

KHA B'NEESAN SPECIAL

It's April this month, and we stop to commemorate one of the most important holidays of the Assyrian calendar. *Kha B'Neesan* is Syriac for April the First, and this year's *Kha B'Neesan* celebrations were kicked off simultaneously in Melbourne, Sydney, Chicago and for once we have covered the event even in our homeland, Northern Iraq.

We are privileged to have been able to have reporters and photographers from around the world assist us in bringing you a very special *Kha B'Neesan* issue of an International *Nakosha* magazine.

Meanwhile, this year's *Sayfo* (Sword) Genocide commemorations, initiated by the Assyrians of Europe, have spilled over into cities such as Tehran, Los Angeles, and into our own city of Sydney. In a spontaneous act of remembrance Assyrians on 3 continents joined together to commemorate April 24.



AKITU

Modern Festival, Ancient Tradition

Much has been written about *Kha b'Neesan/Ha d'Neeson*, or more correctly the *Akitu* Festival, in recent years. But of the more contemporary history of this ancient festival it seems that little is known. Was this festival continuously observed by Assyrians since pre-Christianity (the last 6751 years) or has it undergone a revival in this new age of the Assyrian "Renaissance"? If you are lucky enough to have grandparents who are still alive ask them if they had ever

heard of - let alone celebrated - the *Akitu* Festival. Chances are you'll draw blank expressions.

Probably the best Assyrian language description of the present-day history of the *Akitu* Festival is Dr. Robert Paulissian's article in the *Hirge Akadimaye Atouraye (Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies)* Volume XIII Number 1, 1999, pages 10-15. In it he describes, at times in a necessarily autobiographical style, the events that lead to the revival of this revered celebration.

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Assyrians world-wide conduct Sayfo protests... pp 6-8

Kha B'Neesan

In Northern Iraq

Celebrations in Northern Iraq this year were marked by the official unveiling of several major infra-structure projects.



Daily life in Northern Iraq is something that few Assyrians, and even fewer Westerners, know anything about. Yet here in the United Nations administered zone, the Assyrian people have lived, almost independently, for over 10 years, aptly led by the Assyrian Democratic Organisation (ADO), known colloquially as *Zowa*.

Zowa is the Syriac word for 'movement', and being true to their name's sake, the group has



in the past 10 years revolutionised Assyrian political and social life.

Having been democratically elected in landslide elections in a Kurdish dominated government of Northern Iraq, the ADO have greatly improved conditions for Assyrians living in Northern Iraq.

Current economic conditions in Northern Iraq are bleak. Northern Iraq is unique in that it suffers from two trade embargos. The first embargo, the U.N. imposed sanctions, was imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The second embargo was imposed by Iraq itself on the North, after the U.N. established the very same U.N. protected zone.

Having endured the Gulf War, survived the post Gulf War uprising, and suffered through 10 years of sanctions, the Northern Iraqi

economy is almost non-existent. The people are dependent on an agrarian lifestyle, growing their own food, in order to sustain themselves. The only real work that is available is working for the United Nations and helping them administer and supply the protected zone.

Money, sent by relatives of Assyrians living in the diaspora, also goes a long way in providing assistance and support to the many Assyrians of Bet Nahrain. The only other economic relief and social support comes from the Assyrian organisations that are currently working in Northern Iraq.

For Assyrians who have no relatives in the diaspora, Assyrian groups, such as the Assyrian Democratic

Organisation, have grown to tackle the apparent deficiencies and challenges presented. They have become dependent on the ADO for financial support, protection and the creation of much-needed infrastructure.

The ADO's work in turn is funded through an organisation that has been responsible for funding the numerous projects it has initiated. Aided by the Assyrian Aid Society (AAS), their finest accomplishments must be the establishment of Assyrian schools teaching a Syriac based curriculum, and the building of much needed infrastructure for the Assyrians in that region.

During the month of April, the

following projects were officially opened in celebration of the Assyrian New Year.

