes against Armenians and all of humanity.

AYF and ARF Student Association Unite Armenian Youth

LOS ANGELES—On April 22, the ARF Shant Student Association and the Armenian Youth Federation organized a youth rally that brought together over 1,500 youth at the Ararat Homenetmen Center in Los Angeles. The Rally Against Injustice was hosted by master of ceremonies Ardashes "Ardy" Kassakhian. Guest speakers included current Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Glendale Unified School District board member Greg Krikorian. Both speakers emphasized that Genocide denial would not be tolerated and only a united youth can put a stop to the injustice of its peoples.

In addition, AYF and Shant Student Association member Raffi Semerdjian addressed the gathering, reminding all that now is the time to come together and stand as a united force. The power of success, said Semerdjian, can be found in the minds of each Armenian.

The evening continued with presentations, leading up to the keynote address by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power. In her presentation, Powers discussed the issue of genocide in the 21st century. The cycle of genocide will continue unless the perpetrators are made to be held accountable, Powers said.

"The power of the youth, when they come together, can surpass that of any opposing force," said AYF Western Region Central Executive chairman Shant Baboujian. "They are the foundation with which a nation or culture is created. When Armenian youth unite, their energy is unsurpassable...every year thousands of youth gather to remember the lost souls of 1915 and show that they will never be forgotten."

During the rally, video presentations were shown, addressing the struggle of the Armenian people over the years. The films featured various interviews with Genocide survivors, describing what a lifetime of denial has meant to them. Throughout the evening, various musical sets were also performed by HumanVibes.org; Freeway people; Soseh Keshishian and Knowledge.

"As a youth, as a single united power, we must always remember that no matter how out of reach a goal may be, it is only through the power and strength of a people that can together reach any goal and conquer anything necessary," said Baboujian.



United Human Rights Council Organizes Rally to Raise Awareness

LOS ANGELES—The United Human Rights Council (UHRC) is a collective of concerned citizens working towards correcting the human rights violations of those governments who distort, deny, and delude their own history to disguise past and present genocides, massacres, and human rights violations. The UHRC advances its human rights goals and raises global awareness through grassroots mobilization, boycotts, community outreach and education.

On April 29, 2005, the UHRC held a rally for truth and justice in front of the U.S. Federal Building on Wilshire Blvd in Los Angeles. The rally focused on America's policies and their need to acknowledge the inhumanity of various governments. Over 1,200 individuals gathered at the steps of the Federal Building from various communities all across southern California. Predominately youth, hundreds were bussed in from schools and various Armenian centers. Taking place on a Friday afternoon, numerous people took off school and work to come together and send a message to the government that America needs to take a stand against inhumane countries such as Turkey.

The crowd rallied in front of the Federal Building for over two hours chanting in unison "No to TARC" and "We want Justice," after which a handful of speakers addressed the people. Among them was Armenian National Committee (ANC) Western Region board member Raffi Hamparian, who spoke of the important role today's youth play in American politics. He urged the American government, and President George W. Bush to stop the denial and confront this chapter in Armenia's history, and the just resolution for the Armenian genocide.

In addition, Glendale School Board member Greg Krikorian stated that the youth are responsible for carrying the torch of hope, fire and passion to the new generation. He went on to state that during trying times, the Armenian people have always persevered, and that the Armenian youth will be the ones who take our fight to new levels.

The UHRC rally worked for the recognition of the Genocide and the just resolution of the Armenian cause. Reparation, restitution and recognition are vital in the quest for truth and justice.



Canada

ARF Youth in Canada Hold Vigil Honoring Genocide Martyrs

MONTREAL—On April 23, Canadian youth participated in a vigil in front of the Human Rights monument in Ottawa to pay tribute to the countless victims of the Armenian genocide. The commemorative event, spearheaded by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Youth Organization of Canada (ARFYOC), drew the support of members of the organization from Toronto and Montreal, members of the Armenian community at large, diplomats representing various nations in Canada, as well as representatives of different cultural organizations and nongovernmental, humanitarian organizations.

A crowd of approximately 150 supporters braved the heavy rain to partake in the vigil, which also commemorated all those who have fallen victim to genocides in the 20th and 21st centuries, and aimed at raising awareness about genocide, which still continues to occur around the world.

"This is a first effort on the part of the Armenian Youth Organization to bring together all nations that have suffered such heinous crimes. We should not only remember the past, but strive to unite our voices in order to put an end to the cycle of genocide," said ARFYOC chairman Hamlet Djeredjian.

"I am confident that this event will open peoples' eyes to the threat that genocide poses for all of humanity. As Canadian-Armenians, we bear a special responsibility in this matter. The recent events in Sudan are the direct consequence of the unpunished nature of the Armenian genocide. It's time to raise our level of activism and put an end to the cycle of genocide," said Djeredjian.

The abhorrent reality of genocide in Sudan today was described by the keynote speaker of the evening, Tragi Mustafa, founder of the Save Women from Sudan Organization and a representative of the Darfur Association of Canada. She is a resident of Hamilton, Ontario.

A large banner depicted the vigil's motto, "End Genocide," which gave the overall tone to the

event, and intrigued many curious by-standers, pedestrians and motorists along Elgin Street. The stage carried the flags of all the nations who officially recognized the Armenian genocide through parliamentary resolutions.

