

Food Parcels Reach Armenia & Artsakh

(Continued from page 1)

From the Editor . . .

A \$100 Story

"Send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared."
—Nehemiah 8:10

On December 20, 1992, our Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, was the celebrant at Sts. Vartanantz Church in Ridgefield, New Jersey.

Following the Divine Liturgy a faithful member of the Church approached him and gave him a \$100 donation. "I made a vow during the Liturgy," she said to him, "please take this money and use it on an appropriate occasion. You will know just when."

A few days later Archbishop Ashjian went to Armenia to help in the distribution of the food and gift parcels. While there he visited the Noubarashen Center for Handicapped Children where he helped distribute gifts and sweets on behalf of SOS-Brazil Committee.

At the center, the children had decorated a small, sparse tree in anticipation of New Year and Christmas.

"I stared at that tree and for me it seemed to symbolize the poverty and destitution so prevalent in Armenia," the Archbishop said.

A few moments later, looking out the window Surpazan saw a small, skrawny lamb which the center's director told him was to be slaughtered for the children's New Year's dinner.

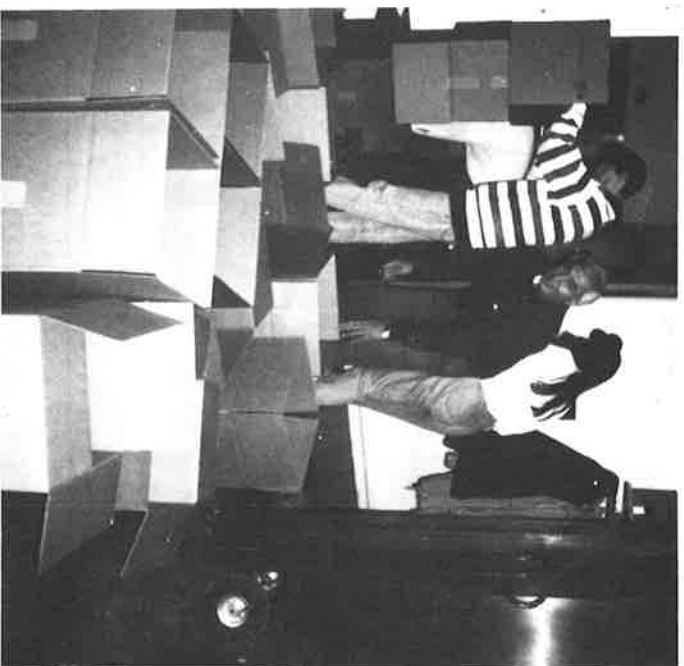
"That half-starved creature could not have possibly provided more than a morsel for each child. I asked the director the cost of a lamb in the market," Archbishop Mesrob said.

"About 5,000 rubles," the director answered, "much, much more than we can afford."

"Suddenly," Surpazan said, "I remembered the woman in New Jersey and her words, 'you will know when.'"

Quickly calculating the current exchange rate, Archbishop Ashjian counted out 40,000 rubles and gave it to the director and related the New Jersey story to him.

The \$100 from the woman in New Jersey who made a vow during church services and entrusted the Archbishop to "know when," purchased eight plump lambs for the handicapped children of the Noubarashen Center.



From Washington to Yerevan: The children's parcels are being assembled by volunteers at Sourp Khatch Armenian Church in Washington, D.C., (photo left). In the photo on the right, Father Navassart, left, Abbot of Oshagan, helps Archbishop Ashjian and Father Mirzakhanian distribute the parcels to children.



