

NAASR to Help Launch Armenian Genocide Textbook

Among the highlights of NAASR's fall 2005 series of lectures and public programs will be the Massachusetts launch of the textbook *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians*. The book was produced by Brookline-based Facing History and Ourselves and was first suggested in the late 1970s by NAASR Chairman Emeritus and Facing History Board Member Manoog S. Young.

The launch will take place at a panel discussion devoted to the issue of Armenian Genocide education and high school curricula to be held on Friday, September 30, at 7:30 p.m. at the Belmont (MA) High School Auditorium on Concord Avenue. The evening will be sponsored by Facing History and Ourselves, The Armenian Assembly of America, and NAASR.

Taking part in the panel discussion will be Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian of the University of California, Los Angeles, who served as a scholarly advisor for the project and who is the author or editor of numerous important works on the Armenian Genocide; Adam Strom, Program Associate for Research and Development at Facing History and the principle writer and editor of *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization*; and John Shattuck, former Assistant Secretary of State and current Chief Executive Officer, John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.

The event will be an exciting opportunity for the public to learn more about this important resource book and to hear a lively discussion about the pressing issue of how to advance the teaching of the Armenian Genocide in public schools in Massachusetts and the rest of the United States.

Coming in December: Film Premiere

In December, NAASR will be co-sponsoring (with Facing History and Ourselves) the New England premiere of Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Araz Artinian's powerful new film *The Genocide in Me*. Details of time and venue are not available as this *Newsletter* goes to press. As soon as this information is finalized we will notify our friends and members. We recommend visiting Artinian's website, www.twentyvoices.com, for information about the film and to view a trailer.

Wide Range of Speakers and Topics in NAASR's Fall Lecture Series

As part of its ongoing efforts to bring a variety of speakers and topics to its long-running lecture series, the NAASR Program Committee has assembled an outstanding lineup for fall 2005. The following list of speakers and events is subject to change. Please watch for mailings or e-mails and check www.naasr.org for updates. All events at NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA, unless otherwise noted.

- **Thurs., September 8, 8:00 p.m.:** Moorad Mooradian: A New Look at TARC (Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission)
- **Sat., September 10, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.:** Seminar by Moorad Mooradian: Hurting Stalemate or Mediation: The Conflict Over Nagorno-Karabakh (**registration required**)
- **Thurs., September 22, 8:00 p.m.:** Carolann Najarian: Healers, Holy Books, Mountains, and Gardens: Armenian Folk Medical Beliefs and Practices (co-sponsored by Armenian International Women's Association)
- **Fri., September 30, 7:30 p.m.:** Special Panel Discussion on Armenian Genocide Education and Public School Curricula with Prof. Richard Hovannisian (UCLA), Adam Strom (Facing History and Ourselves), and John Shattuck (John F. Kennedy Library). Co-sponsored by The Armenian Assembly of America and Facing History and Ourselves. To be held at Belmont High School Auditorium.
- **Thurs., October 13, 8:00 p.m.:** Van Aroian: Armenian Photographs in the Getty Museum Collection: An Introduction
- **Thurs., October 27, 8:00 p.m.:** Marc A. Mamigonian: All Abunk for Tararat! The Use of Armenian in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*
- **Thurs., November 10, 8:00 p.m.:** Steve Kurkjian: Kiss My Children's Eyes: A Search for Answers to the Armenian Genocide Through One Remarkable Photograph
- **Sat., November 19, 12:00 noon:** 51st Annual NAASR Assembly of Members. Luncheon Lecture by William S. Parsons, Chief of Staff, U.S. Holocaust Museum

Save These Dates!

