

BİRLİK

Issue No. 2
Winter 2010



**UYGHURS OF
EAST TURKESTAN
FACE AN
EXISTENTIAL THREAT**

**INTERVIEW WITH
DR. LOTFI ZADEH**

Turkic Student Association at Berkeley (TSAB)

Birlik would like to thank the following organizations for their support

Turkic Student Association



University of California Berkeley - 2006

Turkic Student Association at Berkeley (TSAB)
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Azerbaijani American Council (AAC)
a non-profit organization 501(c)(3) dedicated to promoting Azerbaijani culture, history, etc. in California and U.S.-wide
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Do you have any comments, questions, or suggestions? Email us at tsab.group@gmail.com. We would love to hear anything you have to say!

For more information about TSAB, visit tsab.berkeley.edu

Birlik is very new. We are still looking for writers and graphic design artists. If you are interested, email us at tsab.group@gmail.com and let us know your ideas. Also, if you have a business or would like to donate money to Birlik, we would appreciate all the help we can get.

**Some pictures in the magazine feature the photo collection in Flickr. The back cover features pictures from various TSAB events.*

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Birlik stands for unity and through true UNITY we were able to publish the second issue of our magazine. First and foremost, I would like to thank all of our writers for contributing to this issue of Birlik. I would also like to thank everyone who has helped us in each and every step, without all your help this project would not have been where it is today. We hope that you would enjoy reading and learning about the Turkic world and maybe even travel to the region in the future.

The Turkic Student Association at Berkeley, dearly known as TSAB, began in the Spring of 2007. It was just a dream to bring together those with a passion for Turkic peoples, languages, and cultures. This dream came true with the help of some of my closest friends. We finally gained club status on a glorious day in March. This was truly a day to remember. From then on, we aimed to continue educating our community, and this is how Birlik came about.

Our goal was to create a magazine through which we could reach more people on campus and bring those who are interested in writing and sharing their Turkic experiences together. Through Birlik, we hope to help our community and campus to become better aware of the various Turkic cultures across the world. We aim to celebrate the different Turkic cultures and discuss current events. To do so, we have articles written from different aspects and each have their own unique topics. Our group is not political and is not affiliated with any political or other groups on campus. The main purpose of our group is to have a fun and safe environment, to make friends and introduce the different nationalities which have Turkic backgrounds.

It has been my pleasure to have been part of this process from the very beginning and I have seen TSAB and Birlik grow and become much more active on campus. I would like to give special thanks to Harbir Kaur for her never never never ending help and support and always believing in me, and to Saied Heydarinezhjad for all his time and help with the graphic design of this magazine. Birlik is our new project and hopefully with unity and the never-ending efforts of our wonderful members, we can have Birlik grow and flourish throughout the coming years. This very much reflects our club's universal goal of seeing peace and unity across the globe.

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THIS POEM IS DEDICATED TO AN AMAZING GRANDMOTHER, WHO TAUGHT ME MY VERY FIRST AZERI POEM: HEYDAR BABAYA SALAM

Born and raised in East Azerbaijan, she devoted her life educating the youth. She was a leader, a woman who sought change not only for women but for every citizen in Iran. She taught me my very first Azeri poem and never stopped singing it until her very last days.

My dear grandmother, this upcoming Norouz will be the very first without you, I will miss how you would read one of Shahriyar's poems during our Norouz celebration. We will miss you at Charshanba Souri, jumping over the fire. This spring will be our very first without you but you will continue to live in our hearts and with every line of Shahriyar's poetry. I am so proud to come from a family with such values and beliefs and I hope one day I would be able to be a little like you.

Rest in peace my beautiful, amazing, kind, and forever happy grandmother.



حیدربابایا سلام

Heydər Baba'ya Səlām

Hail to Haydar Baba

حیدربابا، ایلدیریملار شاخاندا (۱)
سئلر، سولار، شاققیدیبوب آخاندا
قیزلار اوْنا صف باغلیبوب باخاندا
سلام اولسون شوْکتوْزه، انلوْزه
منیم دا بیر ادیم گلکسین دیلوْزه

1 Heydər Baba, ildırımlar şaxanda,
Sellər, sular şakqıldıyup axanda,
Qızlar ona səf bağılyup baxanda,
Səlām olsun şovkətüzə elüzə,
Mənim də bir adım gəlsün dilüzə.

1 Haydar Baba when it thunders,
Floods rush down
Girls stand back and watch,
I hail your glory and your people,
May you remember our names too.

حیدربابا، کھلیک لروْن اوچاندا (۲)
کوْل دیبینْدن دوْشان قالخوب، قاچاندا
باخچالارون چیچکلنوْب، آچاندا
بیزدن ده بیر موْکوْن اوْلسا یاد انله
اچیلیمان اوْرکلری شاد انله

2 Heydər Baba, kəhlik'lərün uçanda,
Kol dibinnən dovşan galxup qaçanda,
Baxçaların çiçək'lənüb açanda,
Bizdən də bir mümkün olsa yad elə,
Açılmıyan ürək'ləri şad elə.

2 When your partridges take flight,
When the rabbits hop out of the bushes,
When your gardens have burst into blossoms,
May you remember our name too,
And make our depressed hearts happy.

بیرام یئلی چارداخلاری بیخاندا (۳)
نوْروز گوْلی، قارچیجکی، چیخاندا
آغ بولوتلار کونیکلرین سیخاندا
بیزدن ده بیر یاد انلییه ن ساغ اوْلسون
دردلریمیز قوْی دیکلسین، داغ اوْلسون

3 Bayram yeli çardaxları yıxanda,
Novruz güli, qar çiçəği çıxanda,
Ağ bulutlar köynək'lərin sıxanda,
Bizdən də bir yad eliyən sağ olsun,
Dərdlərimiz goy dikkəlsün dağ olsun.

3 When Nowruz gales uproot garden shelters!
And Nowruz flowers and snow drops blossom!
When the clouds wring out their clothes!
Greetings to those who remember us,
Let our sighs turn into mountains.

اچیدربابا، گوْن دالووی داغلا سین (۴)
اوْزوْن گوْلسون، بولاخلارون اغلا سین
اوشاخلارون بیر دسته گوْل باغلا سین
یئل گلنده، وئر کتیر سین بو یانا
بلکه منیم یاتمیش بختیم اوْ یانا

4 Heydər Baba, gün daluvı dağlasın,
Üzün gülsün, bulaxların ağlasın,
Uşaxların bir dəstə gül bağlasın,
Yel gələndə ver gətirsin bu yana,
Bəlkə mənim yatmış bəxtim oyana.

4 Haydar Baba may the sun warm your back,
Make your smiles and your springs shed tears,
Your children collect a bunch of flowers,
Send it with the coming wind towards us,
Perhaps my sleeping fortune would awaken!

Shahriyar's most famous Azeri work: *Heydar Babaya Salam*, was published in 1954. It won the immense affection of the Turkic world. At every Azeri family you can find his collection of poems. His poems continue to live generation after generation. Heydar Babaya Salam is about Shahriyar's childhood and his memories of his village Khoshginab near Tabriz. Heydar Baba is the name of a mountain overlooking the village.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. LOTFI A. ZADEH

BY TSAB

"Dr. Lotfi A. Zadeh was born in 1921 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Born of an Azerbaijani father on assignment as a journalist from Ardabil, Iran, and a Russian mother who was a physician, Zadeh enjoyed a privileged life those early years of his life in Baku. But at the age of ten, when Stalin introduced collectivization of farms throughout the Soviet Union, widespread famine followed, and the Zadeh family moved back to his father's homeland. There he continued his education in English in a private American high school, Alborz, in Tehran. After high school, he sat for the national university exams and placed second in the entire country. In 1942, he was graduated from the University of Tehran in electrical engineering.

During World War II, he moved to the US and took a Master's degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1946 and a Ph.D. from Columbia (New York) in 1949, where he began teaching systems theory. Since 1959, Zadeh has taught at Berkeley, first in the Electrical Engineering (EE) Department where he became Chair in 1963, and later in the Computer Science Division (EECS)."



As an Azeri growing up both in Iran and in the United States, I knew of all the famous Azeris around the world. I remember when I first started going to school, my mother bought me and my sister a children's version of Dr. Zadeh's book about the Fuzzy Theory. I remember sitting down at the table during our family dinners asking her to tell us about Dr. Zadeh and how he became one of the world's renowned scientists. She would tell us how he was born in Baku but then just like us he went to school in Tehran. He later on came to the United States for his Masters and PhD, and now he teaches at UC Berkeley. At that time I didn't know that I was going to end up attending the same institution with Dr. Zadeh.



Throughout my education at UC Berkeley, I have been proud of this opportunity and so proud that I had met Dr. Zadeh at various events on campus. But when Dr. Zadeh replied to my email regarding his interview with Birlık, I was shocked that I was going to personally meet him and talk to him. As Harbir, my friend, and I walked towards Soda Hall, where his office is located, we were both nervous and excited.

We walked into his office on the seventh floor and his office, of course as you can imagine, was filled with papers and books about Fuzzy Logic. Dr. Zadeh is a gentleman with the utmost kindness. He is very humble and down to earth about his accomplishments. I could not stop myself from saying how proud we were to have him as part of us and what a pleasure it was for us to meet him.

I first wanted to hear about Fuzzy Logic from the brain behind this revolutionary theory himself.

1) Dr. Zadeh, can you tell us about the fuzzy theory?

“My First paper appeared in 1965 and prior to the publication of my first paper I was working in the field of “systems analysis.” Gradually I came to the realization that methods and techniques that were developed were not suitable because we were dealing with human living systems. With mechanical systems it would have been fine. When it comes to living systems it's a different world. ‘Why is it different?’ you might ask. What do you need to deal with human sys-

tems? The difference is that classes have sharp boundaries in mathematics, but in the real world everything is un-sharp. For example when you speak of warm, it is not sharp, cold is not sharp; almost everything is not sharp. However in math everything is sharp. I thought that we needed a bridge and the bridge would be a concept of a class in which the boundaries are not sharp and that is the fuzzy system. Then you would associate with it every object the degree to which that belongs to this theory that is called the “greater membership.” For example, the greater membership of young people. For everything you have a greater membership.”

2) How did the Japanese use the Fuzzy theory?

“The word “fuzzy” in English does not have a positive meaning, it is usually used in negative sense. I knew that but I could not think of anything else that would describe this better. In the English speaking world, when they hear this word they immediately become suspicious because this word is not used as much. Right at the beginning there were some prejudice. You would find that many people know nothing about fuzzy logic and if you asked them they would say it is no good. They don't know what it is. In Japan, however the reaction was different. I received a letter from Japan in 1966, one year after my publication, and they said they were interested.”

3) What are you currently working on regarding the Fuzzy Logic? What do you see for the future of

Fuzzy Logic?

“There are now 64,000 papers with fuzzy in title, 4500 patents in Japan and in the United States, 1700. It is used in this camera you are using, in biomedical technologies, etc. It grows but there are still some people who are skeptical about this idea. I am not trying to change people’s minds. I am writing papers not because I want to change their minds; some want to believe it and some don’t. It’s their choice.”

4) What role did your family play in your success?

“My parents were pleased with my success. But I am not a kind of a person who thinks very highly of himself. People say good things or bad things, it doesn’t bother me. I am not proud of myself. I cannot say that.”

5) Since you have lived in so many countries (being born in Baku, later growing up in Iran and moving to the United States), how does that affect who you are today?

“I was born in Baku. My accent is a Russian accent when I speak English. When I speak Farsi I have no accent, when I speak Russian I have no accent. But it has become a little bit difficult for me to use Farsi, because I don’t use it and you tend to forget. If you tell me something in Farsi, no problem but if you ask me what is this word in Farsi then I might have difficulty.”

He then went on to say: “I speak Azeri a little bit as well. I was in Baku in November 2008. I returned to Iran a couple of times, the last one was in 1976. After being there for 3-4 days my Farsi comes back. It is stored somewhere but it’s not readily accessible. I have never been to Tabriz; in fact, I have never been to the Iranian Azerbaijan.

I have been to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku. Since coming to the United States, I have visited Iran twice. Since living in Baku, I visited it twice in 1965 and 2008. Baku is a beautiful city and I was received really well. They took me to the school where I was a student, all the children were there. I met with the president and the ministers. It was a warm welcome; they want to change the name of the street where I lived to Lotfi Zadeh Street. I had a heart attack in December 2008. In 2008 alone I covered 250,000 miles

in United Airlines traveling. This year, very little because of my health.”

5) How influential was your Azeri-Turkic background in shaping who you are?

“It had an important influence. The first three grades I went to school in Baku. It was a Russian-speaking school but that still played an important role because children are influenced more by their environment than adults. The fact that at that time what was put on the pedestal was science and money was not important; science dedication, sacrificing yourself for the good of the society had an important role.

Once we moved to Iran there were two things that played important roles: 1) I went to Alborz which was an American school at that time, and this school had a positive influence on me 2) In Iran, money was not as important. Here in the United States, money has become too important. In my Commencement Address of 1997 I talk about the situation. The culture has become money-oriented. There was a different culture there in Iran, values were different. Culture here in the United States has also changed.”

6) You are a role model to all the Azeri and Turkic youth. What is your advice to the students in universities like University of Tabriz or Baku State University?

“It is difficult for me to talk about it of course. People send me emails saying that we are impressed by you. I do not consider myself as a role model. That is a kind of thing that other people have to consider.

It is a difficult situation for the youth because they get a degree but there is no industry, here you get a degree you work for Silicon Valley. I got my degree and moved here. In Iran I had a very good life. So it is not because life there was not good [that I left Iran], it is because I wanted something more than just play cards. It is not just Azerbaijan or Iran, Turkey is the same thing, Greece is the same thing as well. You get a PhD, and then what are you going to do with that? It is a difficult situation.”

7) What do you think about the universities there?

“Universities in Azerbaijan during the Soviet time did a lot and now they have inherited it from the So-

viet times. I have collaboration with Professor Rafiq Aliev who is doing very good work in Azerbaijan. He, too, was brought up during the Soviet time. Today it's a difficult situation. Minister Ali Abbasov of Communications is trying to do something. There is some support."

8) You haven't been back to Iran in more than 30 years, do you think you would ever go back to visit?

"Because of my health, not at this point. But I always have been fond of the Iranian people and Iran. But at this point I don't plan on traveling abroad, maybe in the future."

After our conversation with Dr. Lotfi Zadeh, Harbir and I were filled with joy and still could not believe that we had gotten this amazing opportunity to interview and talk to one of the most well-respected scien-

tists in the world. Dr. Zadeh is very modest and humble about who he is but I must say he is my role model. It was because of him that Berkeley was my dream school from the age of 6 growing up in Tehran. I had already chosen my school and it didn't matter that I was in Tabriz or Tehran; I knew that one day I would attend UC Berkeley. I must thank Dr. Zadeh for his time and for agreeing to have this interview. But most importantly I thank him for planting the seed of higher education at a world-distinguished university in my head . And I hope to see him come to Iran and to the Iranian Azerbaijan one day as well, so he can also witness the love and appreciation people have for him. ☐

***Watch the interview on the BIRLIK YouTube channel at:**

<http://www.youtube.com/user/birliktsab>

Camera: Harbir Kaur



INTERVIEW WITH CONSUL GENERAL ELIN SULEYMANOV

BY TSAB

On November 14, 2005, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev appointed Elin Suleymanov as Azerbaijan's first Consul General to Los Angeles, California with personal rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Prior to that he served as Senior Counselor at the Foreign Relations Department, Office of the President in Baku, Azerbaijan and as Press Officer of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Washington, DC. Before joining diplomatic service, Mr. Suleymanov worked with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Azerbaijan and with the Open Media Research Institute in Prague, Czech Republic.

A graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Medford, Massachusetts, Mr. Suleymanov also holds graduate degrees from the Political Geography department of the Moscow State University, Russia, and from the University of Toledo, Ohio. Mr. Suleymanov speaks Azerbaijani, English, Russian and Czech languages.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Suleymanov in bringing together various events regarding Azerbaijan in UC Berkeley. At Berkeley Mr. Suleymanov has been one of the panelists addressing the Khojaly massacre in the past 2 years at our annual Khojaly Remembrance conference. I was delighted to have this opportunity to interview the Consul General and learn more about Azerbaijan.

1) How has the opening of the Azerbaijani consulate in LA helped the overall Azeri community in the US?

“Since the establishment of the Consulate General in 2006, we have been working to reach out to the Azerbaijani and the wider Turkic community in the Western States. The very fact of Azerbaijan's official presence on the West Coast reflects the Government's attention to strengthening relations with the United States on all levels and, certainly, with the Azerbaijani-American community. We have been co-sponsoring various events with community organizations, helping to organize cultural presentations and discussion panels to promote Azerbaijan. I believe all of this helps our friends among the Azerbaijani community.”

2) You have not only been a diplomat, but also a great community leader for the Azeri and the Turkic community. What are you doing to bring the Azeri-Americans together and to further enhance the Turkic connection among the various Turkic communities?



“Thank you for your kind words. I am not sure they are well-deserved, actually. In any case, one reason for my attachment to the wider Turkic community is that I was a graduate student in the United States before being appointed Consul General. Therefore, I have been a member of the community myself in my capacity as an Azerbaijani-American student and



through years enjoyed support and help from its members.

The Republic of Azerbaijan perceives itself as a part of a greater region and the wider Turkic world. A key juncture between the Turkic regions of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Anatolia, Azerbaijan has always promoted Turkic identity. For instance, the most recent Turkic summit took place in Azerbaijan's historic region of Nakhchivan. The heads of states have agreed to establish the Turkic Cultural Foundation, the Turksoy.

Promoting Turkic identity is not simply a policy but also a reflection of a sincere perception among the Azerbaijani people. This is why, as Azerbaijan's representatives abroad, we constantly encourage the Azerbaijani-Americans to work closely with other Turkic people, to organize joint events and to emphasize issues and concerns common to all of us. More needs to be done in this direction and I'd like to thank the Birlik magazine for doing its part."

3) What are your recommendations to the Azeri community and the Azeri youth living in the US?

"Our greatest hope is to see representatives of the Azerbaijani community, especially its youth, as successful and prosperous members of the societies they live in. So, my advice would be to engage more actively in social, economic and political processes within your societies. Be good citizens in the

countries where you live. Earn respect of your fellow citizens and promote the good name of the Azerbaijani-American community by your personal example. Of course, we are also hopeful that the Azerbaijani-Americans will not forget their culture and identity. Thankfully, in a society as diverse and as inclusive as the United States, maintaining one's identity is encouraged and should not be too difficult."

4) Due to the current news regarding the Turkish, Armenian protocol, how do you think this will effect Azerbaijan? and what is Azerbaijan doing to turn this situation to their own favor?

"Azerbaijan's views have been elaborated very clearly by President Ilham Aliyev, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and a number of other officials. Opening of the Turkish –Armenian border at this time is both premature and may undermine the fragile stability that exists in the South Caucasus. This is not because Azerbaijan is opposed to the Armenia-Turkey dialogue per se. Quite to the contrary, we would like to see more conversations in our region and we want to see all borders open, including the Azerbaijani-Armenian and the Turkish-Armenian ones. However, this needs to happen as a result of a peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. No lasting peace and sustainable progress can exist in the South Caucasus if about 20% of

Azerbaijan's internationally-occupied territories remain occupied and a million people live in exile. For Armenia itself, the real integration with the region can happen only through joining regional infrastructure projects, which originate in Azerbaijan and other Caspian nations. Yet, what we see today is a result of a tactical, short-term approach focused on symbolism rather than on real achievements. Unfortunately, the Armenian authorities see this not as a chance to address the region's real challenges but as an excuse to backpedal on negotiations with Azerbaijan. Therefore, Azerbaijan will continue to insist that the absolute priority for international diplomatic efforts should be the soonest resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the greatest threat to regional peace and security. There is, of course, a positive side to all this – namely – the renewed international attention to the urgency of resolving the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.”

5) We are in the era of Globalization and international business, in what ways is Azerbaijan participating in this economic phenomenon? What is Azerbaijan doing to be more self-sufficient?

“Azerbaijan was the world's fastest growing economy in 2006-2007; even now, while the global economy is undergoing a crisis, Azerbaijan grew significantly. This reflects a number of factors, most notably the government's cautious and focused economic policy.”

6) Tourism in today's world has become one of the most important sources of income for a state. Due to Azerbaijan's geographical and cultural location, it has many tourist attractions. What is Azerbaijan doing to further attract tourism?

“You are absolutely right: Azerbaijan has much to offer visitors from its unique nature, which includes 9 different climate types, to its diverse culture to the irresistible charm of Baku. Azerbaijan has enacted a tourism development program and has invested in expanding the tourist infrastructure. This is already paying off as more and more people visit the country every year. The best way to promote tourism is to do it on a regional basis. For instance, neighboring Georgia and the nations of Central Asia are very interesting tourist destinations as well. Once again, a lasting peace and stability in our region would benefit everyone, something, we hope, our Armenian neighbors will soon realize.”

7) Azerbaijan's main revenue is from oil and oil is a limited natural resource. How is Azerbaijan preparing itself for the future-without-oil?

“This follows on an earlier question. Indeed, the main engine of Azerbaijan's economy is energy. The Government, however, understands that hydrocarbons are finite and has advanced a number of initiatives to diversify the nation's economy. These include both diversifying sectors of economy and developing regions outside the Absheron peninsula. Importantly, Azerbaijan's oil revenues are being used to boost the growth of non-energy sectors. Already, the fastest growth is outside the energy sector of the economy. One example is a program to promote new technologies in Azerbaijan, an effort pursued in cooperation with partners in California.

Another illustration is the successful work of Azerbaijan's State Oil Fund, an exemplary institution, which was the first in Eastern Europe to receive the coveted UN Prize for Transparency in Public Service and helped Azerbaijan to become compliant with the requirements of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.”

8) Also from an environmental perspective, we are living in a leading green-energy state - California. We know recycling is not only good for a state's environment, but also saves a lot of money. What steps has Azerbaijan taken to enhance recycling and promotion of green-energy?

“Azerbaijan's and the entire region's environment had been damaged by the years of neglect under the Soviet rule. Since the first days of independence, Azerbaijan is working to overcome that legacy. Frankly, this is not easy because the nation also has to develop rapidly and to improve the living standards of its population. Increasingly, Azerbaijan's relative prosperity has allowed for a greater focus on addressing the challenge of environment. Today, Azerbaijan has established an alternative energy agency and has actively conducted reclamation and reforestation projects. Baku is also engaged in an intensive dialogue with other littoral states on protecting the fragile Caspian environment.” ◼

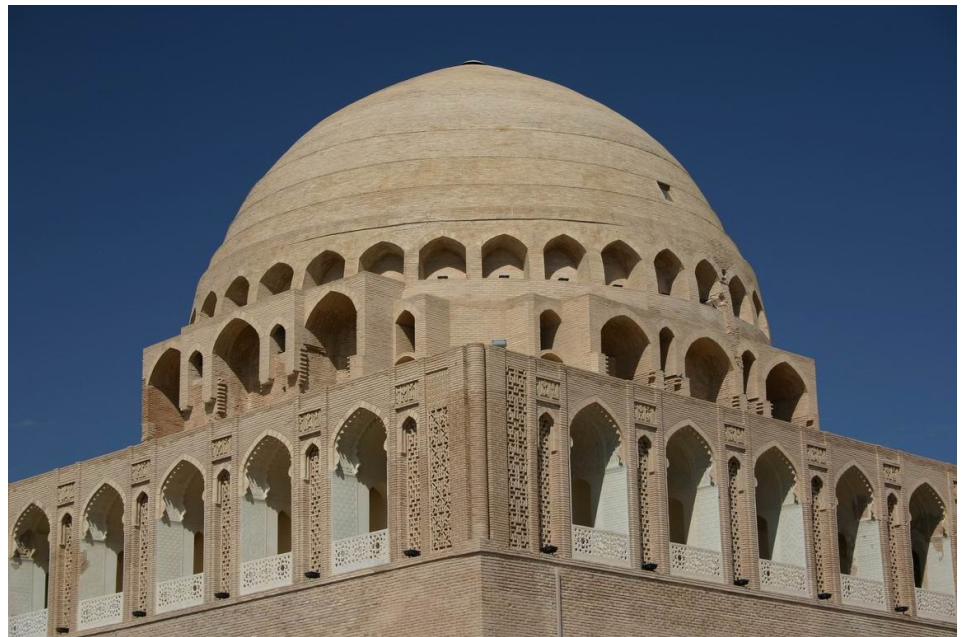
THE GREAT CITY OF MERV

"MERV WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST, MOST COSMOPOLITAN CITIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. ITS CRAFTSMEN DEVELOPED HIGHLY PRIZED DAMASCUS STEEL CENTURIES BEFORE SUCH A PRODUCT Poured FROM EUROPEAN FOUNDRIES. TODAY, MERV IS CENTRAL ASIA'S MOST EXTENSIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND EXCAVATING IT IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN ALL OF ARCHAEOLOGY."

BY HARBIR KAUR

The Silk Road was a major thoroughfare through which goods and ideas were shared. One major stop along the road was the city of Merv in Turkmenistan. Merv lies on the Murgab River, making it an oasis in the Karakum Desert. Actually, the land of Merv was home to several cities, dating as far back as the 5th century BCE. Various empires used Merv as a center for trade and military defense. The earliest city was called Erk Kala, and it was developed by the Achaemenid Empire. The ruins of the city have been built upon for thousands of years, rendering excavation quite difficult.

Gyaur Kala was the next city to replace Erk Kala. Seleucids, the successors of Alexander gained control of territory. Gyaur Kala was established by Antiochus I as great walled city, using parts of the left-over architecture of Erk Kala. After the Seleucids, other empires used Gyaur Kala, including the Parthians and the Sassanids. Over the course of approximately 900 years, the city was reinforced and rebuilt. In the 8th century, Abu Muslim, the general of the Abbasid army, took control of Merv. The Abbasid Empire was divided by Karakum Desert. The capital of the west was Baghdad, and the capital of the east, called Khorasan, was Merv. Abu Muslim had a mosque built in the city,



which was known as Sultan Kala. The city was extensively devel-

“SOME ESTIMATES CLAIM THAT AT THIS POINT, UP TO ONE MILLION PEOPLE RESIDED IN THIS URBAN HUB, WHICH WAS BECOMING AN INTELLECTUAL CENTER WITH WORLD-CLASS LIBRARIES.”

oped with canals and streets and the mosque at the center.

The Seljuks took control of the city in the 11th century, and the city of Sultan Kala continued to expand and thrive. Some estimates claim that at this point, up to one million people resided in this urban hub, which was becoming an intellectual center with world-class libraries. In the 13th century, however, the Mongol army invaded the

city and destroyed it. For the next two centuries, the great city of Sultan Kala lay in ruins.

A new city was built in the 15th century by the Timurid ruler, Shah Rukh. This city was called Abdullah Khan Kala, and it was the smallest of the four cities built on the territory.

Now all that is left of Merv is four walled cities. Turkmenistan set up Merv as an archaeological park in 1987 to protect what is left of it.

In 1999, Merv was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Ancient Merv Project was developed in 2001 to explore and conserve the remnants of the great city, including citadels, mausoleums, and ceramics. ■

MY HOMETOWN ESKİŞEHİR

ESKİŞEHİR IS A CITY IN NORTHWESTERN TURKEY AND THE CAPITAL OF THE ESKİŞEHİR PROVINCE. THE NAME ESKİŞEHİR LITERALLY MEANS OLD CITY IN TURKISH; INDEED THE CITY WAS FOUNDED BY THE PHRYGIANS IN ABOUT 1000 BC. MANY PHRYGIAN ARTIFACTS AND SCULPTURES CAN STILL BE FOUND IN ITS ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

BY AHMET YUSUF MERCAN

My favorite trip, as a child, was always the one from Ankara, where I lived and went to school, to Eskişehir, where my grandparents lived and I spent my summers. I used to wonder on the way what an ironic name Eskişehir was, since it literally means “the old city.” However, the thought would not last long, and I would be possessed by the excitement I felt from the fact that I was going to meet my cousins and spend a couple of months hanging around, having fun, and eating fresh fruits and vegetables from my grandparents’ large garden. Eskişehir was the place where I could be the happiest child ever during the hot and dry summer season of Anatolia.

People consider Eskişehir to be a truly European city because unlike most of the cities in Turkey, a river runs through the heart of it. You can see beautiful parks, restaurants, statues and all sorts of other things around the river and people indulging in them. It is not only the river that gives it a different touch but also the people. They always bragged about how different they were than the people in other parts of Anatolia in terms of modernity, civility, and openness to new things. I cannot say that I have any objections since the city somehow felt



“unusual” indeed during the summers I spent there as a teenager.

Eskişehir is located between Ankara and Istanbul, locating it at a crossroads throughout history and

“THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IS THE ETHNIC DIVERSITY. THERE IS A BIG CRIMEAN TATAR COMMUNITY IN ESKİŞEHİR THAT BROUGHT ITS CULTURE AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE CITY’S DAILY LIFE.”

helping the city flourish. Having been a trade route for a long time, the city was influenced by a myriad of factors. The most significant factor is the ethnic diversity. There is a big Crimean Tatar community in Eskişehir that brought its culture and contributed to the city’s

daily life. A simple example would be the tens of popular *chiburek* places all over the place. There are also Turks who migrated from Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia, and Sandzak.

Another important fact to note is the massive student population in Eskişehir. There are two universities in the city, with about 50,000 students, and a considerable number of prestigious high schools. In

fact, Eskişehir is also known as the “student city.” My father, mother, and aunts always told us about their lives when going to school in Eskişehir and how much fun they had, making us envy them and complain about our own miserable lives as students in Ankara.



Eskisehir is also a fairly industrialized city. Its accessible location made it a convenient place for large companies in Turkey to build factories. As you enter the city through the highway from Ankara, you notice many company headquarters. I was rather ridiculously proud every time I saw the company logos on those big buildings. I was thinking, “You people of

other nations have no idea that the refrigerators you are using are from Eskisehir.”

Even though Eskisehir is a beautiful city to live in, my favorite times there were at my grandparents’ secluded summer house on the hills overlooking the city center from a distance. We used to water the plants, grow our own produce, and pick fresh vegetables

right before my grandmother would make some salad. As I grew up, my cousins and I grew apart, and I cannot visit Eskisehir as often as I want to. At least I am happy to have lived a fulfilling childhood and to be able to tell you about my priceless memories.

◆

PAX TURCICA: A CONCEPT OF TURKISM IN DIGITAL AGE

AZERBAIJANI-AMERICAN COUNCIL (AAC)

BY JAVID HUSEYNOV, PH.D.