The program opened with a message from the organizing committee's chairperson, Lalai Manjikian, who emphasized the importance for all nations who have been victims of genocides to take a united stand against genocide and increase awareness, as this horrendous crime poses a threat to all humanity.

The vigil also included the screening of the documentary "The Genocide Factor," a PBS production, as well as poetry readings by members of the Armenian Youth Organization including a poem titled "The Dance" written by Armenian poet Siamanto, who was murdered in 1915.

During the event, Mikael Vardanian, consular for the Armenian Embassy of Canada read a statement on behalf of the Ambassador of Armenia to Canada, Ara Babian, who was out of the country.

Armenian National Committee of Canada vice-president Toros Dimitian also spoke about the importance of involvement in the quest to have the world recognize the Armenian genocide and for the perpetrators to take responsibility for their criminal acts.

Nathalie Brière, representing Le Projet d'Accompagnement Quebec-Guatemala, spoke on behalf of the organization and read a statement written by a genocide survivor currently residing in Montreal.

After the end of the program, supporters placed flowers on the steps of the monument to honor the memory of all who have suffered and whose fundamental human rights have been violated. The vigil then resumed with a solemn candle lighting ceremony, to commemorate the victims of all genocides.

This article originally appeared in the May 14, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



Armenians in Brazil

Display Exhibition on Armenian Genocide

At the end of April, an exhibition of posters about the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide designed by Norman Seraidarian was held in São Paulo, Brazil, home to more than 18,000,000 people.

The display is sponsored by the Brazilian Commission for the Remembrance of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The exhibit is located in the most important avenue of São Paulo city, the Paulista Avenue; it is the financial centre of the country. Curators of the exhibit are Garbis Bogiatzian and Carlos Chirinian.

"People that see the display like it very much; they found it very strong and creative. We feel that it is important for everyone to learn about the Genocide because it's a part of history and should never be forgotten. It is time for Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide," said Brazil AYF member Kevork Djanian.

The display will run until May 1.

This article was originally published in the April 23-30, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



AYFers in Cordoba

Protest Against Turkish Denial of the Genocide

On April 9, AYF members in the Argentinean city of Cordoba called for justice outside an arts center in the city, for the Armenian genocide. A Turkish performance was taking place at the same venue. Members held posters and distributed flyers about the Genocide, Turkey's denial and their call for justice.

This article was originally published in the April 23-30, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.



Armenians in Uruguay Thank their Country for Recognizing the Genocide, Erecting Monument in Honor of Martyrs



Uruguay's capital city council passed a decision on March 30 to name a broad strip of land in central Montevideo the "Square of the Armenian Genocide," a motion introduced to the city council by council member Raffi Hunanian about a year ago. This year, on April 22, the plaza was officially dedicated and a monument was unveiled that was erected in the square. In 1965, Uruguay was the first country to recognize the Armenian genocide, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Genocide.

Reprinted from the July 2, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.

Australia AYF Organizes walk for Genocide Recognition

SYDNEY, Australia—On April 28, the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) of Australia led the Sydney Armenian community in a candlelight recognition walk through the city's central business district, in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

With candles in hand, approximately 450 people marched from Hyde Park, through Elizabeth Street, Martin Place and Macquarie Street, culminating in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Armenian genocide memorial monument at the New South Wales State Parliament House.

The members of the AYF and the Homenetmen Antranig scouts, along with the students of Hamazkayin Arshak and Sophie Galstaun School led the public, which included many descendants of the 1.5 million civilians slaughtered by the Turkish government.

"This should serve as a message for the Turkish government of today," said AYF of Australia chairperson Kevork Tufenkjian, "Ninety years later, in far-away Australia, 450 members of the same Armenian community that the Turks tried to wipe out have again joined hands in recognition, commemoration and condemnation of the Armenian genocide."

"We challenge today's Turkish government to face up to their predecessors' misdemeanors and admit what history books prove beyond doubt—that they attempted the systematic elimination of an entire people by leading them on a death march and taking nine-tenths of their land," he said. "We, the youth, will not rest until justice is served and our forefathers' spirits can rest in peace."

The candlelight recognition walk was part of a series of commemoration ceremonies conducted by the Armenian community in Sydney.

This article was originally published in the May 28, 2005 issue of the Armenian Weekly.

Media and the Armenian Genocide

By Dalita Getzoyan

Recently reflecting on the commemorative events held this year during the week of April 24, I believe that although more people are finally starting to correctly refer to the Armenian genocide, the media may still portray it otherwise. They will often understate the number of Armenians killed during the Genocide, while there is documentation putting the number at 1.5 million killed.

The media may also use the phrase "Armenians claim..." before discussing the Genocide, not stating it as a fact, but as something Armenians "claim" happened. The problem is, however, that the Armenian genocide is a fact. I believe that if newspapers state it as fact, it will help change the way the U.S. government approaches the issue.

The commemorative events that I attended, including the Genocide program at Boston University, the candlelight march from Sts. Vartanantz Church in Providence to the Rhode Island State House, the Genocide Commemoration Concert at Rhode Island College, and the joint commemoration in New York City, all attracted the media in some way or another, whether it was television, newspapers, or both.