On April 2nd, the AAS officially opened a 600 metre-long water channel in the village of Dehe. On that same day, the Assyrian Cultural Center Hall in Dohuk was officially opened, thanks to the generous help of two main contributors, the late Mrs. Helen Schwarten, the president of the Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, and the Assyrian Orhai Association of Modesto California, USA. The unique architectural design of the Center was based on ancient Assyrian palace designs, and the opening of the Center was planned to reflect this fact. Dressed in an ancient Assyrian warrior's costume, an Assyrian guard stood to attention on the Center's roof as the official opening welcomed dignitaries and guests who streamed into the new Cultural Center Hall.

Also on that day the AAS was present in officially laying down foundation stones for both the Nisibin Intermediate School





Assyrians to remain in their indigenous homelands and live in peace within Iraq. This, it is hoped, will allow the Assyrians there to become self-sufficient and provide for themselves in the

Dormitory for students in Nuhadra, Iraq (at which the students themselves were also present, showing their enthusiastic support for the AAS's new project); and the Nisibin School dormitory buildings, also in Dohuk. The project is sponsored by the Assyrian Aid Society with the total projected cost of U.S. \$72,000 dollars.

According to Isaac Toma, the head of the Assyrian Aid Society (America), "With 26 new projects proposed for the AAS to complete, sponsors are urgently needed, if the AAS is to have funds available for these projects. Please let us know if any Assyrian Church, organisation or individual are interested in sponsoring any projects in Northern Iraq."

With the responsibilities of governing, protecting and assisting thousands of Assyrians, the ADO's aim appears to be to create vitally needed infrastructure within the still unstable area of Northern Iraq in order for the

long term.

Having recently visited the Assyrians in Northern Iraq, Mr. Issac Toma had the following words to share when asked about what message the Assyrians in Northern Iraq wish to pass onto the diaspora Assyrians at the start of the year 6751- "All the Assyrian students and Assyrian farmers that we met told

us the same thing - **PLEASE DO NOT FORGET US.** They say you guys left our beloved country Bet-Nahrain. We don't want to leave. Only please help us and don't forget us. God Bless you all".■

David Chibo



Special thanks to Issac Toma, from the Assyrian Aid Society in America who took the time to conduct this interview, & Firas Jatou who scanned & sent us these special photos.

From p.1

Modern Festival, Ancient Tradition

The first inklings of there ever having existed an Assyrian New Year festival came when in 1880 Hormuzd Rassam, a famous Assyrian from Mosul, in conjunction with Sir Henry Layard, uncovered a cuneiform tablet from Marduk's Temple, *Esagila*. On this tablet, among the many pin-like inscriptions of the Annals of Nabu-na'id (the last king of Babylon), was a treatise on the *Akitu* Festival. Other tablets, in particular from Ashur, Ur and Uruk, also contained details concerning this festival.

Assyriologists from all over the world worked tirelessly since then, bringing to light the complicated language of these cuneiform texts. Heinrich Zimmern, a German Assyriologist, began his studies in 1906 and published his thesis on the festival in 1918. However, most of our knowledge regarding the festival comes thanks to the years of dedication of the Danish Assyriologist Svend Aage Pallis, when in 1926 he published *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*.

The scholarly decipherment of old Assyrian writings is one thing - their introduction into the daily lives of modern Assyrians is another. The first writings in Assyrian on this festival were by the late *rabi* Nimrod Simono, in the Assyrian literary magazine *Gilgamesh*, in 1952. John Alkhas also wrote a short article on the topic a few years later in April, 1955. Incidentally, it was here that the current concept of an Assyrian calendar was born. He writes that "in... Assyrian history as translated from tablets.... there is no cyclical calculation of events... just singular

dates, for example 'the fiftieth year of my reign' or '7 years after the death of...'" It is therefore quite difficult to put ancient events in the context of the Gregorian calendar. However, he goes on to state, "An expert in the translation of cuneiform texts puts the year 4750 B.C. as the year of the calming of the Great Assyrian Flood [and therefore] the beginning of new life." The New Year celebrations thus began from that year on. (This date thus marks regeneration after the destruction caused by the deluge. It was never meant to somehow signify the beginnings of the Assyro-Babylonian Empire, as some mistakenly believe.) Many - *rabi* Simono among them - claim this date to be largely apocryphal, finding no extant "blessed tablet" deciphered by the mysterious "expert" who goes unnamed in Mr. Alkhas's article. Whatever the truth may be, this date has unofficially entered our popular culture and has been followed ever since.