With the emergence of digital age, the concept of common identity has taken an entirely new broader definition. Friends and peers, relatives and compatriots, physically separated by large distances, can be in close daily communication via social networks. The technological media revolution provides us with new effective tools for dissemination of ideas, both classical and contemporary. But the common identity is not something rooted in the technological progress; it is a consequence of social affiliations developed over centuries involving such factors as geography, language, religion, culture, sometimes even politics.

In the first quarter of 20th century, a concept of Turkic unity formulated a new mentality which led to the establishment of secular democratic republics in Azerbaijan and Turkey, and the self-determination of Turkic-speaking peoples in Central Asia. The origins of Turkism trace back to Jadidism (from Arabic “*jadid*” – new), introduced by Tatar theologian Kursavi in 1804, as a movement for Islamic modernization among the Turkic Muslim peoples of Russian Empire. In later 19th century, Turkism came to promote the cultural and linguistic unity rather than purely religious iden-

tity.

In 1883, Crimean Tatar intellectual, Ismail Bey Gaspirali founded “*Tercüman*”, the first newspaper which advocated a common Turkic written language and called for the Turks to embrace the emerging European values of liberty, social justice and modernization. Speaking of education for the Turkic Muslims in Russian Empire, Gaspirali wrote:

“We must be able to read in order to overcome our isolation; we must learn European ideas from European sources. We must introduce into our primary and secondary schools subjects that will permit our pupils to have such access”.

Gaspirali also initiated a new journal for Turkic women, *Alem-i Nisvan* (World of Women), edited by his daughter, and integrated the ideas of freedom and equality for women into Turkism. Consequently, in 1919, the parliament of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – the first secular democracy in the Turkic and Muslim world – extended the universal suffrage rights to women ahead of the United States and some European nations.

In early 20th century, progressive thoughts of Turkism manifested themselves in the 1908-09 Young

Turk revolution in Ottoman Empire. From this time on, the locus of Turkism permanently moved to Turkey, by 1920s embracing the vision of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Here, through the writings of scholars such as Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp and Azeri publicist Ahmet Ağaoğlu (Ahmed-bey Ağayev), the ideas of freedom, secularism, equality, social justice and modernization found their implementation in the reforms of Atatürk and the ideology of Turkish Republic.

Over the course of 20th century, Turkism also heavily influenced the national self-determination of Turkic peoples in Central Eurasia, eventually leading to the establishment of modern independent states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan as well as the emergence of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and few other autonomous Turkic republics within the Russian Federation.

In the modern age, the terms liberty, justice and tolerance idealized by Turkism remain to be hot topics in the Middle East, Central Eurasia and elsewhere, including the United States. These universal values are also embraced by a group of Turkic-American community activists and organizations which formed the Pax Turcica Initiative. The objective is to integrate academic and historical un-

derstandings of Turkism with modern social networking and technological trends to further the Turkic grassroots.

The introduction of *Pax Turcica* term, which stands for “*Turkic peace*” in Latin, is not incidental here. According to American historian Harold Lamb, at the height of the Ottoman Empire in 16th century, Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent had begun to suspect that the Turk had ridden as far as he could on the road of conquest, and that “it was time to squat on the carpet of diplomacy and consolidate the great adventure into great state. Accordingly, the Sultan struck alliances with France and Venice, reorganized the legal code, expanded the educational system, opened his borders to European immigration, and announced the pax Turcica.” (Time Magazine, “Books: Speakable Turk” – summary of Harold Lamb’s “Suleyman the Magnificent”, 1956).

Similarly, while the old challenges pertaining to social justice and economic development remain in the Turkic world today, the original objective to achieve freedom for Turkic peoples was accomplished by the last decade of 20th century. In the 21st century, new challenges were introduced by globalization, interfaith relations and security issues in the world. These challenges can be tackled by Turkism only via further embracing of modern concepts.

In the past year, two major academic events were held under the Pax Turcica Initiative in the U.S. In May 2009, we organized the

First Pax Turcica Conference at Columbia University in New York with participation of scholars, linguists, diplomats and community activists representing different Turkic nations. Via their academic presentations, the conference speakers discussed the commonalities and differences in the modern Turkic world, touched upon the

"VIA ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS, THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS DISCUSSED THE COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE MODERN TURKIC WORLD, TOUCHED UPON THE HOT TOPICS OF ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL RELATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES IN THE TURKIC NATIONS."

hot topics of energy development and transportation, international regional relations and civil societies in the Turkic nations. The next Pax Turcica conference is planned for May 2010 in Washington, DC.

Another important Pax Turcica event was the symposium on “Jewish identity in the Turkic World” held at the Center for Jewish History in New York on November 23, 2009. Organized by local Turkic and Jewish communities, this social academic gathering featured the historically tolerant co-existence and thriving presence of Jewish communities in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

The opponents of Turkism mistakenly portray it as an emphasis on solely ethnic or even racial identity with which it has nothing in common. Modern Turkism must continue to embrace linguistic and cultural unity as well as diversity. According to one recent study of linguistic unity in Europe, “the use of language is a key factor in establishing and maintaining cultural

identity. A common language provides the basis for passing on cultural heritage and for enabling social interaction and identification. Due to the intricate interplay of language and culture, cultural diversity is often reinforced by differences among the language varieties of groups, while group identity can be solidified by the unity of the group’s language, even despite some internal diversity.” (Erhard Hinrichs, Dale Gerdemann, John Nerbonne, “Measuring linguistic unity and diversity in Europe” Eberhard-Karls Universitat Tubingen, Germany & Institute for Parallel Processing, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2008).

One of the successful examples of linguistic unity featuring both cultural commonalities and differences is the American society that we are part of. And in the coming year, the Pax Turcica Initiative will learn and expand on its experiences to further the Turkic grassroots in both the virtual and the real world. ■

KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

IT University, Columbia University, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

BY BEK-ALI YERZHAN

Kazakh foreign policy can be simply described by one word – it is Multivectoralism. Multivectoral foreign policy in the Kazakh sense means constructing friendly relations with immediate neighbors, building balanced relations on the continental and global level, and creating favorable external circumstances for internal political, social, and economic development. Kazakhstan's position as a Eurasian country is also important in understanding Kazakh foreign policy.

Multivectoralism and Eurasianism are not inventions. They are products of Kazakhstan's geographical location, historical heritage, ethnic and religious composition, and geopolitical and economic interests.

Since independence, issues of foreign policy have been debated in Kazakh society. One side argues that Kazakhstan has to choose one strategic line and follow it no matter what happens. The other side says that the current foreign policy, which allows skillful maneuvering, is the best possible choice.

Kazakhstan's multivectoral foreign policy doesn't imply equal relationships with all countries. Kazakhstan definitely has priority fields and countries of interaction. And this is obvious in the Kazakh president's Annual Ad-



resses to the Nation.

Kazakhstan's foreign policy is focused on cooperation and maintaining a peaceful neighborhood. The immediate neighbors of Kazakhstan, Russia, China, and Central Asian republics, are of high priority. A Kazakh proverb says that it is better to have good neighbor than a relative who is far away.

Russia, the neighbor sharing Kazakhstan's largest land border, has been an important country for

Kazakh foreign policy. There is a significant Kazakh population in Russia, and a significant Russian population in Kazakhstan. The two countries also share economic and military linkages. In addition, a linguistic and cultural affinity between the two countries plays a significant role.

I think that no one in the international community disregards China. Despite limited interaction in the early nineties, Kazakhstan now has a wide range of eco-



conomic and military cooperation with China. There is a lot of Kazakh and foreign literature on how China is pushing forward into Kazakhstan. Definitely, there is positive commercial “aggression” by Chinese companies in Kazakhstan because they lost lucrative business in the early nineties and are now fighting to find a place under the Kazakh commercial sun. Also, Kazakhstan itself welcomes Chinese business into the country and in turn explores opportunities in China.

Central Asia has always been on the Kazakh foreign policy agenda. Kazakhstan supports various integration initiatives within the region. And it strongly believes that there is no alternative to close interaction in Central Asia. Nowadays, mutual understanding has become a topic of interest, taking into account the water and energy nexus in the region.

The USA is one of the principal partners in Kazakh foreign policy. Improvements in technology,

investments, the military, education, and increased democratization are on the Kazakh foreign policy agenda.

Moreover, the priority fields in Kazakh foreign policy also include infrastructure, transportation, communication, energy, and combating drug trafficking and other international destructive elements. Furthermore, the foreign policy agenda also takes into account such countries and regions as the European Union, Turkey, Iran, Arab countries, South Asia, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia, as well as international institutions such as SCO, EurAzEC, OSCE, CSTO, CICA, OEC etc.

To sum up, the current Kazakh foreign policy has proven to be efficient. Its results show vivid success. Kazakhstan has no threat to its existence from any actor in the international community. Its borders, except along the Caspian Sea, are delimited and partially demarcated. Investments and businesses are secure in Kazakhstan. The republic is regarded as a

reliable partner since it remains in international institutions, fulfills all major international obligations, and avoids radical shifts in its foreign policy. ■

TURKIC ETHNIC VOTING BLOCK: IMPORTANT FOR ANY US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

BY ADIL BAGUIROV, PH.D.

Turkic peoples in Eurasia share a historic and cultural bond. They also share a common linguistic base spoken in this vast region. Twenty countries, spanning from Europe to Russian Siberia, have significant Turkic communities, and there are six with a Turkic majority. The total Turkic population is estimated to be between 140 and 200 million people worldwide. Although Turkey has the densest Turkic population, the largest groups of Turkic people live throughout Central Asia and Caucasus, also called the Caspian Basin region -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. Additionally, there are also Turkic peoples living in the Crimea (Ukraine), Xinjiang (western China), northern Iraq (Kirkuk), Iran (South Azerbaijan), Russia, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Moldova, Greece, and Bulgaria.

The collapse of the Soviet Union as well as increasing democratization and globalization have allowed different Turkic peoples to develop their economies and ties with each other. Although hurt by the global economic crisis, economic expansion in Turkey (greater than 7% GDP growth for the past several years), Azerbaijan (>30%), and Kazakhstan (>10%)



helps to increase the importance of Turkic voters around the world. The United States is no exception, where increased awareness and learning on behalf of the respective diasporas is noticeable. Currently, Turkic diasporas are leaning towards Democrats. However, there is no profound reason for that, and it can be reversed, especially when a moderate Republican candidate is running.

While it is hard to provide precise figures for the Turkic population in the United States -- because the 2000 census figures are a gross underestimate, while data from the various ethnic communities is exaggerated -- it would be reasonable

to estimate the number of US citizens, Green Card (GC) holders (permanent residents, who cannot vote without becoming citizens, but can make political contributions and might have children who are US citizens), and those in advanced stages of getting the GC at about one (1) million people. The largest number of these are ethnic Turks (from Turkey) and ethnic Azeris (mostly from Iran), followed by Tatars, Uzbeks, and Uyghurs. There are also a small number of Kazakhs and others. Additionally, ethnic Jews (such as Mountain Jews of Azerbaijan, Bukharian Jews of Uzbekistan, etc.) generally vote and campaign

in tandem with Turkic communities due to common cultural and life experiences. This is especially true in the Tristate (NY-NJ-PA) area, where the two communities are very close.

Moreover, if we are to add to that the number of non-immigrant visa-holders, such as students and scholars (F and J visa holders), businessmen (B visa holders), and workers (H1B visa holders), who will either return back to their homelands or go through the US naturalization process at some time, the number increases a bit as well. Because we live in an era of globalization, one could consider that those visa-holders can become important for US policy and future presidents in that turbulent and important part of the world from which they come. Moreover, despite lacking US citizenship, they do have an important role and sway on their US citizenship-holding brethren.

Energy Corridor

The importance of the Turkic ethnic communities is not only due to their potential as a growing voting block and as proactive members of the US political process, but that their countries of origin are generally US allies, sometimes strategic (e.g., Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, as well as NATO ally Turkey), and linchpins of the East-West energy corridor as well as a vital source of non-OPEC oil. In testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 1, 2005, Gen. James Jones, then head of US European Command (EUCOM), stated that "the Caucasus is increasingly important to our interests. Its air corridor has become a crucial lifeline between coalition forces in Afghanistan and our bases in Europe. Caspian oil,

carried through the Caucasus, may constitute as much as 25 percent of the world's growth in oil production over the next five years ... This region is a geographical pivot point in the spread of democracy and free market economies to the states of Central and Southwest Asia."

The most recent and biggest example of this importance is the 1 million barrel per day (50 million tons per year) Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, and its twin gas pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, which connects Turkey and Azerbaijan. Kazakhstan also joined the BTC pipeline and recently agreed to supply 25 million tons of additional oil per year into the BTC, potentially expanding its capacity to 1,6 mbpd (although this will take some years due to the current glut of oil in the world markets). With Kazakhstan, other Turkic states of Central Asia, such as Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, may eventually follow (depending on their democratization). Additionally, a new railroad is being built to connect all these countries to both China and the EU. It should be noted that the US has tried to be active on the matter not just through the Administration, but also on the Congressional level by passing the Silk Road Act of 1999 and introducing the Silk Road II Act of 2006 to the Senate.

Iran

It is difficult to determine the exact number of Azerbaijanis in Iran, since the Islamic government does not include ethnic information in the official censuses. However, according to The New York Times, "More than a third of Iran's 66 million people are ethnically Azeri, a beleaguered minority that frequently agitates for more rights

and cultural autonomy." It is an understatement to say that Azerbaijanis are an important factor in any political or policy decision within Iran. Iran has viewed the Republic of Azerbaijan, its northern neighbor, with ambivalence ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. A free, prosperous, stable, and pro-western Azerbaijan would be a powerful motivator for the ethnic Azerbaijani citizens of Iran, and Iranians in general, to demand democracy and freedom in their own country. Thus, any outreach efforts to the Iranian community, both for the purposes of US presidential elections and post-election strategy and policy should include outreach to the ethnically Turkic community in Iran – the Azerbaijanis.

Conclusion

The Turkic voting block, while admittedly still green, is poised to be an important element of the "ethnic electioneering" in US elections. With growing activism in US elections (e.g., the Azerbaijan-ForBush.com website during the 2004 elections), the creation and strengthening of ethnic grassroots organizations (e.g., ATAA, FTAA, USAN, USTN, etc.), and a number of ethnically Turkic people running for House and Senate seats, as well as occupying other political positions in the country, the Turkic community should be incorporated into the plans of any US presidential campaign. ■

EL-GOLI

EL GOLI (SHAH GOLI) WAS USED AS A SUMMER PALACE DURING THE QAJAR DYNASTY. DURING THAT PERIOD TABRIZ WAS THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF PRINCE OF IRAN. EL GOLI CONTAINS A PALACE THAT IS SURROUNDED BY A GREAT SQUARE WATER POOL AND TODAY IS A NATIONAL PARK IN TABRIZ. THE LAKE DATES FROM THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY AYDIN FATHALIZADEH

Azerbaijan Cuisine, a new Azeri restaurant located in the heart of downtown Berkeley, has been on my list of places to eat for sometime now. I finally got around to visiting the new diner and was pleasantly surprised by the atmosphere inside. Upon walking in, I was greeted by a large wall-sized painting of one of Tabriz's most famous sights, the El-Goli park. Throughout the evening, I found myself affixed to the image of that park, an image which took me back to my hometown and the many weekends I spent high above the city landscape enjoying the company of family and friends at the El-Goli gardens.