All the events were very emotional and powerful, and I was glad to see that reporters were able to capture how strongly we feel about the Genocide. They interviewed people and even reported some of the survivors' stories. However, although they did mention that Turkey denies the Genocide, some failed to say that it was wrong or that something should be done about it.

I believe that we need to change this attitude and send the newspapers feedback, telling them how we appreciate their coverage, but correcting them when it comes to the facts and wording. By doing this, I think that we can voice to the citizens of the United States and beyond what really happened to the Armenians.

Justice Needs Glasses

It is said that the truth is in the eye of the beholder,
Yet what is to be when history grows older?
What will be seen with that impaired biased eye?
Only that time is burning, and so am I.

What has transpired to our sense of sight
When history has been concealed, and time has not shed light?
What is produced when history has been enclosed by bars?
All that results are our fallen stars.
These stars are martyrs of our past,
And they remind us that lies do not last,
They shine to symbolize that history cannot lie,
That righteousness will only help us to justify
The sadistic blow we received to our Armenian Pride,
It was not only a tragedy, but also genocide!

History has been atrocious to the Armenian race,
It has been faulty and out of place.
Yet the darkest days had arrived during 1915,
But the legality remains to be seen,
The essence of 1.5 million soared higher and higher
As they were slaughtered by the Ottoman Empire.

We were inequitably led into the deserts by Turkish armed forces,
Only to result in 1.5 million lifeless corpses,
We were raped, slain, and even beheaded,
And images of fatalities within our minds had been embedded.
Mothers taught their children the alphabet in sand,
Yet justice repudiates to acknowledge our demand,
We have been suppressed for too long of a time,
Justice must show retribution for this crime.

However, justice gawks at me confused,
It refuses to accept that the Armenians have been abused,
It refuses to concede the truth obscured inside,
That the Armenians were victims of a contemptible homicide.

To the Turks I have a question so intimate-
Why did they execute a plan so intricate?
Do they think they gained any control?
Or even damage our Armenian soul?
You only strengthened our Armenian spirit,
And when justice befalls you will only fear it,
I stipulate for you to bow in shame,
1.5 million symbolized by a single flame,
A blaze, which will smolder throughout eternity,
You cannot inter what is our harsh reality,
On April 24th we commemorate and necessitate to be seen,
For the remembrance of the Genocide of 1915.

I demand for the world to recognize the Armenian genocide,
We can no longer tame the emotions that lay still inside.
Yet when the truth stays in the eye of the beholder
The voices of the Armenians will merely grow bolder...
If justice still fails to see our dark gloomy past,
Then with the help of glasses it will realize at last,
That the empire of the Turks should forever linger with shame
As they failed to extinguish our Armenian soul like a single burning flame!

Hrag Pailian

ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ՄԻՈՒԹԻՒՆ, ԱՆՆԱՅԱՆՁ ՊԱՅՔԱՐ

Ռաֆֆի Սարգիսեան

90 տարիներ անցած են այն թուականէն, երբ Թուրքը որոշեց վերջ դնել հայ ժողովուրդի գոյութեան, նախապատրաստուած ծրագիրով մը, զորս սկսած էր զգուշութեամբ եւ մանրամասնօրէն գործադրել Օսմանական Կայսրութեան բոլոր հայաբնակ գիւղերէն եւ քաղաքներէն ներս:

Ձերբակալութիւններ, չարչարանքներ, կողոպուտ, կախաղաններ, աւերակ, եւ մահ... ահաւասիկ պատկերը հայաբնակ քաղաքներուն 1915-ին:

Աքսորի եւ ջարդի այս ծրագիրը ուրիշ բան չէր եթէ ոչ՝ ցեղասպանութիւն:

90 տարիներ ետք, այսօր, կե՛ապրինք կեանքի այլ պայմաններու մէջ:

Այսօր՝ չկան թուրքին եաթաղանները, չկան կարմիր ջարդերը, չկան մարմիններու կորուստին վտանգները: Բայց կան տարբեր վտանգներ որոնք կը պահանջեն ամբողջական իմաստութիւն եւ արդիական լուծումներ:

Այս վտանգներուն դէմ պայքարող ամենէն ուժեղ ձայնը կը հանդիսանայ Զ.Յ. Դաշնակ-ցութիւնը, որ իր յստակ նպատակներով, բժախնդիր կազմակերպութեամբ եւ ծրագրուած աշխատանքով կը վերակենդանացնէ հայ ժողովուրդին երազները, զանոնք 2021-ի իրականութեան վերածելով:

Միւս կողմէ Զայ Դատը, իր բոլոր անձնուէր գործիչներուն շնորհիւ հայու արդար իրաւունքներու ձեռքբերման աշխատանքին ջահակիրը կը հանդիսանայ: Անոր աշխատանքները չեն դադորիր ու երբեք պիտի

չդադրին, այնքան ատեն, որ հայութիւն եւ Զայաստան գոյութիւն ունին: Ան մեր ազգային պահանջատիրութեան ուժեղ ձայնն է:

Առանց ազգային պահանջատիրութեան, առանց մեր հողային տարացքներու ձեռքբերման՝ չկայ ամբողջական հայութիւն եւ Զայաստան:

ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ՊԱՅՔԱՆՁԱՏԻՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ, ա՛յս պետք է ըլլայ մեր ԱԼՖԱՆ եւ ՕՍԵԿԱՆ Զայ երիտասարդ.