NAASR will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, MA, with a conference and gala banquet on Friday, September 29, and Saturday, September 30, 2006. More details will be forthcoming in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

Adventures in Cyberspace

By Marc A. Mamigonian

As part of my job as Director of Programs and Publications and as part of my "Armenian-American civic duty" I spend a fair amount of time reading the news postings on Groong and other English-language Armenian news outlets. Anyone who does likewise knows that it would be easy to spend most of each day responding to ridiculous articles dealing with the Armenian Genocide – recent months, with the Turkish denial machine in high gear, have been particularly vexing. Most simply have to be ignored or forgotten. Once in a while, though, something crops up that must be addressed.

On Tuesday, May 17, 2005, I received an *Azg Armenian Daily* news item in my e-mail that had been forwarded to me and many other people by NAASR member and friend Joe Dagdigian of Harvard, MA, calling attention to the fact that when one did a search for "Armenia" or "Armenian" on Google – far and away the world's most popular search engine – a "sponsored link" appeared for *ErmeniManifestosu-3003*.

The site itself – which I cannot quote at length because it has since vanished – was a rant about the evil Armenians and the glorious Turks. I wrote the following to Google and copied just about everybody in my address book:

To Whom It May Concern:

I do not know the process by which something becomes a Google "sponsored link," but clearly a review is needed. As you may now be aware, a Google search for "Armenia" or "Armenian" produces a sponsored link to <http://blogs.cjb.net/yeminli>, i.e., *ErmeniManifestosu-3003*. This website is no more and no less an astonishingly racist and bigoted screed that asserts, *inter alia*, that "Armenia is a tribe trying to destroy a whole Empire of civilization!" and "Armenia is a terrorist state in support of terrorist organizations worldwide!" whereas "Turks are the sons and daughters of Adam & Eve!" Is this the type of garbage that Google wishes to have associated with it as a sponsor?

I would hope that Google does not

have neo-Nazi propaganda appearing as sponsors when users search for "Jews" or "Holocaust." Similarly, I do not expect to see Turkish genocide denial and racism when I search for Armenia.

I can assure you that if this situation is not rectified at once and some explanation offered, I and many others in the Armenian community and beyond will call attention to the fact that Google is being sponsored by genocide deniers and racists.

I would hate to have to cease using your otherwise splendid service.

One of the people I copied, Adam Strom of Facing History and Ourselves in Brookline, MA, wrote to a connection he has at Google. She assured him that they took such things seriously. About 30 minutes later I received an e-mail from Google:

Hello Marc,

Thank you for your email.

I understand that you saw an inappropriate advertisement on a Google results page. Our AdWords Specialists have removed this ad.

The advertisement you saw was generated through the AdWords program, which is designed to give thousands of small business owners the power to quickly and efficiently generate traffic to their sites. The ads they create run on our site immediately. Our editorial staff reviews all ads to make sure that they are appropriate for our site. Since we show ads immediately, there is often a short period of time when the ad is running before being reviewed and approved by Google AdWords Specialists. Please note that we try to keep this lag as short as possible.

Unfortunately, it seems you saw the advertisement before we had a chance to review it. We have since had the opportunity to review the ad and have deemed it inappropriate for our site.

Please accept our apologies. We thank you for your patience and continuing support. We look forward to providing you with the most effective advertising available.

– continued on page 5

NAASR Working with New Group Devoted to Armenian Drama

A new group devoted to the preservation and promotion of Armenian drama has made extensive use of NAASR's Armenian Reference and Research Library in recent months. The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA), was conceived by President Bianca Bagatourian during a meeting with Anne Vardanian and Diana Hekimian in California earlier this year.

With the help of Armenian drama specialist Dr. Nishan Parlakian, whose inspiring NAASR lecture this past April was attended by several ADAA founders, ADAA has begun amassing a large collection of dramatic texts, scholarly articles on Armenian drama and film, and artifacts related to the same.

Working with NAASR Director of Programs and Publications Marc A. Mamigonian, who is serving on the ADAA Advisory Board, Bagatourian and playwright Joyce Van Dyke, author of *A Girl's War* and a cofounder of ADAA, have carried out research and photocopied scores of items from the NAASR Library.