Those instrumental in bringing about the revival of the Assyrian New Year - as a date in its own right, rather than one linked to Christian celebrations - were the members of the *Shawtaputa d'Shooshata Oomtanaya d'Aleyne Atouraye*. In 1956 in Tehran, Iran, a number of young Assyrians from the University of Tehran, Dr. Paulissian one of them, gathered together and swore that until the last days of their lives they would work for the advancement of Assyrianism.

One of the primary aims of this group was to

reawaken the historical celebrations of our culture. The festival they chose to rekindle first was the New Year celebration, *Kha b'Neesan/Ha d'Neeson*. Incredibly, some religionists and even secular leaders showed resistance and antagonism to the rebirth of the "pagan" rites of our forefathers. Luckily for us today though, these young Assyrians showed such patriotic zeal that they nevertheless went ahead and held a small gathering celebrating *Kha b'Neesan/Ha d'Neeson* for the first time on April 1 1959. The next three years saw the Festival celebrated at *Madrashata d'Shooshan*. A large celebration was held in 1963 at the Pahlavi Club. The *Shawtaputa* then published two booklets under the aegis of the Assyrian Youth Cultural Society Press, Tehran. From this time onwards, the Assyrian New Year was celebrated in all cities throughout Iran.

Dr. Paulissian then emigrated to the U.S. and at a convention marking the 50th anniversary of the Assyrian American Association of Chicago (A.A.A.C.) in 1967 he spoke about the importance of *Kha b'Neesan/Ha d'Neeson* and the need to observe it. Fortunately the three largest Assyrian groups at the time - the A.A.A.C., the Assyrian Social Club and the Assyrian National Effort - joined together and commemorated this day with festivities on the 6 April 1968.

From then on, the day has been venerated throughout the world, wherever there are Assyrians.■

Dr. Sennacherib Daniel

Kha B'Neesan In Melbourne & Sydney

Not since its revival in the 1950s has the Assyrian New Year been celebrated so successfully nor attended by such a large number here in Australia than at Sydney's Akitu Fest on April 1st 2001.

Young Sydney-based Assyrians worked hard to successfully promote a positive image of Fairfield's Assyrian youth in front of an audience of over 7000. The New Year celebration coincided auspiciously with two major Australian events- the Centenary of Federation and National Youth Week- serving to link Assyrians with their wider community.

Singers from the Anu-El Drama and Dance group opened the celebration with a moving performance titled *Akitu*, a song whose English lyrics concerned the myths of *Akitu*- Ishtar, Tammuz and the coming of new life. A young girl dressed in green- representing spring and the fable of revival- then came into the scene, throwing petals. She

On Sunday 1st April, Assyrians from Melbourne gathered to celebrate Kha B'Neesan, the traditional Assyrian New Year's Day. The mostly overcast weather did not deter the 200-strong crowd, who came gathered together at Bundoora Park, Bundoora, to celebrate an important milestone in the Assyrian cultural calendar.

Being a non-religious cultural holiday, the event was organised by a group called the Akkad Cultural group. The outdoor festival saw the gathering of Assyrians from churches of all denominations and diverse organisations, to officially celebrate the New Year.

A variety of entertainment was provided throughout the day, such as traditional Assyrian music, featuring the *zoorna* and *dawoola* and music by D.J. Aghader. Young Assyrians ran around playing soccer and other games.

was heralded in by the arresting sounds of the *zoorna dawoola*, which were played tirelessly all day.

All sorts of activities, catering in particular for young Assyrians, took place through the day. Face painting and rides for the kids, traditional Assyrian and international food and dance, and information stalls were amongst some of the projects of the Fest.