The precise origins of El-Goli are unknown. Located 4 km south of East Azerbaijan's capital city of Tabriz, the grand gardens of El-Goli were constructed sometime in the late eighteenth century and further developed by local governors over the years. Its main feature is the 700 square foot artificial lake, the north side of which was constructed after moving mounds of earth. The garden proper is composed of seven terraces.

El-Goli was not built by excavating the land, but by raising artificial terraces that are hidden beneath plantings of poplars and willows. Consequently, when viewed from the top of the nearby hills, the lake appears to float above the



“IT IS SAID THAT AN EARLIER VERSION OF THIS BUILDING HAD MIRRORED PANELS ON THE WALLS TO CATCH THE CHANGING REFLECTIONS OF THE WATER.”

surrounding landscape. A spring gushing from a rock, diverted into five channels to form cascades, feeds the lake. A causeway cuts through the pool and leads to a central pavilion. The pavilion, once crowned with a dome, is two stories tall and in the shape of an octagon. It is said that an earlier version of this building had mirrored panels on the walls to catch the changing reflections of the wa-

ter.

In its early days, it served as a water resource for agricultural purposes. The water basin was greatly extended during the reign of the Safavids, who had made Tabriz

their capital. The Qajar rulers of Iran used El-Goli as a summer retreat when Tabriz was the official residence of the Prince of Iran. They constructed a palace in the center of the lake surrounded by the 39 foot deep waters. El-Goli was reconstructed during the reign of the Pahlavi kings when the park was known as "Shah-Goli." After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, landmarks and streets which were



named after the Shah were renamed, and Tabriz's most famous lake was henceforth entitled "El-Goli." Sometimes it's hard to break from old habits, and so you'll find that many of Tabriz's residents continue to refer to the park as Shah-Goli.

Today, El-Goli is a very popular destination for picnics and outings when Friday rolls around. You'll find it crowded virtually every morning of the week as well. As part of a daily exercise routine, many Tabrizis will jog or walk around the lake in the morning. With a small amusement park nearby, El-Goli has also become a favorite destination for many children. The romantic atmosphere during the spring and summer sea-

sons attracts many young couples, who'll make their rounds about the lake as well. The recent addition of paddle boats in the lake and the many vendors throughout the park selling sunflower seeds and *pashmak*, an Iranian version of cotton candy, further enhance the festive atmosphere of El-Goli.

With the city of Tabriz in the backdrop, the natural beauty of El-Goli high above the countryside is a truly exquisite sight. The lake, with its newly constructed fountains, is very serene and delightfully majestic. Steps on the eastern side of the park connect a large hill to the pool down below. Fountains of water trickle down these steps except during the winter, when you're likely to find El-

Goli covered in a fresh coat of snow. The grand pavilion in the center of the lake is now a restaurant where on special occasions, if you're lucky enough, you might hear traditional Azeri music being played live. ☐

UYGHURS OF EAST TURKESTAN FACE AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT

AS IT IS WELL KNOWN TO THE READERS OF THIS JOURNAL, UYGHURS ARE SIGNIFICANT IN MULTIPLE WAYS FOR THE HISTORY AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE TURKIC PEOPLES. UYGHURS ARE REGARDED AS THE FIRST “SETTLED,” “URBANIZED” TURKIC PEOPLES IN HISTORY, HAVING ESTABLISHED MAJOR CITIES IN THEIR HOMELAND.

BY SENER AKTURK

Many Turkic peoples met tragic fates in modern history, many of them as recent as in the last decade or so: ethnic cleansing of Turks and other Muslims in the Balkans, deportation of Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, and Chechens in the Soviet Union, massacres against Cypriot Turks, Azeris, and others... There are too many such sad episodes to even list here.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to one of these Turkic groups in particular, the Uyghurs of East Turkestan. In official Chinese and international usage, the territory they live in is called Xinjiang (new frontier, newly conquered territory) province in Western China. Unlike many other Turkic groups upon whom historic tragedies befell, who nonetheless managed to maintain their demographic, cultural, and linguistic integrity, Uyghurs continue to face a threat to their very survival as a Turkic-speaking, Muslim people in their historic homeland, due to the policies of the Chinese state. Estimates of their numbers widely vary: according to the Uyghur



American Association, Uyghurs make up 8 million of the 18 million people (45%) who now in-

“UYGHURS CONTINUE TO FACE A THREAT TO THEIR VERY SURVIVAL AS A TURKIC-SPEAKING, MUSLIM PEOPLE IN THEIR HISTORIC HOMELAND, DUE TO THE POLICIES OF THE CHINESE STATE.”

habit Eastern Turkestan/Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region, while Han Chinese make-up 7.5 million people, or about 40%, of the population. Other Muslim ethnic groups such as the Kazakhs (7%) and Hui (5%) also have a notable

presence in this region. The Uyghur Autonomous Region covers a territory that is four times the size of California. Had it been independent, it could have been a major player in Asian politics, located as it is in the geographical center of the continent.

As it is well known to the readers of this journal, Uyghurs are significant in multiple ways for the history and consciousness of the Turkic peoples. Uyghurs are regarded as the first “settled,” “urbanized” Turkic peoples in history, having established major cities in their home-



land. Hence, the ur-Turkic word for “civilization” in Turkish spoken in Turkey is “uygarlık,” produced from the root “Uyghur [Uyghur]” with the productive suffix “-lık,” hence the word “civilization/Uygarlık” literally means “being like an Uyghur” or “Uyghurization.” This is of course a substitute for *medeniyet*, an Arabic word meaning “civilization,” though one encounters both words being used in contemporary Turkish.

A second significance of the Uyghurs is their affinity and vivid connection with the general Turkish cultural awakening and nationalism in the 20th century. Uyghurs established their independent republics twice in the first half of the 20th century, once in 1933, and again in 1944, and also in this process, they reformed their language in such a way that, simulta-

neous with the language reforms of Ataturk in Turkey, Uyghur Turkish became closer to Anatolian Turkish. In my previous role as the coordinator (and before that as a participant) of the Working Group on Identity in Central Asia, and in some other social occasions, I had the opportunity to listen to the Uyghur language, spoken by scholars and students of Uyghurs, as well as by Uyghurs themselves, and I was genuinely surprised to find out that it was much closer to Anatolian Turkish than I thought, since even the Central Asian Turkic languages, which are geographically closer to Turkey, are so distant from Anatolian Turkish to the point of being almost impossible to understand in many cases.

As was hinted above, Uyghur nationalists have been part of the same wave of independence move-

ments in the interwar years, which led to the formation of many, albeit short-lived, independent republics of Turkic people in the large swath of territory spanning Turkey, Azerbaijan, Crimea, Volga Basin, Central Asia, and East Turkestan. However, the last independent republic of the Uyghurs was annexed by China in 1949, at a time when Han Chinese made up only 6% of the population and the Uyghurs had a decisive majority. This began the process of an intense policy of colonization by a supposedly “socialist” state under the guise of a brotherhood of nations. Sixty years of Chinese colonization produced devastating results, thoroughly transforming the region, which can easily be observed today. First is the policy of forced migration of Han Chinese to the region, which can be called a campaign of



“Sinicization,” which aimed at and succeeded in altering the demographic balance, probably irreversibly, in favor of the Han Chinese, which rose from 6% to 40% of the population in the space of six decades. An important aspect of this policy is to create predominantly Han Chinese cities made up of settlers from Eastern China in the middle of Uyghur territories, as outposts of political, linguistic, cultural, demographic, and economic control. Urumchi, a city that is 75% Han Chinese and 12% Uyghur, designated as the capital of the ironically labeled “Uyghur Autonomous Region,” is the best example of this phenomenon. While there are multiple historic Uyghur cities such as Kashgar and Turpan (70% Uyghur, 22% Han Chinese), the choice of Urumchi as the capital of the Uyghur region

is one of numerous manifestations of the Chinese government’s intentions in the region.

The region has been used as a nuclear testing ground and a heavily militarized zone. Summary executions of Uyghurs on political grounds continue to occur unabated and are unlikely to cease in the foreseeable future. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations repeatedly condemn China for its treatment of Uyghurs, to no avail.

Unlike the struggle of the persecuted Tibetans and the Dalai Lama, persecution of Uyghurs in China receives very little attention in the international media. The massive human rights violations intensified after the attacks of September 11, 2001, because China used these attacks to frame its Turkic-Muslim Uyghur population

as “terrorists.” Furthermore, the prisoners detained in Guantanamo Bay for many years by the U.S., without any apparent evidence for their conviction, included 17 Uyghurs, who may now finally be freed after the closing of this prison camp.

The Chinese government’s concerted attack on all forms of Islamic practices and religious identity at large appears to be a central component in its effort to eradicate Uyghur culture. Two examples are in order in this context. The first is an anecdotal one, albeit describing a systematic policy. Schools in the Uyghur region, as everywhere else in Communist China, are state-controlled. While there is no “lunch” served in these schools during 11 months of the year, in the month of Ramadan, where Muslims are required to fast from

sunrise to sunset, the government provides “free lunch” to all students, with the cruel intention of preventing them from fasting. Second, although very unusual in most Islamic societies, there is an HIV epidemic and widespread alcoholism in the Uyghur region. “With a population of about 20 million and an officially estimated 60,000 infections, Xinjiang has one-tenth of China’s AIDS cases and the highest HIV infection rate in the country.” Whenever mosques and religious notables seek to initiate campaigns to combat alcoholism and HIV, they are deplored and persecuted as Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists.

Many Uyghur human rights activists live in exile in Turkey, the United States, Canada, Germany, and elsewhere. They have, among other things, set up the *Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP)*, with a detailed website (<http://www.uhrp.org/>), and institutional links across the globe. It is widely suspected, however, that the Chinese secret service infiltrated Uyghur organizations in the United States, Turkey, and elsewhere, thwarting their attempts to launch a concerted human rights campaign that could challenge the Chinese state in the international or domestic arena. The strong relations of the United States, and recently even of Turkey, with China

also bode ill for the rights of Uyghurs.

In conclusion, I am afraid that the Uyghurs, unlike Chechens, Bosnians, Kazakhs, and others, who were collectively persecuted and decimated but nonetheless survived, reconstituted themselves, and reclaimed a right to self-determination in some form or another in their homelands, the Uyghurs of China genuinely face the fate of extinction, a fate not unlike

“CHINESE COLONIZATION POLICY OF FORCED MIGRATION OF HAN CHINESE TO THE REGION, WHICH CAN BE CALLED A CAMPAIGN OF “SINICIZATION,” WHICH AIMED AT AND SUCCEEDED IN ALTERING THE DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE, PROBABLY IRREVERSIBLY, IN FAVOR OF THE HAN CHINESE, WHICH ROSE FROM 6% TO 40% OF THE POPULATION IN THE SPACE OF SIX DECADES.”

that which many indigenous peoples in the Americas and Oceania faced. Their population is already reduced to below 50% in their homeland. In administrative, cultural, economic, and political centers, or commanding heights, such as the cities, which are already dominated by the Han Chinese, Uyghurs will be forced to live in small pockets of land, cut off from each other in a sea of Han Chinese settlers if current trends continue for another few decades. Con-

trasted with this pessimistic but unfortunately realistic scenario of extinction, one can posit the story of Kazakhstan, a region that was likewise subjected to massive settler colonization, nuclear testing, and other Soviet projects of social, demographic, cultural, and economic engineering, which brought the Kazakh population to an all-time low of 29% by the early 1960s. And yet Kazakhstan was able to rebound from this situation

and establish itself as a multiethnic, multicultural and independent state by the end of the 20th century. Uyghurs face a much less favorable international and domestic environment; after all, there is no superpower calling China an “evil empire,” and much less support for the struggle of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and other persecuted minorities. This

is indeed one of the important differences between the formerly Soviet Central Asian states and the Uyghur Autonomous Region, and one where public awareness and advocacy in the United States would help most. ■

JAZZ IN AZERBAIJAN

"DESPITE PROHIBITIONS, BY THE 1950S, A NEW JAZZ MOVEMENT BEGAN TO EMERGE IN AZERBAIJAN WHICH CAME TO BE KNOWN AS "JAZZ MUGAM" OR "MUGAM JAZZ" . ITS ORIGINS WERE IN BAKU; ITS BRAIN CHILD, VAGIF MUSTAFAZADE."

BY ARSLAN IBRAHIMI

The State Popular Orchestra, also known as State Jazz, laid the foundations of jazz in Soviet Azerbaijan. Established in 1938 by musicians Tofiq Guliyev and Niyazi, State Jazz consisted of a trombone, five saxophones, three trumpets, a grand piano, a guitar, and percussion instruments. State Jazz played both classic jazz and improvisations on mugam, traditional Azerbaijani modal music. Tofiq Guliyev, Vagif Mustafazade, and saxophonist Parviz Rustambayov improvised on a Chahargah mugam theme at State Jazz's first concert. These Azerbaijani musical geniuses had one aim - to establish a national jazz school.

After the end of the Second World War, Rauf Hajibayov was managing State Jazz, but in the 1950-60s, the USSR propaganda machine dealt a great blow to the development of jazz in Azerbaijan. The Soviet authorities dubbed jazz a seditious western music and banned jazz performances. Despite the prohibitions, jazz fans gathered in secret to listen to western radio stations and then tried to play what they had heard afterwards.

In the late 1960s, jazz began its second life in Azerbaijan under the guidance and support of Gara Garayev, Niyazi, Tofiq Guliyev, and Rauf Hajibayev. This was the era of



Gaya, Rafiq Babayev's jazz "GAYA" quartet, and later, the era of Vagif Mustafazade. Gara Garayev, a very gifted classical composer, also wrote in the jazz genre.

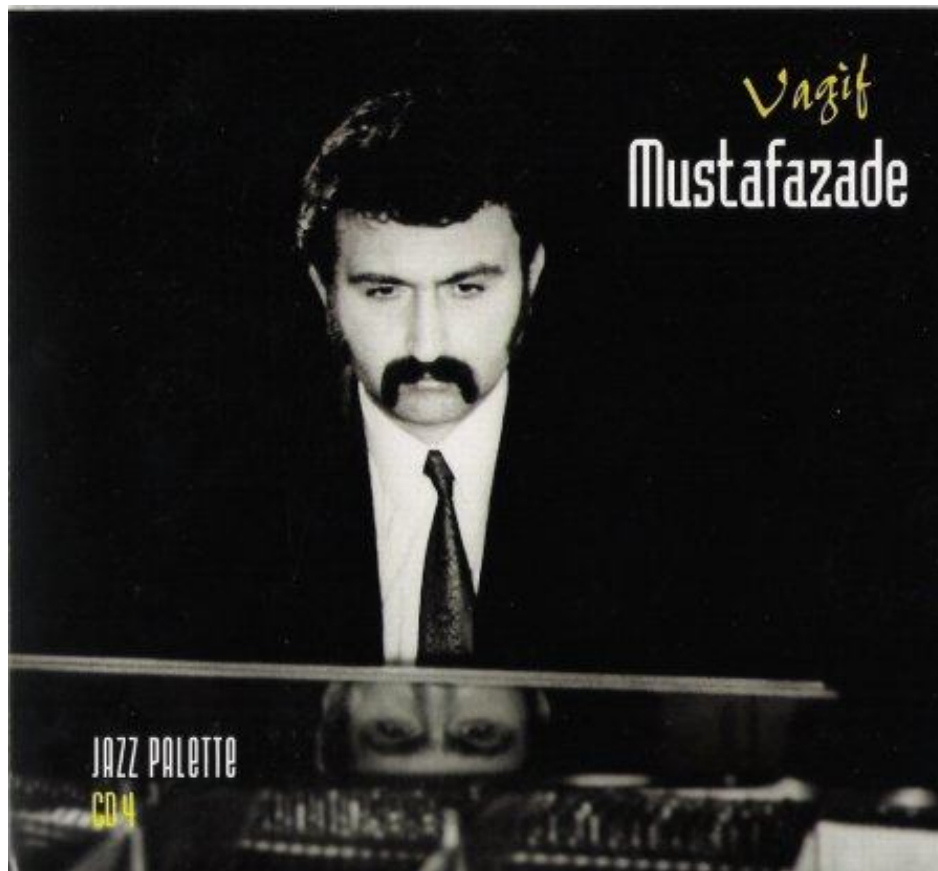
"IN THE LATE 1960S, JAZZ BEGAN ITS SECOND LIFE IN AZERBAIJAN UNDER THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF GARA GARAYEV, NIYAZI, TOFIQ GULIYEV, AND RAUF HAJIYEV."

