

TURKISH PRIEST GOES ON TRIAL FOR PROVOKING HATRED

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (Reuters) — A Turkish court on Thursday began the trial of a Syriac priest accused of “provoking hatred” by telling newspapers that his Christian minority community had been victims of genocide by Turks.

Witnesses at the State Security Court in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir said Father Yusuf Akbulut had contested the charge leveled against him, which could earn him between one and three years in jail.

He was quoted earlier in the year as saying that Turks had systematically killed Syriac Christians in the southeast at the turn of the 20th century.

He made the comments after a U.S. congressional panel approved a resolution characterizing the killings of Armenians in the latter days of the Ottoman empire as genocide.

“I was chatting (with journalists) off the record. I was not giving my personal views but what was said by my elders at the church and by those who came to visit. I do not support the Armenian genocide bill, and I do not accept the accusations in the charge sheet,” Akbulut told the court.

The hearing, watched by a number of western diplomats, was adjourned until February 22.

A few thousand Syriac Christians, one of the world’s oldest denominations, live in Turkey’s mainly Kurdish southeast, formerly the site of fierce conflict between Turkish forces and separatist Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party.

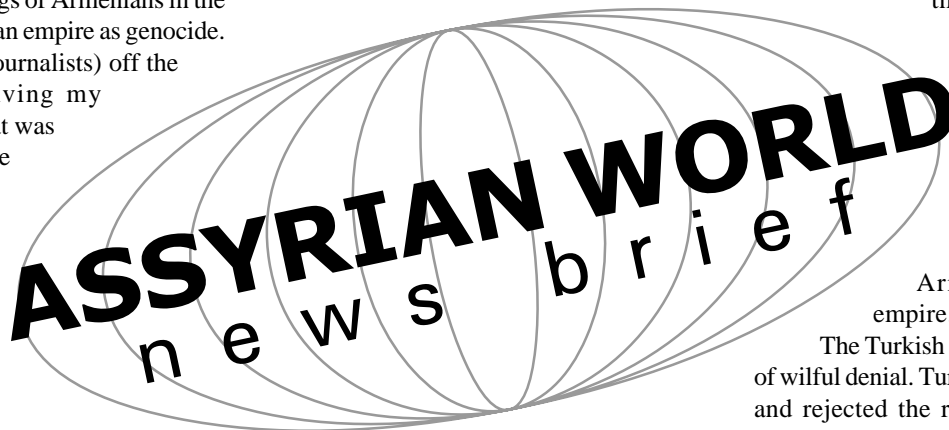
TURKEY’S ASSYRIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Turkey’s Assyrian community celebrates Christmas in Mardin’s K yrklar church in the early hours of Christmas day. Assyrians in the southeastern city of Mardin wore their traditional costumes for Christmas day. At a special Christmas day mass at K yrklar Assyrian church to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ, Assyrians reenacted the lighting of torches by shepherds who had seen the radiance of Jesus Christ’s arrival. Boys and girls sang hymns in Turkish, Arabic and Aramaic. Later special incense was lit specially brought in from Damascus in Syria. Blessing those who attended the mass, K yrklar church priest Gabriel Aky z said December 25 is a very important day for his community.

After the mass many young girls lit candles and held wishes.

ASSYRIAN MP IN IRAN RECEIVES PLAQUE OF HONOR

(ZNDA: Tehran) On the occasion of Christmas and the beginning of the new Christian millennium, the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Speaker, Mahdi Karrubi, presented plaques of honor to the Majlis Representatives of Iran’s Religious Minorities. Honorable Younatan Bet-Kolia, the Assyrian representative was among the recipients. The awards included the Azadi (Freedom) Gold Coins and three plaques of honor bearing a part of the late Ayatollah Khomeini’s message to the Christians of the world in 1979.



TURKS IN GERMANY ACKNOWLEDGE 1915 GENOCIDE

Courtesy of Katholiek Nieuwsblad, Amsterdam-Holland; December 18, 2000

(ZNDA: Hague) The chairman of the German-Turkish Association opposed to Genocide announced last month that Turks in Germany have called upon Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

Turks in Germany have made a plea in favor of the erection of a proposed monument commemorating the Genocide in the Dutch city of Assen. The Turkish Association Against Genocide, comprising of more than 10,000 members, has sent a petition to the Dutch Parliament in the Hague asking for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide as a historical fact.

Expressing their positive attitude on the monument in Assen, they are labeling opponents as Turkish fanatics, and asking the municipality not to change its position. “It is a pity that the monument is under discussion again. It is a psychological terror exerted on the Armenian community in the Netherlands.” Says Ali Ertem, the chairman of the Association.