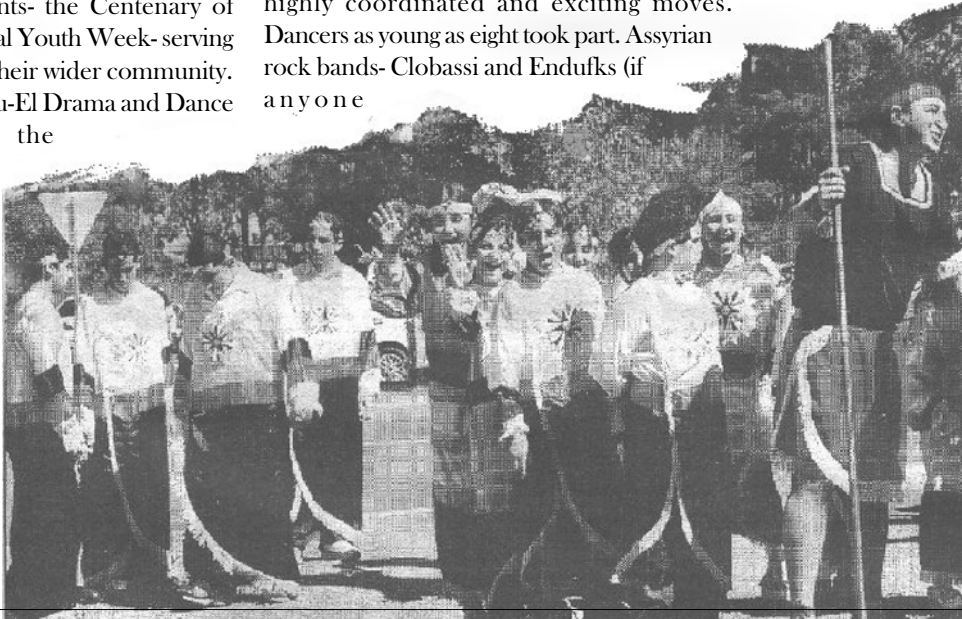
The Babylon Culture Group's team of young dancers dazzled the audience with their highly coordinated and exciting moves. Dancers as young as eight took part. Assyrian rock bands- Clobassi and Endufks (if anyone

can translate them for me I'd be grateful)- played their funky tunes to a delighted audience of young Assyrians.

Everyone seems to agree that one of the highlights was the brilliant fireworks display. Organized by a family of Italian Australians- the same team responsible for the stunning Sydney New Year fireworks- the pyrotechnics took the shape of the star and flowing rivers motif of our 'national' flag.

The *Akitu* Fest was organised by a motley crew of young Assyrians, going under no particular organisation's name, who were keen to keep our traditions thriving in a modern Australian setting. While the details must be strikingly different to those of the original *Kha b'Neesan/Ha d'Neeson*, Sydney's Assyrian New Year festival has proved beyond doubt that the spirit of Assyrianism is alive and kicking, some 6751 years since its inception. ■

Dr. Sennacherib Daniel



The immensely popular event was covered in local Sydney newspapers.

Meanwhile children provided a energetic and youthful atmosphere as they threw balls to each other playing games such as volleyball and chasing each other in energetic games of tag, which could be seen by all.

And of course a picnic would not be complete without a barbecue. The warmth and generosity of our people was evident as food was layed out before a picnic table and families joined together and shared in a banquet of their own preparation.

When asked about his thoughts of the event, Mr. David Chibo shared the following words

with us: "I think that our ancient holidays which had been, until recently, neglected, are today starting to be rejuvenated by Assyrians throughout the world. Holidays such as these will give us a firm foundation that will help us maintain our unique culture and traditions well into the coming century." Overall

it was a most enjoyable day, providing the perfect opportunity for family and friends to spend a relaxing time together, while commemorating their shared heritage.

Kha B'Neesan was traditionally a time for celebrating the beginning of spring. It was an opportunity for our ancestors to farewell winter, and look forward to the year ahead, rejuvenated by life blossoming around them. The celebration that took place in Bundoora Park, while not quite as symbolic, certainly encapsulated the essence of this ancient celebration. ■

Arbel and Arbella Givargis

WHO TODAY REMEMBERS THE ASSYRIANS?

