



ARMENIAN
INSTITUTE

ՀԱՅ ԿՒՐՆԱԿ

Armenian Institute

Bulletin

Volume 1, Issue 1

May 2008

Inside this issue:

Armenian Language Tuition

Armenian Institute Film Club

Taner Akçam

Paregentan Masked Ball

For Hrant, For Justice

Facing History And Ourselves

Puppets And Puppetmaking

Demographic Policy And Ethnic Cleansing In The Late Ottoman Period

Dr Taner Akçam, University of Minnesota
4 March at Brunei Gallery, SOAS

Taner Akçam is the author of numerous articles as well as ten scholarly works on the late Ottoman and modern Turkish history. His most recent publications in English include *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (Zed, 2004); *A Shameful Act: the Armenia Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (Metropolitan, 2006). Jointly organised by Project for Armenian and Turkish Studies (PATS) and Armenian Studies Group (ASG) at SOAS, Prof. Akçam's talk concentrated solely on Ottoman archives, establishing that the deportations began before any uprisings had occurred, such as those in Van or Urfa. Fear of losing any more territory after the fiasco of the Balkan War prompted the Young Turk government to deport entire ethnic and religious groups from 1913 onwards. However, Armenians were singled out for a different treatment and Prof. Akçam was able to show that on the basis of Ottoman records the Union and Progress party followed a policy that endeavoured to annihilate the Armenians in the Empire. Chaired by Dr Hratch Tchilingirian (Eurasia Programme, Cambridge University), the lecture was attended by a capacity crowd of students, academics and general public.

Taner Akçam and Hratch Tchilingirian



Paregentan

9 February. The AI Celebrations series began with an exciting Paregentan Party at the Chelsea Gardener. Brightly costumed and masked guests enjoyed delicious food prepared by Rita Koundarjian, Jakobs Delicates-



sen and other generous donors before dancing to a rich mixture of music provided by DJ Vartan. The lush plants, beautiful surroundings and candlelit tables provided a memorable atmosphere. A family event, children arrived in

a variety of costumes ranging from a beautiful Armenian princess to Batman. A wonderful time was had by all who attended and we plan to make this an annual event.

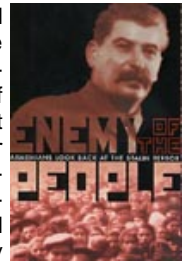
Film Club: 24 January at Pushkin House, WC1.

The AI film Club continued the winter season with a "standing room only" viewing of films by Vaughn Pilikian at Pushkin House. Winner of the Golden Apricot Award in Yerevan in 2005, director Pilikian showed 5 short films (*Prayer at Dawn and Dusk, Alang, Household Gods, Mummers, Actaeon*). The range of subject matter and style demonstrated subtle artistic sensibility as well as a commitment to social concerns. Most striking was the trilogy set in India (*Alang*), shot with a painterly eye, contrasting the monumental ship demolition site with the private rituals of the workers.

Film Club 21 February at Pushkin House, WC1

Enemy of the People: Armenians Look Back at the Stalin Terror

Through rare archival footage and interviews with survivors of Stalinist persecutions, with former informants and agents of the secret police, this film presented an effective and at the same time disturbing picture of the difficult years under Stalin in Armenia. Directed and presented by Zareh Tjeknavorian and narrated by writer/performer Eric Bogosian, *Enemy of the People* is documentary exploring the human impact of the Soviet repression between the 1930s and the death of Stalin in 1953. The film was made in 1998 and distributed by AGBU. Dr Mark Grigoryan, himself an advisor to Tjeknavorian during the making of the film, led a discussion after the film.



This is the first AI Bulletin with news of recent events. The *Armenian Institute News* including original articles, reviews and essays is sent to current Friends, Patrons and Benefactors. If you wish to join, please complete and return the form on page 2.

For Hrant, For Justice: The Ongoing Struggle For Freedom Of Expression In Turkey.

28 February at Amnesty International UK, EC2

One year on from the commemoration of Hrant Dink's assassination in Istanbul, 19 January 2007, the Armenian Institute joined with Amnesty International, English PEN, and Index on Censorship to pay tribute to his life and work and focus on the continuing is-

sues. The centrepiece of the evening was a new film created by Nouritza Matosian, emerging from a series of in-depth conversations she had taped with him in the Agos office in Istanbul. *Heart of Two Nations: Hrant Dink*, produced by SohoFlicks and Tarmak, was followed by a discussion and reception. Those attending were

moved by the images and words and inspired by the ideas expressed by Dink, brought out by the film. We are very grateful to the donors who assisted with the costs of editing the film: Dianne and Bedros Aslanian, Michael Avedisian, Rita Cherchian, Bedo Eghiyayan and Krikor Vartoukian.