1000 Parcels for Children

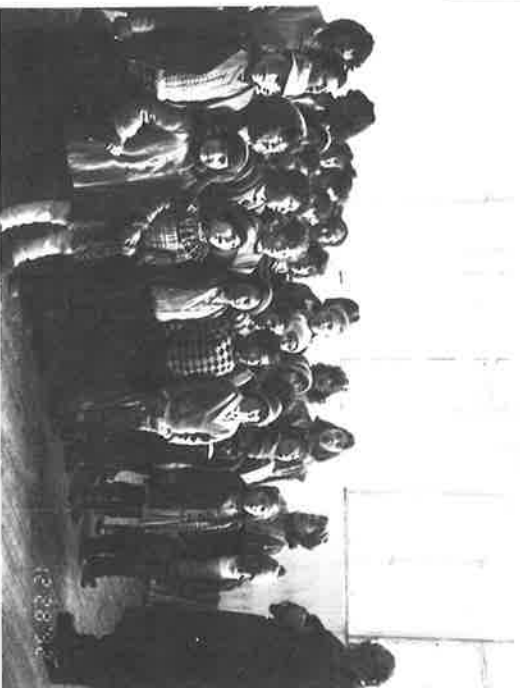
In conjunction with the same project, 1,000 parcels were specifically assembled for children. These parcels were prepared in the United States with money raised by Armenian School and Sunday School children, as well as a generous \$10,000 donation from Mr. Sarkis Acopian, who also contributed a similar amount to the "Gift of Life" campaign. Along with food staples, the children's parcels contained new heavy winter clothing, chocolates, school supplies, flash lights, and toys. Donated items for the children's parcels were received from Dr. Toros Chaghlassian, Mr. Mhrian Namouzian, Seta and Khoren Nalbandian, Yartkes Markarian, and Josephine and Harold Gulamerian. Overall costs for the entire campaign were greatly reduced by the donation of printing by Mr. and Mrs. Vazken Basmajian.

The children's parcels were assembled at Sourp Khatch Church in Washington, D.C., by Rev. Khoren Habeshian and a group of dedicated Armenians. The finished parcels were flown, without charge, to Yerevan via the United Armenia Fund's 39th flight to Armenia. It was originally planned to distribute the children's parcels at designated schools, but since all schools in Armenia remain closed until March, it was decided that the parcels would be distributed to boarding schools, orphanages, and to refugee children from Artsakh now living in Oshagan.

Visit to the Madenataran

On December 26, Archbishop Ashjian visited the Madenataran where he met with the director Prof. Sen Arvashadyan and where he had the opportunity to witness the celebration of the *Donatzar* (New Year Tree) celebration for the children of the employees of the Madenataran. During his visit His Eminence promised to underwrite the costs of two publication projects. One is a reproduction of a 7th century manuscript which Catholicos Vasken I recently donated to the Madenataran. Called "Vehamor Avedaran," it is the oldest extant Armenian manuscript and was discovered recently. The other is a reproduction of the first Armenian manuscript on paper (rather than parchment).

On Sunday, December 27, Archbishop Ashjian and his entourage attended the Divine Liturgy at Holy Etchmiadzin and were luncheon guests of His Holiness.



Archbishop Ashjian with children from Artstakh now living in village of Oshagan. The children uplifted the Archbishop's spirits with their ardent songs.

Visit with Children

On Monday, December 28, His Eminence visited the city of Oshagan where he was welcomed by Navasart Vartabed. In Oshagan, the Archbishop prayed at the grave of his namesake, St. Mesrob Mashotz, and then proceeded with his entourage to a center where children from Artsakh, specifically from the Kramort village of Askeran, had gathered. A short program followed where the children presented their songs, miraculously providing comfort and hope to those present. "It was truly one of the high points of my trip," said Archbishop



At the Nor Kharpert Center for Handicapped Children, Archbishop Ashjian presented crosses to the children. This youngster joyfully wears hers.

On Tuesday morning, December 29, Archbishop Ashjian and his entourage along with Mrs. Levon Ter-Petrosyan, and Minister Ashot Yessayan visited the Nor Kharpert Center for Handicapped children, where on the occasion of the New Year, and in honor of their guests, the children danced and sang as they awaited Father Winter. Archbishop Ashjian was particularly gratified to see the improvement in the condition of this institution since his last visit in May. At that time, at the encouragement of the First Lady, Archbishop Ashjian decided to "adopt" this Center and raise money to improve and expand its mission. "It was gratifying to see the difference money made for the comfort of these children and I was particularly touched to see the love these children displayed toward Mrs. Ter-Petrosyan," His Eminence noted.