Bagatourian remarked that "without NAASR's splendid collection, it's hard to imagine how long it would have taken us to collect all the necessary items. It is truly a most important resource."

ADAA's mission is to preserve Armenian drama by archiving existing texts; to commission new translations of Armenian dramatic works into English and make them available on the web; nurture new dramatists through annual scholarships; and support Armenians in the dramatic and cinematic fields. To fulfill this mission, ADAA plans to develop a collection of dramatic works and related writings and establish a meeting place on the web to encourage dialogue on Armenian projects in theater and cinema.

The launch of ADAA's website, www.armeniandrama.org, is scheduled for September 1.

Official Notice

51st Annual Assembly of Members

The 51st Annual Assembly of Members of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc., will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 12 noon at the NAASR Center, for the following purposes:

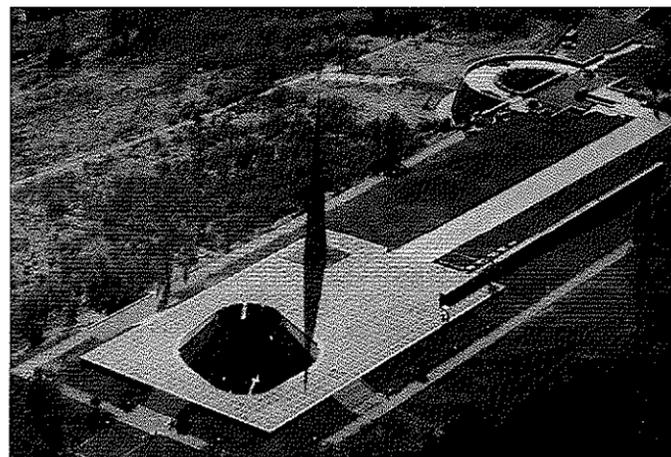
(1) To receive and discuss reports from the Board of Directors; (2) to act on new business and resolutions presented for the consideration of the assembled members; (3) to elect Directors of the Association; and (4) to transact any other business which may properly come before the assembly.

All members in good standing, with dues paid for the current year, have the right to attend, be heard, and vote. (Article IV, Section 1, Constitution)

William S. Parsons of the U. S. Holocaust Museum will speak at the luncheon program prior to the Assembly.

Genocide Memorials Photo Exhibit at NAASR Headquarters

Since May, NAASR has been pleased to have on display in its lecture hall a special exhibition of more than three dozen photographs of Armenian Genocide memorials worldwide taken by renowned photographer Hrair "Hawk" Khatchikian. The exhibit, which was featured in April at the UCLA conference "After Nine Decades: The Enduring Legacy of the Armenian Genocide" and subsequently at the California State House and elsewhere, was mounted by Richard and Anne Elbrecht of Davis, CA. The Elbrechts have loaned these impressive photographs to NAASR for a limited time only.



Monument at Dsidernagapert, Yerevan, Armenia.

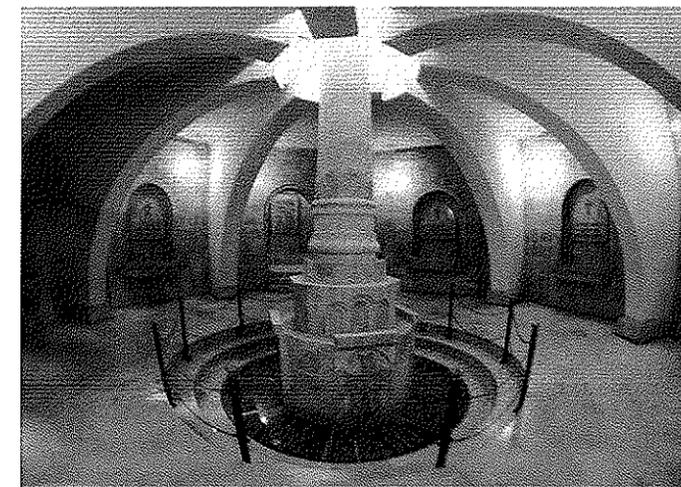
The exhibit features photographs of memorials at the following locations: Dzidzernagapert, in Yerevan, Armenia; Tehran, Iran; Urumieh, Iran; Deir ez-Zor, Syria; Margada, Syria; Antelias, Lebanon; Bikfaya, Lebanon; Plovdiv, Bul-