It is ironic that the Dutch authorities do not wish to comment about the genocide, the Turks, whose ancestors perpetuated the genocide, are asking the Dutch Government for recognition of the Genocide.

The Turkish Association Against Genocide expresses its desire in the petition to clean up their past. A similar petition had been sent to the Turkish Parliament but it has been rejected. The text of that petition reads “As Turks it is bad for our conscience that these people (Armenians) were left to their fate for 85 years. Therefore we feel morally obliged to end their disillusion and agony, and we ask national and international condemnation of the crimes committed against the Armenians, Assyrians and Pontian-Greeks.”

Access to independent primary sources convinced them that there has indeed been a genocide perpetrated at the time of the Young Turk regime.

Ertem said, “What we learned at school is a forgery of history. We learned that we Turks are one nation. In the beginning of the 20th century two million Armenians lived in our empire. Where are they now?”

The Turkish government keeps the line of wilful denial. Turkey promptly condemned and rejected the recent recognition of the Genocide in the French Senate.

UN CHASTISES IRAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

(ZNRU: New York) On Tuesday, December 5 the U.N. General Assembly rebuked Iran on Rights Abuses on a series of human rights abuses by adopting a resolution calling on Tehran to end torture, a crackdown on freedom of speech and press, and discrimination against religious minorities. The vote was 67 in favor, 54 against with 46 abstentions on the resolution.

ST. GEORGE SCHOOL, LEBANON PLEADS FOR ASSISTANCE

(ZNDA: Lebanon) The St. George School in Lebanon was established 70 years ago in the Zahle district. Many of its pupils, taught in Arabic, Assyrian(Syriac), and French, have become Lebanon’s notable professionals and scholars. Today, after surviving the Civil War and the current financial roller coaster ride of the 1990’s, St. George is in financial ruin. Recently, Severios Saliba Touma, Patriarchal Vicar of Zahle and Bekaa, presented the dire monetary conditions of the school and the grim future of its pupils’ education.

Imagine a place...

of beauty and serenity in the hustle and bustle of Fairfield CBD...

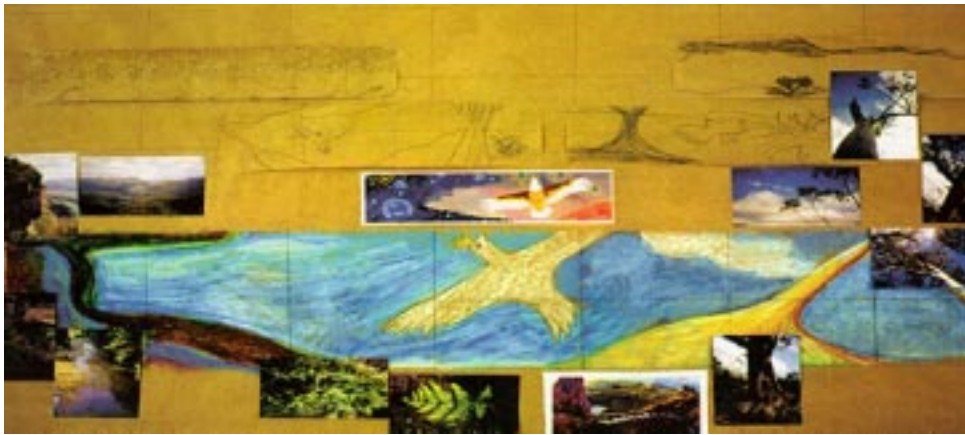
Imagine a Place mural project is based on the concepts of inclusion, empowerment and trust. It combines the homeland memories of the people of Fairfield with images of the Australian natural environment. The tranquil beauty of the mountains, the strength of the earth, the breath of the sky and the murmuring of the trees were the residents' chosen place. This place is watched by an ancient and wise spirit, which appears as a bird in the open blue sky, bringing hope and protection to the people. *Imagine a Place*, mural workshops took place in an empty shop amongst the hustle and bustle of Nelson Street in Fairfield, and was attended by over

two hundred participants.

The mural has been permanently installed on the outside wall of the Fairfield Vic Winton branch Library and it was unveiled by the Mayor of Fairfield, Clr Robert Watkins at 4:00 pm, on Monday 27 November 2000. This project began in late 1999 and was completed in mid November 2000.

A project of the Fairfield Community Arts Network, it was assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, sponsored by the Fairfield City Council and Neeta City Shopping Centre. ■

Samiramis Ziyeh



About FCAN....