His musical *The Bold Young Man of Gascony* and his 1938 *Three Nocturnes* and *Prelude No 28* are classic pieces of Azerbaijani jazz. One of the best performers of these pieces was undoubtedly Vagif Mustafazade. Improvisation on a theme forms the basis of Azerbaijani folk mugam.

Every performer is unique because of his own improvisation. It is this free improvisation that is

the most important link between jazz and mugam. The synthesis of the eastern elements of mugam with western jazz music meant that jazz could conquer the oriental world, too. Vagif Mustafazade was the first exponent of jazz mugam at the end of the 1960s. Naturally, before Mustafazade, many musicians had sensed the similarity

of these two genres and created compositions on this basis. But Vagif Mustafazade was the first musician to bring oriental mugam to the western listener in a language that the latter could understand, i.e. the language of jazz. And vice versa: Vagif Mustafazade explained jazz to Azerbaijani listeners in the language of our native mugam.



This pianist, who for years mastered the subtleties of both genres, thereby gaining the admiration and respect of the West's musical kings, brought Azerbaijani mugam to world attention. The famous American jazz critic, Willis Conover, said, "Vagif Mustafazade is a superb performer. He is the finest lyrical pianist that I have ever listened to."

In 1969, at the request and insistence of Rauf Hajiyev, Vagif returned from Tbilisi to Baku. He worked at the Azerbaijani State Popular Orchestra and established a jazz trio. At the same time, another Azerbaijani musician, Rafiq Babayev, was working in the sphere of vocal jazz while the

Gaya vocal quartet arranged and performed folk songs. Both Vagif Mustafazade and Rafiq Babayev died premature deaths. Vagif Mustafazade passed away in 1979 from a heart attack, and Rafiq Babayev died in 1995 in a terrible fire in the Baku underground. Great jazz appears to have required great sacrifices.

I believe that Azerbaijani society is still in debt to these two musicians of genius. Their musical style, musical thinking, and manner of performance were not fully understood in their own lifetimes. The events of the late 1980s and 1990s put a negative stamp on the development of Azerbaijani music and culture as a whole. The Soviet

Union collapsed in turmoil, and Azerbaijan was at war with its neighbor Armenia over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the national jazz school founded by Tofiq Guliyev, Niyazi, Gara Garayev, Rauf Hajiyev, and Tofiq Ahmadov is still active and developing. Nowadays, Azerbaijan's new jazz generation is already developing various directions of mugam jazz throughout the world. Aziza Mustafazade, a pupil of the national jazz school and the daughter of Vagif Mustafazade, has been popularizing Azerbaijani jazz on the world stage for many years. ■

TURKISH BOB

MCKAY'S TURKISH STORY STARTED WHEN HE ACCEPTED A JOB AS A TEACHER AT TARSUS AMERICAN COLLEGE. MCKAY TELLS HOW IMPRESSED HE WAS BY THE ATTENTION AND THE LOVE HE RECEIVED DURING HIS FIVE-YEAR STAY IN TARSUS.

BY ALI CINAR

When American protest singer Bob Dylan, in his autobiography *Chronicles* mentioned that his ancestors' origins are in Turkey, Turks experienced the happiness of finding somebody else with ties to Turkey.

Believing "everybody whose paths went through Turkey is a Turk," we helped the famous rock star recover his identity. (In his book, Dylan said that his ancestors went from Turkey to Odessa in Southern Russia before moving to USA.)

I would like you to know a more valuable character to the Turks and to the Turkic World. He is Dr. Robert B. McKay, or "Turkish Bob," as close friends call him, living in Hartford, Connecticut, the center for US insurance companies. Although there are few Turks living in Hartford, Dr. McKay voluntarily acts on behalf of Turkey. Every year, on October 29th, he raises the Turkish flag by the Hartford State Capitol, and he volunteers in organizations forging ties between Turkey and the US. He, together with Turks, is working to promote Turkish culture in different areas. He worked on various projects, like bringing the Murat Reis submarine, used to gather intelligence from Russia during

the Cold War, to Little Rock, Arkansas, and on efforts to include Turkish culture in the Heritage Museum, which will soon be opened in affiliation with the Smithsonian Institute.

McKay's Turkish story started when he accepted a job as a teacher at Tarsus American Col-

"HE, TOGETHER WITH TURKS, IS WORKING TO PROMOTE TURKISH CULTURE IN DIFFERENT AREAS."

lege. McKay tells how impressed he was by the attention and the love he received during his five-year stay in Tarsus. Besides teaching, he also did volunteer work building village roads. He still remembers the taste of the fizzy lemonade, "gazoz," which he was offered everywhere he went. His office is decorated with Turkish books and the flag.

His wife Lorraine summarizes the five years the couple spent by saying, "I learned more than I taught." Their favorite locations in Turkey are the Pine Park near Silifke and Istanbul.

McKay, who was consulted by the Clinton administration regarding Cyprus, says, "I received a lot of attention in Turkey, now I am trying to show the same to Turks living in the US."

A friend of the Turks, McKay has four missions: to educate Americans that Turkey is a friend in the free world, to increase the industrial and business relations between the two countries, to positively reinforce Turkey's image in the US, and to make the contribution of Anatolian civilizations to today's life more widely known.

Some of the projects McKay is working on with Turks include flying of the Turkish flag by the Hartford State Capitol, developing a program to bring students at Tarsus American High School with insufficient resources to the US, supporting the exhibition of Turkish historical and cultural artifacts in the Smithsonian Institute's planned new museum in Rhode Island, and promoting the foundation of the Ataturk Peace Museum in North Little Rock, Arkansas. McKay notes that running such ambitious activities would ordinarily require at least six high-level managers funded by both governmental and private sources. In addition, he is also planning to write a book about the *Khojaly Genocide*.

McKay is a member of the board of directors and the advisory board of the Turkish Forum as well as the board of directors of the Southern New England Turkish American Cultural Association. ■

PIPELINE TO SOMEWHERE

BY THOMAS GOLTZ

Baku: For over a decade, its many detractors referred to it mockingly as ‘the pipeline to nowhere.

But on July 13, 2006, international oilmen celebrated the official opening of the 1760 kilometer-long, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, that now connects the hydrocarbon riches of the Caspian Sea to the eastern Mediterranean, and that will hopefully secure peace and prosperity for the post-Soviet Caucasus region as a whole.

It has been a long journey.

First mooted during the immediate post-Soviet chaos of Azerbaijan as a means of exporting unknown quantities of hydrocarbon resources to the West in exchange for ill-defined political favors, the Baku-

Ceyhan pipeline concept quickly acquired the status of geopolitical fantasy. Armenia was chewing off some 15% of Azerbaijani territory in its war over Karabakh. Imaginative (or desperate) energy entrepreneurs in Georgia were drilling with regularity into existing pipelines between Baku and the Black Sea to extract crude for home refineries. And both Russia and Iran were suggesting very strongly that Caspian crude should only reach

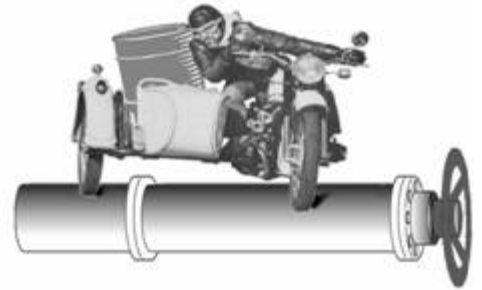
international markets via the pipeline and terminal systems already in place in those two countries either via the Persian Gulf, or ‘the catastrophe-waiting-to-happen, better known as the Bosphorus, the narrow (and shipping-accident prone) straits that run smack-dab through the middle of Istanbul.

But the main problem facing proponents of a Baku-Ceyhan line was economics. Assessments of Azerbaijani reserves in the early 1990s soon proved to be highly-inflated. Making matters worse was the big dip in crude oil prices

“EXPERT OBSERVERS ARE ALREADY PREDICTING A BAD CASE OF PENDING ‘DUTCH DISEASE’ UNLESS BAKU MANAGES TO DIVERT BOTH STATE AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT INTO THE NON-OIL SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY, AND ADDRESS THE SUBJECT OF INCOME DISPARITY BETWEEN THE BRASH, NEW RICH AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF DISGRUNTLED OR DESPERATELY POOR.”

in 1998/99, when oil fell to the around eleven bucks a barrel. At those rates, a mere six years ago, the idea of sinking an estimated \$2.5 billion into a new export pipeline from Azerbaijan to the world seemed like a bad joke.

It was around then that my old pal Laurent Ruseckas, then a senior analyst for Daniel Yergin’s Cambridge Energy Resource Associates, embarked on a PhD dissertation that centered on the fa-



miliar notion that economics would always triumph over politics, and used the BTC as a case study. In the preamble to his dissertation proposal, Laurent wrote:

‘...a preliminary review of the evidence suggests that market forces are generally carrying the day on the pipeline question...The oil companies have been unwilling to make major investments to

support the political goals of either their host government or their home governments. Meanwhile states have been unable, or unwilling, in the case of the United States, to override economic considerations by finding some way to subsidize preferred pipeline alternatives. Having linked their prestige in the Caucasus to a pipeline strategy that has proved commercially unworkable, both the United States and Turkey have seen their

influence begin subtly to decline. This has contributed to a climate in which both Azerbaijan and Georgia are now taking preliminary steps to accommodate Russian interests while cautiously backing away from sole reliance on U.S. support.

Laurent wrote that in 2000; six years later, he was willing to own up to the error of his prediction with a chuckle, and concede that for once, politics had won out over economics.

More specifically, he attributed his analytical error to an uncontrollable human factor: the unflinching efforts of the late authoritarian president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, whose relentless support for the 'pipeline to nowhere' translated into twisting the arms of senior CEOs, banging fist on table and even using bizarre and unorthodox stratagems to bring international attention to the 'do-ability' of the BTC.

Arguably the most unorthodox of all was when Aliyev commissioned a cohort of twenty-odd madmen adventurers to travel down a speculative version of the pipeline route, and deliver the first 'symbolic' barrel of Azerbaijani crude oil from Baku to Ceyhan - and aboard a dozen nostalgic, Soviet-era side-car motorcycles. I was the creator of the 'Oil Odyssey,' and we delivered the goods and, for the record, long before BP boss Sir John Browne came around to sanctioning the BTC.

President Aliyev passed away in 2003, but not before breaking symbolic earth in Azerbaijan for the first section of the meandering line called the BTC. I wish he could have seen it. It is the most state-of-the-art pipeline in the world, traversing desert, forest,

multiple rivers, mountains, high plateaus and some eight climatic zones and all underground, leaving scarcely a trace of the construction process. While cost-overruns pushed the project from the initial \$2.5 billion to something closer to \$4 billion. With the price of oil nudging \$80 a barrel, the initially risk-averse investors in the BTC are not complaining too loudly. Most interesting of are the industry rumors that both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia are toying with the idea of opening up negotiations to move some of their crude west via the BTC.

Thus, for Azerbaijan, the biggest question at present is what to do with the so-called 'wall of money' that will start to accrue once the oil begins to flow. Expert observers are already predicting a bad case of pending 'Dutch Disease' unless Baku manages to divert both state and private investment into the non-oil sector of the economy, and address the subject of income disparity between the brash, new rich and the growing number of disgruntled or desperately poor.

But for now, the question of the political ramifications of future oil-related wealth is on hold as investors, citizens and former pipe-dreamers celebrate the realization of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan 'Pipeline to Nowhere,' which has now become a Pipeline to Somewhere.

I hope my zany motorcycle circus of six years ago played some little part in this process. But I also hope that the current leadership of Azerbaijan will use the occasion of its new-found wealth to win more than just fair-weather friends (especially among the former naysayers), and address some of the urgent social issues at play in the country on the shores of the Cas-

pian. ■

Mr. Goltz is the author of a trilogy of books on the Post-Soviet Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Chechnya and most recently, Georgia Diary (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk NY, July 2006) as well as a memoir of his days as an itinerate actor in Africa, Assassinating Shakespeare (Saqi Books, London, May 2006). He is currently teaches at Montana State University, Bozeman.

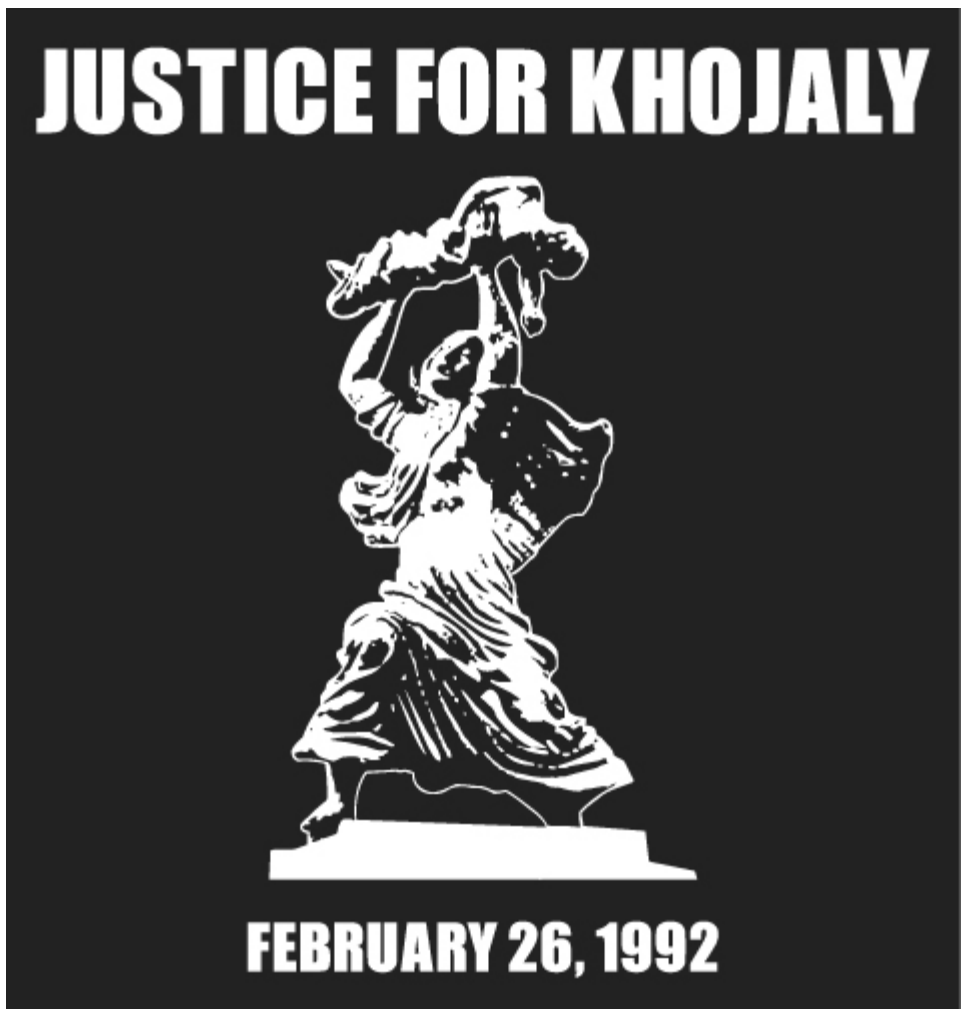
*This appeared in International Herald Tribune mid July 2006

A POEM DEDICATED TO THE VICTIMS OF KHOJALY

The mass extermination of a large group of people based on perceptions of their identity continues to be a tradition of violence from all strides of the globe. From the Holocaust to Srebrenica, from Rwanda to Darfur, crimes against humanity cannot be attached to a specific nation. The violence with which people are reduced into sacks of blood and flesh requires an inhumanity that takes generations to erase and heal. Yet the judgment of history is often carried out in an arbitrary fashion, extending the pain and punishing the victim instead of the offender. While some are permitted to claim their suffering and even encouraged to overestimate it, others must continue to protest the tight-lipped silence concerning the killing of their country people... and again, only due to their identity.