Volunteers Needed in Library

In our last issue we reported on the tremendous progress in our library which is being catalogued by acting librarian Ruby Chorbajian. The library has seen a lot of activity since the project began last spring and it is now at a critical juncture.

Volunteers are needed to carry out a number of fundamental tasks which must be performed on a daily basis in order for the cataloguing to continue at its current pace. For example, affixing call number labels to books as they are catalogued in the computer is a simple but time-consuming task which currently takes time the cataloguer could be spending in the vital work of cataloguing more books. Other tasks which do not require technical knowledge include placing nameplates in books and reshelving books.

Volunteering in the NAASR Armenian Reference and Research Library is a good opportunity for high school students to build a pre-college resumé or fulfill community service requirements. For NAASR members and friends with a little time to spare, it is a great way to help NAASR move forward with the vital task of making accessible our valuable library holdings. Please contact ruby@naasr.org or call 617-489-1610.



Monument and Memorial Complex at Deir ez-Zor, Syria, designed by Sarkis Balmanoukian of Aleppo. Shown here is the martyrs hall, containing a glass-covered display of remains of Genocide victims. The complex was dedicated on May 5, 1991.

garia; Nicosia, Cyprus; Khartoum, Sudan; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Cordova, Argentina; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Montevideo, Uruguay; Montebello, California; Montreal, Canada; Vienna, Austria.

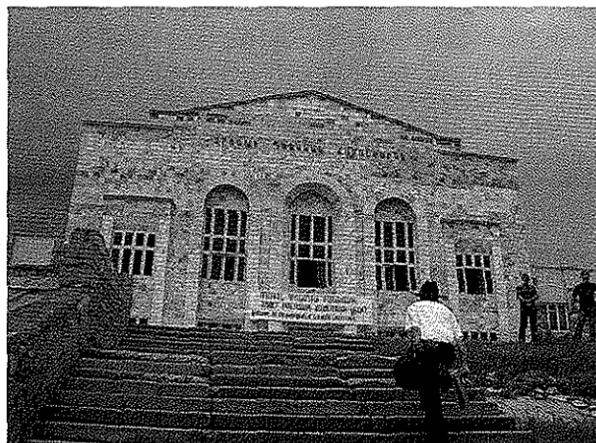
Hawk Khatchikian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and now lives in Canada. He has published two books of his photographs of Karabagh and recently published *Yergir: Pilgrimage Through Western Armenia, 1997-2002*.

NAASR is grateful both to the Elbrechts and Khatchikian for making these photos available.

Report on Mashtots Conference in Karabagh

By Ruby Chorbajian

An International Educational Conference Devoted to the 1600th Anniversary of the Invention of Armenian Script and Foundation of Amaras School was held June 3-5 in Stepanakert-Amaras, Nagorno-Karabagh (Art-



Artsakh State University

sakh), celebrating Mesrop Mashtots' fifth century invention of the Armenian alphabet and subsequent religious and cultural movements. With support from NAASR, I traveled to Armenia for a two-week visit in June, accepting an invitation from Yerevan State University to observe the conference and celebrations and represent NAASR.

The three-day conference of scholarly presentations by speakers from around the globe, combined with cultural festivities, drew a sizeable crowd from Karabagh and the Republic of Armenia, including families, scholars, groups of adolescents, and students who came to hear the presentations and take part in the celebrations.