On the evening of the 29th, the entourage from the United States, met and dined with the Yerevan committee members who directed the food parcel program, principally, Mr. Yervant Melkonian, Mr. Roupen Kosmoyan, Mr. Dikran Hagogian, as well as members of the clergy and others who helped in various ways. Archbishop Ashjian expressed his deep thanks to His Holiness Vazken I for his leadership, as well as all those who in a very short time were able to execute this program in an efficient and effective manner, maximizing the purchasing power of the money raised by the community in the United States.

Before leaving Armenia, His Eminence and entourage bid farewell to Catholicos Vasken in his villa in Yerevan wishing him a long and healthy life so that he can continue his dedicated service to the Armenian church and nation.

Archbishop Ashjian returned to New York on December 30 and pledged to continue the humanitarian efforts for Armenia which he said, "Is the least we can do for our brave compatriots in Armenia and Artsakh. It just takes a little bit of sacrifice on our parts to continue this aid until such time that our country can overcome the current difficulties and become a self-sufficient and vibrant nation in the world community. If not now, when?" he asked. "And if not us, who?"

Efforts to Continue

Since his return, His Eminence has stated several times that the Prelacy will continue its efforts to ease Armenia's suffering. "Let us not think that what we did during this holiday season is enough," he said.

For the next six months, 1,200 elderly people in Yerevan will receive 1,000 rubles a month to supplement their meager

(Continued on page 4)

OUTREACH

A monthly publication of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America
138 E. 39th Street
New York, New York 10016
Tel: (212) 689-7810 Fax: (212) 689-7168

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian

Prelate

Mardirous Minas-Haftvani

Managing Editor

Iris Papazian

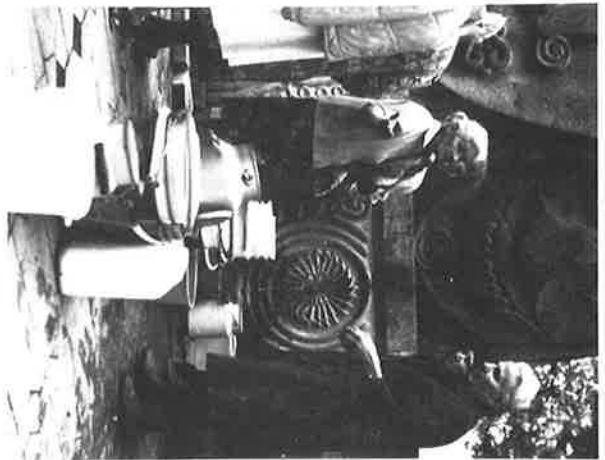
Editor

OUTREACH (USPS 426-480) is published monthly, with the exception of a combined June-July-August issue by the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, 138 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016, (212) 689-7810. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome; please include a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America. Send all correspondence to the above address to the attention of the Editor. Printed in the United States of America. Second class postage paid at New York, NY 10016. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to OUTREACH, 138 E. 39th Street New York, New York, 10016. ISSN: 10643087