On the frosty night of February 25-26, 1992, amidst the war over Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, Armenian forces surrounded and attacked the Azeri-populated town of Khojaly, brutally massacring its fleeing residents. As Newsweek reported at the time, *"many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped"* (David Brauchli, "The Face of a Massacre", Newsweek, p. 40, March 16, 1992). 613 people, including 106 women and 63 children, were tortured to their deaths in freezing temperatures, with hundreds more missing. Over 1,000 people received permanent health damage, 1,275 people were taken hostage, 8 families were fully destroyed. A total of 25 children lost both of their parents and 130 children lost one of them. According to the Human Rights Watch, Khojaly Massacre was "the largest massacre to date in the conflict" over Nagorno-Karabakh (Human Rights Watch / Helsinki. Azerbaijan: Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. New York. 1994)

Monte Melkonian, the graduate of UC Berkeley, member of ASALA terrorist group, Armenia's National Hero and a field commander during the Karabakh war, provided the following account of the aftermath of an Armenian assault on Khojaly: *"By the morning of February 26, the refugees had made it to the eastern cusp of Mountainous Karabagh and had be-*



gun working their way downhill, toward safety in the Azeri city of Agdam, about six miles away. There, in the hillocks and within sight of safety, Mountainous Karabagh soldiers had chased them down... fighters had then unsheathed the knives they had carried on their hips for so long, and began stabbing.." (Markar Melkonian. *My Brother's Road: An American's Fateful Journey to Armenia*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005, p. 213).

For 17 years since the Khojaly carnage, an act of war crime which preceded Srebrenica Massacre, no proper international attention or independent legal assessment was given to this human tragedy. Repeated denials by the Armenian side often about the fact of massacre are undermined by the words of an incumbent president of Armenia, Serzh Sarkisian, who commanded Armenian forces in Karabakh during the war: "*before Khojali, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype].*" (Thomas De Waal. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, NYU Press, 2004). Many suspected perpetrators may still remain inside Armenia or Armenian-controlled parts of Azerbaijan, but the ongoing occupation of Azerbaijani territories despite 4 UN Security Council resolutions (#822, 853, 874, 884) seriously impedes both investigation of past war crimes and the efforts of international community to bring a lasting peace to the region.

So, let us remember Khojaly, which was erased by those who believed in a brighter future for themselves in killing and mutilating their neighbors' children, women and elders. Let the ones who died leave us their history, and let us hear it with the ears of humans. Our textbooks are filled with politically correct historical animosity passed as facts. Let us fill them with truth from the witnesses of Khojaly bloodbath, to defeat animosity as well as bigotry, and to reconcile with our past.

Ghulu – a Meskhetian Turk refugee:

I came to Azerbaijan, to Khojaly. I couldn't imagine that we would live the second tragedy here. We were attacked by the 366th motor-rifle regiment and my house was burnt. We were shot, young brides and girls were taken prisoners, babies were put on bayonets. The reason was simple: we were Turks. As I mentioned I am a Meskhetian Turk. But it doesn't matter if I was Meskhetian, Anatolian or Azeri Turk. They consider them all their enemies. And Russian Empire always used them for their purposes. And nowadays they always use them for their purposes. Nowadays Russia enlarges its war bases in Armenia. Russia gives them fighter

(bombing) planes "MIG-29", "EF-300" rockets.

Jamal Heydarov:

On February 29, we found corpses. But they didn't give a chance to take them. Some women had been killed with their babies on the arms. Some babies chests had been cut and their hearts were divided into pieces. In whole, many of dead bodies had been cut into pieces. 613 civilians were murdered.

*And one morning all that was burning,
one morning the bonfires
leapt out of the earth
devouring human beings --
and from then on fire,
gunpowder from then on,
and from then on blood.
Bandits with planes and Moors,
bandits with finger-rings and duchesses,
bandits with black friars spattering blessings
came through the sky to kill children
and the blood of children ran through the streets
without fuss, like children's blood.
(Pablo Neruda, I'm Explaining a Few Things)*

KAZAN – A THOUSAND WORLDS OF NEW!

MY NATIVE LAND IS TATARSTAN,
I AM THE IDEL'S BABY.
MY NATIVE LANGUAGE IS TATAR
MY MECCA IS KAZAN CITY. (REZEDA VALIEVA)

BY NAZLYGOL GABDRAHMANOVA

I am from the world where two continents are one, and a hundred languages tell the same tale. Where East meets West, and North meets South. Yes, there is such a place, and it is called Kazan. Kazan is the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan and one of Russia's largest cities. Since April 2009, Kazan has the legal right to brand itself the "Third Capital" of Russia. The city is located on the border between Europe and Asia and has always been a kind of link between the East and the West, keeping traditions of two great cultures. Kazan, with the marvelous Kremlin, mosques, churches, and rich museums, is a unique place of interest sitting on seven hills at the confluence of Kazanka and Idel (i.e., Volga) rivers.

There are several explanations for the name "Kazan." Some say it is because the area around the city of Kazan resembles a cauldron, and the Tatar/Turkic name for cauldron is "kazan." However, several linguists such as Sattarov and Zakiev theorize that the name "Kazan" may be derived from "kazigan," which changed to "kazgan," and later on to "kazan." Indeed, combining "kazu" (to dig) with the affix "gan" means "dug out" or "hollow





ground.” It is interesting that the word "kazan" in Russian means "a river that cuts/digs into ground."

Today, Kazan is a major industrial, commercial, and cultural center, and remains the most important center of Tatar culture. Tatars are Turkic peoples with their own language, culture, faith, and age-old traditions. Simply put, Tatars are an ethnically different people from Slavic Russians. However, Kazan is only 500 miles to the east of Moscow, and the fate of Kazan and the Tatars is intertwined with those of Moscow and the Russians. Present day Kazan is a multi-national, multi-cultural city and the home to Turkic Tatars, Slavic Russians, and the Ugro-Finnic Mari, Udmurt, and others.

Kazan Tatars worked hard to achieve sovereignty; the city has both a brilliant and a tragic history. On August 30th, 2005, Kazan celebrated its millennium. Many reconstructions were done for the anniversary. The profile of the city was changed and beautified. The largest mosque in Russia, Qolsharif, was rebuilt in the Kremlin.

Major objects like the Millennium Bridge were also inaugurated that year. A single-line metro with 6 stations was opened on August

27th, 2005. Kazan is also a city of theatres, museums, music, international festivals, rich libraries, new technologies, business partnership, and science. Kazan State University, one of the oldest sites of learning in Russia, celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2004. Kazan's oldest part of the university building contains three classical

“THERE ARE 759 HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN KAZAN. IN 2000, THE HISTORICAL-ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX “KAZAN KREMLIN” WAS INCLUDED IN UNESCO’S LIST OF WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE.”

portals along its white facade from the original 1822 construction. The rest of the buildings were constructed from 1832 through 1841. These include the Anatomy Theatre, the Library, the Chemistry and Physics Laboratories, and the Observatory, completing the University complex and giving it its neo-classical look. Nowadays there are a lot of foreign students in our university from different parts of the world. I am very proud to call Kazan State University my Alma Mater.

Kazan is proud of its cultural activity. It hosts international theatrical and musical festivals, in-

cluding the International Opera Festival named after F.Shalyapin, the Festival of classic ballet named after R.Nuriyev, the International Festival of modern chambered music "Europe-Asia," the International Festival of piano music «Piano forum», and the “Golden Minbar” Muslim Film Festival, which are held every year. It is impossible to imagine the cultural and spiritual life of the city without Tatar national holidays, such as Sabantuy (Harvest Holiday), Nauruz, and the main festival, Republic Day (or City Day), which is celebrated on August 30th. This holiday includes both ancient customs and festivals and the new traits of Kazan.

There are 759 historical monuments in Kazan. In 2000, the historical-architectural complex “Kazan Kremlin” was included in UNESCO’s list of World Cultural Heritage, a great event for Kazan.

In 2013, the people of Tatarstan will be glad to welcome the 27th summer Universiade in Kazan. Many new sports buildings have recently been constructed, which has influenced the development of sports in the country. The role of Kazan in the development of cultural links with Tatars overseas is special. Kazan has been the spiritual capital of Tatars living all over the world. ■

FROM ORKHON VALLEY TO ISTANBUL

A JOURNEY OF A LANGUAGE THROUGH TIME

BY TUGSAN TOPCUOGLU

In 1889, when Nikolai Yadrintsev, a Russian archeologist and Siberian separatist, found the two earliest known Turkic scripts, later deciphered by Danish philologist Wilhelm Thomsen, in the Orkhon Valley, the Turkic languages were already adopted by people living on a wide landscape, ranging from the shores of the Adriatic to the Korean peninsula. On the Orkhon inscriptions, which date back to 732 A.D., Prince Kül Tigin says: *Türk Oğuz beğleri, budun, eşidin; üze Kök Tengri basmasar, asra yir telinmeser, Türk budun, ilinin, törünün kim artatır?* (“Turkic Oghuz chieftains and people, hear this; Unless the Sky God pushes down on you, unless the earth beneath you collapses, who would be able to overthrow the Turkic people, land, and traditions?”)

Centuries have passed since then and Kül Tigin's words still hold true. Today, more than 180 million people worldwide speak Turkic languages. However, languages are like living organisms; they give birth to several sibling languages, they trade with each other, and their structures change. In this article, I will talk about the journey of my language, which is one of these Turkic languages: Turkish.

Turkish is widely spoken in Turkey, Cyprus, Germany, and many other countries, and its speakers



account for roughly 40% of all Turkic speakers. It belongs to the Oghuz subgroup of Southwestern Turkic languages. Turkish speakers, whose population is close to 70 million worldwide, can easily communicate with other Oghuz language speakers, such as Azeri, Turkmen, Qashqai, Gagauz, and Balkan Turks. “Proper” Turkish is considered the dialect spoken in Istanbul. Even though the sentence I quoted in the first paragraph is still quite intelligible for me, I would put it slightly different in my language.

Today, Turkish is the predominant language in Asia Minor, also known as Anatolia (*Anadolu* in Turkish). However, when the first waves of Turkish warriors and nomads reached the borders of the

Eastern Roman Empire, this was not the case. In fact, the transformation of the Turkish language had started even before then.

The first interactions of the Turkic people were with their immediate neighbors: Mongolians and Chinese. There are many similarities between Turkic and Mongolian languages since both belong to the same Altaic language family. It is hard to know in which language words like *yurt*, *ordu* (horde), *dağ/tağ* (mountain), or *demir/temur* (iron) first appeared. On the other hand, most of the words borrowed from Chinese into Turkish disappeared or got replaced. Few words like *inci* (pearl) were kept, whereas *çay* (tea) was adopted much later.

When the Oghuz Turks started to

move westward around the 8th century, Persia became their most influential neighbor. Since Turks adopted Islam around this time, most of the religious terms in Turkish have Persian origin instead of Arabic. Words like *peygamber* (prophet), *namaz* (prayer), and *oruç* (fast) all originate from Persian, which is an Indo-European language. But the influence of Persian, or Farsi, was not limited to religion. From city life to literature, Persian words flooded the Turkish vocabulary during the migration of Turks into Asia Minor. Staple words like *merdiven* (ladder), *pencere* (window), *bahçe* (garden), and numerous terms with significations foreign to the nomadic life style, such as *duvar* (wall), *çarşamba* (Wednesday), *cam* (glass), and *kağıt* (paper) all come from the Persian language. As a result, even though Persian is ranked third in the list of foreign languages that loaned words to Turkish, these words are so basic that it would be impossible to speak Turkish without words taken from Persian. However, all those words did not go into the language exactly as they are in Persian. Turks modified these words to make them easier to pronounce and to make them sound more natural to Turkish ears. *Gul* has become *gül* (rose), and *legleg* became *leylek* (stork). And in some cases, new words were created. For instance, the Farsi *destuvan* (dest=hand + van=protector) became *eldiven*, using the word Turkish *el* (hand)!

Once the Oghuz people adopted Islam and came to the Middle East, they met another major,

however this time Semitic, language: Arabic. Today there are more than six thousand words in Turkish that were borrowed from Arabic. This number is more than any other for a non-Altaic language. The language of the Quran, and considered one of the richest languages in the world by many, Arabic words, just like Farsi ones, flooded Turkish and pulled the language further away from its other Turkic siblings. The flexibility of Arabic allows many new words to be created from the same root. Thus, when a word entered into Turkish, so did all of its derivatives. For instance, when the word *kitap* (book) came in, so did all the related words like *katip* (clerk), *mektup* (letter), *mektepe* (school), etc.

When the Turks reached the

“TODAY, MORE THAN 180 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE SPEAK TURKIC LANGUAGES. HOWEVER, LANGUAGES ARE LIKE LIVING ORGANISMS; THEY GIVE BIRTH TO SEVERAL SIBLING LANGUAGES, THEY TRADE WITH EACH OTHER, AND THEIR STRUCTURES CHANGE.”

shores of the Mediterranean, their language did not have many maritime words. So they borrowed: fish and seafood names mostly came from Greek (*barbunya*, *istakoz*, *karides*, *kefal*, *lüfer*, *midye*), and naval terms mostly from Italian, such as *güverte* (deck), *volta* (to foul a rope), and *laçka* (to let a rope).

During the Ottoman era, Arabic and Farsi kept their overwhelming influence at the court of the sultans (meanwhile, ironically, the language spoken at court in Persia was Azeri-Turkic). However, the

language of the people who lived in the countryside was relatively free from foreign influences. In fact, those were the times when *Turkish* influenced other languages spoken in Asia Minor, such as Greek and Armenian.