SAYFO WORLD WIDE

The Assyrian Genocide of World War 1, along with the Genocide of the Armenians and Greeks, was significant, because it has been recognised neither by the Turkish government nor the rest of the world. This indifferent attitude that the world holds for recognising genocides committed by fellow nation states can set a dangerous precedent for other leaders to follow. On Aug. 22, 1939 Adolf Hitler boldly stated, "I have ordered my death units to exterminate without mercy or pity men, women and children belonging to the Polish-speaking race. It is only in this manner that we can acquire the vital territory which we need. *After all, who remembers today the extermination of the Armenians?*"(author's italics). If the Armenians claim to have been forgotten, then history has dealt an even crueler blow to the Assyrians and Greeks.

Apparently the Assyrians of Europe today not only remember this tragic event but have moved aggressively to have it recognised by the world community. For the past four years the Assyrians of Europe have conducted a steadily growing campaign in order to have the 20th century's first Genocide officially recognised by the world.

Sayfo, or *Seypa*, is the Syriac word for 'Sword', and judging by the tragic events that began on April 24, 1915, it is understandable why Assyrian history books mark the year 1915 as the Year of the 'Sword'.

This year's *Sayfo* protests were conducted live on the Internet at the following homepages; www.aina/Sayfo.htm and www.freeassyria.com. Photos and reports were updated on the hour, as the protests were taking place.

The following is an article by Gabriel Yusuf, one of the protest organisers, who was eager to share the latest news regarding the worldwide Assyrian protests with the Assyrians of Australia. ■

David Chibo



This year's protests drew extensively on the experience of past protests. Similar activities have taken place in recent years in Brussels (1998, Belgium), Enschede (2000, Netherlands), Cologne (1999, Köln-Germany), Zurich (1999, Switzerland), Södertälje, Stockholm (1999, 2000, 2001 Sweden), Berlin (2001, Germany) and Amsterdam (2001, Netherlands).

Following in the footsteps of last year's protests, this year's protest took the form of hunger strikes which were held in Paris, France, between April 17th-24th, 2001, Gütersloh, Germany and Södertälje, Sweden between April 21st-28th, 2001.

Meanwhile in Berlin, Germany, a demonstration was held on April 28th, 2001. Meetings in Stockholm, Sweden, in front of the Swedish Parliament building and in Paris, France were held on April, 24th, 2001, to mark the day the Assyrian Genocide officially began 86 years ago.

Other events included genocide conferences held in the Netherlands, Holland on April 23rd, 2001, which were organised by the Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac Union, (ACSU). Sydney's Assyrian community also joined their fellow protesters in Europe when they conducted a peaceful 3-day protest between 23rd-24th April. (See *Sayfo* protests in Sydney, page 8)

By protesting against atrocities committed in the past, we are highlighting to the world that the rights of our people are still being denied up to the present day. The same people who gave so much to humanity are still oppressed and confronted with difficult conditions in the Middle East - the rallies for the 86th annual commemoration of the Assyrian-Suryoye Genocide were organised under the leadership of the Gabo d'Hirutho d'Bethnahrin (GHB - formerly known as the Patriotic Revolutionary Organisation of Bethnahrin), with these people in mind.

The GHB single-handedly co-ordinated the rallies in Sweden, Germany and France, where we unfortunately weren't given the democratic right to conduct a hunger strike in Paris. So together with an Armenian Delegation we delivered a petition regarding the Genocide to the Turkish Consulate. We received support and congratulatory messages from groups and organisations from around the world. Armenians joined us in Berlin and took part in the demonstrations. They also had a speaker talk during the meeting in the centre of Berlin.

On Saturday, 21st of April at 15.00 p.m this year's hunger strikes and protests in Sweden were officially launched by an official representative of the GHB and a member of the Assyrian-Aramean-Chaldean-Suryoye Committee against Genocide. Mr. Yusuf continued, "Both representatives highlighted the importance of the proceeding years' rallies. Especially the rallies and protests conducted last

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F O P R O T E S T S

year, which was responsible for bringing the Genocide of our people before the Swedish Parliament for discussion.

