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HUMAN RIGHTS

by Pierre Papazian

It is practically impossible nowadays to open a newspaper or magazine without seeing at least one article on the subject of human rights. Activities in the field of human rights have increased markedly in the present decade, and the topic has become a matter of major concern not only for governments, but for private groups and individuals. With all the publicity on the subject, however, the scope of human rights as well as its basic significance is poorly defined in the minds of many; in fact, there is an ideological controversy about the definition of human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1948, contains 30 articles specifying human rights. The majority of the articles refers to political rights, while a smaller number is divided almost equally between civil and economic rights. In common usage, however, the term "human rights" refers to the political rights of the individual human being. (Governments professing leftist ideologies most often emphasize economic rights to the exclusion of political rights.)

Americans who are familiar with the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights can easily enumerate basic rights, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right of peaceful assembly, security against unreasonable searches and seizures, etc., all of which are also listed in the U.N.'s Universal Declaration. The American documents make no reference to any economic rights, except property rights, while the Universal Declaration specifies the right to work, protection against unemployment, equal pay for equal work, holidays with pay, etc. Interestingly enough, there has never been (to my knowledge) any human rights protests by dissident or activist individuals on the basis of economic rights. Thus, it is not unreasonable to state that human rights are generally considered as political not only in the West, but also by those people, in whatever country, who are protesting the denial of their basic human rights. In fact, human rights must be characterized as political since they refer to relations between the state and the individual citizen, namely protection of the citizen from the arbitrary actions or excessive demands of the government. The codification of these rights in such international agreements as the Atlantic Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and more recently, the Helsinki Final Act, further confirms the political nature of human rights.

From the early days of the United States to the present day, human rights have been an important political issue. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth." And a month after his inauguration, President Carter stated that the United States has a responsibility and a legal right to express its disapproval of violations of human rights. Yet, though the pronouncements and the activities are manifested in the political arena, the principles underlying human rights are undeniably moral and spiritual. These principles did

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The September issue of OUTREACH will feature an in-depth report of H.H. Karekin II's trip to the United States. The expanded issue will also include reports about the Lebanese fund raising campaign and we will begin to list the names of all the donors to the Lebanese fund. Please remember that we are dependent upon your support in order to continue publishing OUTREACH. Just a few dollars a year from each family would assure twelve issues a year.

Diaspora: New Julfa Armenians in the Indies

by Frederick A. Leist

Having known so many graduates of the Armenian College in Calcutta, and having heard so much about it from them, when I arrived in Calcutta in May of 1978 I set out to look for it. An unpromising gateway off a crowded street led unexpectedly into wide green playing fields flanked by a large and modern building. The principal was a Mr. Poladian from Kessab, who turned out to be the uncle of Bishop Datev, who as head of the seminary had been my host in Antelias. Mr. Poladian, who was most hospitable, took me to the Armenian club where he introduced me to the Adams brothers, the elder of whom had previously been head of the local Armenian community. There was another man who had been active in the jute trade in East Bengal, now Bangladesh, before Indian independence, and a fourth man originally from Chehar Mahal in Iran. Although the Armenians of Bengal, most of whom had come originally from New Julfa, flourished for over two hundred years, the size of the colony in Calcutta has decreased greatly in recent years due to emigration. Perhaps partly as a result of this depopulation the club was an oasis of tranquility in the heart of the city, less bustling by far than it must have been in the heyday of the Armenian community. There is still a priest in Calcutta, but I was told I had missed him by a day, as he had just gone back to Armenia for a visit.

Mr. Poladian also introduced me to an Armenian woman who owned a hotel and turned out to be the cousin of a friend of mine from Iran who had in fact been my host when I had gone to the Armenian gathering in Chehar Mahal near Isfahan. One of her grandfathers had had the cognomen "Lorantz." She explained that there was a time when, as the result of a feud in the mountains, forty Lurs (probably Bakhtiari, who were formerly known as "Great Lurs" and still speak a dialect intermediate between the Luri of Luristan and the Persian of Fars and Isfahan), all men, sought sanctuary at an Armenian church and asked to become Christian. This was of course unprecedented, but the authorities finally said that if they fasted, otherwise prepared themselves and learnt the catechism, they would be accepted. Her grandfather was descended from one of these. She told me stories of life in the New Julfa of a century or more ago which she had heard from aged relatives, as well as stories of the fabulously wealthy Bengal Khojas of the early and prosperous days of the colony. Much later, in South India, I was to meet a Hindu from Bengal who said that in his opinion it was the Armenians who had done the most in building up Calcutta into the emporium of yore, and that he regretted that their community had for the most part dispersed.