Speeches by Karabagh Dignitaries

Karabagh Vice Prime Minister Anushavan Danielyan and Karabagh President Arkady Ghukasyan opened the celebrations with moving speeches expressing joy and optimism about the cultural anniversary and opening ceremonies. Primate of Artsakh Eparchy Bishop Pargev Martirosyan delivered a blessing.

Sen Arevshatyan of Yerevan's Matenadaran, Hamlet Grigoryan of Artsakh State University, and Kevork Bardakjian of the University of Michigan addressed Mashtots' spiritual undertakings, Artsakh schools, and the latest phases in Armenian language and literature. Professor Bardakjian suggested opening a translation institute in Armenia devoted solely to translating all newly-published informational sourcebooks, thus helping to deepen and widen knowledge of the Armenian language. The audience greeted this idea with overwhelming approval.

Armenian poetry, singing, and traditional Indian dances performed by Armenian and Indian students from Yerevan State Medical University followed

these comments on a stage above which were Mashtots' first words written in Armenian: "To know wisdom and gain instruction, to recognize the words of understanding."

Conference organizers received some 350 submissions, of which 85 were selected. Among the speakers were twenty non-Armenians of American, Dutch, German, Russian, and Slovakian descent. Panelists divided into three simultaneous sessions according to the topics of their presentations: History of Educational Policy and Pedagogy, Pedagogy and Psychology, and Armenian Studies and Culture.

One highlight from the many lectures presented was the talk of Dr. Karen Yuzbashyan of the Oriental Studies Institute in St. Petersburg,

who discussed Mashtots' political activities as they are presented in Koryun's *Vark Mashtotsi*, the first (and for a long time the only) work on Mashtots' life and activities. Another interesting lecture was presented by Prof. Armenuhi Drost-Abgaryan of Halle University in Germany, putting the Armenian alphabet in the context of East Christian literary systems. Drost-Abgaryan noted the parallel between the spread of Christianity in the East and the development of new alphabets. She explained that the Eastern countries and peoples who refused paganism saw in the new scripts the expression of a covenant sealed and signed with God in which they invested their literary culture.

Gathering at Amaras Monastery

On the second day of the conference, presentations paused for panelists and locals to travel nearly two hours to the Amaras monastery and school where hundreds gathered as the local community replicated traditional activities,



Ruby Chorbajian with dignitaries at Amaras Monastery.

including *shurch bar* (circle dance) with musical accompaniment.

The Amaras monastery, founded by Grigor Lusavorich (Gregory the Enlightener) at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. and completed by his grandson, was opened as a school by Mashtots early in the fifth century.

—continued on page 5

Conference Report (cont. from p. 4)

Inside the surrounding walls of Amaras, visitors were entertained by traditional dances and a play about the Armenian alphabet. Dinner followed in the nearby village of Sos where some two hundred people were accommodated in the town hall.

At the Presidential Headquarters in Stepanakert, Karabagh President Arkady Ghukasyan met with noteworthy international academics, members of the Conference Organizing Committee, various politicians, and reporters. He thanked everyone for their commitment and hard work on the conference, reminding everyone that Karabagh's continued independence and success remains partly dependant on such dedication.

A *hantes* closed the day in another government building in Stepanakert, with moving performances by the Karabagh State Symphony, traditional regional dancers and singers, and the Karabagh State Choir. The conference concluded the following day with the remaining lectures, a group trip to Shushi, and the lengthy, bumpy return to Yerevan.

First of Numerous Planned Events

Yerevan State University Vice Rector and member of the Conference Organizing Committee Aram Simonyan explained that the Committee has positioned itself strategically to get as much exposure as possible in local and national media for this event. He noted the importance of informing Armenians in the diaspora and foreigners about these important international activities.

"It is very important for people—students and academicians—to know about these conferences," said Simonyan, who has been on the Committee since its inception and has been working steadily to cultivate State and private funding. He further explained, "this is only one in a stream of international conferences in Armenia."