Twenty hunger strikers attended the first day of the hunger strike protest in Södertälje, Sweden. On the second day the number rose to 35. The total number of protestors who conducted the hunger strike for the whole 7 days was 25, most of whom were very young, aged from 15 to 20. This really impressed the older people visiting the tent in the city of Södertälje (Stora Torget). The hunger strike officially ended on Saturday 28th April with a meeting of over 300 people in the Cultural Center of Bethnahrin in Södertälja. A political speech was made, and folklore dances and even musicians like Moussa Elyas and Aboud Zazi performed for the hunger strikers. Every day more than 60 people visited the hunger strike tent. On one day alone, more than 120 people were in the tent during the discussion between Murat Artin (Venster Partiet) and Besim Aho (Social Democrat Party) about the *Sayfo* not being recognised and the NO VOTE of the Swedish Social Democrats, who shelved plans to officially recognise the Assyrian Genocide just last month.

On 24th of April a delegation of hunger strikers, together with representatives of Committee against Genocide, delivered a petition, a *Sayfo* booklet and a new *Sayfo* documentary to the Swedish parliament in Stockholm. The meeting took more than 15 minutes and the Swedish representative who took the petition in the name of the Governmental Social Democrat Party, promised that they would further analyse the Assyrian question of the Genocide.

The hunger strike in Gütersloh, Germany, where the Assyrian-Suryoye population numbers close to 10,000, also began on Saturday. More than 50 people took part. In the following two days the number rose to 65. On Saturday the hunger strikers visited the 6 Syriac Orthodox churches in the area. The people in the church showed their solidarity. Even on Sunday, the Bishop of Germany His Holiness Mor Issa Gürbuz preached in the Syriac church in Paderborn (near Guetersloh) which was attended by a group of hunger strikers. More than 80 people visited the hunger strikers on this day. Discussions, music and speeches were all part of the program. The famous musician George Issa performed in the tent. On one occasion more than 150 people saw the *Sayfo* documentary, 'The Unheard Scream', produced by Bahro Production.

The rallies held in Germany ended on the 28th

April in Berlin with a great demonstration. More than 2,000 people attended the demonstration in which they walked more than 3 kilometres through the German capital. In front of the Turkish Embassy of Berlin the demonstrators stopped for 30 minutes and held a political speech. They accused Turkey of being guilty of the genocide of the Assyrian-Suryoye, Armenian and Greek people. They also demanded that Turkey should recognise the Genocide, so that different cultures and people can live together in peace and harmony in the future. They also demanded the cultural and religious rights of the remaining Assyrian-Suryoye still living in Turkey today. After their demands were read out they loudly marched to a meeting. At 5.00 p.m the meeting ended and dozens of buses filled with Assyrian-Suryoye from all over Europe drove back to their starting point.

Meanwhile in the Iranian city of Tehran, Assyrian protestors also held a hunger strike for 4 days. The Iranian media also showed great interest in reporting this event.

In Amsterdam, Holland a Genocide Conference organised by ACSU (Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac Union) took place on Monday 23rd of April. It



took place in an Armenian church. It was held in co-operation with Dutch institutions and the Armenians of Holland. Several scholars gave lectures about the Genocide.

The rallies are organised each year to remember the Genocide of our people. Our first aim is to remember and awaken our people, and to show them that they have to work for our national issues that they should not forget this tragic Genocide that took away more than two-thirds of our people. The Genocide is a key issue for us today because we are still living in the aftermath of this Genocide. When we remember when and under what circumstances it took place, at a time when most of



our people began to organise themselves around a national mindset and build a nation, it breaks our heart. It divided our homeland into four parts, and it divided our people into different parts, growing up as Turks, Kurds, or Arabs. So our people have to see the importance of the Genocide in our history- our aim is that Assyrians begin to remember the Genocide and its aftermath, as it is a national day of remembering.

A list of visitors included- representatives of the Social Democrat Party of Sweden: Yilmaz Kerimo (Parliamentarian in the Swedish Parliament), Besim Aho, Aydin Özkaya, Lotten Johansson,

Besim Aho (Social Democrats)

Adnan Can (City of Stockholm, council)

Representatives of Kurdish YDK, Kurdistan Federation of Sweden and PJKK

Yavuz Öner (Head of the Association for Human Rights in Turkey)

Representative of VENSTER Party, Mr. Ted Wright

Murat Artin, Armenian and representative of Venster Party in Parliament

Renata Yakoub (Secretary and in member of the council of Swedish Prime minister Goran Persson)

Melke and Munir Rhawi (Social democrats politicians)

Cinnika Benning (Parliamentarian of Social Democrats)

Mats P. (Politicians of the "Green Party of Sweden" - Miljöpartiet)

Gunilla Lejjan (Rättvisapartiet)

This list of people shows how much interest the world and the Swedish State had for our rally.