Մե՛նք պիտի ըլլանք առաջնորդները այս պայքարին:

Մե՛նք պիտի ըլլանք այն արձագանգը մեր նահատակներու արեան կանչին:

Մե՛նք պիտի ըլլանք ոգին յաւերժական Զայաստանին:

Մե՛նք պիտի ըլլանք զօրքը վաղուան հայոց բանակին, որպէսզի ծունկի բերենք ցեղասպան թշնամին:

Մե՛նք պիտի լուծենք վրէժը մեր հայրերուն, արդարապահանջ ու վճռական պայքարով: Պայքար մը, որ պիտի մղենք արեան գետով, պիտի մղենք հպարտութեամբ եւ անձնուիրութեամբ ինչպէս մեր նախնիները:

90-ամեայ ցեղասպանութեան դիմաց կանգնած, մեր ցաւերը վերածենք պայքարի, բողոքի, աշխատանքի ու ազգային պահանջատիրութեան: Որպէս ազգ, որպէս մէկ մարմին եւ էակ մեր ձայնը լսելի դարձնենք աշխարհին գոչելով եւ ուխտելով...

«Մեր անունն է պայքար, եւ մեր վախճանը՝ յաղթանակ»

De quelle manière le Génocide Arménien a-t-il influencé la Shoah ?

Par Shant Karabajakian

L'histoire de l'humanité est marquée par de nombreuses guerres et conflits, souvent causant de vastes pertes humaines et sociales. Selon certains, se sont des cas isolés, qui n'ont aucune importance dans la vie de tous les jours. Cependant, il y a ceux qui pensent différemment en affirmant qu'il faut connaître et analyser les tragédies et les événements marquants de l'histoire afin de pouvoir relever les erreurs de l'humanité et ne pas les répéter. C'est le cas, à mon avis, du Génocide Arménien, trop souvent négligé par la communauté internationale. Mon but, par biais de cette recherche, est de prouver, que la négation du Génocide Arménien a causé directement l'Holocauste juif, ainsi que les autres génocides du XX^e siècle. Pour ce faire, je propose d'étudier différents aspects;

1. L'antisémitisme face au panturquisme;
2. le fait que les deux génocides se sont produits durant des Guerres Mondiales;
3. les techniques de massacres
4. les propos de Hitler.

Afin de bien comprendre la problématique, il faut, en premier lieu, se rendre compte du contexte historique qui a abouti à une des catastrophes de la civilisation humaine, le Génocide Arménien. En 1878, l'Arménie, une des colonies de l'Empire Ottoman depuis 1375 de notre ère, se trouva au beau milieu d'une problématique internationale, dont elle était l'un des enjeux. La guerre turco-russe avait pris fin à l'époque avec la victoire totale de l'Empire Russe, ce qui a fait perdre à l'Empire Ottoman toutes ses possessions européennes. À la table de discussion, à Berlin, on a reconnu l'indépendance de plusieurs des pays Balkans et, de plus, on a imposé à l'Empire Ottoman d'implanter des réformes dans les provinces arméniennes de l'Empire. Cependant, cette clause du traité ne s'est pas imposé, et les Arméniens vécurent dans la misère, jusqu'à la dernière décennie du XIX^e siècle. En 1890, la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne prit naissance au Caucase en réclamant une meilleure condition de vie pour les Arméniens de la Turquie. Les réponses à cette requête furent la surtaxation, la privation du droit de porter des armes, la privation du droit de la possession de terres etc.... Les Arméniens étaient alors réduits à des citoyens de troisième classe. S'ensuivirent les massacres, dits « hamidiens », au nom de Sultan Abdul Hamid, de 1894 à 1896, qui ont fait à peu près 250 000 victimes dans la région autour du lac de Van. La population a été dévastée. C'est à la suite de cet événement que la F.R.A. a décidé de créer une Arménie autonome, par des procédés politiques.

En 1908, le parti politique des Jeunes Turcs, soutenu au début par la F.R.A. a entrepris un coup d'état, en détrônant le Sultan Abdul Hamid. Moins qu'un an après, pour « remercier » le peuple arménien pour son soutien, les Jeunes Turcs ont organisé le massacre d'Adana, où 30 000 Arméniens ont trouvé la mort. C'est alors que la F.R.A. a procédé à des attentats terroristes et à la défense militaire des villages arméniens. Tout au long de cette histoire, les Arméniens ont voulu faire connaître les peines qu'ils subissaient, à la main des Turcs, aux Européens. Plusieurs ambassadeurs furent convoqués par les pouvoirs alliés mais aucune mesure n'a été prise pour garantir la sécurité du peuple arménien.