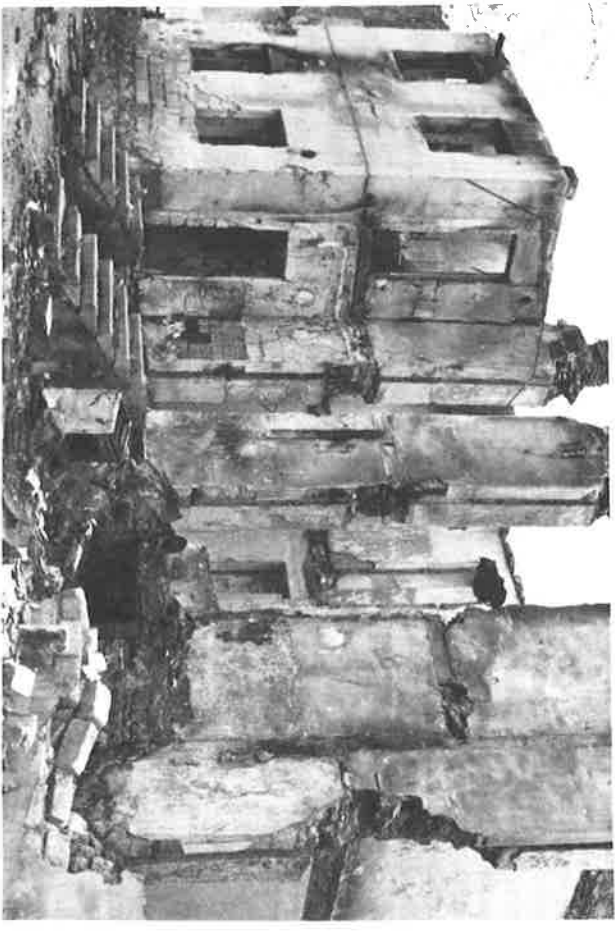
Life in Artsakh. . . A Photo is Worth A Thousand Words. . . Here's 13,000 words. . .



Armenian woman in Mardouni region bearing bread and gun.



Women in Stepanakert fill buckets of water from fountain. Water, food, fuel are all in short supply.



Devastated buildings in Stepanakert following GRAD bombings.



Young and old in Mardouni (left) and Stepanakert (right) gather firewood for warmth and cooking. The trees are slowly being depleted.

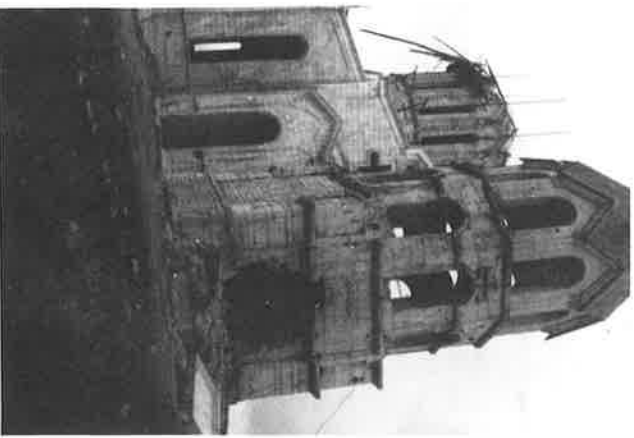


Stepanakert (right) gather firewood for warmth and



A young resident of Stepanakert cooking outdoors over a wood fire. Handwritten on the wall of the building is "Hayastan."

Photos by Anoush Ter Taulian



Armenian Church in Shushi damaged by Azeri GRAD missile.



Hospital personnel in Stepanakert sterilizing sheets outdoors.



Mourners at the funeral of the hero Ashbad killed in Askernan battle, August 1992.



Armenian soldier mutilated at Askernan.



Soldiers on guard.



A young boy in Stepanakert in front of sandbags.



Anahid Barsagghian, 92, lived in Shushi in 1920 when Azeris burned Armenian homes. She holds photo of herself as a young girl.

Living on the Edge

(Continued from page 1)

government, but now I compare politics with prostitution. Every Armenian question is connected with land and land can't be defended without sacrifice. Now we are spilling our blood to live on our land. It has become a part of our usual life to hear bombing, fighting and shooting. We are short of ammunition and do not have enough rockets, tanks or anti-tank missiles. One whole day a week I take my turn standing on guard with a gun to help protect our land. I have no where to go. I must stay here and die here.

"Because of the Azeri's military action many people's nerves have become weak. The Azerbaijani government policies are also condemning us to a slow death by means of the economic blockade. What happens when we can't get food, water or fuel? Already we have cut down so many of our precious trees. How are we going to cook or keep warm in the winter without fuel?"

"We have been enduring this blockade for over four years. It was awful to see a child coming to school hungry. There were even cases of children fainting during their lessons. They would ask each other, 'Have you had a cup of tea today?' or 'Are you afraid when the guns are shooting?' An experienced teacher can see all the children have inner terror. I have a 2-year-old daughter and sons who are 5 and 6 years old. I embrace them and press them to my bosom, because it is so awful for them. Now I only live for my children.