Samiramis Ziyeh, was in charge of the Fairfield Community Arts Network for over 4 years. During that time she actively sought out youth, especially the disenfranchised Assyrian youth, from the Fairfield area. She introduced a new and artistic aspect to their lives that they had never seen before.

After years of faithful service to the local community, Samiramis Ziyeh has decided to move to California where her family currently resides.

I think that we speak on behalf of the

entire Assyrian community, when we say that she will be deeply missed. She leaves the name of her last project as a tribute to her vision, her energy and her talent, 'Imagine a place....'

The following report is courtesy of Samiramis Ziyeh, Fairfield Community Arts Network (FCAN).

To see FCAN's past projects and understand FCAN's vision visit the group's homepage. ■

www.fcan.org.au

Welcome to the start of a New Year and a new beginning to Nakosha magazine. It's been a typical hectic holiday period for most of the Assyrian community, as most, at work and school, finish of the year's activities and take some time off to go on holiday. This year's end-of-year activities are very different in Australia, where, the temperature usually rises above 30 degrees Celsius.

Amongst stories covered in this month's issue of Nakosha we bring you the end-of-year activities conducted by the St. George Assyrian language school, which involved a night time concert, as well as a very special and enjoyable school Olympics. We also have a report on the, much-awaited, Assyrian Report, which was released last month at the Hammurabi Centre.

I hope you all had a happy Christmas and a relaxing holiday break. I was able to spend some time reading, and managed to finish a book about the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Whilst reading *Introducing Nietzsche*, one of his comments, in particular, jumped out and struck me. In 1867 he stated, "All writing is useless that does not contain a stimulus to activity".

With this quote I'd like to introduce you to the new direction that Nakosha magazine will be taking this year.

In past years we would send each of our readers a Christmas card celebrating the end of the year. Starting last year and continuing this year we have included a calendar that highlights and contains the most important Assyrian holidays our culture has passed down to us. We hope that this card along with every monthly issue of Nakosha reaching you this year, not only stimulates you into reading its pages, but also prompts you to become more active in your local community.

Contrary to popular belief Assyria is not a noun, it is a verb. A doing word. Our New Year's resolution is to act as a catalyst and prompt our youth, especially, to not only take part in the activities conducted, but also initiate activities of their own. ■

David Chibo

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On Sunday 17th of December many parents, teachers, students and other members of our community attended the St George Assyrian Language School's Olympic day, which was held at Edwardes Lake.

Students and also teachers were put into 3 different teams, which were red, blue and white.

Throughout the day there were different games, and the teams were to compete against each other, with the winners of each game gaining one point for the team they were in. Some of the games that children had a choice to compete in were the sack race, jelly-eating competition, corn eating competition, flower and chocolate game, water game, relay running, tug of war and the back-to-back race. The end saw a game called tunnel ball, in which teachers and students had to participate. After the whistle was blown they started rolling the balls. When the game had finished the red team had won the tunnel ball but after the points had been tallied up it was a draw between red and blue teams.

It was decided that the red and blue team had to play another game of tunnel ball, in which the red team was the winner.

Red team took the gold, blue the silver and white the bronze. After the children had all finished the games they went to get a drink and some children got something to eat.

Afterwards, a surprise, guest appearance was made by Santa Claus, and all children were happy to see him.

The main organisers of the day were Rivena Jando and Vienna Toma.

School principal, Marlin Haweil, said "I think the day went very well because of the good co-operation of the students with teachers on such a hot day."

The day was very much enjoyed by everyone, and it was a very big success.

Later on there were also some games for the parents and other people that were there (not children), and they also enjoyed themselves. ■

Joseph Haweil



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What did you get up to during the first year of the millenium?

M / 16 / Canada

uu New Years wouldn't be New Years with out a family celebration! For the past 3 new years now we have been celebrated



at home with our

cousins. It is much more comfortable and enjoyable that way. There is no loud music blaring in your ears, no body stepping on you because of the large crouds, and now line ups to the washrooms, hahaha. There is never anything better than celebrating a special occasion with your loved ones!

M/28/Australia

This year went very fast. I still remember te build up to New Year's Eve Celebrations for 2000.

This year I disocovered that I have to have a balance in my life. There are many distractions in the world that are placed before us and it is important that we don't spend too much time focussing on one specific area. Life should be made up of a balance in terms of physical, spiritual, educational, work and play. All of these need to be attended to. Happiness is a state in which these are all in balance. This

is what I slowly disocvered this year. I just hope I am wise enough to apply this in my personal life.