En 1915, sous le couvercle de la Première Guerre mondiale, débutant le 24 Avril, quand 500 dignitaires et notables arméniens furent arrêtés et liquidés à Constantinople, le vilain complot du gouvernement turc a pris naissance. Des femmes, enfants et vieillards furent tués en masse. Le bilan final, au moins 1 500 000 victimes, 250 000 orphelins, 100 000 conversions forcées, au moins 250 000 dont on ne connaît pas le sort, 1 750 000 réfugiés, un pays vidé. Quoique les organisations arméniennes aient tenté de sauver la population de l'Arménie, dite « turque », elles ont échoué, cependant, elles ont réussi à créer un état arménien indépendant en Arménie dite « russe ».

Le Génocide a causé de graves conséquences à l'échelle sociale, politique, économique et géographique pour les Arméniens. Une vaste diaspora s'est créée en Europe, Russie et en Amérique. La culture et l'économie arménienne épanouissante du XIX^e siècle furent haltées à cause de la disparition de la tête pensante de la



Reflections on Genocide

population. Finalement, les Arméniens ne vivaient désormais, que sur une petite fraction de leurs terres ancestrales.

En guise de comparaison, on peut tracer un parallèle avec la situation des Juifs en Europe.

En premier lieu, il est intéressant de constater les similarités entre le panturquisme de la Turquie et l'antisémitisme de l'Europe. Le panturquisme est une idéologie lancée par le gouvernement turc au début du siècle. Elle consiste à créer un

vaste empire, du Bosphore à la Mongolie, comprenant que des sujets turcophones musulmans. Un obstacle à ce projet, l'Arménie chrétienne (le premier pays à adopter le christianisme de 285 à 301 A.D.), coïncé entre la Turquie et l'Azerbaïdjan musulmanes, des voisins en fait hostiles. Les Arméniens furent alors méprisés par les dirigeants et même le peuple musulman, avec qui ils avaient cohabité depuis près de 550 ans. Etant donné que les Arméniens, ainsi que les Grecs constituaient la plaque tournante de l'économie ottomane, on les accusait d'avarice et de vol. L'antisémitisme se déroulait de manière similaire en Europe. Enracinée dans la culture européenne depuis déjà le Moyen Age, l'antisémitisme avait aussi comme source la religion. L'église catholique, force suprême de l'Europe, accusant le peuple juif pour avoir crucifié Jésus, méprisait la population hébreu et en persécutait les membres, jusqu'à l'ère moderne. Les Juifs, tous comme les Arméniens, jouissaient d'un essor économique remarquable, et ainsi étaient sujet à la jalousie des autres nations de l'Europe. Cependant, ils étaient, parallèlement, victime d'une discrimination et d'une ségrégation raciale.

En deuxième lieu, il est plus qu'une coïncidence, à mon avis, que ces deux crimes atroces contre l'humanité soient produits durant les deux guerres mondiales. Selon Vahakn N. Dadrian, auteur de *Warrant for Genocide; Key Elements of the Turko-Armenian Conflict*, il y avait de grandes chances que le Génocide Arménien ne serait pas produit sans le déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il cite Enver Pasa, Ministre de la Guerre de l'Empire Ottoman, en disant que « la chance amène les circonstances de la guerre, et l'alliance des États Centraux avec la Turquie »¹. En utilisant des prétextes absurdes, dont « la protection de la population arménienne contre les avances russes » et « la déportation des Arméniens pour la sécurité nationale », la Turquie a utilisé le couvert de la Grande Guerre pour mettre en pratique leur plan d'élimination systématique de la population indigène. De même manière, la Deuxième Guerre mondiale fut un camouflage pour les autorités allemandes, pour systématiquement déporter la population juive de l'Europe, vers les camps de concentration plus à l'est. Les alliés n'ont su de cette tragédie que durant l'invasion de l'Europe vers 1945, alors que le plan d'extermination était mis en marche dès le début des années 40. Ce fait contribue à prouver que la souffrance des Arméniens de la Première Guerre Mondiale, impunie, influença l'Allemagne Nazi dans ses plans d'extermination de la cause juive.

Troisièmement, dans les deux cas, les massacres de la population civile n'étaient pas aléatoires, ils étaient systématiques, bien révisés et témoignant d'une organisation méthodique. Pour ce faire, Yves Ternon, l'auteur d'origine française, élabore dans son livre, intitulé *Les Arméniens; Histoire d'un génocide*, six points qu'a envisagé la haute direction turque, afin d'éliminer les Arméniens;

1. S'en débarrasser totalement,
2. S'en débarrasser proprement,
3. S'en débarrasser discrètement,
4. À moindre risque,
5. À moindre frais,
6. Mettre en place les structures et saisir le prétexte.

Ceci témoigne le fait que le Génocide Arménien était prémédité et on envisageait même saisir les avoirs du peuple massacré. Aussi, l'auteur souligne les différentes techniques utilisées par l'armée turque pour s'en débarrasser des Arméniens. Cependant, il est évident que ces techniques n'étaient pas à point, puisque il y a eu plusieurs rescapés des massacres, et c'est pour cela que Hitler élabora des techniques plus modernes et



productives. Les longues caravanes à pied dans le désert qu'effectuait le peuple arménien, ont été remplacées par les wagons de train vers les camps de concentration, méthode plus efficace et rapide. La fusillade turque, remplacée par la chambre de gaz allemande, d'une technologie et rendement supérieur. Les Turcs faisaient un art de piller et de confisquer des biens arméniens après la mort du propriétaire. C'est ainsi que des hommes d'affaires turques se sont très rapidement enrichis avec l'instauration de la République Turque. Dans le cas juif, les biens étaient aussi confisqués, quoique jusqu'à aujourd'hui, l'Allemagne paie une somme annuelle importante comme restitution.