Genocide Conference in Istanbul Canceled

The first academic conference devoted to exploring non-official Turkish positions on the Armenian Question was scheduled for May 25-27, 2005, but was canceled at the last moment under extreme pressure and threats from the Turkish government.

The conference, entitled, "Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy," was to be held at Bosphorus (Boğaziçi) University, hosted in cooperation with the Comparative Literature Department of Bilgi University, the History Department of Boğaziçi University and the History Program at Sabanci University. Only scholars from Turkey, including several Turkish Armenians, were invited to participate; and only those open to challenging the Turkish Government's version of the events of 1915.

The Conference Organizing Committee was comprised of faculty members from Bilgi University, Sabanci University, and Bosphorus (Boğaziçi) University. Some of the Consulting Committee of academics invited from the United States included Engin Akarli (Brown University), Taner Akçam (University of Minnesota), Seyla Benhabib (Yale University), Fatma Müge Göçek (University of Michigan), and Cemal Kafadar (Harvard University).

The conference was initially met with great interest and was widely discussed in the Turkish press in the days leading up to its opening. A total of 720 people applied to participate. However, on the afternoon preceding the scheduled commencement, the President of Bosphorus University received a call from the governor of Istanbul suggesting the conference be postponed due to possible "security risks."

—continued on page 7

Symposium on Mashtots at Harvard in October

Prof. James R. Russell, Mesrop Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, informs us that a symposium on Mesrop Mashtots and the 1600th anniversary of the Armenian alphabet will take place at Harvard on Friday October 28 and Saturday October 29.

The symposium is jointly sponsored by the Mashtots Chair, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, and the Armenian Prelacy.

Scheduled to present papers at the symposium are Prof. Russell, Gohar Muradyan of the Matenadaran, Dr. P. Oktor Skjaervo of Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Dr. Abraham Terian of St. Nersess Theological Seminary in New York, Dr. Robert W. Thomson of Oxford University, Karen Yuzbashyan of the Oriental Studies Institute in St. Petersburg, and Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia. Dr. Michael Stone of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will deliver the keynote talk.

Cyberspace (from p. 2)

What this suggests to me is the desperation of a group of people who have been put on the defensive by decades of scholarship and advocacy on the Armenian Genocide and the need for its recognition. The intellectual "debate," if that is what it ever was, over the Genocide is long finished. But it is crucial to keep up the pressure. Obviously, not my e-mail alone or anyone else's e-mail alone is enough to force Google to delete the site, or the *Boston Globe* or *New York Times* to change their policies on referring to the Genocide, and so on; but the vigilance and responsiveness of large numbers of people do have an impact.

Spring Lectures Cover Wide Range of Topics

George Bournoutian: The Academic War Over Nagorno-Karabagh

Dr. George A. Bournoutian, Senior Professor of History at Iona College, conducted a special afternoon seminar at NAASR on Saturday, May 14, entitled "The Academic War Over Nagorno-Karabagh," admitting that the conflict is a major contemporary problem for Armenia. He is the author of numerous books on Armenian history, including the recent *Two Chronicles on the History of Karabagh* (Mazda Press), funded in part by NAASR. He has taught Armenian history at Columbia University, Tufts University, New York University, Rutgers University, the University of Connecticut, Ramapo College, and Glendale Community College.

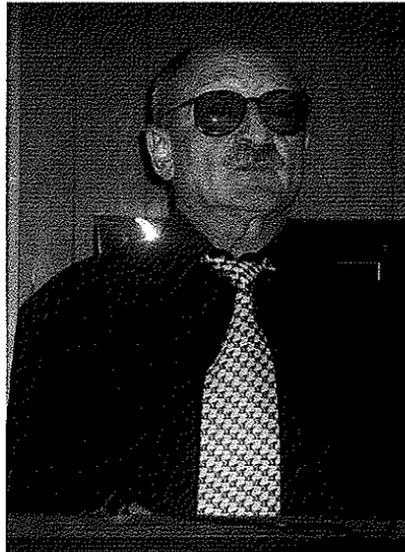
As an introduction to the Karabagh discussion, and as a backdrop to the ongoing intellectual battle, Bournoutian began with a brief historical overview of the past several decades in the region, including secession and independence, war, the decade-long shaky ceasefire, Turkish and Azeri economic retaliation, and more recent international attention and pressure to resolve the conflict.