The next major influence came in the 19th century, when French was the *lingua franca*. Until the early 20th century, the importation of French words went hand in hand with the modernization and the Westernization of Turkey. Words like *gişe* (ticket window), *tirbuşon* (corkscrew), *vagon* (wagon), *virgül* (comma), and *kürdan* (toothpick) are just a few examples that came from the West. The influence of French was later replaced by English as the main source of loanwords, increasing influence by the U.S. after the Second World War.

But it was during the first decade of 20th century, when the Pan-Turkic movement came up and Turkish intellectuals started to question the excessive number of these loanwords. Nationalist writers, such as Ömer Seyfettin, started to avoid Persian

and Arabic words in their writings as much as they could. Purification of Turkish language had become one of the pillars of the new nation-building process.

When the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, radical reforms were introduced during the early decades of the new regime, led by Kemal Atatürk. One of those reforms was the Language Reform, aiming to replace Persian and Arabic words within Ottoman Turkish with either original Turkish equivalents or new words created based on Turkish syntax. In

fact, even Atatürk himself was the creator of many of these new words, such as *çarpmak* (to multiply) and *üçgen* (triangle). Furthermore, as a part of these efforts, the Arabic alphabet, which was then in use got replaced in 1928 with a new script based on the Latin alphabet. The Turkish Language Association was also founded during these years to coordinate the transformation. As a result, the language has become more “pure” and “Turkish” over the last 80 years. However, there were also significant side effects. The literary connection between new and old generations was cut when the script changed, and the number of words in Turkish dictionaries significantly decreased. Even Atatürk’s Grand Speech that he gave in 1927 had to be “translated” into new Turkish in 1963, again in 1986, and yet again in 1995!

Nowadays, English words are flooding Turkish vocabulary at an unprecedented rate. The Turkish Language Association cannot come up with Turkish equivalents for all the new technological gadgets and terms. Also, there are many Turkish businesses and products with English names. Even the names given to Turkish children are becoming more and more foreign-sounding, and some parents avoid names that have “Turkish” letters in it, such as *ç*, *ğ*, *ı*, *ö*, *ü*, or *ş*.

So what are the lessons that we

have learned after this long journey through the centuries?

First of all, the flow of words was not one way at any given time. While Turkish borrowed words from other languages, other languages also borrowed words from Turkish. For instance, while most of the religious terms in Turkish are from Persian, most of the religious terms in Persian are Arabic! Even Arabic, which is a language known to be resistant to accepting words from other languages, re-imported its own words from Turkish, but this time with different meanings. For instance, the word *vatan* used to mean “hometown” in Arabic until it was imported back from Turkish with a new political meaning of “country,” while the word *cum-*

“THE FLOW OF WORDS WAS NOT ONE WAY AT ANY GIVEN TIME.”

huriyet (republic) was created in Turkey from the Arabic *cumhur*. During the Pax Ottomana, Turkish words became used in numerous other languages, such as Greek, Bulgarian, and Romanian, and later became victims of similar national purification movements in the 20th century. Consequently, the exchange of words that happened in the past was a result of the fact that languages interact with each other and benefit mutually.

Furthermore, when new words are borrowed, they go through a

“Turkishification” process. For instance, words like *parça* (piece) or *perde* (curtain) have so many other functions in today’s Turkish that their meanings are now totally different than the way they are used in Farsi. Therefore, those words, while recognizing that they were not originally Turkish, should now be considered “Turkish.” Removal of those words, which happened to other words during the language reforms, would cause irreparable damage to the functionality and richness of the language.

Today, Turkish is under a big influence of English because English is the *lingua franca* of our times, and the United States is still the strongest country in terms of political, economic, and social powers. As the center of gravity of these powers move from the Atlantic to the Pacific region, it should not be surprising to see a renewed influ-

ence of Sino languages on Turkish in the near future. The important point here is to understand that the ability of Turkish to absorb those influences without getting lost in the pages of history does not depend on the “strength” of other languages, but on the strength of the Turkish people in terms of their socio-economic and cultural heritage and their current being. The best way for a society to protect its language is to advance in all aspects of life. ■

BAIKONUR COSMODROME

THE BAIKONUR COSMODROME IS LOCATED IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, IN A SEMI-ARID ZONE. IT IS ALSO CALLED TYURATAM, IS THE WORLD'S FIRST AND LARGEST OPERATIONAL SPACE LAUNCH FACILITY. IT WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT BY THE SOVIET UNION IN THE LATE 1950S AS THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR ITS AMBITIOUS SPACE PROGRAM. VOSTOK 1, THE FIRST MANNED SPACECRAFT IN HUMAN HISTORY, WAS LAUNCHED FROM ONE OF BAIKONUR'S LAUNCH PADS, WHICH IS PRESENTLY KNOWN AS GAGARIN'S START.

BY HARBIR KAUR

Near the Tyuratam railway station in the Kyzylorda Province in southern Kazakhstan lies the world's oldest and largest space launch facility. The Baikonur Cosmodrome is located near the mining town of Tyuratam, north of the Syr Darya River. The name is intentionally misleading due to attempts at maintaining the secrecy of the space facility. The city of Baikonur was chosen for its name because many of the launched rockets passed over the city, and so people could be easily confused. Near the Cosmodrome, a makeshift city was created for the workers, and this was called Leninsk up until 1995, when Boris Yeltsin renamed it Baikonur.

In 1957, the Baikonur Cosmodrome launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I, breaking records and beating the US in the great space race of the 20th century. Other famous launches at the Cosmodrome include the first satellite to travel to the moon (1959), the first human in orbit (1961), and



the first woman in space (1963). million US dollars per year. It is

run by the Russian Space Forces and the Russian Federal Space Agency. The facility is still used today, though a new Cosmodrome, the Vostochny, will become the primary Russian spaceport when it will be completed in 2018. ■

“OTHER FAMOUS LAUNCHES AT THE COSMODROME INCLUDE THE FIRST SATELLITE TO TRAVEL TO THE MOON (1959), THE FIRST HUMAN IN ORBIT (1961), AND THE FIRST WOMAN IN SPACE (1963).”

Russia currently leases the Baikonur Cosmodrome from the Kazakhstan government for 115

MUMMIES IN URUMCHI

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MUMMIES IN THE UYGHUR REGION OF CHINA RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT IDENTITY REALLY MEANS. WOULD THIS NEW DISCOVERY REDEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CELTIC? SUCH INTERESTING QUESTIONS HAVE CAUSED MANY SCHOLARS TO COME UP WITH MANY DIFFERENT THEORIES ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE. THIS CONTROVERSY AMONG THE SCHOLARS HAS CAUSED MANY DEBATES ON HOW TO INTERPRET THIS DISCOVERY.

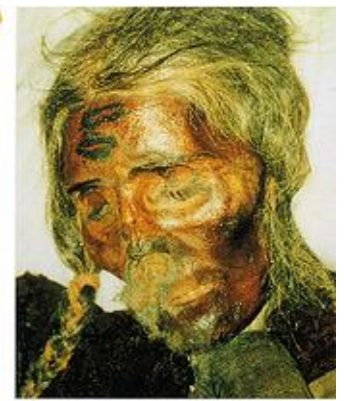
Urumchi, where the mummies were found in 1987, is the capital city of the Chinese-administered Uyghur Autonomous Regions (Chinese Turkestan). One of the very first scholars who visited the mummies was Professor Victor Mair. "The mummies appeared to be neither Chinese nor Mongoloid in facial type; they looked, in fact, distinctively 'Caucasian,' with high-bridged noses, deep, round eye sockets, fair hair, and-on the men-heavy beards". Therefore, the discovery of such mummies was more than just an archeological find in that also "the very existence of the mummies and the history they represented would revolutionize academic thinking in a number of fields". In order to better understand the finding first we need to examine the mummies and what was found in their graves.

There were five mummies found in the grave. A man who is called the Cherchen Man, three women (one of the women was thought to be his wife and so was called the Cherchen Woman), and a baby. Aside from the Cherchen Woman, the other two women were buried around the Cherchen Man. One of the two women is thought to be the nurse for the baby and the baby seems to be the Cherchen Man's

baby.

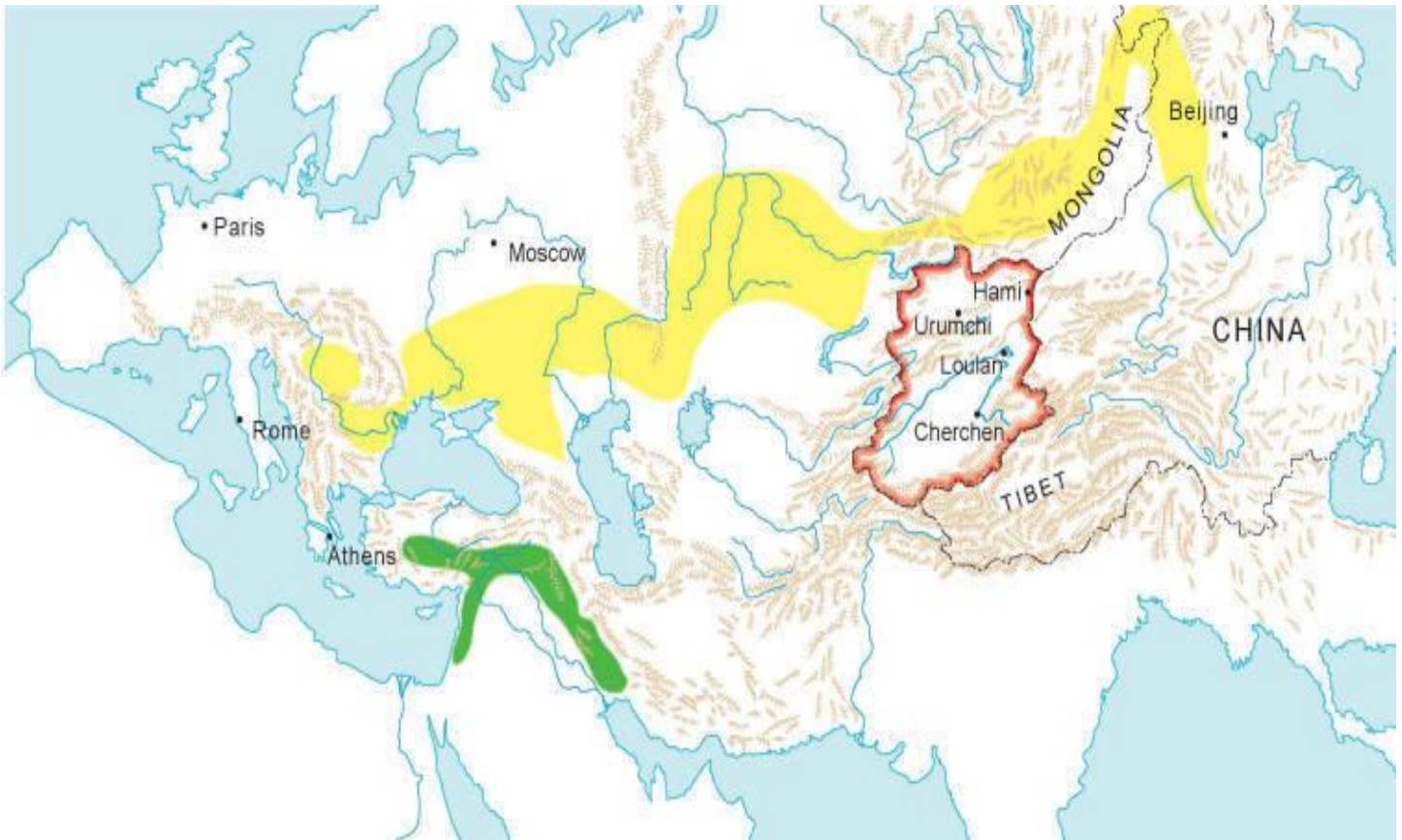
The man is about three thousand years old and he is well preserved. Through examining his clothes we see that some of the textile and clothing forms come from other parts of the world. In his grave, there were a number of hats found, and "hats of this shape are well known in ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean art, where they

were copied from the headgear of Phrygian archers, a group of people all too familiar to the Classical Greeks. This is very important, because it suggests the effects of human migrations on culture and clothing. Around "800 to 700 B.C., the heartland of Anatolia had filled with Phrygians, an Indo-European-speaking group that had come south from the steppes, the



Zaghunluq Mummies
Xinjiang, China





great grasslands that stretch from Hungary to China is a broad belt across Eurasia".

One other piece of clothing that can suggest the migration of the mummies from Eurasia is pants. Pants are believed to have been first made among the Eurasian pastoral nomads, since horse-riding was very common and made easier with pants. And since pastoral nomads moved with their herds to greener areas, slowly through time they ended up being in the steppes of Central Asia where the mummies were found. Examining the climate, we see that since that particular part of China is covered in desert and salt, it was possible for the mummies to be mummified.

Much of what was found in the graves was shared with other cultures and societies in that time period. Greco-Roman empires had influenced the Anatolians and later the greater Turkic empires. This

process was also seen in the opposite direction in which information and goods traveled from east to west. However, one very important conclusion from this analysis is that through time and human migration, people affect one another culturally and linguistically.

Therefore, it is not possible for

these groups of Celtic background to start from Ireland and leave directly to Central Asia. The migration procedure must have taken place over a long period of time and in each period this group of people must have resided in a particular location and then moved again.



a. Fabric with Animals, c.600 BCE Found at Zaghunluq Cemetery Displayed at Toghrakek Museum Charchen / Qiemo, Xinjiang, China

SELECTED TEXTILES FOUND AT ZAGHUNLUQ CEMETERY

b. Fabric Skirt (detail) c.800 BCE Found at Zaghunluq Cemetery Displayed at Xinjiang Museum Urumqi, Xinjiang, China



c. Fabric (detail) c.600 BCE Found at Zaghunluq Cemetery Stored at Xinjiang Regional Museum Urumqi, Xinjiang, China



d. Wool Gauze Fabric, c.800 BCE Found at Zathunluq. Displayed at Xinjiang Regional Museum Urumqi, Xinjiang, China



e. Leather box Found at Zaghunluq. Stored at Xinjiang Regional Museum, Urumqi, Xinjiang China



f. Felt hat, c.1000 BCE. Found at Zaghunluq. Displayed at Xinjiang Museum, Urumqi, Xinjiang, China

Images Source: a, c, d, e A Grand View of Xinjiang's Cultural Relics and Historic Sites, Xinjiang Cultural Relic Heritage Authority, 1999. Images Source: b, f centralasiatraveler.com