In Madras, I stayed at a tiny inn on Armenian Street, named for the Armenian church of St. Mary near the head of the street. St. Mary's was built in 1772 after the original Armenian St. Mary's in Madras, dating from 1712, was demolished. Sources differ as to whether the English pulled it down when they cleared an area around their Fort St. George or it was the French who destroyed it during their occupation of the city. Mr. Gregory, who has a typically Julfaiot Armenian surname, i.e., without "-ian," lives in the church compound and looks after it. He was delighted to show a visitor around. There were pictures of the New Julfa Cathedral on display and one of the plaques set into the wall commemorated Khoja Petros Voskan, a descendant of Khoja Petros Veli-janian, in whose New Julfa church Voskan's heart is buried in a golden casket. He was born in New Julfa in 1681 and died in 1751 in Madras, where the rest of him was buried in the Vepery section of the city where St. Mathias' now stands. There were also many pictures of places in the Armenian S.S.R. and from His Holiness Vazgen I's visit to India, as well as newspaper clippings relating to the Armenians of Calcutta and Madras. Except for Mr. Gregory, there are apparently only a few pensioners left of the once thriving Armenian community of the city. The church itself is well built, typically Armenian, and not at all ostentatious.

The Armenians must have been among the first Christians in Bengal, but in Madras there is a cathedral built

over the reputed site of the martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas. The present building was put up by the Portuguese in 1547 and is Catholic, but there had been a strong Christian community, originally Nestorian, near Madras from very early days. Even the English church of St. Mary was built within the walls of Fort St. George in 1680 and is said to be the oldest Anglican church East of Suez.

Although, as I was not planning to visit Bombay, I hadn't expected to find any further evidence of Armenians in India, I was agreeably surprised in Trivandrum. Trivandrum, before independence the capital of the princely state of Travancore, is now capital of the state of Kerala, the old Malabar Coast in the extreme southwest of India. There, in the Chitralayam Art Gallery, I came across two paintings done in the style of the seventeenth century frescoes of Chehel Sotun Palace in Isfahan, entitled "The Wine Drinkers" and "A Glass of Wine." They were by the late Sarkis Katchadourian who had set up the museum on the grounds of the Vank in New Julfa where several of his paintings of Armenian landscapes may be seen. It was a pleasure to be reminded of New Julfa while so far away. It was even appropriate in a way for Kerala has always been on the trade routes from the Persian Gulf and early Christians there (the state is now about one third Christian) were subject to the Persian Catholicos.

Later, while in Malacca, now a somewhat sleepy backwater but for centuries one of the richest ports in the Indies, I saw an interesting tombstone. It was set in the floor of Christ Church, built by the Dutch in the mid-eighteenth century but now Anglican. There was a long inscription in Armenian followed by a shorter one in Dutch, but what really caught my eye was the unmistakable New Julfa look of part of the design, showing scissor, scales and a pen and inkwell, in other words such marks of the deceased's trade as are commonly shown on the older tombstones of New Julfa. The border of interlacing vines leading up to a design looking like a vestigial coat-of-arms, however, suggested Portuguese or Dutch influence. The Dutch reads, roughly, "Here lies the body of Mr. Jacob Shamier, an Armenian merchant, who passed away on the 7th of July A.D. 1774 at the age of 29."

Bishop Mesrob Ashjian was kind enough, when I told him of this, to draw my attention to a 1919 article in the *Journal Asiatique* which discusses this stone and two others which I did not see with inscriptions in Armenian and Portuguese. The more interesting of the latter, from St. Peter's in Malacca, concerns a man who died in 1736 at the age of thirty. The Portuguese inscription begins, "Here lies John Donacao, an Armenian, the son of Khoja Sarkis Meliian, a native of Yerevan in Isfahan in the kingdom of Persia. . ." To this day there is a section of New Julfa in Isfahan known as Yerevan. Although the Dutch held Malacca from 1641-1795 and again briefly from 1818-24, and thus longer than the Portuguese, who took it in 1511 and kept it till 1641, there would appear to be no trace of Dutch rule in the city apart from the architecture, whereas there remains to this day a staunchly Catholic and Portuguese-speaking fishing community nearby. It is interesting, therefore, that an Armenian dying nearly a century after Malacca fell to the Dutch should still have an inscription in Portuguese. The other Armenian and Portuguese inscription dates in fact from even later, 1746.

In Singapore, which, though not without competition from Penang, has largely replaced Malacca as the leading regional entrepôt, I visited St. Gregory's. The interior of the church is undergoing extensive restoration. The caretaker, apparently Moslem, gave the usual runaround of no key, no authority, etc., before finally and reluctantly letting me in. The church is set in attrac-

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This is the fifth and final article in a series written by Frederick Leist. Mr. Leist lived in Isfahan, where he taught at the University from June 1974 to January 1978. During that time he travelled in the area extensively. We are grateful to him for sharing his experiences with us.

Editorial:

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”

*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew
Chapter 10, Verse 8*

In 1915 the phrase “the starving Armenians” was born and used to evoke sympathy and encourage humanitarian aid for the Armenian refugees. In 1979 the phrase “the boat people” has been coined to symbolize the plight of the thousands of Vietnamese who are daily being pushed out of their country and into the sea.

Certainly, a refugee problem is no longer unique. In fact, many historians are now calling this century the “age of refugees.” There are, by current estimates, more than 13 million refugees worldwide, but the problem in Southeast Asia is the most pressing simply because of the large number of people involved—a number much too great for neighboring countries to accommodate. The Vietnamese refugees are leaving at a rate of 70,000 a month. The government is literally forcing its ethnic Chinese citizens either to leave the country (leaving behind all their assets) or to move to “new economic zones.” It has been reported that besides leaving behind all belongings, a price of \$2,000 per person, payable in gold or hard currency, is being charged for the “privilege” of being put out to sea.