Scholarly skirmishes continue, with Azeri intellectuals presenting a version of history that maintains Azeri claims to the region. Bournoutian challenged the audience to focus only on the historical data he was presenting, and to not get weighed down by the contemporary politics, stressing the importance of understanding the actual history. Rather, his stated goal was to present historical data and for the audience to judge for itself the legitimacy of Azeri and Armenian claims to Karabagh. Bournoutian insisted he would "not present any sources written by Armenians or in Armenian. So all the material [given] to you is written by Muslims, Greeks, Romans, French, Germans; not one Armenian source will be discussed today." In so doing, Bournoutian demonstrated that even according to the Azeris own historians their contemporary claims to Karabagh are made on false premises.

Dr. Bournoutian transported the seminar attendees through the reli-

gious, political, cultural, architectural, and linguistic history of the area, leading them to a far greater understanding of the contemporary claims to Nagorno-Karabagh. Bournoutian's enthusiasm steered the audience into lively conversation about fiercely contested and often sensitive issues, and his cutting sense of humor contributed to everyone's enjoyment of the day.

According to Bournoutian's non-Armenian sources, the earliest records of the Karabagh region, documented in Strabo's geography and many other Greek and Roman sources, indicate that



Dr. George Bournoutian

the entire region west of the Kur River (located in modern-day Azerbaijan) was part of Armenia. This is today's Nagorno-Karabagh, which is only about one third the size of all of historic Karabagh.

Azeri historians point out that the region Armenians claim was actually Caucasian Albania (Aghvank), which includes peripheral areas and areas east of Kur River, as well as areas west of the River as far as Lake Sevan. Azeris claim that the Caucasian Albanians are the ancestors of the Azeris who have been in these regions at least as long as the Armenians—a notion that has long been a point of contention in the Caucasus, even in Soviet times.

Bournoutian countered that records show the Caucasian Albanians were converted to Christianity by Armenians

early in the fourth century. These Albanians (no relation to the Albanians of the Balkan region) were part of the Indo-European people of the region, closely related to the Persians, and not of Central Asian or Turkic origins. He went on to present various local, non-Armenian historians' and geographers' accounts of local governments, marriage patterns, and demographics, noting there is not one source proving Turkish presence in the region until the eleventh century.

Bournoutian's openness to the audience's questions, comments, requests for clarification—as some of his material was extraordinarily detailed and technical—and interjection of historical anecdotes, combined with his particular professorial style made for a scholarly and detail-oriented lecture which was also accessible and enjoyable for all attendees.

Pamela Steiner: When a Traumatized People Tries to Resolve Past Hurts

As part of NAASR's ongoing efforts to present a variety of perspectives on understanding the Armenian Genocide and its legacy, Dr. Pamela Steiner of Cambridge, MA, delivered a talk entitled "When a Traumatized People Tries to Resolve Past Hurts," on May 19.

As a member of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, Dr. Steiner has long worked with interdisciplinary teams dealing with traumatized communities. She has conducted workshops and facilitated dialogues between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, Germans and Jews, and Greeks and Turks, has written articles and delivered presentations on a wide range of issues in conflict resolution, mass trauma, and inter-group dynamics.

Steiner, who is the great-granddaughter of Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time when the Armenian Genocide began, opened the evening with a very warm and heartfelt welcome to the Armenian community, expressing her empathy for survivors and descendants of survivors.