"It is hard to see an end to our struggle, because for seventy years the Soviet system taught the Azeris that this was their land. Once before we tried to convince an Azeri teacher that the history he learned was distorted, that really Karabagh is ancient Armenian land with a multitude of ancient Armenian churches and monuments. He said, 'Yes, the facts are on your side, but I have been taught by and believe in our textbooks.' He was illiterate?"

"Now all we think about is how to survive against Azeri attack. There are no cultural activities in Mardouni. There used to be an orchestra here called Yeraz (Dream), but now all of its members are soldiers. No shops are open. The school is closed because it was shelled. I don't even know where all the students are.

"The future of the Armenians here is totally unpredictable. An Azeri plane could fly over Mardouni and bomb it. You must be aware at every minute that an Azeri rocket might meet you. We are even afraid of information when people tell us how the Azeris have more weapons and more help."

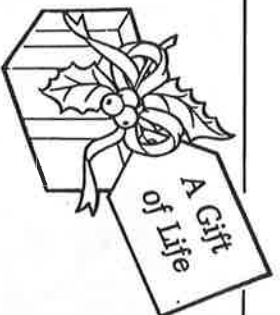


Sergei Arzoumanian with two of his three young children in front of bomb shelter he is building.

As I listened to Mr. Arzoumanian, I wondered what chance he and his family had to survive in Mardouni. Some of the missiles that were killing his neighbors and destroying their homes were coming from over the border in Azerbaijan.

The only way for the Armenians here to defend themselves is to capture the deadly GRAD machines. In order to do that they would have to go into Azerbaijan and will then be called "aggressors" who are invading Azerbaijan.

What choices do the Armenians in Mardouni and the rest of devastated Karabagh have? No world power is helping the Armenians in Karabagh defend themselves. The citizens of Mardouni do not want to be forced to leave their homes because of Azeri terrorism, and fighting for freedom has become the main purpose of their lives. ■