If any people can empathize with the plight of the “boat people” certainly it should be the Armenian American. As Armenians we remember all too vividly the suffering and indignities our parents experienced. As Americans we remember with a certain amount of pride the huge outpouring of humanitarian aid from the United States, without which many of our parents would have perished.

As Armenian Americans and as *Christians*, we must take an active part in helping the boat people. There are currently many charges being voiced against such a stand. Many say that the deportations are strictly a political move by Vietnam to weaken her neighbors. Others say that most of the Vietnamese are leaving voluntarily and are not being pushed out. Still others insist that we have our own problems, i.e., inflation, unemployment, and for once “let someone else do the job.”

All of these charges should ring familiar to Armenian ears, for they were the very same arguments, in slightly different words, used to discourage American involvement with the “Armenian problem.”

Writing in the *Baltimore Sun* on May 28, 1920, the famous author H. L. Mencken penned a typical article entitled “The Armenian Buncombe.” In more than one column Mencken claimed the Armenian problem was a hoax perpetrated by Wilson and certain members of Congress. He wrote: “The Armenians are *not* a race of persecuted innocents, the Turks did *not* fall upon them wantonly and without excuse. . . the plain facts are that the Armenians themselves began the turmoils from which they afterward suffered so severely. . . they are detested not because they are Christians but because they are treacherous and disorderly. . . . What caused the Turks to fall upon the Armenians during the war was a typical piece of Armenian treachery. The Turks, attacked at Gallipoli, had to concentrate nearly their whole strength there. . . the Armenians proceeded at once to engage in high jinks—inviting in the Russians, sacking and burning Moslem towns, massacring isolated Turkish garrisons, setting up a reign of terror. . . .”

Mencken was not alone in these sentiments. Similar statements were heard everywhere, including Congress. But the “big-hearted American” won out. Massive fund drives were conducted coast-to-coast and the doors were opened to admit Armenian refugees into the United States.

While it is true that there are many political ramifications that must be taken into account, the immediate problem is to rescue the boat people and then to take measures to stop the inhuman deportation by the Vietnamese government. As Christians we must be aware of the problems of today’s society, and sensitive to the needs of its members. If as Christians, whose basic teaching is love, and as Armenians, whose history is dominated by injustice, we do not take a stand, then who will?

Today’s “boat people” are yesterday’s “starving Armenians.” And if our action today helps but one person in that far-away sea, it will be a more fitting memorial to our martyrs than all the stone monuments we have erected, and all the candles we have lit.

Prelacy Announcements

Our thanks to the following who helped us recently in renovating the Prelacy offices: Mr. and Mrs. Nercess Aynilian, Mr. and Mrs. Hratch Dadoyan, Mr. and Mrs. Sarkis Ohanessian, Mr. Papken Dadoyan and Einstein-Moomjy.

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For Whom the Bell Tolls: The Boat People and the Armenians

by Khachig Tololyan

Over a period of four years, snipers have murdered and artillery men have bombed, and the result has been the devastation of Lebanon. Over the past two years, in another part of the world, thousands of Chinese and Vietnamese individuals who live in what used to be South Vietnam have been coerced by the Communist authorities into surrendering virtually all of their worldly goods to the new state. They have then been bundled into frail boats, towed to the open seas and cast loose. Thirty to forty percent of those treated in this manner have died, some without a trace. Thousands of others languish in tropical refugee camps. So?

The most common Armenian response to this is “Mer kordze che, mezee chi kharnevir,” “It is not our affair, it does not concern us.” On the level of the individual, this may be an understandable response, although it’s not a praise-worthy one. The Armenian whose grandparents were slaughtered by Turks and whose cousins have been sniped at by other Lebanese can be forgiven if he does not care much about the miseries of others. On the institutional level, however, this is not an understandable reaction. The institutions which organize and lead the communal life of the Armenian Diaspora have a responsibility to take a cooler, more detached and far-sighted view of developments which might affect us. Even if individual Armenians insist on remaining insular in outlook, our institutions must not.

The British poet John Donne, who was also Dean of London’s famed St. Paul’s Cathedral in the early seventeenth century, spoke of funerals and said: “Send not to ask for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.” What he meant by this was that you need not send someone to inquire for whose funeral the church bells were tolling. “No man is an island, entire unto himself,” he added. If a man dies, even a stranger, his death should not be the occasion of vulgar curiosity but a reminder of our common mortality, our common humanity. None of us is an island, living isolated from the rest. We are together in this “business” of living and dying, and nothing can evoke that sense of togetherness in us as easily as our all-too-human mortality. When Ernest Hemingway named his novel on the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” he was telling the largely indifferent American public what he realized before many politicians did; he saw that the war between fascist and communist was a test-run for a larger world war to come, one which would engulf all of humanity, precisely because no one was willing to help the Spaniards who struggled and died for freedom.