It must be understood that protests like this are not a glitzy way to get attention. Nobody goes on hunger strikes for attention or profit. It's a kind of protest where everyone can wake up. I think we are on the right path. The present proves this. It took 86 years for European states to start discussing the genocide of our people. It comes from the rallies and protests which say "our martyrs are immortal, we will never forget our past and all the victims, we will continue until the day that these genocides and crimes against humanity are recognised by Turkey and the rest of the world".

Gabriel Yusuf

SAY F O

protests in Sydney

On the 23rd and 24th April 2000, Assyrian young people, supported by many of their elders, took to the streets in a rally cry against the oppression of the Christian population in Turkey during the Young Turk Genocide in the years 1915-1923.

Waving placards, banging war drums, and spreading information (in the form of a leaflet campaign), the group of dedicated and passionate activists set towards the Turkish Consulate in Woollahra in Sydney to hold a peaceful protest demanding the recognition of the Turkish government of these heinous crimes.

The aims of the demonstration were not to incite hatred or misinform the general public. The Assyrian people present were not acting in any shape or form against the modern day Turkish government. They argued that for the sake of humankind, Turkey recognise the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians, 1 million Greeks and 750,000 Assyrians.

Despite the peaceful nature of the demonstration, and despite friendly police liaison, the Turkish consul

general Mr. Niyazi Adali refused to greet the crowd to discuss their aims and demands. This however did not dampen the spirit of those present.

The group was met with interest by several members of the press, including Turkish radio and television. We also had a member of the Kurdish community in Sydney come along and join the protest.

Primarily this demonstration was in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Europe, Iran and the US. It was also an opportunity for the community in Sydney to join hands with the international Assyrian community to show that we are all together in this fight for the recognition of our people in our ancestral homeland.

On 24 April 1915, the Young Turk regime issued an order to all governors and other Turkish authorities that all Christians residing within the Ottoman Empire be systematically exterminated.

This policy of pre-meditated massacre had already begun to be implemented on Christian communities both in Turkey and parts of Iran under Turkish occupation from mid-1914.

Through this policy of Genocide, millions perished in massacres and forced deportations to concentration camps in Turkey's desert interior.

The Turkish Government has still not recognised these killings as Genocide and continues to deny their occurrence outright. It also continues to employ a policy of ethnocide against its Christian minorities and refuses to recognise Assyrians as an ethnic minority within its borders.

The Assyrians of Sydney, in solidarity with Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks all over the world, call upon the Turkish Government to recognise the Christian Asia Minor Holocaust. Under Resolution 96 of the United Nations Convention, Genocide is a Crime Against Humanity.

Assyrian young people do not promote a recycling of ancient hatreds or vengeful violence. They demand a healing of these still open wounds through international recognition in order for these odious crimes to never be repeated on humanity again. ■

Majidi Ann Warda

The Royal Assyrian Butterfly



The name 'Royal Assyrian' refers to one of the relatively rare butterflies of Singapore. This name was chosen because of the deep purple color of the wings, particularly the upper surface, and a white area on the hind wings. The ancient civilization of Assyria was famous for its purple dye that was used for coloring fabrics and the ceramic artwork that decorated their walls and palaces. This species is found over a wide range and its habitat is the forests of tropical or subtropical Southeast Asia.

The Royal Assyrian is the only one of its genus. The butterfly can only be found in a localized area within nature reserves where its host plant - *Rinorea anguifera* - can be found.

The underside is purple-brown, traversed by reddish brown and pale dull blue fasciae and the hind wing has a series of dark, orange-tinged post-discal spots. The butterfly is alert and is territorial, often returning to the same spot again and again.

Moneer Cherie

◀ The brightly coloured butterfly - its colours are reminiscent of dyes used by ancient Assyrians