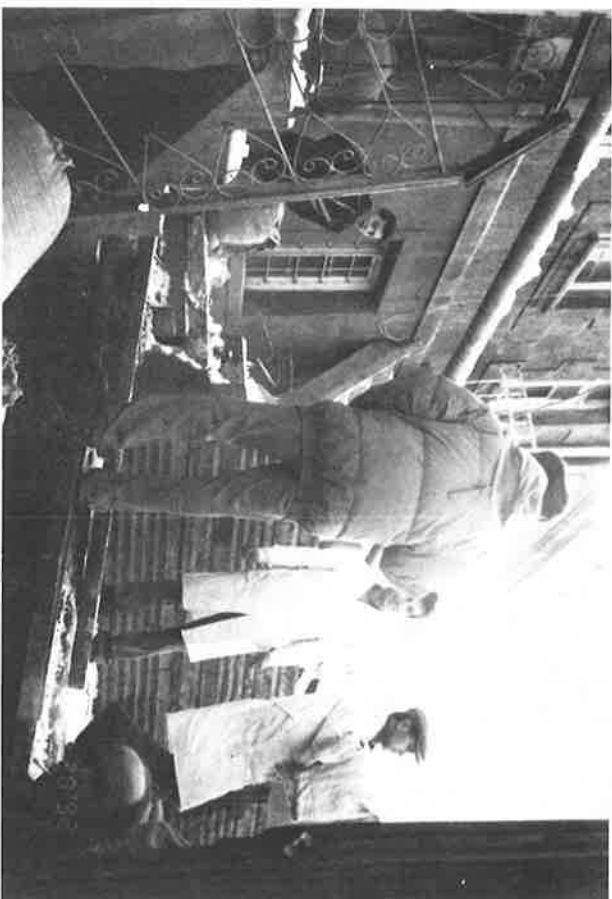


| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Total Income (as of January 4, 1993) | \$278,152.00 |
| Expenditures (as of January 4, 1993) | |
| 13,190 Food Parcels | \$197,850.00 |
| 998 Christmas Parcels for Children | 25,948.00 |
| Cash Distribution to Needy through Holy Etchmiadzin | 10,000.00 |
| Cash Distribution to Needy Families in Artsakh | 5,000.00 |
| Generator for Home for the Aged in Keghamasar | 500.00 |
| Four stoves for the Children's Home in Oshagan | 400.00 |
| Transportation | 6,555.00 |
| Labor Costs and Honorariums Spent in Armenia | 2,457.00 |
| Office Expenses in Armenia | 500.00 |
| Printing, Mailing, and Communications | 17,317.69 |
| TOTAL | 266,527.69 |
| BALANCE AVAILABLE † | \$ 11,624.31 |
| Pledges and Commitments for Next Six Months: | |
| Monthly (for 6 months) cash payments to 1,200 needy and elderly people in Yerevan | \$ 17,000.00 |
| Monthly (for 6 months) payments to 2,000 needy families in Artsakh | 22,000.00 |
| Shipment of Baby Formula through U.A.F. | 10,000.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 49,666.67 |
| Funds Needed to Fulfill Pledges and Commitments | \$ 38,042.36 |



Photo above:
A view of some of the food staples in the food parcels. Each parcel contained: 9 lbs. macaroni; 2 lbs. rice; 2 lbs. sugar; 2 lbs. rye; 2 lbs. vermicelli; 2 lbs. powdered milk; 5 lbs. flour; 1 lb. butter; 1 box of pastries; 3/4 lb honey; 1/2 lb. coffee; 1/2 lb. tea; 10 eggs. Each parcel also included 1,000 rubles for the purchase of 6 lbs. of meat. The children's parcels contained food items and chocolates, school supplies, toys, and new heavy sweat suits.

Photo right:
Workers unload the bulk food purchased in Russia into a warehouse in Yerevan where the individual family-size parcels were assembled.



Food Parcels

(Continued from page 2)

retirement income. Also, through the offices of the "Varakan" organization and its president, Mr. Lawrence Aroushanian, 1,000 rubles a month will be given to 2,000 needy individuals in Artsakh. Aside from this, while in Armenia, Archbishop Ashjian presented \$10,000 to His Holiness to aid needy families at his discretion and an additional \$10,000 was pledged to the United Armenia Fund for the purchase of 200 tons of powdered milk.

His Eminence expressed heartfelt words of thanks to all those who contributed money, goods, and services. He extended special thanks to all of the pastors, boards of trustees, and parishioners of the churches within the Prelacy jurisdiction, as well as members of the Prelacy staff who worked tirelessly to bring this campaign to a successful conclusion.

Archbishop Ashjian commented on the generosity of the people of Armenia. "Even at a time when their need is so great, they were thinking of their neighbors. Many families receiving the food parcels decided to share with another family, thus increasing even further the number of families receiving help. Through this effort we were able to bring temporary help to more than 20,000 families, and although that may sound like alot, in the overall picture, it is just a small amount."

While in Armenia the Archbishop made arrangements with the Prelate of Shirag, Archbishop Der Krikoris, for the "adoption" of 500 orphans in the earthquake zone. Information about this project as well as others will be announced in the near future.

The campaign will continue, especially through the winter months. Those wishing to contribute may do so by sending their tax-deductible donations to the Armenian Prelacy, 138 E. 39th Street, New York, New York 10016.

Parententan Celebration (Mardi Gras) PALOU ETHNIC DAY FESTIVITIES February 20, 1993

Featuring a Traditional Wedding and Paloutzee Style Dinner, Music and Dancing

Sponsored by Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Providence, Rhode Island

His Eminence Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian

Guests of Honor

Mr. and Mrs. Kazar and Nevart Aramian

Festivities will take place at:

GREEK ANNUNCIATION CHURCH HALL

175 Oaklawn Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island

Doors Open at 5:00 p.m. Wedding at 6:00 p.m.

\$25 per person by reservation only (Table of 10 available)

Children under 12: \$15.

For information and reservations: (401) 831-6399