M/24/Melbourne

This year I started my own business. It was very hard especially because I wasnt born in Austalia and I don't speak the language very clear.

I had friends and family give me alot of supprt and I was able to get my business running. I hope to continue this year and hopefully be able to grow my busines more.

I also found a new friend who is very close to me. It has been a good year and I look forward to the year 2001!!!

F/23/Canada

uuI finished my University course. I am now a qualified Scientist!

I think in this day and age that education is one of the most



important things we should all strive for. We in the West just t a k e things for granted a n d become so lazy. In the Middle East, our parents never had

this freedom that we abuse. Baseeme Raba!

M/18/Canada

uuMy parents has alittle boy and I finally understand what it means to take responsibility in your life. I've had to help alotmore around the house and stuff. I think it's a good wakeup call for someone whos been shelterred all their life, you know. Altyhough its hard work I actually look forward to coming home and playing with him.

M/17/Sydney

uuI attended the Symposium Syriacum and was a speaker at the Assyrians after Assyria Genocide Seminar. This was a great experience for me as I got to meet many different academics whose work on our people and language I admire. It was an experience of a lifetime! I believe it has inspired me in my future aspirations. Oh yeah... and I finished high school too.

THE ASSYRIAN RESEARCH REPORT

Starting at around 2:00pm, on Sunday 10th December, the Hammurabi Centre, located in Melbourne's suburb of Broadmeadows, played host to the official unveiling of the 'The Assyrian Research Report'.

Over two years in the making, the research report had been initially commissioned by the Assyrian Council of Victoria Inc. (ACV). The ACV had been the recipient of two grants from Federal Government.

The first grant, which was for \$30,000, was to be used for 'The Assyrian Research Report'.

The Australian Federal Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Mr. Philip Ruddock was the guest of honour, for the occasion, and he was joined by Lewis Patros, who displayed various artistic works, on the day, as well as other distinguished guests.

Mr. Ruddock took to the podium and initially began by acknowledging the Aboriginal custodians of the land, now under the care of the ACV. He then expressed his thoughts and feelings on this report. "This report", he said, "tells others about yourselves, your experience, your culture, your history." The primary goal of the report was according to Mr. Ruddock, that, "it opens Assyrians up to other Australians."

He continued to translate what he had interpreted from reading the report, "The report says there's a challenge for you. To come together, to work together, to be effective advocates for your cause."

Mr. Ruddock then continued to explain the benefits of the Hammurabi migrant resource Centre urging all newly arrived Assyrians to make use of the extensive resources that his government had provided for the Hammurabi Centre, "We have

the best programmes, and the most comprehensive in the world."

"Migrant resource centres don't exist anywhere in the world. Grants to communities are also rare." He emphasised the contents of the report, which stated that a second grant, had been received by the ACV, in the name of Assyrians, of all churches, **including the Church of the East, Chaldean and Syrian Orthodox churches.** The grant is for a two year Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS). The \$73,482 grant is to be used by the ACV at its Hammurabi Centre to provide Council Welfare Services.

The object of the Centre is to provide services and information in areas of welfare, health, youth, women's issues, Immigration, aged care, child care, settlement needs and any other areas of social need that are identified. The Centre is also to provide educational needs in both Assyrian and English.

Mr. Ruddock then ended his talk by acknowledging the hardships that the Assyrian

community was forced to endure in getting to Australia. "I want to commend you for your humanity and the hard work involved in settling here. You are just as much Australian as everybody else." ■



David Chibo

All Assyrians (Chaldeans) can contact the AACV, for further help or information:

Assyrian Council of Victoria
Hammurabi Centre
Seabrook Reserve
Goulburn Street
Broadmeadows, Vic. 3047
Tel: 0409 334 094

Assyrian Council of Victoria Inc.

The Assyrian Research Report

10th December, 2000



The Sun-God dictating his laws to Hammurabi
1750 B. C.

ملف لغوي

كلمة لغوية

هَنْلَاsnee-gro.....	lawyer.....	sneeg-ra.....	هَنْلَا
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نَهْمَاneq-mo.....	punishment.....	neq-ma.....	نَهْمَا
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دُونَاdyo-no.....	judge.....	da-ya-na.....	دُونَا
بَرُونَاbree-ro.....	innocent.....	bree-ra.....	بَرُونَا
هُونَاhoy-bo.....	guilty.....	kha-ya-wa.....	هُونَا
كُونَاkee-noo-tho.....	justice.....	ke-noo-tha.....	كُونَا
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The Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit organisation. It seeks to promote the Assyrian culture, history and language, as well as the Assyrian name and community, bringing it to the world stage.

AYGV

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