Centuries of persecution, followed by decades of massacre, culminating in the genocide of 1915, have made Armenians insular. When it comes to suffering, we put on our blinders, stuff cotton into our ears and pick up the loudspeakers: it is *we* who have suffered, we alone. It is *we* who know what it means to be betrayed by states that we thought were our friends, we who have experienced abandonment by those who were richer and more powerful and might have helped us. We act as though we have had a monopoly on particular forms of suffering, we compete in the genocide Olympics, we think we have a blank check to draw against the moral funds of the world. All of these are attitudes which are wrong for several reasons; they are only partly justifiable, and, what is worse, they are not fruitful—they prevent us from undertaking the kinds of actions that would be in our communal interest.

It is true, for example, that with the possible exception of the Jews, we are the nation that has undergone the longest, most continuous historical suffering. But the suffering of the Jews has made their institutions behave more intelligently than ours. Of course, they have had advantages, in that the Germans lost World War II, whereas the Turkish loss of World War I was largely remedied by Ataturk, and of course, Israel survived whereas the independent Armenian Republic did not, and so we have had no state to undertake certain initiatives on our behalf, but even so, we cannot explain away the behavior of our institutions in the face of such phenomena as the boat people, or in the face of more everyday phenomena.

Let me take the everyday terms first. We are taught to lament for our genocided brethren, and rightly so, but we are also taught that the western powers were irresponsible, that they did not do enough to prevent what happened to us. Now this is a justified accusation if certain periods of history are taken into account, but in fact, World War I is NOT such a period. While our one and a half million ancestors died from Erzerum to the deserts of Deir-Zor, 900,000 French soliders died at Verdun alone; on the first day of the battle of the Somme, in ONE day, mind you, 50,000 British casualties fell. The Russians — the Tzarist empire — lost millions of men, literally millions, when their incompetently led armies clashed with the Germans on the Polish front. On the “Armenian” front, where Tzarist and Turkish troops fought, victory did not come easily and automatically either. I am not trying to say that the great powers behaved in an exemplary fashion, but I *am* saying that they, too, were bleeding profusely, and that only a remarkable naivete would expect help (and that in a period when there was no such thing as air power) from great states locked in a struggle *a l’outrance*, to the death.

At any rate, the historical arguments we make are not only mistaken to some considerable degree, they are also irrelevant. What does the callous behavior of other nations towards us have to do with how we, as a supposedly intelligent Diaspora, should behave *now*? Why should we not make symbolic gestures, at the very least, towards the Boat People? Why shouldn’t an Armenian institution, for once, take the lead in calling together Jewish and Cypriote refugee groups, let us say, in order to make a small donation to the Boat People and to spend money (Public Relations money) to publicize the fact that we have done so? Our own laments will gain moral and political force if we are seen as human organizations which are willing to make at least symbolic gestures towards the interests of other human beings. There is no naivete in this. The powerless must strive on every front; there is no reason why we should not try to get U.S. money for our stricken brethren in Lebanon (as we have done) while at the same time joining in appeals to help the boat people. These efforts *reinforce* each other they do not subvert each other. If Jewish organizations can loudly testify in *Le Monde* of Paris that Jews sympathize with the plight of the boat people and that no Jew can rest easy in the face of this spectacle, why can’t we? Why must we always be ten steps behind, parroting the Jewish gesture in the rare instances when we do something at all? What institution will think in our name, and think independently and daringly, combining the moral and the political? We cannot make our case all alone: from Amnesty International to the various ecumenical charities, we must participate and help others if we expect our own claims for help to be listened to. We can’t say, “we gave our blood in the past, let us have our rights now.” As a people expert in the give-and-take of business, in which “what have you done for me lately?” is the watchword, we must understand that in order to get, we must also give. Not sixty years ago, but *today*, in the arena of international life. To depend on our own resources and to use them effectively in our behalf is good, but not good enough. We must help others judiciously in order to legitimize our own demands. People like Stephen Mugar have realized this — they have given money to *odar* individuals (for example, to the campaign funds of Tipp O’Neill, and to *odar* institutions like Boston University). By doing so, they have marked our presence as a force. Of course we need not and cannot imitate the proportions in which men like Mr. Mugar have distributed their wealth, but the principle which their actions illustrate is a lesson to our institutions in the sphere of action, be it moral or political.

“It was private American charity that reached the Armenians first. As early as 1915, in response to Ambassador Henry Morgenthau’s urgent message from Constantinople that ‘the destruction of the Armenian race in Turkey is rapidly progressing,’ an influential group of missionaries, philanthropists, industrialists, and educators founded the Armenian Relief Committee. The organization promptly collected 100,000 dollars for supplies to be distributed by American officials in Constantinople and Syria. As the magnitude of the Armenian tragedy was revealed, the Committee expanded its operations uniting late in 1915 with relief groups for Syria and Persia into the Armenian and Syrian Relief. During the next two years a steady flow of money and supplies was used to succor Christian refugees in the Near East, particularly destitute Armenians who had been deported to the arid plains of the Arab provinces. At the same time American missionaries and educators in Anatolia struggled to snatch an occasional Armenian from certain death. . . . The defeat of the Central Powers enabled the American public to renew and intensify relief operations. As the channels of communication became unclogged, numerous reports from Turkey, Syria, and the Caucasus portrayed the utter wretchedness of the refugee population. In response, the Armenian and Syrian Relief, now operating as the American Committee for Relief in the Near East (ACRNE), launched a 30 million dollar campaign and in an unprecedented display of private charity succeeded in raising nearly 20 million by the end of 1919.”