En fin de compte, une dernière preuve que la dénégarion du Génocide Arménien a directement causé l'élaboration d'un plan d'extermination des Juifs est le discours qu' Adolf Hitler prononça à ses officiers pour les convaincre de son plan diabolique. Le 22 Août, 1939, à Obersalzberg, une semaine avant l'invasion de la Pologne et du début de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, Hitler s'adresse à ses commandants militaires et leur ordonne de « tuer sans pitié et sans clémence tous les hommes, femmes et enfants de race ou de langue polonais ». Il conclut ses observations en disant « Qui se souvient encore de l'extermination des Arméniens ? », et ceci même pas vingt ans après le fait.

Pour conclure, il faut retenir que la situation humaine et le droit de l'homme doivent être d'abord et avant tout des principes de base de notre civilisation aux portes du XXI^e siècle. En privant un groupe ethnique ou religieux du droit à la vie et à l'épanouissement de sa culture sur ses terres ancestrales, on commet un crime du plus haut niveau. De plus, priver un groupe ethnique du droit au souvenir et à la justice en est un crime aussi grave. Ne pas punir les fautes du passé c'est être condamné à les répéter dans le présent et le futur, tel a été le cas des deux génocides étudiés ici. La justice ne doit pas être sujet aux caprices écono-politiques qui font que le Génocide Arménien n'est pas reconnu, ni puni et d'autres génocides soient perpétrés.

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(Footnotes)

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Turkey at the *European Union's* Door

By Maria Keusseyan
December 22, 2004

Introduction

This is a tale of a country that wants to join the European Union. The country lies mostly in Asia and shares borders with problematic states such as Iran, Syria and Iraq. Its economy has been unstable and underdeveloped for many decades and it is one of the largest debtors to the (IMF) International Monetary Fund. This state is far more poor than even the poorest of the ten countries that recently joined the European Union. It is largely a Muslim nation, has a history of military involvement in politics and has a criticized and terrible human rights record. The question of whether or not the European Union should admit this country is, of course, a delicate one. This candidate for membership who is causing much controversy is, Turkey. As the decision whether to start accession negotiations draws closer, the debate of this Turkish issue has become delicate and disruptive.

The question of Turkish membership of the European Union has been debated for four decades. In 1963, the Association Agreement ("Ankara Agreement") was signed between Turkey and the European Community as a promise of eventual membership. Turkey applied full membership for European Union only in April 1987; however the European Commission deferred the application in December 1989 for a variety of economic, political and social reasons. Consequently, Turkey became the first nation to establish a customs union with the European Union in 1995 with hope of full membership afterward. Yet, the Turkish public was

surprised when the 1997 Luxembourg summit excluded only Turkey from its list of candidates. Two years later, at the Helsinki summit, Turkey was officially recognized as a European Union candidate. During the summit of 2002, European Union leaders agreed that, if by the end of 2004, Turkey fulfilled the economic and political conditions of the Copenhagen criteria, a date will be fixed for the start of negotiations.

This paper will analyze the Copenhagen criteria and Turkey's progress towards entry in the union. By discussing Turkey's ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria, this essay will conclude whether Turkey is ready to become a full member of the European Union.

The Copenhagen Criteria

"Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and, protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union."¹

The above excerpt is from the Copenhagen Presidency conclusions enforced by the Council of the European Union at the Copenhagen summit in June 1993. All candidates, including Turkey, must accomplish all conditions before accession negotiations commence. This decision is, of course, not negotiable.

At its Helsinki summit in De-

cember 1999, the council gave Turkey the candidacy status with five other states: Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. In fact, the European Council confirmed that no special rights were required for applicants except the need to meet all the European Union's tough membership criteria particularly the political conditions. Thus, clarifying the fact that accession preparations will concentrate in light of political criteria such as stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, the protection of minorities as well as other factors. Regardless of the major factor influencing the opening of negotiations, each candidacy state must also satisfy the economic conditions as well as the criteria of the adoption of the community *aquis*.

Furthermore, the constitutional, legislative, and administrative changes that a candidate country is adopting have to be complete and fully implemented. Though Turkish government officials are acknowledging the major problems of their state and aiming for modifications, they have to ensure that the adopted laws are being accomplished. It is inadequate to pass reforms that are incomplete, and leave many areas with particular problems. In addition, the government should be aware that the objective of the reform process is not just to be equal to European standards, but also such reforms should contribute to improving their countries' condition.

Economic Criteria

In 1993, the Copenhagen European Council designed the membership economic criteria as follows:

*"A state intended to join the Union must have a functioning market, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the European Union."*²

When the Helsinki European Council in 1999 took the key decisions on the enlargement of the union, they were prepared to accept new member states, among them Turkey. However, Turkey's candidacy was subject to a special decision because of its insufficient improvements to meet the strict criteria.