Armenian Language Tuition

Thursday evenings at the Armenian Institute Library, Nevart Gulbenkian Hall, W8.

Our successful classes have continued regularly during the first quarter of 2008. Sossie Yeretjian and Rita Koundarjian taught the West Armenian beginner and intermediate classes respectively and Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian continued with the East Armenian course.

Armenian Conversation: Intensive language for beginners:

2 February. Susan Pattie, Diane Aslanyan and Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian held an intensive Armenian language workshop for absolute beginners in which those attending learnt a basic vocabulary and had opportunities to practise using it. The workshop was well-attended and participants went away with some useful expressions for social occasions, an acquaintance with the alphabet, and a foundation for learning more.



Film Club

13 March at Faraday House, WC1

London's most experienced documentary producer and director of Armenian descent, Ani King-Underwood, showed two of her latest films. In the first film King-Underwood followed her mother and aunt as they travelled to Mersin to look for the home in which Sirarpie Manoukian was born. A detective story, involving a wide cast of Mersin residents, the very moving film highlighted changes in Turkey in recent years. The sisters found the home, now a cultural centre, and the relief among the audience was palpable. A second film, *Killing for Honour* also



shot in Turkey explored the phenomenon itself as well as the steps being taken by the government and NGOs to fight against it.

17 April at Pushkin House, WC1

Lecture: Facing History and Ourselves

16 April at Nevart Gulbenkian Hall, W8

Michael McIntyre UK Programme Co-ordinator Michael McIntyre spoke about the important work of this organisation, creating multimedia resource materials for schools and training teachers to deal sensitively with the difficult questions of history. The Armenian genocide is one of more than 30 topics addressed by the Facing History team. In its series on "Crimes against Humanity and Civilization", the information package on the Genocide of the Armenians includes a resource book and companion DVD, lesson plans

for teachers, documentary DVDs, posters and a map. During his stimulating presentation, McIntyre used excerpts from the DVDs, including rare footage from the 1910s.

Puppet Club

Puppets and Puppetmaking with Maral Kerovpyan, artist

19 April at Nevart Gulbenkian Hall, AI library.

AI's first meeting of the Puppet Club, a group for all ages, met with Maral Kerovpyan (Paris) who introduced the Toumanyanyan story, *The Two Brothers*.

The Genocide Inside Me Following on from Michael McIntyre's talk on 16 April, the companion DVD from the resource pack put together by Facing History and Ourselves was shown at AI's monthly Film Club. This film is written, directed and filmed by the Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Araz Artinian and has received an accolade from Atom Egoyan. From the 1915 Armenian Genocide to contemporary North America, via modern Turkey, *The Genocide Inside Me* is a moving personal journey in which Artinian confronts the reality of her life in the Canadian melting pot of cultures and asks herself the universal question "Where do I belong?"

ers. The group then revised the story, made additional puppets and backdrops and put on a performance for each other at the end. The new AI puppet stage worked very well, newly painted by Maral, providing a wonderful environment for this lively art. By coincidence, two weeks later, AI was approached to provide storytelling at Discover Activity Centre in Straford, London and we were fortunate to have The Two Brothers to rehearse and present. We hope that there will be more opportunities for presenting Armenian folktales and stories and look forward to welcoming more people, children and adults, experienced and not, to the monthly Puppet Club.



The new puppet theatre at the Armenian Institute Library.

Yes, I wish to support the Armenian Institute and become a Friend/Patron/Benefactor of the Institute.

Friend (single) £25 **Family** £40 **Patron** £100+ **Benefactor** £1000+

At this time I wish to support the projects of the Armenian Institute as a Donor. Enclosed is my donation of £

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

GiftAid Declaration: I would like the Armenian Institute to reclaim tax on all donations I have made since 01/01/04 and thereafter until further notice. I am a UK tax payer.

Signature _____ Date _____

Send to: Armenian Institute, 7 Hollingbourne Road, London SE24 9NB