An Excerpt from The Republic of Armenia, Volume I, by Richard G. Hovannisian, pages 133-34, University of California Press, Los Angeles, ©Copyright 1971, by the Regents of the University of California.

Human Rights

(Continued from page 1)

not begin with any United Nations declarations during this century, or with the U.S. Bill of Rights or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man two centuries earlier. The principles of human rights were seminal in religious thought before Christianity, and in some cases, even before Judaism. Theistic philosophies before the advent of Christianity had already developed not only the relationship of Man with God, but the relationship between man and man. The ideals of world brotherhood and human morality appeared early in the history of religion. The Judeo-Christian tradition represents the culmination of monotheism, but it also emphasized and augmented the ideals of moral human behavior. It is no coincidence that in the long history of the human struggle for freedom, justice, and morality, many of the leaders were (and are) religious or spiritual leaders.

The basis of human rights is the belief in the inherent dignity of Man as a creature of God. The American Revolution was not only a break with the mother country, England, but a radical departure from the European idea that rights were granted by (or extracted from) sovereigns. The Founding Fathers claimed that rights were God-given, as stated in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . ." The concept of human rights being derived from God, and that governments have a duty to guarantee those rights is of paramount importance in this whole question, for it means that every human being and every human institution must be alert to violations of human rights.

When a government, especially one that has legally codified human rights within its constitution, does not uphold those rights or violates them itself, it is incumbent upon individual human beings to protest those violations. It is even more incumbent upon religious institutions to protest and to act to redress the grievances, if they are to fulfill their role as agents of God. It is unfortunate that the Armenian Church in its long history has not been noteworthy as a defender of human rights, as distinguished from the rights of Armenians as a national group. Certainly the Church has acted on occasion on behalf of the rights of the Armenian people, but *human rights* are universal, not parochial. Human rights refer to the rights of the individual as a human being, not as a member of a distinct group, be it ethnic, cultural, or linguistic. A Christian Church must perforce be universal in its outlook, despite its national structure, and must be concerned with universal moral values. A Christian cannot forget the Biblical injunction: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 26:40)

The Armenian Church cannot eschew a role in the defense of human rights without diminishing its veracity as a Christian institution, nor can its members maintain a Christian outlook by ignoring violations of basic human rights wherever they occur. Even in the case of Armenians who have suffered from such violations, no Church official or organization has made an official plea or protest. A short document dated Yerevan, June, 1977, states, "Civil rights violations in Armenia have not ceased since the signing of the Final Act [Helsinki]. We understand the concept of 'civil rights' to include national, political, religious, economic, cultural and other freedoms. The free and unhampered activity of Armenian citizens in any of the above-named areas is not guaranteed. The very fact that members of the Armenian Group to Promote [Observance of the Helsinki Agreement] have been persecuted speaks most eloquently for itself." (Paragraph A.)* The document lists the names of various Armenians deprived of their rights for reasons of political convictions, religious beliefs, or only on the basis of nationality. For example, Gerasim Stepanian was committed to a psychiatric hospital for holding a religious gathering in his apartment. Robert Nazarian was the target of a scurrilous attack in the newspaper, "Sovetakan Hyastan," in which Mr. Nazarian, a Deacon of the Armenian Church, was called "The False Prophet." Would the Armenian faithful be expecting too much of their church and church leaders to keep them informed about the human rights violations of their brethren? It is ironic that practically all the news about Armenian victims of human rights violations in the Soviet Union comes to us from Andrei Sakharov, Soviet scientist and Nobel Prize winner, and a spokesman for the rights movement in the U.S.S.R.

Human rights must be the concern of all people of goodwill, individuals, groups, and churches. We cannot take for granted that the moral and spiritual well-being of people anywhere is being maintained. A truly religious devotion to one's fellow man extends beyond the four walls of one's church or one's immediate personal needs. Empathy with the suffering victims is only the beginning. To speak out and to act in defense of human rights comes from religious conviction as much as from political ideology. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound." (Luke 4:18)

*Documents of Helsinki Dissent from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C., May, 1978.

Pope John Paul's trip to Poland in June was a triumphant journey in which the religious leader emerged as a world leader and a dynamic spokesman for human rights.

His nine-day trip had such an impact that a Polish Communist official said: "Everything we have accomplished in terms of the secularization of society, everything we have done since 1945, will have to be done again."

Certainly it should not be surprising that a Christian church leader is a champion of human rights, for was not Jesus Christ a human rights activist?

Yet, worldwide the Church has been silent on so many important issues that Pope John Paul has become a voice in the wilderness. Returning to his homeland for the first time since his election, the love and respect that poured forth from the people, the huge crowds that greeted him everywhere in spite of the government's "down-play" of the trip, and the emotional reaction that came from all parts of the world, shows that the world is searching for spiritual and moral leadership.

The Pope's eloquent words need no commentary. They speak loud and clear:

"The church is not only a place where catechesis is given, it is also the living environment that must actualize it."