In its 2003 Regular Report, the commission concluded:

"Turkey has significantly improved the functioning of its market economy, while macroeconomic imbalances remain. Further decisive steps towards macroeconomic stability and structural reforms will also enhance the Turkish capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union."³

Turkey is a largely populated yet very poor country. Both characteristics seem to have various economic consequences. Over the past few years, Turkey has faced two severe financial crises, one following the other. Although the economy is recovering relatively well from the crises, it is not completely stable yet. The table below represents Turkey's economic evolution following the first serious financial crisis in

1999.

The European Commission states that: "a good functioning market requires liberalization, modernization and especially macroeconomic stability, which will allow the country to sustain economic growth."⁴

In view of these statistics, Turkey's economy has recorded remarkable and rapid growth, however serious imbalances still prevail. Although studies show that the economy is somewhat stabilized after the recent recession in 2001, it is still dealing with significant financial weaknesses in different areas.⁵ While inflation continues to remain high, it is under control and declining. This is considered an important achievement since Turkey has experienced a long period of hyperinflation in the past. Due to the changes in inflation, the country's exchange rate made some crucial swings effecting interest rates as well as imports and exports.

Turkey's labor market situation has deteriorated during the past few years. Given the country's low employment rate and the increase of the working-age population, Turkey is struggling with an unemployment rate just over 10 percent.⁶ The rapid and strong economic growth led to an increase in the labor market and extended the working times. According to nongovernmental orga-

nizations, many employees worked more than fifty hours per week.⁷ Despite this reality, the economic development did not lead to a higher employment rate because of the growing young population of workers. Moreover, the employment rate is growing slowly because of the lack of industrialization and modernization taking place; in other words, the country's agricultural sector represents 40 percent of the employment.

In order for Turkey to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the union, it still requires a stable macro economy as well as sufficient human and physical capital. Turkey's other major challenge is debt figures, though much of it is short-term debt. The indebted country manages to pull itself out of this situation due to the strong financial support provided by the IMF.

Furthermore, Turkey's skill and education levels are progressively rising. The old-fashioned education system is still widespread in Turkish school systems and female participation in education is low. These problems are mostly found in rural areas of the country. Thus, rural to urban migration is ongoing in Turkey because of the outdated skills and job categories.

The issues discussed above clearly demonstrate that until the end of 2003, Turkey's macroeconomic situation made progress, but did not meet the Union's expectations and needs further efforts.⁸ Over these past few months, the Turkish government has made progress by passing many economic reforms, which may eventually help satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria.

Overall, it is clear that the Turkish government is motivated

Table 1: Turkey's Main Economic Trends (as of September 1, 2004)

	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004 (latest)
Real GDP growth rate (%)	4.7	7.4	-7.5	5.8	10.6
Unemployment rate (%)	7.7	6.5	8.3	9.0	12.4
Inflation rate (%)	64.2	57.3	57.6	25.3	11.2

Source: Eurostat

Reflections on Genocide

and the financial situation is under expansion, however the instability is without doubt a concern to the union. The European Union does not want to have a member who is vulnerable to regular financial crises. Thus, by far, Turkey's economy is considered very fragile and poverty is still present that may lead to other problems.

Political Criteria

The political aspect of the Copenhagen Criteria states that candidate countries must achieve stability of its institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, and must respect and protect human rights and minorities.⁹ This criterion is Turkey's most important obstacle to overcome in order to adhere to the Union, however according to the Commission report, the country is the right track.

On the political front, following the election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, Turkey has shown radical transformation related to the adoption of a series of political reforms. These reforms include the abolition of the death penalty as well as torture in prisons, the limitation of military influence and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms such as the freedom of expression.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the reform process is incomplete and essential issues need further improvement.

There is still much to be done in terms of civil-military relations. During the past few months, civilian control over the military has been strengthened. The power, composition, functioning and duties of the National Security Council (NSC) have been modified.¹¹ Thus, the NSC has become an advisory body with no executive powers comprised of a majority of civilians. For instance, the

role of the Secretary General of the National Security Council has been reevaluated and its executive power was abolished. For the first time, a civilian was selected Secretary General of the NSC. It is obvious that the government has increased and asserted civilian control over the military; however there are still some non-civilian representatives of the NSC on civilian boards. Also, the Turkish Armed Forces continue to influence and pressure civilians indirectly.

Considerable amendments have been implemented in the judiciary and the juridical system, such as the adoption of the new Civil Code and the new Penal Code.¹² Generally, positive changes have been made to the system; however the reforms are not being fully practiced, causing problems and unevenness across the country. The opposition to Kurdish rights, the issue concerning the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the lack of freedom in political speech are still enforced. Non-governmental organizations are concerned by the fact that key juridical reforms are not yet implemented. More efforts are needed to bring the functioning of many courts in line with the European standards.

Issues related to human rights are in fact improving, due to a series of substantial reforms and constitutional changes. On the other hand, Turkey still refuses to sign and ratify many international agreements regarding minority and cultural rights, and so the harassment of these rights continues.

Although the death penalty has been abolished, non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International report more than a thousand cases of torture, despite the zero tolerance policy towards torture.¹³ Furthermore,

human rights monitoring groups have reported the persistence of practices such as arbitrary arrests, disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture in prisons and censorship. Therefore, the European Union argues that human rights are still violated.