— continued on page 8

Canceled Istanbul Conference (continued from p. 5)

A second call came in from a chief public prosecutor requesting copies of all papers to be delivered, suggesting the risk of criminal proceedings. That afternoon Turkish Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek delivered a speech in parliament in which he announced that "There is no nation that has as clear a conscience and hands, as pure a head as the Turkish nation," citing the openness of the Ottoman archives as proof.

Çiçek accused conference organizers and participants of treason and condemned the initiative as a blow to government efforts to counter the worldwide Armenian campaign to have the killings recognized as genocide. "This is a stab in the back to the Turkish nation. This is irresponsibility," Çiçek proclaimed in a Parliamentary debate. "We must put an end to this cycle of treason and insult, of spreading propaganda against the nation by people who belong to it," he added.

In a statement released the day of cancellation, Sabanci University President Dr. Terzioğlu wrote that Bosphorus University, the host of the conference, had been forced to postpone it, noting that "a condition and context harmful to academic freedom [has] been created," adding, "not only does this [cancellation] seriously harm the development of freedom of thought, democracy and civil liberty, but I worry that it will also become ... a significant impediment to Turkey."

Dr. Taner Akçam of the University of Minnesota explained that the Turk-

ish government was never misled about the nature of the conference and it was officially made known through a press release in May. In a communication with NAASR, Akçam explained, "We don't agree with the labeling 'Turkish and anti-Turkish,' this is not the point. We had only three important criteria: scholars who are Turkish citizens; academic integrity; and moral ground, namely readiness to condemn the wrong doings of the past."

When Akçam spoke at Harvard University in 2004, under the auspices of NAASR, the Zoryan Institute, and Harvard, he stressed that there are many people in Turkey, especially students, who want an open discussion of the Armenian Question. Although it is clear that the government is not ready for such a discussion, he feels that it is only a matter of time before it will have to take place—especially if Turkey wants to join the European Union.

While the cancellation remains a major disappointment to academic communities and proponents of a free and democratic Turkey, it may come to be seen that the cancellation actually moved forward the ongoing discourse over Turkish and Armenian history.

It was reported by participants that the conference dominated the headlines for a week following the cancellation, and that academics and laymen are discussing not only issues of history, but also free speech and the role of the government in limiting access to this (and perhaps other) information. There were

reports that government officials and members of the press were openly allying themselves against government suppression. One participant wrote, "More and more people are coming to perceive that the divide between denialism and responsible scholarship over the Armenian Question is coming to coincide more and more closely with a divide between repression and democracy, and between bigotry and tolerance."

Organizers are planning to reschedule the conference for mid-fall, and they remain hopeful about the Turkish government's reaction to academic freedom. The efforts to bring this conference to fruition—efforts made primarily by Turks on Turkish soil—even if doomed to fail in the short term, can only lead to Turkish citizens asking more questions of their government about what they have been taught for ninety years about the "so-called Armenian Genocide." The Turkish government's furious campaign of denial and propaganda suggests that the pressure on them has been significantly increased.

Do you have any ideas for the NAASR Newsletter? Please e-mail Marc Mamigonian or Ruby Chorbajian at hq@naasr.org or give us a call at 617-489-1610. We appreciate your input!

NAASR Volunteer Profile

Lucy Bedirian of Watertown has been volunteering at NAASR on a weekly basis since 1997. Prior to that she did occasional volunteer work and through the years has served on various NAASR activity committees. Lucy also helps out at NAASR lectures and functions—few of which she misses.

One of the most important tasks Lucy performs at NAASR is carefully combing through the innumerable publishers' catalogues received at the Center and identifying titles with Armenian or Armenian-related content. This is a time-consuming task and one which helps the NAASR bookstore to keep abreast of new books of interest to our members. Lucy is also an attentive and faithful reader of the Armenian-American newspapers and helps make sure we are up to date and aware of important developments. We are grateful for her continued dedication.

NAASR needs more volunteers—if you have time and skills and want to help us, give us a call or come by and talk!