"Christ will never approve that man be considered, or that man consider himself, merely as a means of production, or that he be appreciated, esteemed and valued in accordance with that principle. Christ will never approve of it. This must be remembered both by the worker and the employer, by the work system as well as the system of remuneration; it must be remembered by the state, the nation, the church."

"International reconciliation depends on recognition of and respect for the rights of each nation. The chief rights are the rights to existence and self-determination—to its own culture and the many forms of developing it. We know from our own country's history what has been the cost to us of infraction, violation and denial of these inalienable rights."

"It is the church's mission to make man more confident, more courageous, conscious of his rights and duties, socially responsible, creative and useful. For this activity the church does not desire privileges, but only and exclusively what is essential for the accomplishment of its mission."

"Is it not Christ's will that this Pope, in whose heart is deeply engraved the history of his own nation from its very beginning, and also the history of brother peoples and neighboring peoples, should in a special way manifest and confirm in our age the presence of these peoples in the church and their specific contribution to the history of Christianity? He [the Pope] comes here to speak before the whole church, before Europe and the world, of those often forgotten nations and peoples. He comes here to cry 'with a loud voice.' He comes here to embrace all these peoples, together with his own nation, and to hold them close to the heart of the church."

A.Y.F. Olympics in N.Y.

The New York Hyortik chapter is the proud hosts of the 46th annual National Olympics of the Armenian Youth Federation. The games will take place Labor Day weekend, August 31st through September 3rd. The Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia Airport will be headquarters for the weekend. For more details call (212) 446-4800.

OCTOBER 28, 1979
Jubilee
Roubic Gregorian

New Julfa Armenians In the Indies

(Continued from page 1)

tive lawns not far from the Anglican Cathedral of St. Andrew. According to the plaque, St. Gregory's is the oldest church in Singapore and a national monument. On the wall outside is posted a very good capsule history of the Armenian folk and their church, as well as names and addresses of several local Armenians willing to provide further information. The property is in the heart of the business district and must be immensely valuable.

In Singapore, I was still within the boundaries of the old New Julfa-centered diocese of Iran and the Indies. The Armenians in India and Indonesia, as well as southern and central Iran, all were under the jurisdiction of this diocese. There were flourishing Armenian settlements in Batavia and Surabaya, but I did not visit Indonesia and so left the diocese after Singapore, not really expecting to find evidence of Armenian presence further east. Nevertheless, in Macao, just across the river from Hong Kong and under Portuguese administration since 1557, I came across an Armenian inscription set into a wall of the old fort, high atop a hill overlooking the harbor. I should have expected it, of course. Where have the Armenians not travelled?

Let the Armenian epitaph of Jacob Shamier (translation taken from *The History of the Armenians in India* by Mesrob J. Seth, Calcutta, 1895, with slight emendations proposed by F. Macler in *Journal Asiatique*) stand as an epitaph for all those Armenians compelled by circumstance to live in Iran and the Indies:

*"Hail! thou that redest the tablet of my tomb wherein I now do sleep.
Give me the news, the freedom of my countrymen, for whom I did much weep.
If there arose among us one good guardian to govern and to keep.
Vainly I expected to see the world a good shepherd come to look after the scattered sheep.
I, Jacob, grandson of Shamier, an Armenian of respectable family whose name I do keep,
Was born in a foreign town in Persia, New Julfa, where my parents do forever sleep.
Fortune brought me to this far-off Malacca, which doth my remains in bondage keep."*

THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN:

In the Wilderness
by Moses

In the Palace
by David

In the Field
by Amos

In Babylon
by Daniel

In Jerusalem
by James

While Traveling
by Paul

In Prison
by Paul

In Patmos
by John



You can read it
anytime
anywhere

ՈՂԿՈՅՉ ՄԸ

Ստեղծագործության հրաշքը կը ներկայացնէ սա ողկոյզը: Կ'ուտենք եւ անով կը կշտանանք բայց ուտելէ առաջ զայն դիտելը ինքնին հոգեկան վայելք մըն է որմէ զրկելու չենք մենք զմեզ: Կենդանին միայն կ'ուտէ բայց օծումած ղէ Կարողութիւնովը, որով մենք օծումած ենք, դիտելու եւ հրաշք մը տեսնելու ողկոյզի մը մէջ:

Բնութիւնը հրաշք չի գործեր: Աստուած է որ կը գործէ հրաշքը բնութեան մէջ: Այլ խօսքով, բնութիւնը տերը չէ, հապա միջոց մը՝ տիրոջ մը ձեռքին մէջ:

Նորէն կը դիտեմ սա ողկոյզը եւ լուռ կը մտածեմ: Հրաշք մըն է, ըսի, եւ ինչ հրաշք: Բացառիկ երեւոյթներու մէջ հրաշք կը փնտնենք մենք ընդհանրապէս, բայց ըսէք, երբ բնութիւնը կը դիտենք ինչ երեւոյթ կազ անոր մէջ որ բացառիկ չէ: Որովհետեւ միշտ կը տեսնենք ու շատ կը տեսնենք այդ երեւոյթները ուստի մեզի սովորական կը թուին անոնք: Սովորական - ոչ: Մենք ենք որ սխալ բացատրութիւն կը գործածենք: Ու մեր սխալ բացատրութիւնը իրողութիւնը չի փոխեր: Իրողութիւնը այն է թէ այդ երեւոյթներէն ամէն մէկը բացառիկ է հրաշքի պէս, զի հրաշք է կատարեալ իրաւամբ: Ամէն մէկ ողկոյզի հատիկ հրաշք մըն է որքան ամբողջ տիեզերքի ստեղծագործութիւնը:

Արեւ, օր, ջուր առաւել գերբնական զօրութեան մը խորհրդատու գիրը եւ անաւարդիւնք մը որուն անունն մըն կուտանք, որ սակայն անունն է մը անհունապէս անելի է որ ան ունի, համ ունի, գոյն ունի, բայց նոյնպէս ձեւէ, համէ, գոյնէ անելի է: Ու ի՞նչով: Դժուար է պատասխանել, թէն փորձեցինք: Այդ անելին մեր մտքին մէջ է: Այդ անելին թելադրութիւնն է մեր հոգոյն Աստուծոյ խորհրդոյն եւ գիտակցութեան:

Անուշ ըլլայ, կեր խաղողի բայց զգա Աստուածդ: Կերածի փառաբանութեան ալ առիթ կրնաս ընել այսպէս:

Ա. Ա. Պետիկեան

The Assumption of the Holy Mother of Christ and The Blessing of the Grapes

by Rev. Gorun Shirikian

Outside of the Evangelical testimonies concerning the Holy Mother of Christ, information gathered about her is taken from the traditions acknowledged and confirmed from the Universal Church. These traditions are summoned to enlighten the facts and miracles previously unrecorded. After the earthly life of Christ, Mary lived under the filial care of John, the Evangelist, for fifteen years as commanded by Jesus at his crucifixion (John 19:26-27). After her death, she was buried in the family crypt in the garden of Gethsemane where St. Mary's Church stands today.

Although we celebrate St. Mary's feast on several occasions throughout the year, the most revered and solemn feast is the Assumption. All churches throughout the world celebrate the Assumption on August 15 without modification; however, our church, after Catholicos Nerses Shnorhaleh, began celebrating this feast on the nearest Sunday to August 15.

Traditionally, the story of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of Christ is as follows. St. Mary dwelled in Jerusalem for fifteen years, passed away, and was buried in Gethsemane. But prior to this, miracles befell her and after her death, angelical songs were heard over her grave for three days and nights. When Bartholomew arrived in Jerusalem, he was sorry he could not attend her funeral. Wishing to pay his last respects, he and the rest of the Apostles went to the Garden and opened the crypt and did not find the body. The Apostles believed that she had not died but was in a deep sleep, since Christ had promised her that He would take her into heaven. That promise had been fulfilled. This theory has been accepted as Church dogma since the ninth century and has been called the Assumption.

The Blessing of the Grapes, which is celebrated the same day as the Assumption, does not have any connection with the feast. The ripening of the grapes in the same season of the year that the Assumption takes place is the reason for this dual celebration, and is part of an old custom of sacrificing the first fruit of the harvest to God for making them worthy of His earthly goods.

The grapes, being the Queen of Fruit and the essences of the communion wine is considered as the best harvest to bestow to God. This solemn symbolic ceremony is celebrated in the Armenian Apostolic Church following the Mass and has its own ritual.

As has been mentioned above, the Blessing of the Grapes has no connection with the Assumption. In some of the southern states of Armenia, where the grapes ripen earlier, the Blessing of the Grapes took place sometime during Vartavar. In either event, grapes are not to be consumed until this ritual has taken place.

Prayer of Catholicos Nerses the Gracious for the Blessing of the Grapes

Translated by Ani Kavafian and Vazken Ghougassian

Lord God, without beginning, uncreated, immortal and self-existing Father, Creator of all being from nothingness, You commanded the earth on the third day of creation to grow various fruit-bearing plants and trees for the good of breathing and sensible creatures, and set trees in that place of joy which you have named heaven, to make it a habitat for rational beings and You blessed them according to the Divine Word: "...and God, seeing that they were very good, blessed them."

But when men disobeyed Your commands concerning the eating of the forbidden fruits, You changed the blessing which was upon the earth into a curse, saying to Adam, "For what you have done, let the earth be cursed." And You did this according to Your just judgment; for, after the head dies, the parts of the body can no longer exist. In the same way it was impossible for your life-giving blessing to remain unchanged upon those who served the earth, after the head of all sensible creatures, man, had died because of sin.

But when You revealed Your fatherly love to mankind, by sending Your Only-Begotten Son, so that a shoot in human form would grow from the root of Jesse, and a beautiful and sweet-smelling flower come forth from the immortal Virgin Mary, He brought the fruit of life and immortality to our mortal nature. By His crucifixion You again blessed the whole universe, according to the just promise which you made to Abraham, our father in faith, that through Your Son, You would rule over all those who were under the rule of the condemnation of sin. Then how much more will rational and sensible creation enjoy the divine blessing, especially, the fruit of the grape cluster, since its blood became worthy of the greatest benefit of blessing, in being the substance for the Blood of Salvation of Your Only-Begotten Son, by which we were ransomed from servitude to sin and death; which He took in His hands in the holy upper chamber, saying, "This is My Blood," and by which all fruits of that vine received the perfect blessing.