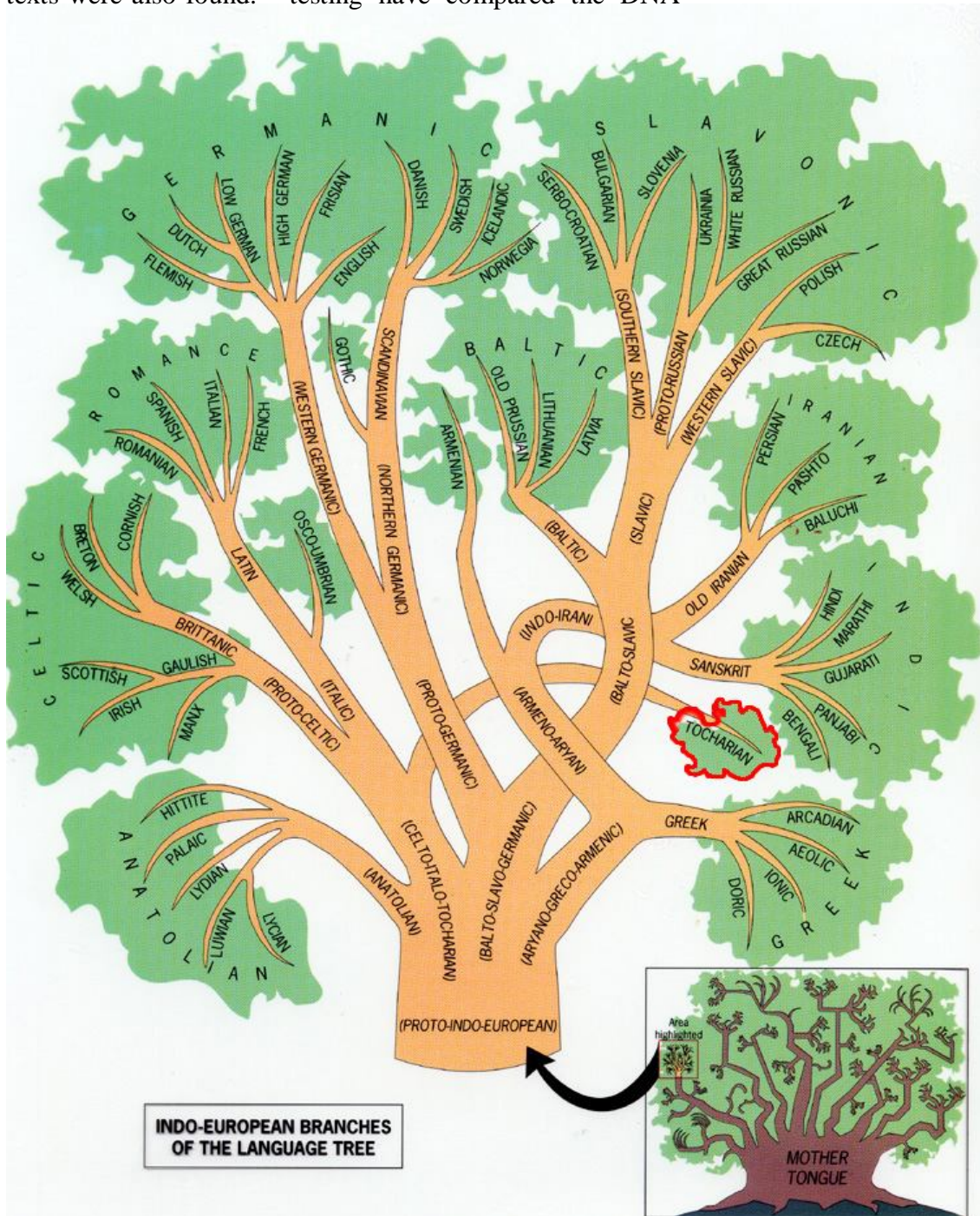
This is seen through their clothing. Another significant way that we can better analyze who these mummies were and what their ethnicity was is through determining the language they spoke.

Aside from the Urumchi mummies, there were other mummies that were found in the early nineteenth century around the same regions of China. In those sites that were very close to the site of discovery of the Urumchi mummies, many texts were also found.

The discovered texts were "most closely with the westernmost Indo-European languages: Celtic and Italic, and to some extent Germanic". Researchers were able to distinguish that the language the mummies are thought to have spoken was Tocharian (Tokharian). Tocharian is a branch of the Indo-European language which is one of the branches of the early Celtic languages. On the other hand, scientific experiments such as DNA testing have compared the DNA

taken from the mummies to the Mitochondrial Eve. The results were shocking; analysts did find Celtic ancestry in the mummies.

The Urumchi mummies are part of a still unfinished chapter of human history and such findings help us better understand and connect back to our unknown history. The human past is and has always been a million-piece puzzle and every piece found is a new clue into getting closer to the final picture. ■



INDO-EUROPEAN BRANCHES OF THE LANGUAGE TREE

THE NOT SO PLEASANT FIGURE OF 8 MILLION

AZERBAIJANI-AMERICAN COUNCIL

BY JAVID HUSEYNOV, PH.D.

The number of jobs lost in the U.S. private sector over the last two years of recession is quickly reaching a whopping 8 million. Under our system of governance, it would seem that the U.S. lawmakers should be gravely concerned about the situation, desperately seeking to aid the constituents. But it was another 8 million that was on the U.S. Congress agenda last week. On December 9th, the House and Senate amended the Administration's budget proposal in order to appropriate \$8 million in fiscal year 2010 for an entity likely unknown to most of those 8 million jobless Americans.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a region inside Azerbaijan hotly disputed by neighboring Armenia for over 20 years. The conflict started in 1988 when both Azerbaijan and Armenia were Soviet states and the population of this 1700-square-mile autonomous region in Azerbaijan was about 2/3 Armenian and 1/3 Azeri. Upon the fall of Soviets in 1991, Armenians launched a war ridding the region of its Azeri population and aiming to annex it to Armenia (When Saddam did that in 1990 to Kuwait, we were somehow more attentive). Azeris resisted, some



30,000 people were killed, few hundreds of them brutally massacred, and close to a million Azeris were forced out of their homes. By 1994 ceasefire, Armenia, not without Russian

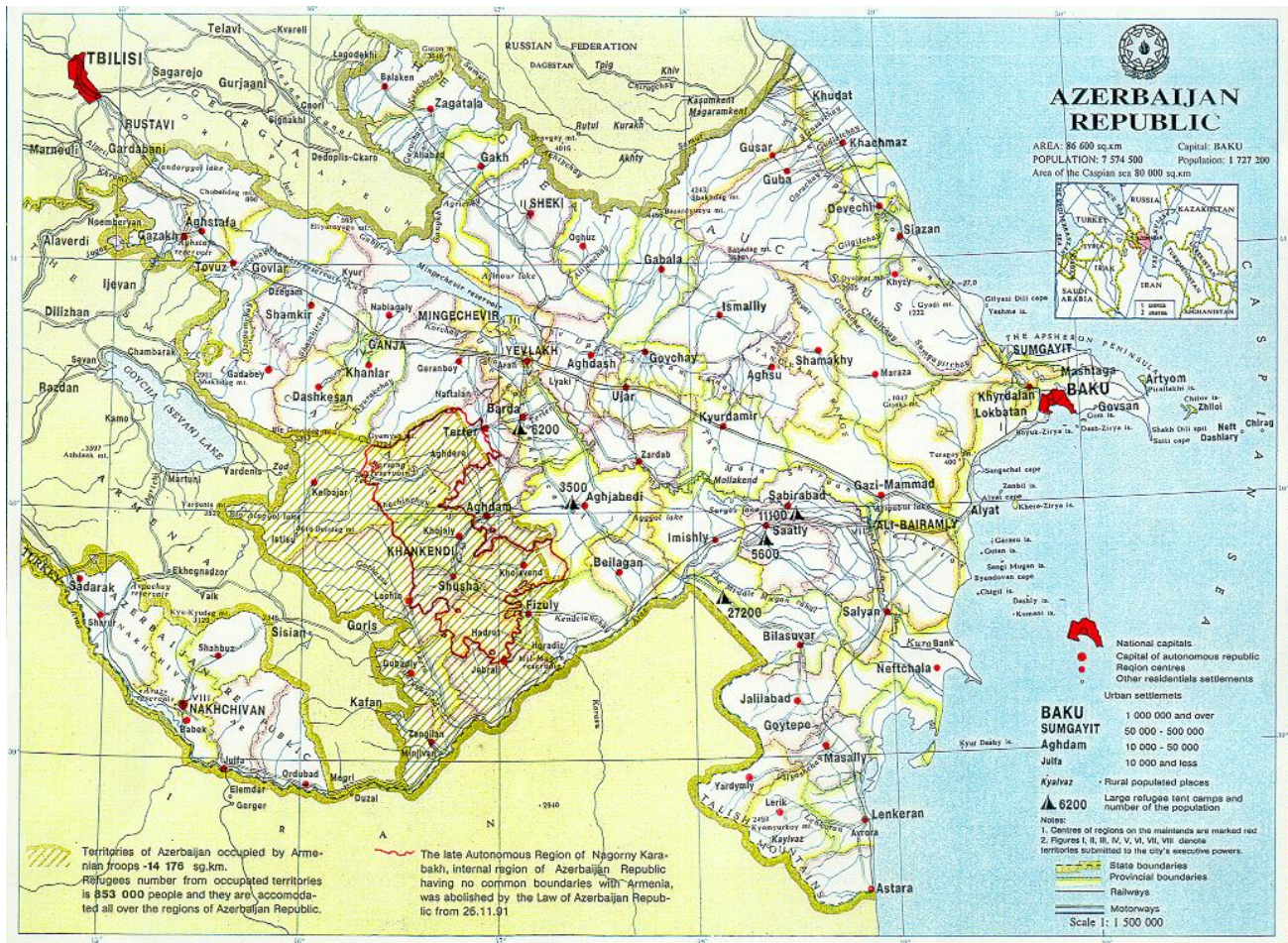
“UPON THE FALL OF SOVIETS IN 1991, ARMENIANS LAUNCHED A WAR RIDDING THE REGION OF ITS AZERI POPULATION AND AIMING TO ANNEX IT TO ARMENIA.”

support and Iranian sympathy, took control of the region along with some 3500 additional square miles of the UN-recognized Azeri territory. Our ignorance was even more fascinating when in 1992,

amidst the war, the U.S. Congress restricted aid to Azerbaijan claiming it was blockading Armenia and Azerbaijan's own occupied territory. That would be similar to asking why are we imposing economic sanctions on Iran today.

Since the ceasefire, Armenians have setup the so-called “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” on the occupied territory.

The entity is not recognized by any country including Armenia itself, the U.S. State Department denounces it by officially recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Big powers, led by



the U.S., Russia and France, weighed in to help resolve the conflict peacefully, so far without success. Meanwhile, U.S. Congress fueled by ethnic special interest allocates millions of taxpayer dollars in direct aid to Nagorno-Karabakh [Armenian separatists], further undermining any compromise to resolve the conflict and the U.S. position as a neutral peacemaker. This legislative move is also indirectly rewarding the ethnic cleansing which took place in the region as the U.S. aid cannot reach the Azeri residents of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Interestingly, our elected officials take part in this travesty against Azerbaijan, perhaps, the only secular Muslim friend which

supported us and participated in our endeavors ranging from Kosovo to Iraq, Afghanistan and the global war on terror. Sandwiched between Russia and

million against our own national interests? ☐

“BIG POWERS, LED BY THE U.S., RUSSIA AND FRANCE, WEIGHED IN TO HELP RESOLVE THE CONFLICT PEACEFULLY, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS.”

Iran, Azeris also managed to secure the export of their energy to Western markets, indirectly helping the plight of those 8 million jobless Americans too. And above all, we are constantly asking them to be democratic and pro-Western. So why do our own U.S. lawmakers charge extra \$8

BEING UZBEK-AFGHAN AMERICAN

BY AFSOON FAZLI

Being an Uzbek-Afghan-American can yield quite an identity crisis. I myself being born in America can't get away with being American because I don't "look American." I can't even get away with being Afghan because most Afghans will swear by anything that I don't look Afghan. And I've never met an Uzbek outside my family so I don't really know what they think. But I'm sure if they tried to speak Uzbek to me, I'd just as quickly be disowned too.

When I was in the third grade, my class was assigned a report on our country of origin. So, I decided to write my report on Afghanistan. Growing up, I always thought I was Afghan. Unfortunately, like many things in my life, I was wrong. The day after my presentation, my father came to me and gruffly said, "You know, we are really Uzbek. Your mother and I were just born in Afghanistan. You are Uzbek. You should have done your report on Uzbekistan."

This confused me. If I was Uzbek, why did I eat Afghan food? Speak the Afghan language? Listen to Afghan music?

So, the next year in the fourth grade, as I took a standardized test, I was asked to fill in the bubble that corresponded with my race. I bubbled in Asian. Afghanistan and



Uzbekistan were both on the continent of Asia, so how could I go wrong? When I informed my father on this particular decision, he gave me a confused look and notified me that I wasn't Asian either.

"YES, IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN MY INTERCHANGEABLE ETHNICITY, BUT I'VE LEARNED TO EMBRACE MY CULTURE, ROOTS, AND HERITAGE, EVEN IF NO ONE KNOWS WHERE UZBEKISTAN IS OR WHO UZBEKS ARE."

As I grew up I realized that not many people have heard of Uzbekistan (although now thanks to "Borat" the title conjures an image of a furious Kazakh journalist making obscene remarks toward

an Uzbek embassy). Uzbeks are a Turkic people; not exactly Turkish, although that would be easier since everyone knows Turkey.

However, the underlying issue is that I hail from a long line of immigrants. Since ancient times, thousands of Arabic and Persian immigrants have settled in a city known today as Bukhara. Its geographic location in modern political lines is within Uzbekistan. Yet, it was once its own empire and today is a city that speaks a Tajik dialect of Farsi.

Due to pressure from Soviet forces, my grandparents/great-grandparents moved from Bukhara to Northern Afghanistan. A decade or two later, my parents were born.

Both of my parents grew up with the Afghan culture and traditions. Thus when Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and they were pressed to immigrate to Pakistan, then America, they still associated themselves with Afghan culture.

Yet despite all this, my family has maintained much of its Uzbek roots. Our marriage customs can be traced to Uzbekistan. And during Norooz, the “new year,” Uzbeks all over have specific traditions; one of which is soaking seven types of dried fruit in water two days before Norooz as a sweet to eat. In fact, my earliest memories in life began in Uzbekistan, although none were quite pleasant. I dropped my pacifier in the toilet, was coerced to become potty trained since my mother ran out of diapers, and every single one of my Disney movies were given to all the little kids there. I left as a very cynical child. But throughout the years I have grown up learning the history of Uzbekistan and have been continually fascinated with its culture and people.

Yes, it’s hard to explain my interchangeable ethnicity, but I’ve learned to embrace my culture, roots, and heritage, even if no one knows where Uzbekistan is or who Uzbeks are. ◼



YASHA TIRAXTOR!

Tiraxtor Football Club (Teraktor Sazi) was founded in 1970. It is an Iranian soccer club based in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan. They play in Iran's Pro League.

The team was sponsored by Iran Tractor Manufacturing Co. (ITMCO), one of the largest industries in Tabriz. Tiraxtor also provides Iran with some of the most talented players such as Karim Bagheri, Sirous Dinmohammadi, Rasoul Khatibi, Yahya Golmohammadi and Sattar Hamedani.

Currently Tiraxtor has the highest number of fans in Iran. Even in away matches an extraordinary number of fans attend the games to cheer and show their support for the team. Doesn't matter in rain or snow you can count on the fans of Tiraxtor to be there.



YASHASIN TIRAXTOR!



*Azərbaycan xalqı dayaqdır sənə
Çırpınan bir ürək sənsən vətənə
Dayanma heç zaman yaşa Tiraxtor
Qoy sel kimin aşa daşa Tiraxtor*

*Səndə Səttarxanın şöhrati vardır
Yerişin meydanda şandır vigardır
Tiraxtorun kimnən yoxdur qorxusu
Ey elin vətənin zəfər ordusu*

*Gözlərin hamısı bağlıdır sənə
Sən dan ulduzusan gözəl vətənə
Boğazımda səsım qanımda rəngim
Ey mənım aslanım bəbrım pələngim,
Hər meydanda vardır iki dərvaza
Biri baxır qəmə biri avaza
Tiraxtor açacax avaz qapısın
Meydanda quracax zəfər ordusun*