However, fundamental freedoms, for instance freedom of expression and religion, have been starting to improve. Although several legal restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression have been lifted, people are still sentenced for non-violent expression of opinion. While changes have been made to enhance the freedom of the press, journalists and writers are still prosecuted and imprisoned. Absolutely no reform has been passed to end this situation.

Religious freedom remains restricted in Turkey and there is no respect for minority rights. Minority groups experience problems regarding property rights and legal personality. Non-Muslim communities including Greeks, Armenians, and Jews confront obstacles for example when opening new churches and community centres. The issue of church and state separation is another major concern that has yet to be settled.

In conclusion, the political reforms show that the Turkish society is developing and change is actually possible. However, the reforms must be completed and the necessary conditions must be fully fulfilled before negotiations can begin.

Turkey's Relations with its Neighbors

In 1974, Turkey invaded northern Cyprus and the dispute between the two countries over the island of Cyprus remains unresolved until today.¹⁴ Turkish

troops have occupied one-third of the territory of the island. Although Turkey made efforts to find political solutions concerning this issue, no comprehensive peace settlement has been made so far.

As a result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh during the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey has frozen relations with Armenia and its relations with Azerbaijan grew stronger. Thus, an economic blockade is currently maintained against Armenia. Turkey should absolutely resolve this situation as well as normalize its relations with Armenia, before accession in the European Union. It is important to note that Turkey's relations with Armenia are further provoked by the Armenian demand for recognition of the Genocide. This issue is considered taboo in Ankara.

Economic and Monetary Affairs

Accession negotiations commence once a candidate country demonstrates its capability to meet the additional obligations of membership, which is the legal and institutional structure known as the *acquis* where the European Union implements its objectives.¹⁵ This paper will also provide an assessment of Turkey's ability to deal with one of the most important community *acquis*: the economic and monetary affairs.

The *acquis* such as the independence of central banks, the interdiction of direct-public sector financing by the central bank as well as other personal and institutional independence must be ready as of the date of accession. Adjustments have been reported related to Turkey's alignment with the community *acquis*, however once again, they are in-

complete. Despite the modifications of Turkish legislation, the Turkish Central Bank is not fully independent from the government and thus most policy decisions on monetary matters are taken by the government or in some cases jointly with the government.

Most importantly, the government interference in many areas of the economy is reduced and important markets, such as electricity, telecommunication, petroleum, has undergone liberalization. However, additional adjustments are necessary in the area of personal and institutional independence.

With the agreement of having a Customs Union back in 1995, Turkey has showed little progress in the operation of the Customs Union.¹⁶ Even though trade barriers have been removed, other tariff and bureaucratic barriers still remain. Nevertheless, regardless of the European Union's disappointment concerning the unsatisfactory efforts of Turkey, it is interesting to note that the trade between the European Union and Turkey has grown significantly. At present, Turkey is the European Union's seventh important partner in terms of imports and sixth in exports.¹⁷

In general, the process of alignments of Turkey's legislation with the community *acquis* is progressing slowly and further legislative work is required in all areas in order to be complete.

European Opposition to Turkey's Entry

Many countries in Europe show strong opposition towards Turkey's membership. Some arguments put forth by many objective countries such as France, Spain, Austria and Germany, include poverty, religion as well as geographic problems.

The most negative factor influencing the European Union's decision is the argument that Turkey is not in Europe and its territory mostly lies in Asia. Next, there is its large population, combined with the poor state of the economy, which could have negative impacts on the European Union. Today, Turkey has over 70 million inhabitants and the number is rapidly increasing.¹⁸ Thus, Turkey would be the largest European Union country at the end of the accession negotiations, which are predicted for the end of 2020. Consequently, this will have a big impact on the council and the European Parliament. Thus, the weighting of votes in the Council is a concern to many since under double majority voting system, Turkey will have around 14.5 percent of the total.¹⁹ Turkey's entry would make it the second largest state after Germany, who has 18 percent of the votes and it would be an important powerful player in the parliament.

One of the most important concerns for the other countries is the incorporation of a Muslim nation. Turkey should not be excluded on the basis of their religion. Although the European Union defines itself not a "Christian Club", however admitting an Islamic state will, in some way, end the view of the European Union being based on a sense of shared identity. Also, the Turkish population believes that their state is secular one.

Lastly, many think that Turkey's strategic geographical borders will threaten the European Union stability since the Union's borders will extend to Iraq, Iran and Syria. Its borders will also have an impact on the European Union's foreign policy interests.

Conclusion

This paper has argued the various obligations and obstacles Tur-

Tears of a Nation

The tears of us could make an ocean
The stories we've told are only a portion

The lives you stole are remembered
The lost souls are not surrendered

You can take the land that we controlled
But you can never erase the memories told

Kill our men, burn our homes
Take our children, whose spirits still roam

Do you remember the ruins of our nation?
Do you still hear the cries of starvation?

You may now have our land
But our remains still sift through the sand

Our broken hearts will never mend
And you just seem to always pretend

Remember those who died without a name
Forgetting them is wrong and full of shame

So close your eyes and imagine the fear
Yet never be afraid to shed a tear

Palig Mouradian