And now, Lord, by that blessing which You favored those creatures who became good through You, during the first and second creations, bless now the first harvest of the fruits of the new year. Bless them according to the priesthood of Aaron, since by Aaron's example, You established this practice of offering the first fruits of the harvest on Your altar of sacrifice among the people of Israel, through Moses; so that by this symbolic presentation all fruits may be blessed. Therefore, place your divine and spiritual blessing in these temporal fruits which have been presented so that Your spiritual blessing may touch the souls of those who eat them, and that by eating them, they will be cleansed from their sins and forgiven, and will be made worthy to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, which you ordered the cherubim to protect with a fiery sword, and by which we will become immortal, and with the immortal ones, will praise You, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, Amen.

Blessed are You, Son and Word of the Father, the Ineffable Ray of the First Light, the Form and Image of the invisible God, coexisting with Him and Co-creator in the making of all creation. That which You have spoken has been fulfilled, that which You have ordained has been established, for whatever You think and want is accomplished.

You made the grape vine, the weakest of all woody plants, stronger than the tallest trees because You have honored it by making it an example of Your Highest One: You have called Yourself the Vine, and those who are connected to You in love, the branches; and You have called the Father the Caretaker and Vinekeeper, because He who gave birth to pious works prunes like a vinedresser, and cuts those branches that do not bear fruit, and makes them subject to the Eternal Fire.

Through the prophets You showed it to be a comforter of all sorrows and a cause of joy for wine gladdens men's hearts and his son ordered wine to be given to those who were sorrowful. You again gave it in the upper chamber, as a goblet of joy, of Your Saving Blood and wisdom of Spirit; and You established this sacrament according to the example of Melchizedek who presented bread and wine to our forefather Abraham. You revealed the same through Noah, who was sorrowful because of the flood, which was caused by the world's corruption, by giving him wine as a consolation; for, as the Bible tells us, Noah planted the first vineyard and drank the wine, and the pious one was comforted.

But even though this wine was given by You as a gift, it became the cause of drunkenness and wickedness to those who used it thoughtlessly, as with many other good things in Your Creation. And now, Lord, bless the clusters of grapes presented at the temple of Your glory, as You first blessed the small clusters found among the branches, and grant forgiveness and physical and spiritual health to those who eat of this fruit that is blessed by You, and give them the chance, with the Good Thief, of eating the fruit of immortality in the



Virgin Mary and Child by Sourenian in Holy Etchmiadzin

ՏԻՐԱՄԱՅՐ ՄԱՐԻԱՄ

Ո՛վ դու Սուրբ Մարիամ, մայր Քրիստոսի,
Մայր երազների, մայր ճող լույսի,
Ակունք բարութեան, զանձատուն լույսի.-
Ամէն առաւօր,
Առաւօր ծէգին
Հեռու երկնքի ամպէ դաշտերում,
Ամպեղէն շորեր կապած քո մէջքին
Եւ ոտաբոքիկ, լույսի պէս թեթեւ
Դու փնտրում ես քո կորած մանկիկին:

Եւ գտնում ես դու,
Ուզում ես իջնել,
Բայց երկրի վրայ իջել է արդէն
Գիշերն ահարկու:

Օրորում ես քո կորած մանկիկին.-
Երկրի եւ երկնի ահմասնագծում
Յոգնած ննջում ես՝ զանձ քո ձեռքին:
Զարթոնում աստղերի արծաթ շշուկեցի,
Նա դուրս է թռչում քո գրկի միջից,
Եւ խառնելում է ինքն էլ աստղունքին:

Զէ՛ որ, ո՛վ Մարիամ, ո՛վ Աստուածամայր,
Քո Որդուն մի օր խաչել են մարդիկ,
Իր մեծ Հաւատի,
Մեծ ճշմարտութեան,
Մեծ Սիրոյ համար:

Եւ կրկին յաջորդ առաւօր ծէգին
Դու փնտրում ես քո կորած մանկիկին,
Եւ երկարում է ճանապարհորդ այսպէս
Ու դու չես հասնում, չես հասնում դու մեզ:

ՌԱԶՄԻԿ ԴԱՌՈՅԵԱՆ

Տար Սալեր
Երեւան, 1978

Garden of Eden.

Bless, Oh Lord, the grape plants and vineyards from which these grapes are taken and presented to the holy church, and make them bountiful and fruitful; let them be like good and fertile land, protect the vineyards from all kinds of misfortunes and destruction which come from above because of our sins, from hail, from cold, from hot winds and from destructive insects, so that we may enjoy that which You have created in this world for our enjoyment and for Your glory, and grant that we may be worthy to eat and drink with You from the bounty of Your most fruitful Vine at the table of Your Father's Kingdom, according to the just promise which You made, to the honor and glory of Your coexisting Trinity, the Father, the Son and the most Holy Spirit to whom is due glory, power and honor, now and forever, Amen.